

# Rheinland-Pfalz



## Guidelines

on Rural Development  
and Rural Land Readjustment



**Guidelines**

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# **Guidelines on Rural Development and Rural Land Readjustment**

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## **Dialogue Process for the Formulation and Practicable Implementation of the Guidelines on Rural Development and Rural Land Readjustment**

The Guidelines on Rural Development and Rural Land Readjustment are only valuable and practicable if a maximum degree of practical experience as well as knowledge of the appropriate instruments and approaches is considered. With the formulation of these guidelines, the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Transportation, Agriculture and Viniculture is aiming at a realistic and effective approach for the federal state of Rhineland-Palatinate. For this undertaking, the collaboration and participation of the relevant economic and social groups that shape the rural area today are absolutely necessary.

Beside the requirements of agriculture, forestry and viniculture, all other area-related aspects like water management, nature and landscape conservation as well as the development of infrastructure have to be considered.

Especially the local authorities within the rural area are of great importance. Furthermore all regional economic actors, such as enterprises from handcraft, industry, trade and services, together with their respective associations, have to bring in their requirements and experience. In the end, they are the ones who are able to create and ensure employment in the rural area.

Last but not least, it is of utmost importance to involve all relevant social groups in a realistic, adequate formulation of the guidelines.

Against this background, the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Transportation, Agriculture and Viniculture carried out an intensive dialogue process in the year 2005 in order to justify and formulate the Guidelines on Rural Development and Rural Land Readjustment.

Within the context of two workshops in Rhineland-Palatinate, the instruments of Integrated Rural Development (ILE), the so-called Integrated Rural Development Concept (ILEK) and the instruments of the ILE–Regional Management (ILE-RM) were intensively discussed and developed in detail. This first dialogue process was led by the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Transportation, Agriculture and Viniculture.

In a second dialogue process during the course of two further workshops, the current challenges of rural land readjustment were dealt with and, at the same time, used for an up-to-date positioning of land readjustment.

On the one hand, the whole dialogue process was characterized by a hard but constructive professional debate during the workshops. On the other hand, the results were turned into clearly defined passages of the guidelines. Proceeding in this fashion guaranteed that the guidelines do not represent a purely ministerial view. Instead, they represent a professional, competent and well-founded positioning, derived from discourse between all relevant social forces of the rural area.

The following guiding principles were established by a group of experts of this workshop, representing all the different actors of the rural area.

## **Guiding Principles of Rural Development and Land Readjustment**

### **For the Support of Agriculture and Viniculture:**

- Rural land readjustment is essential for the support of a structural change in agriculture, viniculture and forestry
- Rural land readjustment creates win-win-situations for all parties involved
- Rural land readjustment enables an opening-up of land according to the respective needs of the players involved
- With intensive preparation, an integral approach is also possible when using cheap and cost-saving land readjustment procedures
- Maintaining the property assets of landowners as well as competitiveness and income in the fields of agriculture, viniculture and forestry are all inevitably linked with each other

### **Strengthening Regional and Municipal Development:**

- The dialogue process has to be intensified - which means that the possibilities of rural land readjustment are to be made available for village development and regional tourism
- In the future, rural land readjustment will be used increasingly to develop tourism
- Rural land readjustment contributes to the realisation of infrastructural measures
- Through land readjustment procedures, the possibilities of an effective compensation of third parties by intervention are improved
- Village consolidation and village renewal are highly significant for the attractiveness of villages and their potential as tourist attractions

### **Securing, Sustaining, and Developing the Natural Basis of Life**

- Aims of the instruments of Integrated Rural Development, such as rural land readjustment, are: a land use that is environment-friendly, adapted to the requirements of the landscape and the respective location in order to preserve the cultural landscape, to restore bodies of water as much as possible to their natural state and to realise ecological programmes

- Rural land readjustment is an important instrument for the implementation of legal concerns as regards bodies of water, forests and nature conservation. Examples of this are the Campaign Blue, the EU Water Framework Directive, the habitat network in Rhineland-Palatinate and the European network Natura 2000.
- ILEK and rural land readjustment procedures allow harmonised land use concepts with a positive ecobalance
- Rural land readjustment helps to provide areas in order to realise extensive, technical flood protection measures and to compensate a possible land loss. In this way, conflicts between land users and landowners are solved.
- Clear ownership structures (land tenure) and an opening up of the respective areas are the most important preconditions for making adequate forest cultivation possible. The only efficient instrument to secure this is forest land consolidation.

### **Stimulating Economic Power and Employment**

- Land management solves land use conflicts – especially as regards infrastructural measures and cooperation between municipalities.
- Land management implements the aims of land use planning, federal state planning as well as further sectoral planning in partnerships, and it does so in a fast and cost-effective way. Furthermore it helps to minimise conflicts.
- By combining the instruments of rural development such as ILEK or ILE-RM, rural land readjustment creates favourable hard and soft basic conditions for enterprises and foundation processes, and accelerates their realisation
- Village consolidation improves the inner development of villages, which is a precondition for their viability
- The interaction of all instruments can improve basic conditions for the creation and securing of employment. Furthermore it can increase the creation of value and thus contribute to the solution of problems regarding the current demographic development.

With practicable and appropriate programmatic guidelines, we are able to introduce a jointly supported policy for the rural area in Rhineland-Palatinate.

## **Chapter I: Cornerstones of the Guidelines on Rural Development and Rural Land Readjustment in Rhineland-Palatinate**

Within the Federal Republic of Germany, the rural area represents an economic and cultural area as well as a living space of great importance. In times of globalised economic cycles, we must not ignore the fact that a considerable part of Germany's people are living and working in rural areas. The rural area is a historically grown cultural area. It represents home and, at the same time, provides people with roots and identity with its specific landscapes and regional cultures (mentality, customs, language, culinary traditions).

For the densely populated economic areas and conurbations, the rural area provides fundamental potentials as regards recreation and leisure activities right at "peoples' front door". Furthermore, it represents the vital "green lung" of our state. Thus, the rural area provides the intensely used and densely populated areas with necessary social and ecological resources within the social and economic fabric.

This high significance of the rural area especially applies to Rhineland-Palatinate. Therefore, the development of the rural area is one of the central political concerns of the federal state government of Rhineland-Palatinate. For our state, an effective and sustainable policy for rural areas as well as a practical economic and social policy is of vital importance.

Already in the past, Rhineland-Palatinate occupied an outstanding position nationwide regarding land development initiatives. When it comes to the instruments and approaches of rural development, Rhineland-Palatinate has – again and again – played a leading role and advanced new development approaches for rural areas.

One example of this is the Guidelines on Rural Land Readjustment, which have existed as a central policy for the rural area in Rhineland-Palatinate since 1995. On the basis of those guidelines of 1995, land readjustment, the agrarian structure development planning and supportive investment measures within the context of EU support programmes have been constantly and successfully enhanced. This was done in the context of an emphasis on regional development.

The Ministry of Economic Affairs, Transportation, Agriculture and Viniculture of Rhineland-Palatinate now presents revised and adjusted "Guidelines on Rural Development and Rural Land Readjustment".

These new guidelines summarize the experiences of the past ten years. They describe in detail the further development of the instruments involved but also the changing challenges in the rural area. Finally they sum up the current discussion on the adaptation to the EU framework conditions. The guidelines on rural development and rural land readjustment guarantee the political and instrumental framework for the development of rural areas within the next years. With these guidelines, the federal state government has modernized its concept of an active development policy for our rural areas. This means not only the promotion and support of economically underdeveloped regions but also vitalising the specific social, cultural and economic "treasures" of the rural areas of Rhineland-Palatinate.



With this, we contribute to a great extent to maintaining the competitiveness of our state as a region within the German, the European and the global context.

## **Rural Development in Rhineland-Palatinate**

In the development of its rural areas, Rhineland-Palatinate mainly focuses on “Integrated Rural Development” (ILE).

Integrated rural development (ILE) aims at the assurance and increase of a regional creation of value (earnings for enterprises and private households, incomes of municipal budgets, the competitiveness of the region as a location for industry and commerce, for leisure activities and as a place of residence). ILE integrates all subject areas which directly and indirectly drive forward the regional creation of value. The relevant subject areas beside agriculture, forestry and viticulture are questions concerning land use, trade and services, industry and handcraft as well as cultural and social topics and youth work. Equal opportunity for women and men is a relevant subject, too.

Integrated Rural Development (ILE) is based upon three coordinated pillars:

- *Integrated Rural Development Concepts (ILEK)*
- *ILE–Regional Management (ILE-RM)*
- *Promotion of Investment Measures*

## **Integrated Rural Development Concept (ILEK)**

The integrated rural development concept (ILEK) assures the strategic and planning basis for successful development processes within the region. For an effective enhancement of the region, the local actors work out customized and conceptual basics together with a qualified, external regional consultancy. As a result of integrated rural development concepts (ILEKs), the following questions for the respective local areas are being answered:

- What are the regional starting conditions for a further development and an increase of the regional creation of value? (*strengths-weaknesses analysis*)
- Which promising development potentials and project ideas are to be derived from regional strengths and opportunities? (*region-specific project portfolio*)
- Which key personalities are involved in the projects and development potentials? (Creation of sustainable project teams / gaining promoters for the respective projects)
- How can a successful realisation of projects be achieved and which projects and practical realisation can already be started? (Professional project management and first realisation of projects)
- How to involve the local population in the discourse on regional development? (Creating new initiatives/movement within the region)

## ILEK at a Glance

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<b>Financial Support</b>	<b>Up to 75% of the costs, but at most 50,000 EUR subsidies per concept</b>
<b>Area</b>	<b>At least one association of municipalities</b>
<b>Duration</b>	<b>12 months</b>
<b>Standard financial support for realisation measures</b>	<b>Up to 10% increase of the standard financial support according to a determinate catalogue of measures within the support guidelines</b>

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## ILE-Regional Management (ILE-RM)

The main focus of the ILE-RM is the practical realisation of the projects developed in the range of integrated rural development concepts (ILEKs). It is of great importance for the federal state government that, together with the ILE-regional management, practical and results-oriented activities are being initiated and achieved within the respective regions. The objectives are mainly:

- securing and promoting the cultural, economic and social creation of value within the respective region (results orientation)
- professional support, coordination and successful realisation of promising regional development projects (project management)
- adjusting and ensuring knowledge transfer between the specific projects (controlling of the regional project portfolio within ILE-RM)
- allocation of scarce financial means as well as of consultancy resources among the projects (program control and allocation of professional support through external regional consultancy)
- presenting and communicating strengths and achievements of the respective regions (regional marketing)
- giving local actors methodical and professional support in their management competencies and assisting them with the realisation of projects (financing / questions on detail) through an external regional consultancy and qualified technical authorities, such as ADD (supervision and service office) and DLR (service centres for rural areas) etc.
- ensuring an appropriate connection between the ILE-RM programme and the municipal policy
- ensuring that integrated aims, such as equal opportunity for men and women, are reached (gender mainstreaming)
- compiling information on regional development processes so that they endure beyond the supported period of time

## ILE-Regional Management at a Glance

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<b>Financial Support</b>	<b>Up to 70% of the costs, but at most 50,000 EUR subsidies annually</b>
<b>Area</b>	<b>Region with at least 30.000 inhabitants, normally several associations of municipalities</b>
<b>Duration</b>	<b>3-5 years</b>

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### New Accents and Innovations in Rural Development

With the enhanced instruments of rural development, the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Transportation, Agriculture and Viniculture is clearly aiming at a broader basis for the necessary impulses within the rural areas of Rhineland-Palatinate.

In this respect, agriculture still plays a decisive role. Agriculture, forestry and viniculture shape the natural landscape. Furthermore they are an important part of our regional culture and represent an important pillar within the structure of the regional economy.

At the same time, it is very important to consider the rural area beyond its agricultural and area-related aspects. From this point of view, the claim for an integrated rural development becomes apparent. All relevant development potentials within the region have to be considered. These include trade, industry, services and handcraft. The tourist industry is also one of the economic priorities of integrated rural development (regional creation of value through supra-regional leisure and recreation activities).

In addition, the requirements and the intra-regional demand-boosting effects through private households within the rural area are also in the focus of interest (social, educational and traffic-wise infrastructure /, residing and living in the rural area). And, last but not least, the efforts of the local authorities, who today act more and more as “entrepreneurs for their region”, are in the focus of interest as well.

