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MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF THE AECMs

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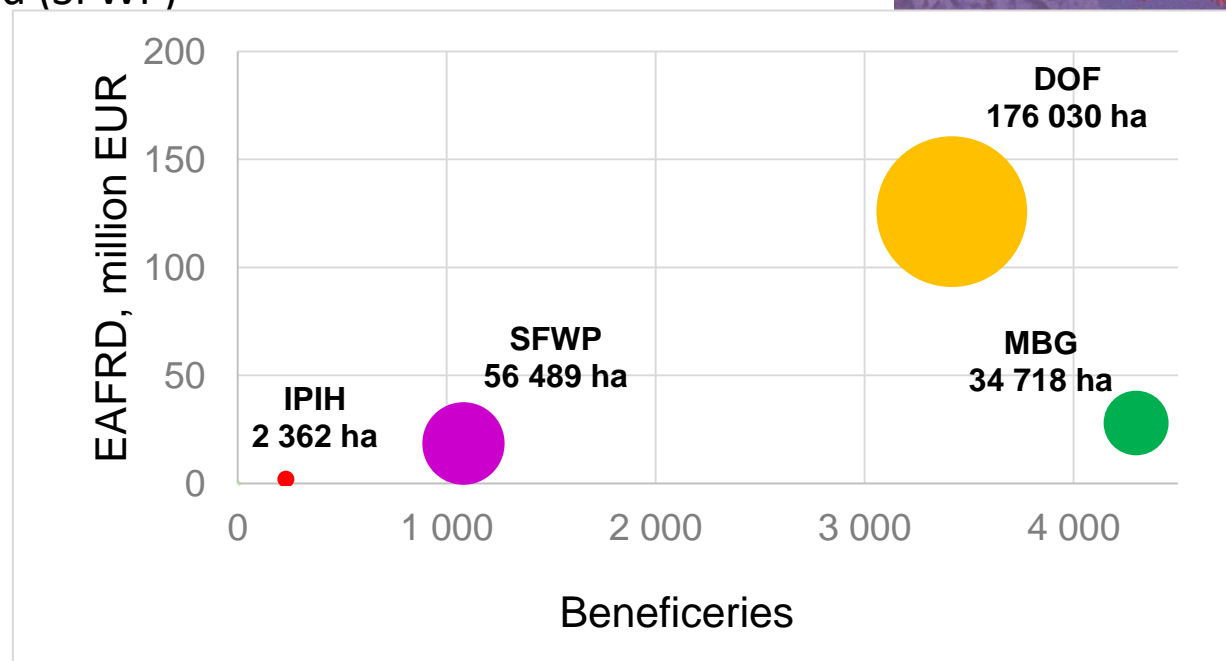
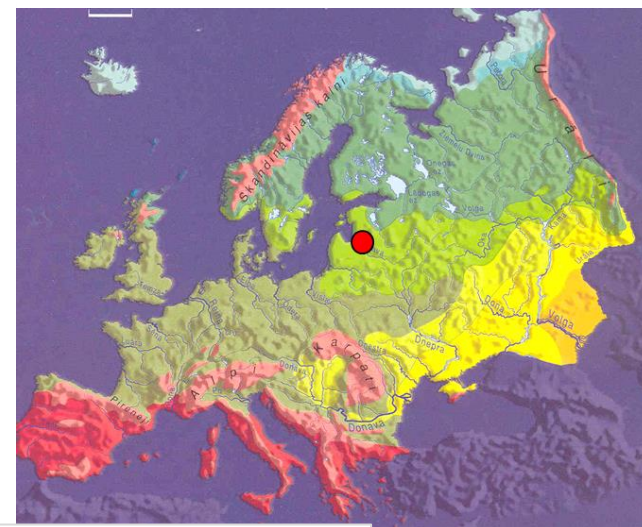
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RDP 2007-2013 measures of AECM in Latvia

