



Brief Information: The project and its goals

How can modern societies solve their environmental problems? For a long time, answers to this big question were not only sought in regulatory law, but also in the development and implementation of economic incentive instruments. However, one thing is clear, the one contributing to solving environmental problems should not be financially worse off than the one who does nothing or even created the problems.

Economical solutions are based both on the findings of ecosystem and landscape research as well as on ecological economics, research on public goods and property rights, and environmental ethics. It is not surprising that mainly government-organized reward/remuneration systems were considered so far. In economic thinking, environmental problems are turned into problems concerning public goods to make them easier to understand. Neglected environmental problems are viewed not only as complex environmental, but also as social - cause-effect relationships, as reinforced by the debate on sustainable development of society. Social and cultural realities have returned heightened into the focus. The question of what rules and what organizational structures are necessary for counteracting the many environmental problems will now be analysed in the framework of governance research.

The partly disappointing record of governmental control is driving this new perspective. Talk of "government failure" in protecting the environment has become a common statement. For how could economic control instruments, for example, be effective in the long-term if they are used strategically in budget negotiations subject to political decisions that are entangled in largely inflexible governmental regulations?

In this context, the questions of the research project are focused particularly on the contribution from civil society initiatives (CI) that reward environmental benefits. Can new contributions towards handling the ecological crisis of modern societies be found with the use of financial incentive schemes, which are internationally discussed under the term 'payment systems for ecosystem services' (PES)? Will the economic control instruments unfold their full effectiveness when they are based on civic engagement in the planning (including target identification), the shaping, and the implementation of rewarding approaches? CIVILand devotes itself to these issues through a comparative research approach. The various aspects of the topic will be developed for the research guided by the following questions:

1. How are CI that apply the instrument of remunerating environmental services organized and what is the relevance of foundations in terms of CI?
2. Which types of environmental services are actually rewarded by CI and what environmental objectives can be achieved with them?
3. What approaches are used in the planning, design and implementation of remunerating instruments for environmental benefits?

- 3a) To what extent are knowledge and models of science used in creating instruments?
- 3b) What opportunities for participation do CI offer during the planning and implementation and what impact will this have on the remunerated benefits and the civic engagement?
- 3c) What types of financial incentive mechanisms are generally applied by non-governmental initiatives and how effective are they?
- 4. What innovative approaches in the planning, design and implementation of remuneration instruments can be drawn from the analysis of non-governmental PES for remuneration instruments organized by the government?
- 5. What is the current significance of civil society financed and organized PES for sustainable landscape development and what role can they play in the future?
- 6. What institutional frameworks are crucial for enabling CI to establish and successfully operate?