With this integrated approach, the federal state government underlines the clear aim of a development that is mainly borne and supported by the region itself. It is not only just experts from local and regional administrations who advance the development potentials. The people themselves living within the region are actively involved as well and their opinions are sought. Strategies, analyses and concepts are no longer prepared unless they can be realised and implemented. Their actual value rather depends on how much they are in line with their realisation and to what extent they can practically enhance this realisation.

Within the next years, this method of implementing innovations and practical accents is to be enhanced and improved consistently, together with the Guidelines on Rural Development and Rural Land Readjustment.

## **Rural Land Readjustment in Rhineland-Palatinate**

Beside rural development, rural land readjustment presents a further important basis as regards a guaranteed future for the rural areas in Rhineland-Palatinate.

Rural land readjustment can look back at a long and eventful past. As a public task, rural land reorganization has at times had to confront critical points of view and differing areas of interest within the rural area.

The federal state government of Rhineland-Palatinate will aim at a modern and effective rural management in the future as well.

## **Agriculture Needs Land Readjustment**

The structural change in agriculture is ongoing. In many respects competitive agriculture depends on effective land readjustment initiatives.

One of the main goals still is to enable adequate production conditions for all future-oriented agricultural enterprises as regards foreign trade. Agriculture in Rhineland-Palatinate has to compete with other European regions, which partly have better initial positions due to a more favourable land distribution. What will be decisive in the future is that the cultivated areas must be adapted to the requirements of modern agriculture. Location, form and size of the respective land plots have to ensure profitable cultivation. Additionally, the land plots should be consolidated as closely as possible to the respective agricultural enterprises. Whoever wants to maintain agriculture as an economic factor within the rural area needs professional land readjustment resources and land readjustment procedures (procedures varying in intensity, flexibility and speed of implementation).

But farmers, whose main paid occupation is agriculture, are not the only focus. The natural landscape, homes and the cultural landscape as a whole are also shaped by agricultural enterprises that only partly depend on agriculture. In this respect, areas that are less attractive for agriculture but highly valuable within the landscape are a matter of particular interest. Future generations who also depend on non-farm activities in order to generate their incomes will only be able to cultivate and manage these areas further if their land ownership is designed and structured properly.

## **Land Readjustment Ensures Capitalized Values in Region**

Land readjustment is often seen in a negative light and its positive effects – particularly regarding the property interests of landowners – are often overlooked. But land readjustment not only aims at ensuring private needs and interests of agricultural enterprises, whose number is continuously decreasing. Above all, the capitalized value of the respective land areas has to be maintained for all the people living in the rural area. If an area is not cultivated any more, then its capitalized value drops. Thus regional capital remains unused. In order to ensure a significant creation of value through land property for future generations of landowners as well, a modernized lay out of land plots is absolutely necessary.

## **Land Readjustment Ensures a Coordination of Interests and the Development of Infrastructure**

On the one hand, clear private property rights represent a very important factor of the economic system. On the other hand, an active and appropriate development of infrastructure is of vital importance for the development of rural areas. Fundamental regional economic potentials and impulses depend on adequate transport connections (development of tourism, transport connections to conurbations with employment potential for the people in the rural area, areas for municipal development etc.). Also in the future, specific areas for infrastructural measures, municipal development, building land as well as for nature and landscape conservation will be required. Professional land management provides for the allocation of these areas. Rural land readjustment thus contributes to a fair coordination of interests between landowners and public requirements.

## **Land Readjustment Supports Sustainable Nature and Landscape Conservation**

Nature and landscape conservation are important features of the rural area and today an integral part of the policy for rural areas. In the future as well, there will be conflicts of interests between the economic needs of agriculture, recreational activities and the demand for land for residential areas and industry. Even though huge progress has already been made in achieving an ecologically sensitive and defensible use of land, the active management of land according to the needs of nature and landscape conservation and the coordination of interests still play an important role. Land Readjustment can help to solve land-related conflicts.

The consolidation of connected and valuable nature reserves and the challenges of finding and providing compensation areas play another important role.

There has been a change in the once-considerable conflicts between nature conservation on the one hand and land consolidation on the other hand. In recent years, a cooperation based on partnership could be established between land readjustment and nature conservation.

As land use requirements constantly change, nature conservation will depend on the strong and professional land management capability of the federal state in the future as well.

## **Land Readjustment Needs a Broad Spectrum of Procedures**

In recent years one of the main objectives and developments of land readjustment has been to choose the simplest and most cost efficient land management procedures in each case for the readjustment of the area involved. In this respect, the Authorities for Land Consolidation of Rhineland-Palatinate have proved to be an effective and innovative service provider for their "customers". This was shown by the groundbreaking enhancement of instruments at our disposal, for example voluntary land exchange.

In the future, as well, the federal state government of Rhineland-Palatinate will make use of this well proven spectrum of procedures to the full extent. The debate of experts within the

second dialogue process has shown that, in the future, classic and partly complex land readjustment procedures will be necessary to solve land readjustment issues.

### **Land Readjustment Ensures Various Functions and Development Forces within the Rural Area**

The overall picture of Rural Land Readjustment in Rhineland-Palatinate clearly shows: Land management supports the development of rural areas in various ways. It serves as a driving force and “indispensable supporter” for the development and economic prosperity of rural areas. From this point of view the following becomes apparent: Today, the circle of those who benefit from Rural Land Readjustment is broader than ever before. Integrated Rural Development and Rural Land Readjustment with its various facets require such a broad orientation.

Besides ordinary customers like agricultural enterprises and landowners, new customers have emerged. Today, especially municipalities, all area-related administrative authorities and the whole tourist industry highly appreciate the advantages of structured land management through land readjustment. Thus, a relationship based on partnership has been developed, as the dialogue process for the formulation of the guidelines has shown. Thanks to the efforts of flexible land management, the economy of the rural area is gaining many advantages.

Rural Land Readjustment can contribute to the assurance of employment and the creation of value within the rural area. In order to provide effective land readjustment, public efforts are appropriate and economically meaningful.

### **Land Readjustment Needs Professional Resources**

All relevant social groups within the rural area have contributed toward making recommendations for the cornerstones of land readjustment in the coming years. The conclusions listed above were arrived at in the course of the dialogue process, during which detailed evaluations and different points of view were exchanged.

In the future, it will be very important to ensure the necessary contributions to Rural Land Readjustment and to the development of rural areas by the use of appropriate procedural approaches (flexible, fast, simple). Despite tense budgetary conditions, therefore, appropriate resources are to be made available to the Authority for Land Consolidation in Rhineland-Palatinate.

Together with the modification of requirements and problems, the repertoire of the Authority for Land Consolidation in Rhineland-Palatinate has successively been enhanced. The experts of the service centres for the rural area (DLR) and the supervision and service office (ADD) in Trier are today favoured partners for the solution of area-related problems and development tasks in Rhineland-Palatinate. The efforts and contributions of the service

centres for the rural area and the supervision service office are aiming at an integral Regional Management. Here, steering tasks, the specific supervision of regional development processes and up to date regional analyses are as important as classic geodetic and agricultural expertise.

The federal state government will further enhance and develop these administrative and service\_ providing resources in order to make them available for all local actors of regional development within the rural area of Rhineland-Palatinate.

In the future, one of the main tasks of the experts for land readjustment in Rhineland-Palatinate will be ensuring active land management according to the needs of landowners, farmers, municipalities, the actors of nature conservation and finally of all the people living within the rural area of Rhineland-Palatinate.

## **Chapter II: Guidelines for the Integrated Rural Development**

### **1. Background and General Principles**

Rhineland-Palatinate is mainly shaped by its rural area. The rural area comprises more than 70% of the total area of Rhineland-Palatinate. More than half of the population lives there.

The rural area is to be promoted as an independent area with its different economic functions, as an area to live in and also as a natural, cultural, working and recreation area. Strategies for the new EU-programme phase, beginning in 2007, have to be developed. Therefore, it is necessary to identify, link and purposefully support the development potentials which are available within the rural regions of Rhineland-Palatinate. In this respect, the strategies for the Integrated Rural Development are to be applied together with financial support from the EU.

It is of great importance that the local actors within the rural area themselves contribute to the development of their region. Impulses from above (e.g. political guidelines, support programmes) have to be combined meaningfully with regional, endogenous potentials. Integrated Rural Development is to be supported systematically in order to help the federal state to identify growth potentials, innovation potentials and possibilities for the creation of value within the rural regions. In the light of the complexity of problems within the rural area, cooperation between actors from politics, administration departments, the economy, associations, science and the citizens is to be strived for.

#### **The Following Guidelines Apply to Integrated Rural Development:**

##### **An Active Policy for the Development of Rural Areas**

There must be an active policy for the development of rural areas. In this respect, the experiences made within the past years will be drawn on. At the same time, new accents are being set in order to make development in the rural area more efficient and more successful.

##### **Assistance for Self-Help**

The strengths of the regions are to be worked out, activated and concentrated. The regions are offered profound and qualified support when it comes to the formulation of Integrated Rural Development Concepts (ILEK) and the realisation of development concepts on the spot. Local energy for the development of the region is coming to the fore. The main objective is to promote and advance regional development processes. Those who really want to participate will be both willing and able to make extremely scarce public funds from municipal budgets available.



## **Transfer of Knowledge and Expertise to the Regions**

The transfer of knowledge is to be promoted further. An important factor for the transfer of knowledge is a highly skilled federal state administration for Integrated Rural Development. The employees are required to bring in specialised knowledge and real service orientation to Rural Development. It is not only about classic administrative tasks (authorising, examining, building etc.) but also about a professional and personal contribution to regional development processes. Professional administrative action as regards Integrated Rural Development means: The main objective and criterion is the success of the local projects and actions. Furthermore, this success should serve as a benchmark for the provision of the service. Beside federal experts, qualified regional consultants and teams of experts from private industry will be involved in Integrated Rural Development as well. This external consultancy will bring in professional knowledge in order to control and support regional development processes. It represents a further but temporary additional resource for the local actors. Advisory groups bring in ideas, advance projects and ensure that actions on the spot are implemented according to the rules of successful Rural Development.

## **Concentration on Connections within the Development of Regional Economy**

In the future, Rural Development has to manage problems systematically and implement solutions successfully. One of the aims is to especially support local actions and projects, to promote an additional regional creation of value and the assurance of employment. Everything that potentially increases incomes of regional enterprises and private households is in the focus of Integrated Rural Development. This means concretely: The subject area of Integrated Rural Development has to be broadened. Beside agricultural issues – on which the main emphasis was placed in the past – in the future, all subject areas and questions regarding the regional creation of value have to be considered. Local handcraft, industry, trade and services are now equal subjects within Integrated Rural Development Concepts and Regional Management. Especially agriculture benefits from this new orientation. A structural change in agriculture is in progress. It is thus important to improve the chances of all growth-oriented agricultural enterprises for competitive production. Furthermore, a preferably broad spectrum of business opportunities for the enterprises in the rural area is to be developed. Leisure time, recreation, tourism, generation of energy and other non-agricultural employment possibilities are becoming important issues.

## **Realising and Promoting Local Strengths**

Each region has its own specific strengths. The people living there possess special talents and every region has its own history and traditional skills. In the future, these regional characteristics and the associated competitive advantages have to be considered more intensely. For Integrated Rural Development in Rhineland-Palatinate this means: The regions have to compete more than so far with other regions. That is why, for the new accents within Integrated Rural Development Concepts and Regional Management, regional strengths and weaknesses have to be clearly defined.

## **The Local Population is in the Centre of Attention**

In various regions of Rhineland-Palatinate there are treasure troves which have yet to be exploited. The most valuable treasure is the creativity of the local population. An essential concern of Integrated Rural Development is to identify and capitalize on these treasures. Integrated Rural Development Concepts and Regional Management will allow new and additional contact among local actors and promote external incentives and impulses for the respective region. The objective is to activate and vitalise local networks. Many rural areas are not aware of their talents. Integrated Rural Development means encouraging the local actors to participate in regional initiatives and projects. Rural Development will work only if it is possible to bring creative local strengths and capabilities to the fore. All fellow citizens who were content to remain inactive in the past should now join in the discourse of local politics. Integrated Rural Development ought to give new impulses, short term and long, to both men and women; all participants can benefit from Integrated Rural Development. Additionally, Rural Development is a chance to diminish "political apathy". For the people who participate, it represents the chance to develop pride in their own region. To achieve this, the development process has to be managed professionally.