Measure 214: Agri-Environment payments

- ☐ Sub-measure 214/1: Development of Organic Farming (DOF)
- ☐ Sub-measure 214/2: Introducing and Promoting Integrated Horticulture (IPIH)
- ☐ Sub-measure 214/3: Maintaining Biodiversity in Grasslands (MBG)
- ☐ Sub-measure 214/4: Stubble field in winter period (SFWP)

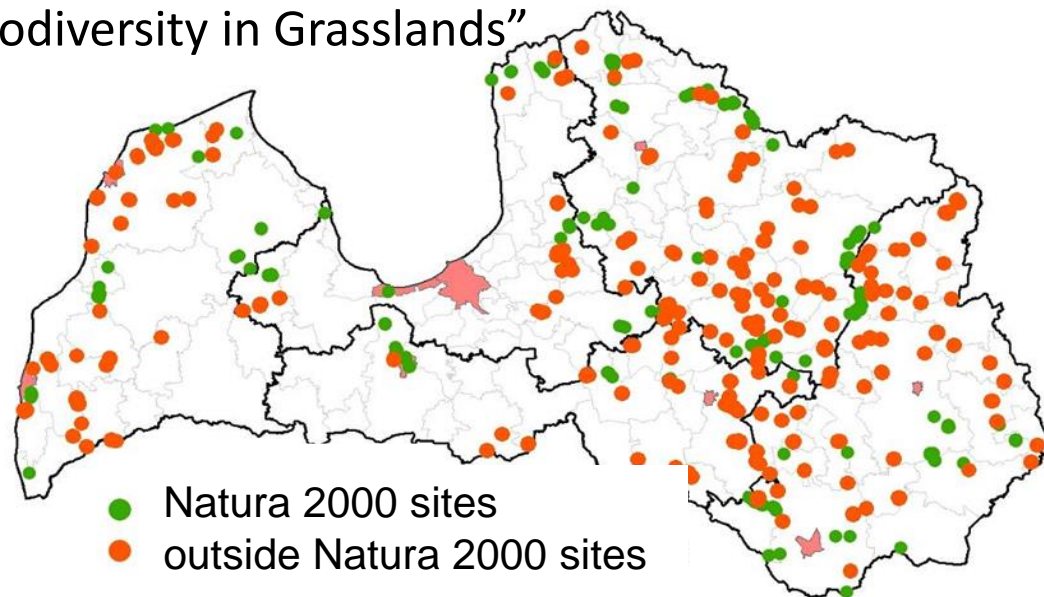


Challenges in evaluating the AECMs

- Measures of AECMs are planned in general (not well spatially targeted/without specific regulations), that means different methodological approaches in evaluation of AECMs
- Take into consideration differences between programme, axis, measure and submeasure level, for example, continued use of agricultural land or improve biological diversity of grasslands (quantity vs. quality)
- Values for 3 of 4 context indicators are not available – «data gaps». Context indicators are not/partly suitable for evaluation of AECMs
- Defining of extra national indicators
- Construction of treatment and control groups (areas) for evaluation of environmental impacts
- Planning of case-studies/methodological approaches in limited funding
- Evaluation scale /object – fields, farms, Natura 2000 sites, municipalities, catchment area