## **Innovative and Unusual Ideas are Required**

Integrated Rural Development needs new ideas and approaches. In the framework of Integrated Rural Development Concepts and Regional Management, it is not sufficient to follow up on old projects for rural development and then hope for financial means and further support. Of course many good ideas already exist. Some of them are worth being advanced. But unusual combinations, new partnerships and courageous approaches are necessary. The interim results of these projects can involve moments of surprise, and both these and their innovative potential should be kept in mind and evaluated as criteria of success.

## **Contributions of Men and Women are to be Involved Equally**

Nowadays, gender mainstreaming is a central issue. Women's contributions to Rural Development are of crucial importance. In the past, this fact was not fully appreciated. Whether in agricultural enterprises, trade or services, within the context of income support or private households: In the future, the role women play will be of decisive importance. They contribute as entrepreneurs, managers of families and creative minds. For Integrated Rural Development this means: Even more than in the past, equal opportunities have to be made available to women.

## **Activating Lasting Developments**

The focus of Integrated Rural Development is to create new impulses for the respective regions. In the past, many valuable regional initiatives “fell asleep” after the end of the supported project phase. For Integrated Rural Development it is essential that, right from the beginning, sustainable and independent structures be created in the regions. The question in all projects and initiatives must be: Which concrete efforts can be realised within the duration of the project and what is to be done to keep these projects alive even beyond their actual duration? Integrated Rural Development means placing the emphasis on the initiative of the local population right from the beginning.

## **As Little Planning and Analysis and as Many Action Steps as Possible**

Moreover, Integrated Rural Development means: The focus is on results-oriented projects and actions. The Integrated Rural Development Concept serves as a lean and pragmatic basis for the development of projects within the rural area. But this does not mean preparing professional reports on topics that have already been described in connection with other projects and are only read by just a few people anyway. Integrated Rural Development Concepts are worked out together with the local population and define the basic direction. Thus, the concepts should become even more activity-oriented and leaner than the present Agrarian Structure Development Planning (AEP). These projects require a duration of several years. It is not possible to develop effective new ideas and implement them successfully within just one or two years.

## **2. Integrated Rural Development Concept (ILEK)**

With the help of the Integrated Rural Development Concept, the extensive Agrarian Structure Development Planning is being enhanced. Whereas the focus of Agrarian Structure Development Planning was agriculture as such and the economic sectors directly connected with agriculture, Integrated Rural Development Concepts pursue a much broader approach. Integrated Rural Development Concepts serve the integration of agriculture and forestry into the development process in order to strengthen the whole regional economy.

The Integrated Rural Development Concepts (ILEK) should realize the following, on the basis of an analysis of the local strengths and weaknesses of a region:

- define development goals for the respective region
- define fields of action
- develop strategies for the realisation of the development goals
- describe and implement first priority development concepts

In this context, it is of great importance that the development strategies aim at the characteristics and the particular situation of the respective region. The region is defined as an area with a spatial and functional connection. The following results should generally be expected:

- The structures for cooperation and organisation of the Integrated Rural Development are worked out
- The relevant fields of action are defined
- The need for action is defined as a result of a structural analysis
- The guidelines and objectives as well as the strategies for the implementation are worked out and illustrated (through texts and maps) in an integrated structural concept
- An action programme including the first necessary measures/projects is developed
- Priorities for the implementation are determined
- The use of instruments for the participating authorities is shown

### **3. Regional Management**

In framework of Integrated Rural Development, Regional Management should initialise and organise development processes and support them during the implementation phase (steering of implementation). The main objective is to activate the local population and other actors of a region. Through information and advice, the endogenous potential of a region is to be made accessible. At the end of the process, projects which contribute to the development of a region are to be identified and assisted during their implementation.

In the framework of Integrated Rural Development Concepts, effective measures are developed, whereas the focus of Regional Management is on managing and supporting concrete projects professionally.

The following general objectives are to be reached – with sustainability as a guiding principle:

- Promotion of regional and communal development
- Promotion of the regional economy and agriculture
- Creation and assurance of employment
- Support of young families in order to work against the negative effects of the demographic change and migration

- Improvement of working and living conditions
- Promotion of the regional identity
- Maintenance of the natural basis of life

In order to create advantages for everyone, it is necessary to consider which actors should participate in the Regional Management. Through local economic cooperation and the bundling of available resources, for example, ecological, economic, social and tourist benefits can be reached.

To achieve the above-mentioned objectives, the main tasks of Regional Management comprise all the central aspects that are necessary to initiate, organise, manage, arrange and implement rural development processes. These are, amongst other things, information, consultancy and activation of the local population as well as initiation and continuation of purposeful regional development projects (including agricultural development projects). Further aspects are the implementation of procedures in the light of conflict management as well as the evaluation of the achievement of objectives.

Regional Management will use the following tactics in order to make sure that the measures, derived from the above-mentioned areas of responsibility, are implemented successfully:

- Connecting ecological, economic, social and cultural aspects
- Involving all sections of the population (gender mainstreaming)
- Concentrating on focal themes taking all fields of action into consideration
- Achieving implementation results
- Creating networks and synergy effects
- Utilizing public relations
- Measuring success
- Activating financial means

Before several partners can implement a Regional Management together, they must have established – together or on their own – an Integrated Rural Development Concept or something comparable. Another important condition is the creation of a widespread acceptance of Regional Management in order to guarantee a preferably broad basis for the successful realisation of all projects.

Right from the beginning, important local actors should participate in Regional Management. These are, for example, associations from the areas of handcraft, trade and tourism, firm owners and employees, enterprises and banks, farmers, restaurateurs and hoteliers, representatives of authorities and municipalities as well as club members from sport, music and cultural activities, private persons and potential critics.

Additionally, the decisions are to be made by the actors themselves, according to the bottom-up principle, and without guidelines from above. During the support phase of Regional Management, the local actors are to be involved in the process as much as possible, so that they are able to carry on these projects independently even beyond the support phase. In order to achieve this, right from the beginning, the actors are entrusted with executive functions. The advisory centre serves as a partner which supports the development process externally, whereas the organisational structure of the Regional Management continues to exist for a longer period of time. In any case, the actors should be aware of the fact that the development of the rural area is a process that is not completed after a temporary, limited phase of support. The success of Regional Management can be enduring and sustainable if all participants act in concert and bring in their creativity in the future as well.

### **Chapter III: Rural Land Readjustment as an Integral Approach for the Sustainable Development of Rural Areas**

“Rural Development? What has to be developed in the rural area? And with the help of land consolidation, which has been used to clear out entire open fields ?” Such statements can still be heard. However, nowadays our rural area faces completely new basic conditions and challenges. There is, for example, a negative trend in the demographic development of the rural area. On the other hand barely anyone is aware of the consequences of a predominantly depopulated rural area. Furthermore, one must consider globalisation, which does not spare the rural area, and also the persistent structural change in agriculture.

To cope with these challenges and to reach an extensive improvement of the natural and economic basis of life, the rural area has to be developed further. Many development measures require land exchange and the acquisition of land. In this respect, Rural Land Readjustment is the key to success. It serves as a flexible instrument which can be adapted to the needs and objectives of the various development tasks.

Land Development especially has to face the challenge of stimulating economic power and employment within the rural area.

Just like the human body, the rural area needs arteries through which vital substances and information can reach even the smallest entity. Thus, the infrastructure within the rural area has to be supported in order to sustain the pulse of rural life.

Agriculture and viticulture play a decisive role in Rhineland-Palatinate. They represent important economic factors and shape the natural scenery. In order to maintain a comprehensive and sustainable cultivation of land within Rhineland-Palatinate, the competitiveness of agriculture and viticulture has to be permanently ensured.

The municipalities are the core of the rural area. When improvements for single villages and municipalities are achieved by communal development, the situation of the entire rural area automatically improves.

The rural area only functions if healthy and natural structures exist. That is why nature and landscape conservation have to play an active role within the process of Rural Development.

Water bodies are another important subject of Rural Development. They have to be maintained as a valuable living space. At the same time, sustainable flood protection measures have to be developed.

As regards the development of forests, sustainability has to be the main principle as well. Forests are of great economic importance and represent an important natural basis of life. In this respect as well, the competitiveness and the social function of the forests have to be maintained and improved.

For Rhineland-Palatinate, tourism is a very important sector. In order to make full use of the potential creation of value in the various regions, Rural Development also comprises development goals in the area of tourism.

To realise all these objectives, an integral Rural Development is necessary!

The guidelines of “Rural Land Readjustment”, which were passed on March 28<sup>th</sup>, 1995 by the council of ministers of Rhineland-Palatinate, represent an essential milestone on the way to the realisation of this approach. Through these guidelines, the authority for land consolidation was instructed to contribute to the solution of the diverse management and development tasks within the rural area. By creating regional development priorities and working out comprehensive development approaches within the respective regions, we turned away from the small-scale and purely sectoral approach. Starting from Rhineland-Palatinate, the concept of implementation steering, which was necessary here, has proven indispensable throughout the whole of Germany.

With the help of Integrated Rural Development, Rural Development processes have been decisively enhanced into an integral Rural Development.

As a central development instrument, Rural Land Readjustment completes the pillars of Integrated Rural Development. This instrument has proven itself in various fields of action.

Regardless of whether the task at hand involves improving the agrarian structure or land cultivated for viticulture, practising land management for nature and landscape conservation or developing infrastructure, furthering community development or planning water management, developing sustainable forests or pursuing goals in tourism - Rural Land Readjustment is very often the instrument of choice!

One of the strengths of Rural Land Readjustment is that one can coordinate various tasks and area-related demands as well as reach the best possible result for the general public.

In all processes, the planning basics for Rural Land Organization stand alongside Integrated Rural Development Concepts and the Land Development programme together with regional planning procedures and the land utilization plans of the municipalities. In order to promptly achieve the development goals within the regions in focus in the future as well, fast, simple land readjustment procedures are to be used to the greatest possible extent. The best results for the respective regions can be achieved through a purposeful and bundled use of the available support instruments. Within this context, voluntary land exchange is also to be seen as an important instrument for a fast, simple, and results-oriented readjustment of rural land tenure and for the arrangement of the rural area as such.

Although during the planning period of 2000 – 2006, more than 80,000 ha of land were reallocated through measures of Rural Land Readjustment, including voluntary land exchange, there still exists a high demand for the readjustment of land. Many local districts still require reallocation of land, although there already has been a readjustment. The current lay out of land plots does not fulfil the demands of modern land cultivation. An improvement of the lay out of plots is to be strived for through fast, simple and cost-saving land readjustment procedures. Just now, Rhineland-Palatinate is highly dependent on a sustainable development of land, and land readjustment is the appropriate integral approach to realise this! The following approaches show where the main programmatic emphases are to be placed.



## 1. Stimulating Economic Power and Employment

A significant factor for the development of rural areas and the assurance of their manifold functions is the strengthening of economic power as well as the assurance and creation of employment. Sufficient sources of income create the economic basis of rural areas as an independent working and living area. Through an adequate number of job vacancies, the demographic change can be counteracted, as especially young people and young families are more likely to stay in the region when they are offered good job opportunities. Thus, the support of agriculture, forestry, handcraft, trade, services and freelance jobs through Land Development and land readjustment aims to stimulate economic power and employment.

For example: In order to preserve agricultural jobs in the future we will especially require consolidated, utilizable land, which has been opened up well, and also appropriate locations for agricultural enterprises. The construction of an appropriate network of roads, paths and the development of vegetation strips further increase the attractiveness of the respective area for agriculture, leisure time and recreational activities. This supports the attempt to create additional sources of income (e.g. vacations on farms and wine-growing enterprises). A new objective is to activate the promotion of cooperation between farmers and foresters (e.g. with hotels and gastronomy).

For all types of companies and enterprises, the main priority is that there is sufficient demand for their products, goods and services. At their locations the companies often require cheap, spacious and extendible industrial real estate as well as adequate transport connections – today primarily via road. Infrastructure is a decisive location factor in terms of accessibility. Especially representatives from the branches of mechanical engineering and plant construction have again and again stressed their high dependence on their suppliers, acting as their “extended workbench”. When it comes to fulfilling these requirements, Rural Land readjustment is able to render assistance through land management.

Inside the villages, unused development potentials exist in the form of gaps between buildings, fallow land and vacant buildings. Very often, operative development chances for handcraft and trade exist. In order to realise these chances, Rural Land Readjustment is necessary in the context of the allocation of building land and inner development.

If new areas of land are to be identified, Rural Land Readjustment and Land Development are able to act in advance. Publicly owned land can be designated as an area for an eco-account in order to establish habitat networks and help to realise objectives regarding nature conservation. Later on, these areas can be used as anticipated compensation within urban land-use planning.

## 2. Improving Agricultural Competitiveness

In Rhineland-Palatinate, around 40% of the total area is used for agriculture.

In the future as well, agriculture will be an essential element within the economic and social structure of rural areas. Especially outside the conurbations and the few large closed forests, the natural scenery will be decisively shaped by agriculture.

Only an efficient and environmentally sound agriculture can contribute to the economic power of rural areas. With this, the maintenance of the ecosystem and of the historically grown cultural landscape is ensured.

In comparison with other European regions, Rhineland-Palatinate and Germany as a whole find themselves in an unfavourable competitive position, despite enormous adaptation efforts during the past decades. The greatest competitive disadvantages are the insufficient size of the enterprises which fully depend on agriculture and a fragmented structure of land plots. As a consequence of the enduring competitive pressure through agriculture in former East Germany and in the acceding countries of the EU, the structural change in agriculture will accelerate. Considering the current framework conditions, this will probably lead to the following situations:

- In the higher situated areas, where pasture land dominates, the concentration on highly-efficient milk producing enterprises with more than 50 to 100 cows and an area of 100 to 200 ha for agricultural use will proceed.
- In the higher situated areas, the number of sideline enterprises and those which fully depend on agriculture, using their farmland extensively with the help of mother cows, sheep and fallow deer, will increase. Enterprises which fully depend on agriculture and specialize in an extensive use of pasture land will require an increase of 100-200 ha of land.
- The farm size of cash crop enterprises within the upper Rhine rift and the bordering plateaus with only limited pasture land will increase to more than 100 ha. At the same time, sideline enterprises cultivating 30-80 ha of land will emerge.
- Farms producing arable products and fruits will enlarge their area under cultivation.

Alongside the ongoing structural change in agriculture, the discrepancy between fast growing farm sizes on the one hand and a growing number of inefficient, small plots of land on the other, is increasingly hindering agricultural enterprises on their way to competitiveness. The aim must be to create a lay out of plots which enables an efficient employment of machinery and rational working conditions for all agricultural enterprises.

There already has been land consolidation in the largest parts of the local districts in Rhineland-Palatinate. But 50% of this land was reallocated at a time when land readjustment was realised according to the economic requirements of an agriculture that was carried out with the help of horses and cows. As a consequence, plots with a length of 100 to 150 m were created. The newly allocated plots of land were mostly smaller than 2 ha.

Numerous enterprises, which were fully dependent on agriculture, were able to enlarge their plots of land considerably during the past years by leasing new land plots and through land exchange. Nevertheless, due to the close-meshed network of roads, this normally could not change the insufficient lengths of the land plots.

As a result of the conditions described, working costs and the costs for machinery in Rhineland-Palatinate are often up to 30 to 50% higher than in other German regions or the EU.

The aim of improving the competitiveness of agriculture within Rhineland-Palatinate is only to be realised if the structural adjustment of farm sizes is supported by land readjustment. This will help to create a lay out of plots that enables an efficient and rational cultivation. This is the reason why land readjustment will be a very important measure as regards the creation and assurance of the competitiveness of agricultural enterprises in the coming years.

The highest reduction in working costs and costs for machinery in agriculture has been achieved when the plots of land are enlarged to 5 to 10 ha and at the same time the length of the plots is extended to 500 to 600 m. In the case of larger agricultural enterprises, an even more extensive enlargement is desirable to make full use of the potential economies of scale.

For agricultural enterprises with grassland and pasture land, the allocation of land plots with a size of 10 ha and more is often a precondition for a profitable use.

In the past, a too closely-meshed network of roads was created in many municipalities by allocating land plots with a length of less than 200 m. But an efficient and profitable size and length of the plots of land can only be reached when a considerable number of the existing roads is disposed of. This, again, can only be realised by the use of land readjustment procedures.

In this context, the following aspects are to be considered as regards an evaluation of the ecological consequences of an enlargement of land plots:

- The aspired increase in labour productivity must not come along with a simultaneous burden for the natural balance.
- As experience shows, the cultivation of small and inefficient land plots can cause an excessive use of fertilisers and pesticides.
- Soil compaction and the burden for the soil can be diminished as larger land plots offer better possibilities to reduce the stages of operation by a combination of different types of equipment, large working widths as well as the use of special equipment for a minimal cultivation of soil.

The arrangement of the plots is to be adjusted to the respective regional agrarian structure and ecological conditions. An economic optimisation of the plots is especially limited when

- the areas to be cultivated are endangered by water erosion,

- valuable habitats or habitat networks were lost for which no equivalent habitat networks can be established as replacement
- the natural scenery or climatic requirements were affected to such an extent that they could not be compensated.

In the future, another task of land readjustment will also be to contribute more than so far to an effective protection against erosion through adequate measures (design of the plots, planting vegetation strips).

The aims of land readjustment are closely connected with economic effectiveness, a sustainable and environmentally suitable cultivation of land, a working ecosystem and the regional identity of the respective landscape structure. Thus, in all coming land readjustment procedures, the objective of an improvement of the agrarian structure comes along with the securing of the natural balance and the natural scenery as well as the reconstruction and development of lost habitats and structures. These tasks make clear that land readjustment procedures do not only mean maintaining, for example, the still sparse habitats in landscapes which have been cleared out, or compensating interventions in the landscape in the course of second land consolidations. It is rather about compensating as far as possible losses that occurred in the wake of first land consolidations. The important planning basics for the realisation of these tasks are the planning of measures for landscape conservation as well as the planning of habitat networks, integrated in regional planning procedures and land utilisation plans. Land Readjustment in principle has to ensure the adaptation of the lay out of plots to a more efficient agriculture as an overall result, as well as an improvement of the ecological conditions and the aesthetic aspects of the natural scenery at the same time. The ecological balance of the procedures has to be positive.

If land readjustment only concentrates on a modification of property rights and land tenure, the above-mentioned objectives regarding an adaptation of the lay out of plots cannot be realised. In the meantime, the proportion of leased land in agricultural enterprises is about 60 to 80% of the total cultivated area. In order to achieve a satisfactory land readjustment, the leased areas have to be integrated in the consolidation. As an instrument for the realisation of constructive cooperation between lessors and farmers regarding the consolidation of leased areas and land property, voluntary land use exchange was created.

As experience shows, voluntary land use exchange is very often a precondition for keeping open and extensively using valuable habitat areas such as, for example, meadows alongside creeks and ditches. Without the use of voluntary land use exchange – oftentimes in combination with a readjustment of land property – an economically satisfying result of land readjustment measures could not be realised, especially as agricultural enterprises in Rhineland-Palatinate have a very high proportion of leased land.

The adaptation of the lay out of plots for the improvement of the competitive position of agriculture in Rhineland-Palatinate cannot be postponed over a longer period. Agriculture benefits most if land readjustment measures are implemented quickly.

### **3. Promoting and Protecting the Competitiveness of Viniculture**

What do foreigners associate with Rhineland-Palatinate? The results of a poll show that it is primarily the marvellous cultural landscape shaped by viniculture alongside the river valleys. This makes clear the importance which wine has for tourism and the economy in the largest wine-growing federal state in Germany. At first glance, Rhineland-Palatinate appears to be a serene world with its “cultural wine landscape”, rich in tradition. But on closer examination, it becomes apparent that we are in a phase of upheaval. Increasing competitive pressure, caused by the concentration of the grocery trade in only a few trade chains as well as the emergence of new international competitors on the wine market, has led to structural change and changes in the local viniculture.

In order to better deal with this competition, wine-growers with unfavourable structural, topographic and economic basic conditions have to improve their productive capacity by decreasing working and production costs, enlarging their operating units and producing high-quality wines.

Very often, the use of modern machinery and equipment is not possible, due to a lack of or insufficient opening up, or roads that are too narrow and too steep. A fragmented land property causes high labour input, high production costs, additional change-over times and a partly manual cultivation. The cultivation of vineyards which are located next to habitats, water bodies and vacated, overgrown vineyards can result in a drop in harvests and additional expenditures. Small terraces as well as too steep a gradient of the vineyards make a rational cultivation more difficult. The drainage of surface water can cause erosion within the vineyards.

Rural Land Readjustment is the most effective instrument to counteract these obstacles and to make innovative rationalisation possible. Thus, new roads make open fields accessible, structure the landscape and enable rational cultivation with a direct winch or a cable winch.

In consideration of the typical landscape structures, the plots are consolidated to larger cultivation units and arranged properly in order to enable an appropriate use of machinery. In this way, the hours of work and labour input are decreased, whereas labour productivity increases and better working techniques can be applied. Through the separation of land utilisation in the course of land management, a continuous cultivation of the economically best plots of land, an appropriate consolidation of fallow fields as well as the closure of inefficient agricultural land can be realised.

But what direct benefit can wine-growers derive from the favourable conditions created by land consolidation measures? Through the reduction of working hours, labour costs can be decreased noticeably. Through the improved mechanical cultivation of land, a more efficient application of fertilisers and pesticides as well as reduced losses at the edges of plots, material costs decline considerably. New working capacities can be used in order to improve the quality management of the enterprise, to intensify the marketing of wine, to enlarge the area under cultivation as well as to diversify the potential sources of income.

In the wine-growing areas as well, the significance of modern land readjustment procedures has changed. Nowadays, the aim of land consolidation is not only the improvement of the

production and working conditions. Land consolidation also serves as a procedure for the Integrated Development of the rural area and for the reactivation of the cultural landscape. Today one speaks of “cultural landscape projects” which not only integrate the concerns and interests of viticulture but also those of communal and urban development, agriculture and forestry, the preservation of historic monuments, nature and landscape conservation as well as rural tourism.

Due to the fairly diverse topographic conditions in Rhineland-Palatinate, the methods of cultivation of the vineyards differ as well. About two-thirds of the whole cultivated area is low land with a gradient of less than 30%. These areas are accessible through roads and modern cultivation is possible. However, they are often poor in ecological elements and therefore need an enrichment of the landscape structure.

On the other hand, the mechanical cultivation of steep slopes with a gradient of more than 30% is very difficult and linked with high labour input and high production costs. However it is precisely in these areas that extraordinary wine specialities have been cultivated and, in the course of time, valuable habitats, especially for warmth-loving animals, have emerged. These areas are, for example, dry grassland, rock formations, small terraces and dry walls (supporting walls made out of bedded stones without the use of mortar). This unique landscape not only attracts the local population but also the numerous tourists. Thus, the steep slopes, as an area for the cultivation of wine, have become a characteristic feature of a whole region.

Nevertheless, due to the high amount of work involved, there has been a rapid decline of these wine-growing areas. In order to sustain this special “cultural wine landscape”, it is necessary to combine all existing regional development approaches.

The dramatic process of structural change has led to the fact that, in formerly consolidated areas in Rhineland-Palatinate, there again exists a high demand for land readjustment today. The strategy of the second consolidation is to achieve a clear rationalisation effect with a preferably small expenditure of work. The length of plots, for example, can be doubled or even tripled by taking out one or two unhitched roads and in this way consolidating the properties. Through such consolidation there is no longer the need to access isolated single plots and distances between neighbouring plots are reduced.

## 4. Realising an Appropriate Infrastructure

The central location of Rhineland-Palatinate within Europe poses a great challenge in coping with transit traffic in many parts of the state, especially in the light of the increasing volume of traffic.

After the realisation of the newly developed ICE-railway line, further expansion measures and new motorways are planned, especially in the north of the state. Additionally, numerous bypasses are to be built along the routes of federal and regional state roads within the whole of Rhineland-Palatinate. Another infrastructural project is the relocation of the military airport from Frankfurt to Ramstein.

In the future as well, Rural Land Readjustment has to avoid expropriations and to minimise losses and disadvantages for agriculture, nature and landscape. Land Readjustment is to be used in the course of large-scale construction measures. Thus, a distribution of land loss among a larger group of participants is possible and the construction measures can be integrated into the rural area in a socially acceptable and environment-friendly way.

How do infrastructural measures affect the rural area? Large-scale construction measures fragment plots, roads, water bodies and habitats and destroy road, water and habitat networks. They cause detours due to reduced crossing possibilities and, in terms of an opening up, inefficient exploitation due to unused land. Furthermore, they lead to small and uneconomically shaped remaining plots. Landowners and farmers are affected unequally, which means that the land loss is concentrated on single agricultural enterprises and potentially can lead to a loss of livelihood. Through the fragmentation of the layout of plots, the arrangement of leased land is modified considerably.

When a Rural Land Readjustment measure is implemented as land consolidation for large-scale projects of public interest, the losses through a fragmentation of plots is minimised and the readjustment of the plots is adjusted properly to a new network of roads, water bodies and habitats. Through early planning of viaducts and underpasses, detours can be avoided and an appropriate arrangement of the cultivated area is possible. The distribution of land loss among a larger group of participants through such a procedure can help to secure livelihoods of farmers and wine-growers. More explicitly, Rural Land Readjustment should support future infrastructural measures in the following ways:

- The purchase of land can be expanded over the whole area concerned and thus becomes cheaper.
- Through the readjustment of the surroundings, the consumption of land is minimised and disadvantages for nature and landscape conservation are avoided.
- The loss of land due to an infrastructural measure can be distributed among a larger group of landowners when the purchase of land is not possible.
- Compensating measures regarding landscape conservation or transfers to eco-pools can also be realised over a larger regional area.
- The allocation of new property for the property developer can be effected immediately after the incontestability of the planning approval of the holding company.

In the future, Rural Land Readjustment will be given high priority when it comes to the realisation of infrastructural measures that are mainly for public benefit.



## **5. Effective Support of Communal Development**

The rural area is the living, commercial and recreation area for about half of the population of Rhineland-Palatinate and is characterized by the diversity of our villages. People strongly identify with their village and realise their ideas, initiatives and activities there.

One of the tasks of Rural Land Readjustment is to increasingly pick up on the ideas of the local population, associations and municipalities. Rural Land Readjustment provides the required information, discusses the ideas at round tables and develops a concept, supported by all parties concerned.

The appropriate arrangement of roads, streets and squares in combination with newly arranged plot boundaries and property lines is of vital importance for communal development. This leads to a higher degree of legal security and to a more efficient use of property as regards the courtyards of farmers and winegrowers, and the property and gardens of house owners.

In the future as well, Rural Land Readjustment will create the necessary preconditions for the expansion of streets, roads and squares, the renaturation of creeks and the ecological enrichment of villages. However, not only the quality of life in rural villages is to be improved. Industry, retail trade and tourism should also be influenced in a positive way.

People are called upon to participate actively in the renewal of their villages. Individual initiative and the public spirit of the local population are important preconditions for successful village development through Rural Land Readjustment. New plot boundaries and property lines within the village are being developed in agreement with the respective neighbours.

The consequences of the demographic development will increasingly play a greater role for the villages. Given the poor local supply of services, Rural Land Readjustment can contribute to a reuse of vacant buildings in the village centres and support a new arrangement and design of the village core. Long-term objectives regarding constructional measures can be systematically supported by generously defined land readjustment (e.g. in the designation of intercommunal commercial areas). The objectives of Rural Land Readjustment can very often be adapted, even to the different ideas of several municipalities. As regards the realisation of municipal projects, Rural Land Readjustment can provide manifold assistance. Privately owned land which is no longer required, for example, can be acquired and used for municipal purposes, after which landowners receive compensation payment. This applies not only for the designation of projects within the villages but also for the development of a municipal eco-account.

For the realisation of a village consolidation, working groups can be established by the local population. The residents are given constant support through intensive and professional advice. The personal contribution of the residents, for example toward the planting of vegetation and the construction of roads, is explicitly desired. During the planning and realisation of individual measures, the residents, the municipality, associations of municipalities, the district administration, and technical authorities coordinate all issues and provide each other with information.

The following are measures to improve property conditions and give general support which are especially suitable for close cooperation with residents and municipalities, always keeping in mind the need to ensure the identity and character of the rural municipalities.

- Land exchange, straightening of property lines and an improvement of the intervening space in order to achieve a better constructional use or reuse for residential or industrial purposes.
- Access to roads or streets, new access paths behind the houses, especially for agricultural enterprises.
- The allocation of land for communal purposes such as streets, roads, squares, new boundaries of villages, cycle paths, the planting of vegetation strips, renaturation of creeks, reinforcement of riparian zones, measures to undo sealing, flood protection measures, ponds, damp biotopes, dry grassland etc..
- The creation of private and public greenery between built-up areas and the bordering open fields.

## **6. Securing, Sustaining and Developing the Natural Basis of Life**

Land consolidation and nature conservation – do these two terms not express a fundamental contradiction? The answer to this question is no! In fact, it is true that until the mid-seventies, Rural Land Readjustment was oriented towards the economic aims of an increase in production. As the main objectives necessarily comprised the securing of food and the arrangement of land plots according to economic requirements, there was no room for an awareness of ecological problems. As a result, cleared out, ecologically poor and monotone production landscapes evoked a negative impression of the consequences of land consolidation in the minds of many people.

It is perhaps not widely known that, in the mid-seventies, there emerged an ecological reorientation in society and in politics. Today, in the course of land consolidation procedures, various objectives regarding nature and landscape conservation are realised. Land consolidation authorities not only take the requirements of nature and landscape conservation into account, but also contribute to the maintenance and re-establishment of the identity of the rural area. Thus, the role of the rural area as an area for recreation is also ensured. Especially for urbanites, this aspect is becoming more and more important.

But how in fact can Rural Land Readjustment contribute to the conservation and development of nature and landscape? In the future, land consolidation authorities will additionally work with the help of land management in order to implement the objectives of nature conservation!

This is the best and often the only way to solve existing land use conflicts. As the landscape is highly burdened by the demands of habitation, trade, industry, infrastructure, agriculture and recreation, there is not much room for the maintenance and regeneration of structured cultural landscapes. Through the purchase of land and land readjustment, in the future, the various utilisation claims can be separated. Furthermore it is possible to provide land where it is needed according to the requirements of landscape and nature conservation as well as according to the interests of the respective landowners and the users of the land.

Land management can be seen as the foundation for the networking of nature-oriented areas in order to develop habitat networks and sustain them permanently. Through the designation of buffer zones between protected areas and land that is intensively used for agriculture or viticulture, a sustainable protection of habitats is possible.

Rural land organisation contributes to a land use that is environment-friendly and adapted to the requirements of the landscape and the respective location. In the course of land readjustment, the renaturation of water bodies and the enhancement of the natural scenery through a manifold restructuring and the planting of vegetation result in an ecological and visual enhancement of the landscape.

Through land management, Rural Land Readjustment is able to support the ecologically meaningful planning of other responsible authorities and organisations as well, and to implement them during the procedure. For municipalities, for example, areas for the eco-account can be joined or suitable areas for land pools can be consolidated. This will be an important task during the coming years.

The planning and establishing of collaborative and public projects will be oriented towards nature conservation. The fixation of roads is to be done in an environmentally sound manner, for example with the help of gravel, grass grate stones or "Spurbahnen" (paths with fixed tracks for wheels). These methods of fixation are to be favoured over laminary bituminous roads or roads made of concrete. Thus, extensive sealing is avoided and a genetic exchange on both sides of the road is made possible as there is no heating-up of the road or any other barrier. The roads and lanes are to be embedded into the landscape in the best possible way.

In the course of water management measures, the ecological permeability of water bodies, for example through the construction of fords or bridge constructions, is maintained or re-established. Furthermore, through the designation of riparian zones, the natural development of water bodies is supported.

If possible, dry walls are to be preserved as ecological and historic-cultural elements. Furthermore, land consolidation is able to contribute decisively to a reduction of soil erosion caused by water and wind through reallocation, adapted to the respective topographic conditions, a corresponding extension of the network of roads and water bodies, as well as through the creation and maintenance of constructions that diminish potential erosion. By maintaining loose boundaries of fields and forests, adapted to the respective landscape, a contribution to the diversity of the landscape and the overall protection of species is made.

In spite of everything, interventions into the ecological systems are necessary in order to realise the various objectives of Rural Land Readjustment! Nevertheless, these interventions in the course of land consolidation must not cause a negative ecobalance. Compensatory measures are to be used as effective contributions to the realisation of ecological purposes. New elements which shape the landscape are to be developed. Hedges, copse, tree rows, orchard meadows, vegetation strips, biotopes of the field boundary ridge, damp biotopes and single trees are to provide protection, food and nesting sites for native animals and serve as stepping stones from one habitat to another. Copse and wood that is not native is to be eliminated and tubed ditches are to be restored to their natural state.

In order to preserve and to improve the ecological quality of the landscape, a stocktaking and evaluation of the landscape with reference to landscape conservation is necessary. The results are to be used as a benchmark for the assessment of the avoidance of disturbances, the admissibility of interventions and in order to determine the type, scale and location of the necessary compensatory measures. Interventions as well as compensatory measures are to be documented to enable an efficient control and management of all the measures which are carried out in the course of a land consolidation procedure. To reach all these objectives, there is a very close cooperation between the land consolidation authorities, the authorities responsible for landscape conservation and the accredited associations for nature conservation.

Even in the case of existing land use conflicts, various objectives in nature and landscape conservation should still be realised and a coordination of interests reached, taking into account the principle of private use and of equal compensation for all participants of the land consolidation procedure. In the future as well, land consolidation need not represent a

contrast to nature conservation. Instead, impulses for a sustainable development of the rural area through the reactivation, new installation and networking of habitats are to be provided.

## **7. Supporting Water Management and Water Supply through Land Management**

Rivers and creeks run across our cultural landscape like important arteries. But in the past, technical river development quite often reduced them to structurally poor runlets and channels. Additionally, they lost their natural, biological equilibrium as rubbish and harmful substances were discharged into them in many places. This was caused by the manifold utilisation of rural areas, for example for infrastructural measures, settlement development, leisure activities, recreation or agriculture.

Flood plains are natural flood areas of rivers and creeks. But they are only able to absorb surplus rainwater and thus attenuate peak flows in a state which is as natural as possible. In many places one can find that flood plains have been sealed, for example through the construction of traffic routes or the establishment of areas for industry and trade. This has far-reaching consequences as regards water retention and infiltration.

Present and future procedures of Land Development and land readjustment have to ensure a coordination of the various land use claims. Through Land Development and land readjustment, the various functions of water bodies and their flood plains are to be protected, re-established and developed. As in the past ten years, Rural Land Readjustment and water management must work in partnerships in order to reach these aims. Through well-directed measures, Land Development and Rural Land Readjustment contribute to the realisation of the European Water Framework Directive, the renaturation of water bodies in the course of "Aktion Blau" and various other flood protection measures.

Flood protection is only to be realised properly when the respective measures are implemented extensively. Within the whole catchment area of the river, the retention capacity of the landscape must be increased and the infiltration and evaporation potential promoted. This should be realised through the following measures:

- Preservation, enlargement and new designation of boundary strips, hedges and riparian zones in order to hinder drainage
- Installation of troughs to promote infiltration and evaporation.
- A wide-meshed network of roads supported by contour farming
- Renaturation of water bodies and flood plains in order to increase their natural retention capacity.

Land Readjustment is extraordinarily suitable for the realisation of flood protection that takes ecological concerns into account, as it considers and balances different land use interests during the procedures in an optimal way. Within the next years, regional emphases regarding land readjustment are to be placed, especially on the catchment areas of rivers. Furthermore, the "Aktion Blau" of the water supply authorities is to be supported.

Rural Land Readjustment and Land Development also provide direct approaches for the support of the catalogue of measures of the European Water Framework Directive. Within the context of these land readjustment procedures, agriculturally compatible purchases of

land can be expanded over the whole area concerned. Afterwards, this land can be reorganised together with the remaining properties and specific areas can be realised, for example riparian zones alongside water bodies. Another important task is the disposal of barriers within ditches since, for an intact ecosystem of running waters, the permeability for fish and other organisms is of vital importance. Very often, mills, weirs, dammed up water, tubes and other barriers hinder fish and other organisms living in the water in moving up- or downstream. Through the allocation of land, appropriate rearrangements or the creation of additional transit opportunities for fish (fish ladders), these obstacles can be removed.

Rural Land Readjustment is also a useful instrument for active flood protection, that is for artificially created retention areas which decrease outlet peaks, for example the polders along the Rhine. Through the possibilities of the allocation of land and compensatory measures, Rural Land Readjustment is able to create essential preconditions for the authority responsible for the construction of dikes. More precisely, it is about to provide land for the foundations of dikes and to contribute to the designation of compensatory measures in an optimal way.

Through the acquisition of land and through land exchange, agricultural land is taken out of the areas endangered by flooding. Thus, new room for a nature-oriented development of water bodies and flood plains is being created.

Within the context of these measures, the grants provided by sectoral planning are being combined and coordinated in terms of location and scheduling. As an observer, one could ask: Why are there not only large-scale water retention areas? Are small-scale measures effective at all? The positive effect of decentralised measures alongside water bodies in the course of individual land readjustment procedures is not directly noticeable. In contrast to special rainwater retention tanks, they store considerably smaller amounts of water. However, as a whole, small-scale measures contribute substantially to preventive flood protection. Furthermore, the costs for the realisation of these measures are comparatively low. That is why such efforts are to be intensified in the course of all land readjustment procedures.

The protection of ground water and surface water against harmful substances is of equal importance. In these cases as well, land readjustment is able to contribute to a coordination of interests between agriculture and water management. Here, measures to decrease pollution through harmful substances and to separate incompatible methods of land use, especially within narrow water protection areas, come to the fore. Through the involvement of third parties (municipalities, water supply companies) a large-scale extension of protection areas can be coordinated more easily. Furthermore, landowners possessing land in these protection areas can be compensated more easily.

Thus it is clear that, even in this important field of Public Services, Rural Land Readjustment and Land Development are required as a flexible and balancing instrument. This applies to the European Water Framework Directive as well. Different land use interests within water protection areas must be separated in order to enable environment-friendly methods of cultivation. As a result, the ground water reservoir can be protected.

## **8. Structuring, Opening up and Sustaining the Development of Forestry Holdings**

About 42 % of Rhineland-Palatinate is covered by forest. This is the highest proportion within the whole Republic of Germany. A sustainable development of the forest is an important socio-political aim. When it comes to the protection of the natural assets air, water and soil, the forest plays an essential role. Forest areas contribute to the balancing of the climate and the retention of precipitation; they produce oxygen, filtrate dust and other harmful substances in the air and support the augmentation of ground water. For many animals and plants, the forest serves as a living space. For the people, it represents an area for recreation and leisure activities. Furthermore, the forest provides the naturally growing raw material wood, which is used in various ways. Through the mobilization of raw materials and their refinement within the supply chain, forestry contributes to a great extent to the development of rural areas.

The forest areas are owned by three different groups: The State (Federal Republic of Germany and the federal state of Rhineland-Palatinate), communal corporations and private owners. Forest areas owned by the Federal Republic of Germany and Rhineland-Palatinate constitute the forest of public authorities, which comprises about 76 % of the total forest area. Of this, 27 % or 223,000 ha account for state forest and 49 % or 405,000 ha account for communal forest. The private forest comprises 24 % or 200,000 ha of the total forest area. Thus, Rhineland-Palatinate is characterized by an extraordinarily high proportion of communal forests.

Throughout the state of Rhineland-Palatinate, 405,000 ha of communal forest are distributed among 2,000 forest-owning municipalities. Accordingly, the average forest size is about 200 ha. In the majority of cases, these forest areas are not consolidated but mostly distributed over a large number of small plots within the respective local districts. This fact further aggravates the disadvantages which are caused by the already fragmented ownership structure.

An even smaller structure of ownership can be found in privately owned forests. About 335,000 landowners possess a total of 200,000 ha of forest. This leads to an average forest size of about 0.6 ha. Thus, there is a domination of very small plots of private forest. Additionally, all three of these types of property are mostly located in historical mix (without any paths or roads). This leads to substantial structural problems and additional expenditure when it comes to the construction of new access paths and roads, the use of pesticides against insects, the cultivation of forest property or the consolidation of forest areas in order to reach a production of wood in line with the market. Here, only forest land consolidation is able to help.

In order to evaluate the efficiency of a forest land consolidation, the economic importance of forestry must be understood. Taking all industry and trade branches which process wood into account (paper industry, printing and publishing industry as well as the manufacture of furniture), the combination of forestry, wood and paper industry with about 50,000 employees in Rhineland-Palatinate is one of the most important employers after the chemicals industry.



As a consequence, the forest is of vital importance for the job situation in Rhineland-Palatinate.

The largest potential for an increase in the use of wood lies in the privately owned forest. The results of the National Forest Inventory once again illustrate the importance of the private forest. Most notably there has been an increase in the reservoir of wood in private forests. During the years 1987 to 2002, an increase of 46 % could be registered here. At this rate, the private forest ranks first. A rise in spruce reservoirs has been decisive for this result. Currently they exceed the spruce reservoirs of the state forest by 50 % - which is a considerable potential. The growing importance of wood as a renewable energy source speaks for the importance of intensified efforts to improve the ownership structure of the forest. In the future, through forest land consolidation, Land Development can support an effective creation and securing of employment and will be able to contribute to the use of more economical working methods in the private forest and the forest of public authorities.

Through forest land consolidation a more economically viable structure of land plots is being created, adapted to the respective topographic conditions as well as to the different kinds of wood. The absence of adequate paths and roads within the forest significantly complicates maintenance and transport. Very long roads cause an increased labour input and higher costs for machinery, which results in decreasing profits.

Without measures for an opening up of land, wood reservoirs in private forests can very often not be used. An adequate system of paths, skidder trails and places for the storage of wood lead to a more profitable use through the reduction of transport routes for the transport machinery. Furthermore, a reduction in working time for the maintenance, thinning out and turnover of the forest is achieved.

For leisure activities, the provision of certain areas such as parking places at the edge of the forest, hiking trails or educational trails is possible. Game reserves, woodland nature trails, forest playgrounds, barbecue areas and similar facilities increase the attractiveness of the forest. For such purposes, land readjustment can very often provide the required areas. These measures of land readjustment must support the intense upward trend of tourism and the constantly rising importance of leisure and recreation.

In summary, all these considerations illustrate that, in the future as well, the forest will need land readjustment and Land Development as flexible, balancing instruments. This especially applies to the job situation and the provision of renewable resources.

In the future, forest land consolidation in well wooded areas is to be implemented, financed and promoted in cooperation with the forestry commission of Rhineland-Palatinate. For this jointly financed "Forest Land Consolidation", a cost unit agreement between the responsible departments is to be arranged. This will guarantee flexible and fast procedures. Eventually, modifications of the procedure, for example regarding an opening up of the forest, are possible and have to be considered as well.

## **9. Promoting Rural Tourism and Cooperation**

Tourism is one of the most important industries in Rhineland-Palatinate. Every twelfth job directly or indirectly depends on tourism. Altogether, more than 130,000 people are employed in tourism. As these jobs are naturally non-exportable and therefore of great importance, this sector is to be expanded. Within the context of different development strategies aiming at an advancement of the tourist industry, Land Development and Rural Land Readjustment also play a decisive role.

Thus, in the future, measures which not only serve the improvement of working and production conditions but tourism development goals as well, are to be implemented to a greater degree.

Areas for different tourist facilities are to be provided. Furthermore, diversification measures enabling new sources of income in the tourist industry for farmers and winegrowers are to be supported. Nature experience and the recreational value of the landscape are increasingly important factors in tourists' choice of a holiday destination. In Rhineland-Palatinate one can find several nature protection areas. First of all, there is the biosphere reserve Pfälzer Wald. In addition, there are five nature parks and a further thirty nature protection areas. Altogether, they provide the basis for a landscape- and nature-oriented tourism. That is why nature and landscape conservation are to be supported by land readjustment in order to preserve our natural landscapes and to advance the recreational value of our region. Land Readjustment procedures are to be implemented as carefully as possible and with methods which are as nature-oriented as possible. Negative influences on the recreational value of the landscape are to be compensated. In the course of land readjustment measures it is important that recreational areas are developed in a nature-oriented manner and integrated properly into the respective environment. Furthermore, ecological and geoecological routes can be designated in order to promote a gentle tourism. For example, the combination of the preservation of orchard meadows and a designation of educational trails will intensify the nature experience and increase visitors' interest in the landscape.

Sport tourists, leisure tourists and active tourists represent an increasingly important target group for tourist attractions within Rhineland-Palatinate. In the course of land consolidation, newly developed networks of roads and paths which serve agricultural purposes can additionally contribute to the creation of connections for hikers, cyclists, in-line skaters, strollers and nordic walkers. Therefore, the network of roads for hikers and cyclists is to be expanded and replenished with the help of land readjustment to further enlarge the number of attractions for active tourism. When it comes to increasing the quality of tourist attractions in individual regions, the network of roads for cyclists in the valleys of the Rhine, Mosel, Saar and Lahn alongside closed railway lines is taking a key position. Additionally, the organisation of riding stables in connection with a network of bridle-paths as well as an allocation of adequate areas for the establishment of golf courses are increasing the touristic significance of the respective regions.

Rhineland-Palatinate can look back on two thousand years of eventful history, and a huge number of Celtic and Roman relics are to be found here. In order to preserve these cultural

assets, they must be excluded from intensive agricultural cultivation and made accessible to cultural tourism. This is to be realised with the help of land consolidation procedures.

The upcoming measures in connection with the World Cultural Heritage Roman Limes are current and prominent examples of this policy. About 75 km of Limes cross Rhineland-Palatinate. The largest discernible part, which is about 30 km long, is to be found in open fields (acres, fields, grassland). The regional authorities for the preservation of historic monuments are aiming at the development of a prominent strip of the Limes of 30 m width in the open fields. In this way, people will be able to experience the Limes more actively. This is to be realised through measures of landscape design, the appropriate planting of vegetation and the visualization of ground plans of former watchtowers. Land Readjustment is the most suitable instrument for the realisation of these measures. Within the context of Rural Land Readjustment, this strip is to be transferred to public ownership and used for the cultivation of extensive grassland.

The protection of relics of the former Westwall along the French-Belgian-Luxembourgian-Dutch border is another important task in the context of a European neighbour project. The preservation and protection of ruins, bunkers and tank traps from more recent history, both for the protection of species and the promotion of tourism, are also to be supported by land management. At the same time, regional and local development strategies are to be considered.

In order to make full use of the potential of creation of value through the tourism of a region, the preservation and improvement of the quality of a location must be at the centre of attention. Thus, land management becomes a cultural landscape project.

## **Chapter IV: Further Steps of Rural Land Readjustment and Rural Development to Create a Sustainable Instrument for Integrated Rural Development**

### **1. Customer Orientation**

Customers of Land Development and Rural Land Readjustment in Rhineland-Palatinate (landowners, owners of agricultural enterprises, other authorities and other bodies responsible for infrastructural measures) have become used to the exceptionally short duration of land readjustment procedures in comparison with other parts of Germany. This customer orientation must be maintained. In the coming years, land readjustment will only be effective if the measures implemented are demand-oriented, fast and well-directed. In the future as well, public authorities have to make full use of all legal, planning, technical and organisational means in order to accelerate, simplify and improve the course of procedures. The time scales of the respective procedures are to be realised so that both the quality of the output and the overall efficiency of the administrative performance are guaranteed.

### **2. Choice of the Procedures**

When it comes to reducing the duration of land readjustment procedures, the most important factor is choosing the appropriate procedure. But for these decisions there is no universal recipe. First of all, legal instructions and guidelines have to be considered. Within the context of these framework conditions, the procedure which is most suitable to reach the goals in each individual case in a manner which is as simple, fast and cost-saving as possible is the one to be chosen out of the instruments that are to be found in the Farmland Consolidation Act. Thus, the simplest procedures are becoming general procedures.

Accelerated land consolidation is regulated in § 91 of the Farmland Consolidation Act. This procedure is to be applied if there is no need for a new road network, or for extensive water management measures or other larger rural development measures. This procedure is especially suitable in areas where there already has been a readjustment.

Simplified land consolidation procedures according to § 86 of the Farmland Consolidation Act provide the possibility for a speeding up of the procedure. These are to be applied when there is a limited need of readjustmental measures and if there is no possibility for accelerated land consolidation due to particular legal requirements.

Procedures with rather extensive objectives (land consolidation procedures according to §§ 1, 37 of the Farmland Consolidation Act) are very time-consuming and labour-intensive. In the future, these procedures are only to be applied if a systematic road-network is required and if larger water-management or landscape conservation measures are necessary. Thus, these diverse readjust mental measures are only to be defined with the help of a plan for pathways and water bodies, including a landscape conservation support plan.

Voluntary land exchange differs from other conventional land Readjustment procedures managed by public authorities in that it includes the “principle of voluntariness”. If all owners concerned are willing to exchange plots voluntarily and all of them accept the ensuing measures, then voluntary land exchange is the appropriate procedure, as it is the fastest and simplest land readjustment measure. Voluntary land exchange is especially suited to realising measures for landscape and nature conservation. But it should also be considered in individual projects for tourism when there is an exchange with agricultural land involved.

Land consolidation for large-scale projects of public interest is regulated in § 87 of the Farmland Consolidation Act. It is to be used if a loss of land in the course of large-scale infrastructural measures is to be distributed proportionately among several landowners and also in order to avoid any disadvantages for the regional landscape culture.

Voluntary land use exchange – without a land readjustment procedure – is always to be applied if the issue at hand is exclusively about the readjustment and reallocation of land use. If a long-term effective reallocation of land use is only to be realised together with a modification of the ownership structure, then a combination between voluntary land use exchange and simple procedures of Rural Land Readjustment is to be considered and applied where appropriate (accelerated land consolidation procedure according to § 91, simplified land consolidation procedure according to § 86 of the Farmland Consolidation Act).

When extensive objectives in the course of large-scale projects necessitate the choice of a complex procedure, the possibility of scaling down the affected area or realising the procedure in separate segments should be considered – for example as a combination of the above-mentioned procedures (for example as a combination of a village consolidation according to § 86 with a proximate consolidation of the agricultural area according to § 91 of the Farmland Consolidation Act).

### 3. Early and Effective Introduction of New Procedures

The table below shows the current average duration of the following land readjustment procedures (from execution order):

<b>Procedures according to the Farmland Consolidation Act</b>	<b>Until transfer of the property</b>	<b>Until final decision</b>
Procedure according to § 1	<b>about 6 years</b>	<b>about 10 years</b>
Procedure according to § 86	<b>about 4 years</b>	<b>about 7 years</b>
Procedure according to § 87	<b>about 5 years</b>	<b>about 12 years</b>
Procedure according to § 91	<b>about 2 years</b>	<b>about 7 years</b>

Rapid processing of all types of procedures from the execution order to the final decision should be assured at all times. Wherever possible, the duration of individual procedures should be further reduced by preferably one year. Through this acceleration and the reduction of the time needed for a rectification of the public registers (land register, land survey register), fast processing of land readjustment and all legal issues can be ensured.

Beside the modifications already mentioned under points 3.1 to 3.10 and a regular choice of the simplest procedure possible, the following guiding principles are to be considered in the course of the introduction of new land readjustment procedures:

- early instructions for fast-acting procedures in order to prevent waiting times between the instructions and the beginning of the actual processing,
- a restriction of reallocation to certain areas (e.g. realisation of subtasks, consolidation of entire plots of land, waiver of expansion measures, voluntary land use exchange),
- an intensified combination of procedures (e.g. accelerated land consolidation and voluntary land use exchange),
- a combination of land readjustment with support programmes for agriculture, viticulture, landscape conservation, water management and forestry in order to make full use of the financial support and to reach an optimal support of the package of measures provided for by the respective sectoral planning

#### **4. Delegation of Tasks**

Within the framework of the legal possibilities (§ 2, passage 3, phrase 2 of the Farmland Consolidation Act), all legal competences have been transferred from the upper land consolidation authority to the land consolidation authority. Thus, in the future as well, the lowest authority for Rural Land Readjustment will be responsible for the instructions on new land readjustment procedures. There still exists the aim to further strengthen the areas of responsibility of the respective service centres for the rural area (DLR). The basic coordination needed for this can be found in the programme “Rural Land Readjustment”. The respective annual coordination is to be accomplished with the help of contracts between the upper land consolidation authority and the highest land consolidation authority.

## **5. Renewal of Land Readjustment Processes**

New goals and perspectives for the further development of an automation of Land Development and Rural Land Readjustment (project WEDAL) were established in 2002. These are to be realised gradually. Goals with high priority are:

- intranet for the entire administration
- the use of workflow-programmes in suitable fields
- the use of a comprehensive document management system (electronic filing systems) and introduction of a digital signature
- the use of external files and gis-procedures from landscape conservation
- an optimisation of planning and financing of land readjustment procedures in the course of a redevelopment of the financing guidelines
- the use of the internet to communicate with all parties involved
- development of a control system to ensure the appropriate and qualified education and further education of all employees

## **6. Prevention of a Work Backlog after Execution of Order**

During the procedures after the execution of an order, the service centres for the rural area – Land Development and Rural Land Readjustment – are responsible for the rectification of all land registers. The expenditure of time and work needed for this should therefore be minimised as far as legal instructions and technical working methods will allow.

During all land readjustment procedures, externally originated modifications are to be minimised and an increase of new “relics” is to be avoided. To achieve this, the rectification of both the land register and the land survey register must be undertaken simultaneously and as soon as possible. In this way an undisturbed course of all legal regulations in accordance with the respective land consolidation procedures is guaranteed. Another aim is that all other authorities rectify their registers as promptly as possible.

## **Chapter V: “ Rural Land Readjustment 2007 – 2013”: Regional and Topical Priorities**

In the following, the most important regional and topical priorities of land readjustment in Rhineland-Palatinate for the coming years are described:

### **1. Eifel**

#### **1.1 Higher Situated Areas of the Eifel**

The priorities for the development of the higher situated areas of the Eifel are as follows:

- the basis for a sustainable land use and the maintenance of an extensive cultivation of land is to be ensured and strengthened with the help of land readjustment measures,
- alternative sources of income for agricultural enterprises are to be developed (diversification),
- an improvement of the location factors in the respective areas is to be initiated through intensified intercommunal cooperation (Regional Management),
- measures for the realisation of habitat networks, landscape planning, eco-accounts as well as for the designation of the Natural Park Eifel and the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive (Nette, Elz valley, Ahr 2000-programme) are to be supported.

#### **1.2 Continuation of First Land Consolidations**

First land consolidations for an improvement of the agrarian structure, especially in the area around Bitburg-Prüm, are to be continued (at present about 40,000 ha of land without any land readjustment measures so far). Ecological aims and the support of village renewal are to be given particular attention (extensive prevention of water pollution, preservation of the diverse cultural landscape).

#### **1.3 Intensification of Second Land Consolidations**

Second land consolidations in all areas of the Eifel serve as an instrument for the following:

- a separation of land use interests between agriculture, nature conservation, water pollution control and tourism
- the support of the designation of nature protection areas
- the improvement of the agrarian structure through structural change in agriculture
- the maintenance of an open landscape through an extensive use of grassland
- a controlled and well-organised afforestation



- the designation of nature protection areas
- measures for the development of a gentle tourism
- an improvement of the agrarian structure combined with ecological aims
- the realisation of the aims of the Water Framework Directive

#### **1.4 Municipalities Pellenz and Maifeld and Priorities for the Development of Grafschaft**

The municipalities belonging to Pellenz and Maifeld as well as Grafschaft are characterized by intensive agriculture – especially by the cultivation of cash crops. In this area

- land readjustment measures are indispensable, especially in fruit-growing municipalities, in order to increase and durably ensure competitiveness
- land use conflicts are to be solved
- new, natural living spaces are to be designated and developed
- the effects of many years of pumice and lava mining are to be removed

#### **1.5 Forest Land Consolidation**

First land consolidations of (private) forest areas should especially support the local energy and raw material production.

#### **1.6 Land Consolidation for large-scale projects of public interest in the course of the completion of the federal motorway 1 (BAB 1).**

## **2. Hunsrück and Bordering Areas**

### **2.1 Hunsrück Municipalities**

- In this area, the cultivation of cash crops predominates, not least because of the high proportion of agricultural sideline enterprises with relatively large-sized farms. In the course of first land consolidations, mostly done five years ago and more, road networks and plots were developed that are nowadays much too close-meshed and too small. For this reason, farmers require larger plots in order to use their machinery in a rational and efficient way.
- At the same time, the landscapes of districts have partly been cleared out. Particularly in these areas, an adequate adjustment of the arrangement of plots is necessary. This is to be connected with the designation and development of nature-oriented living spaces and the renaturation of meadows alongside creeks and ditches in order to develop a passive flood protection along the lines of the Nahe Programme and the "Aktion Blau".

### **2.2 Municipality Morbach and the Association of Municipalities Thalfang**

Here, the following tasks are to be realised:

- improvement of the agrarian structure,
- land management for nature and landscape conservation (eco-account/eco-pool),
- village renewal, support of communal projects,
- promotion of tourism,
- designation of an intercommunal commercial area.

### **2.3 Associations of Municipalities Hermeskeil and Kell am See**

The following points are of high priority:

- the improvement of the agrarian structure,
- land management within the context of the "Ruwerrandstreifenprogramm"
- nature and landscape conservation
- the support of projects regarding tourism and leisure activities.

### **2.4 The large-scale projects of public interest for the allocation of land in order to expand the federal motorways A 60 and A 61 in combination with steering procedures serve to minimize conflicts and accelerate planning.**

### **3. Westerwald and Taunus**

#### **3.1 Westerwald**

In this area, agriculture is structured by the landscape of a low mountain range. Fodder crops farms are prevalent. Here,

- the Land Development within the associations of municipalities Dierdorf, Rengsdorf, Puderbach and Flammersfeld is to be further supported
- the basis for a sustainable land use and the maintenance of an extensive cultivation of land is to be ensured and strengthened with the help of land readjustment measures
- alternative sources of income for agricultural enterprises are to be developed (diversification)
- measures for the realisation of habitat networks, landscape planning, eco-accounts as well as the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive are to be supported (e.g. the catchment area of the river Wied).
- the competitiveness of agricultural enterprises with dairy cattle in the high Westerwald is to be increased with the help of simple and fast-acting land readjustment procedures.

#### **3.2 Taunus**

The municipalities of this area are dominated by agricultural enterprises cultivating fodder crops and cash crops. Here:

- the competitiveness of agricultural enterprises is to be ensured in the long run through simple land readjustment procedures
- the potential of the World Heritage Upper Middle Rhine as well as of the World Cultural Heritage Roman Limes is to be further developed.

### **4. Rheinhessen**

#### **4.1 Viniculture**

- The number of new vineyard land consolidation procedures has risen notably. As, up to now, only 40 % of this growing area has been consolidated, the realisation of these procedures is most important. In spite of consolidations through leased land, there still exist huge structural problems due to the fragmentation of land through inheritance (the property of a man was divided according to the number of his sons).
- Due to an insufficient opening up, the use of modern machinery (grape harvesters) is quite limited. These deficiencies are to be removed gradually.
- Viniculture is a characteristic and important feature of tourism. Thus, in the course of all land readjustment procedures, the tourist infrastructure is to be improved as well.

## **4.2 Cultivation of Cash Crops**

- As a consequence of competitive pressure, second land consolidations of districts used for agriculture are of high priority.
- Within the context of the upcoming modification of the European sugar regime, the rationalisation pressure for agricultural enterprises will increase considerably. This increase is already apparent in the greater demand for second land consolidation procedures.
- In Rheinhessen, second land consolidations are to be combined with an enrichment of the natural scenery and an expansion of nature-oriented living spaces on the basis of habitat networks.

## **5. Vorderpfalz**

### **5.1 Wine-Growing Area Pfalz**

- Over the past years, land readjustment measures have been realised in almost 30 wine-growing municipalities. At the same time, measures regarding an improvement of the ecological conditions, flood protection, an improvement of the infrastructure, village renewal and measures regarding the development of tourism have been promoted. These accents of regional development have become a positive example for land readjustment measures in other parts of Rhineland-Palatinate as well.
- Within the context of the medium-term financial planning for land readjustment in Rhineland-Palatinate, the continuation of these measures in the wine-growing municipalities of the Pfalz is to be given priority.

### **5.2 Realisation of Water Management Planning**

Apart from land readjustment with special regard to viticulture, the following areas development have also been given priority:

- a number of procedures for the renaturation of meadows, creeks and ditches (e.g. Isenach/Eckbach),
- collaboration in the realisation of polders for flood protection, planned in the flood plain of the Rhine
- land readjustment measures in order to assist dike building projects alongside the Rhine

## **6. Westpfalz**

### **6.1 Land Readjustment of Acres and Grassland**

- In the Westpfalz, including the district Donnersberg, there still exists a high demand for land readjustment of acres and grassland - including village-areas. In many municipalities, both especially accelerated land consolidation procedures and also classic land consolidation procedures were realised during the sixties and seventies. Here, due to the structural change in agriculture, second land consolidations are absolutely necessary.
- However, first land consolidations are also still necessary and in high demand. Land readjustment has been demanded by local farmers as well as by municipalities.
- For the farmers, of course, a reduction of costs through a consolidation of agricultural plots of land and an improvement of the infrastructure are of top priority (main paths for an axle weight of 10 t).

### **6.2 Preservation of the Cultural Landscape**

Local authorities as well as landowners who do not personally cultivate their land have submitted claims for land readjustment as an instrument for a sustainable structural improvement and the preservation of the cultural landscape. Negative examples are quite well-known. The abandonment of agricultural land use can have a negative influence on the future viability of the region. Under these circumstances, especially in municipalities without resident farmers, municipalities and landowners consider land readjustment to be the only instrument able to ensure the cultivation of agriculturally attractive areas.

### **6.3 Voluntary Land Exchange**

In the area of the Westpfalz, voluntary land exchange as a fast-acting land readjustment measure is of great importance, namely:

- within the context of legal land readjustment
- subsequent to the land readjustment procedures realised 20-30 years ago
- when it comes to first measures in the biosphere reserve Pfälzer Wald in order to support pasturing projects (landscape conservation through land use)

## **6.4 Large-scale infrastructural Measures**

- Within the coming years, the support of large-scale infrastructural measures through land readjustment will be decisive in terms of the amount of work to be accomplished. Just for the extension of the air base Ramstein, three land readjustment procedures are to be processed due to the necessary ecological and water management compensatory measures.
- Furthermore, the building projects of the federal motorway AS63, the federal motorway B37 and the country roads 356,369,465 and 700 are to be supported by a total of eight land readjustment procedures.

## **6.5 Forest Land Consolidation**

First land consolidations of (private) forest areas will especially support local energy and raw material production.

## **7. River Landscapes**

### **7.1 Mosel**

As regards the wine-growing municipalities alongside the Mosel, the following aspects are to be considered:

- Those classical procedures which have already been initiated are to be continued and completed, with a significant reduction in costs; new land readjustment procedures will be effected as simplified land consolidation procedures.
- In order to promote the unique river landscapes, tourist programmes, village renewal measures and measures such as the “Moselerlebnisroute”, “Radwanderland Rheinland-Pfalz” are to be supported.
- The economic structure of the vineyards that have not been consolidated so far is to be improved with the help of simplified land consolidation procedures. Necessary development measures (construction of roads and/or stationary transport equipment) and measures preserving terraces (reconstruction of walls) are to be carried out.
- The structural change in viticulture is to be supported through land management (rational cultivation in core locations, management of fallow land in the outskirts)

## **7.2 Ahr, Lahn, Nahe**

The aims of the concepts for steep slopes in the river valleys of Ahr, Lahn and Nahe are to be realised with the help of the following measures:

- Those classical procedures which have already been initiated are to be continued and completed, with a significant reduction in costs; in this respect, the creation of sustainable cultivation techniques (e.g. transverse terracing) is to be supported.
- The economic structure of the vineyards that have not been consolidated so far is to be improved with the help of simplified land consolidation procedures. Necessary development measures (construction of roads and/or stationary transport equipment) and measures preserving terraces (reconstruction of walls) are to be carried out.
- In the vineyards of the Nahe, larger plots of land are to be created with the help of accelerated land consolidations; this is to be done without further expansion measures.
- The separation of fallow vineyards on the one hand and cultivated vineyards on the other is of vital importance for tourism along the Nahe as this contributes to the preservation of the original natural scenery shaped by viticulture.

## **7.3 Mittelrhein**

- In vineyards where first land consolidations have been realised, simple cultural landscape projects should contribute to the separation of fallow land and cultivated land. In this way the natural scenery of the cultural landscape within the World Heritage area will be preserved.
- Simplified land consolidation procedures and the construction of railway tracks are to contribute to the preservation and stimulation of the cultivation of vine on terraces, shaping the natural scenery.
- Through fast-acting land readjustment procedures land and lease exchange, the conservation and acquisition of land in hillside locations for nature and habitat conservation, as well as the creation of functioning buffer zones at the margins of plateaus are to be supported.

## **7.4 Renaturation of Rivers and Ditches in Rheinhessen**

Important development priorities of land readjustment in Rheinhessen are:

- Projects regarding the construction of polders and the relocation of dikes in the flood plain of the Rhine
- The renaturation of the meadows beside the ditches of the Pfrimm and Selz

## **7.5 Ruwer area and bordering river catchments**

In the coming years, within the scope of the riparian zone programme of the federal ministry of the environment, the Ruwer area including the whole catchment area is to be supported further through measures of land readjustment.

## **7.6 Catchment Area of the Nahe**

The aims of the Nahe Programme are to be formulated and supported with the help of land readjustment procedures. The main focus is the development of a land use adapted to the specific requirements of the location. In this way an improvement of the water retention on the surface as well as the water retention alongside water bodies and in flood plains will be reached. In order to achieve this, the following are to be implemented effectively: the renaturation of water bodies, riparian zones alongside water bodies, the renaturation of flood plains and, finally, a decentralised water retention. These measures are to be undertaken in accordance with the respective landowners and in such a way that resources are saved.



## **Appendix: Programme “Rural Land Readjustment 2007 – 2013”**

The following guidelines for Rural Land Readjustment in Rhineland-Palatinate are to be considered:

### **Principles**

The programme “Rural Land Readjustment” is the central instrument and medium-term work programme for the service centres of the rural area to deal with the tasks of Land Development and Rural Land Readjustment. It contains the general guidelines for ordering and processing procedures according to the Farmland Consolidation Act and land use exchange. At the same time, it is the basis for the controlling system of the administration and comprises all plans regarding targets, measures and resources as a common target agreement of the ministry, the supervision and service office and the service centres of the rural area. The programme provides the framework conditions for the appointment of new procedures as well as for the targets for the continuation of pending procedures within the respective planning period. Furthermore, this programme instructs all subordinate authorities of Land Development and Rural Land Readjustment to implement new land readjustment procedures according to the given framework conditions and to continue pending procedures as fast as possible as well as to realise the initiative “Land Use Exchange”.

The choice and the priorities of the procedures in general are coordinated in accordance with the respective local and regional authorities and administrations. If required, the coordination is adjusted in the course of annual rounds of talks.

The work scheduling of the service centres for the rural area regarding the tasks of Land Development and Rural Land Readjustment is to be adjusted to the capacity of personnel according to the personnel management concept and according to the medium-term financial planning. Additional adjustments are to be made annually (rounds of talks). Fast-acting land readjustment procedures have priority (voluntary land exchange, accelerated land consolidation procedures, simplified land consolidation procedures). This especially applies to land use exchange procedures.

With regard to the tasks of Land Development and Rural Land Readjustment, the service centres for the rural area can also take over projects that are beyond their local area of responsibility. This is only done for particular, suitable reasons (e.g. greater proximity, factual coherence) on the basis of paragraph 3, passage 1, phrase 2 of the Farmland Consolidation Act. In order to maintain legal security, all public registers (land register and land survey register in particular) are to be adjusted promptly.

## **Rural Land Readjustment (including Voluntary Land Exchange)**

For the period of 2007 to 2013, the implementation of about 300 land readjustment procedures according to the Farmland Consolidation Act is planned (excluding voluntary land exchange and voluntary land use exchange). Through these procedures about 73,500 ha of land can be restructured. This corresponds to an amount of 10,500 ha annually. In this respect, an improvement of the working and production conditions in agriculture and viticulture has priority. All land readjustment procedures serve this aim, with the exception of land consolidation procedures for large-scale projects of public interest. In addition, land readjustment procedures additionally serve one or more of the following aims

- the realisation of road construction measures and other large-scale infrastructural measures (20 %)
- the support of water management (construction of polders) and the implementation of the European Water Framework Directive (35 %)
- the support of measures of nature and landscape conservation (40 %)
- the support of communal development measures and the improvement of the basic conditions for the creation and the securing of employment (35 %)
- the support of aims to promote tourism (20 %)
- the restructuring of private forest (15 %)

The average size of one cultivated plot of land of an agricultural enterprise should normally exceed 5 ha. The average length of such a plot of land should normally be between 350 and 600 m.

Within the period of 2007 to 2013, at least 25 % of the newly planned land readjustment procedures (a total of 73,500 ha) are to be implemented as accelerated land consolidation procedures according to § 91 of the Farmland Consolidation Act (about 18,500 ha) and at least 60 % are to be implemented as simplified land consolidation procedures (about 44,000 ha). Pending procedures are to be processed to an annual extent of about 10,500 ha. This also comprises voluntary land exchange and voluntary land use exchange (area of the exchanged plots of land). An annual amount of at least 10,500 ha of processed area is also to be scheduled in connection with Integrated Rural Development Concepts (ILEK), the pathways and water bodies plan, and the measurement concept. This should include the termination of the land readjustment procedure within the planning period and the rectification of the land register and of the land survey register.

## **Voluntary Land Use Exchange**

Within the planning period from 2007 to 2013, voluntary land use exchange is to be applied both as an independent readjustment measure as well as in appropriate combination with land readjustment procedures according to the Farmland Consolidation Act. All preparations and results of the procedures of voluntary land use exchange are to be included in the work scheduling.

## **Determination of Indicators of Effect**

In future procedures according to the Farmland Consolidation Act (excluding voluntary land exchange), not only the area affected by the procedure or the area of the transferred possession (in ha) is to be used as an indicator of effect. Additionally, the number of procedures, the number of participants, the number of participating municipalities, the consolidation ratio, the size of the “old” and “new” plots of land (in ha), the construction of pathways (in km), all measures of landscape conservation and water management (in ha or km) as well as the allocation of land for infrastructural measures are to be used.

For voluntary land exchange and voluntary land use exchange, the exchanged area (in ha), the number of exchange partners, the number of affected enterprises, the number of exchanged plots of land as well as the area used for measures of landscape conservation (in ha) are to be applied.

## **Results and Modification of Work Scheduling**

For each of the following eight defined procedural stages:

- Integrated Rural Development Concept (ILEK)
- Pathways and water bodies plan
- Execution of new procedures
- Measurement concept
- Transfer of possession
- Rectification of the land register
- Rectification of the land survey register
- Termination

on average, an annual amount of 10,500 ha of processed area is scheduled as a result for Rhineland-Palatinate (altogether 84,000 ha annually).

Voluntary land use exchange is added to the “transfer of possession” on the basis of the collective lease contract. As regards voluntary land exchange, the exchanged area on the basis of the exchange plans is to be counted.

Standard principles of work scheduling for the whole of Rhineland-Palatinate have been developed. Regarding Land Development and Rural Land Readjustment, the supervision and service office (ADD) and the service centres for the rural area (DLR) are bringing their work scheduling in line with the existing guidelines and ensure their implementation. A modification of the guidelines and work objectives requires the approval of the Ministry of Ministry of Economic Affairs, Transportation, Agriculture and Viniculture.