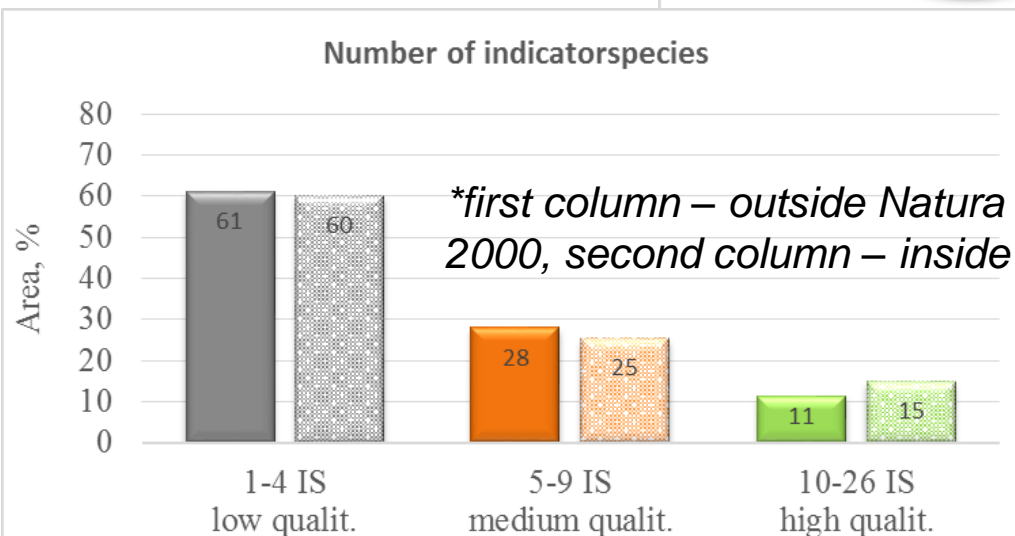
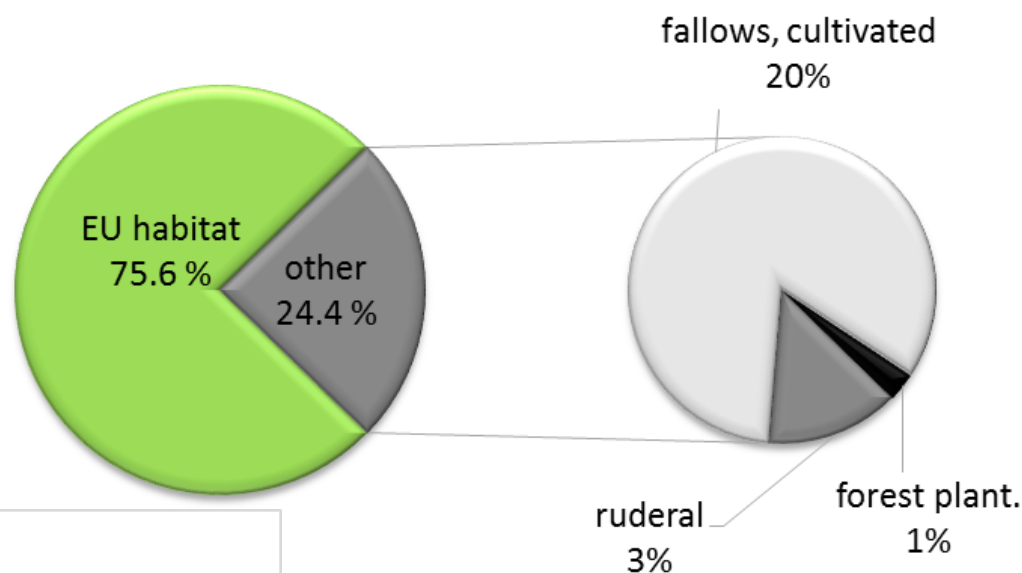
Case study: Botanical diversity of EU importance grassland habitats managed under RDP

- Authors: *Dr.geogr. S. Rūsiņa* leadership, 3 experts for field survey and data analysis
- Budget approx. 6 000 EUR
- Data from Natura 2000 monitoring programme (140 sites, 946 ha) (2010-2012)
- Field survey in 2013 outside Natura 2000 sites (212 sites, 1072 ha)
- representativity – 6 % of the total area of semi-natural grasslands managed under measure “Maintaining Biodiversity in Grasslands”
- Transect method (200 m), 10 points in each grassland and vegetation releve - management type, cover of litter layer, aggressive species, number of semi-natural grassland indicator species, species richness.



Case study: Results

- RDP scheme *Maintaining Biodiversity in Grasslands* appeared less promising than it was expected
- Although MBG scheme had strong positive influence to prevent abandonment of semi-natural grassland habitats (60 % of the total area are under MBG)



- Grassland habitats maintained by MBG scheme were mostly of bad botanical quality habitat type
- Only 2-17 % of area had high species richness in 1m² and richness of indicatorspecies;

Case study: Conclusions/actions

- ▶ **The low quality of botanical diversity could be related to:**
 - ▶ low overall diversity of grassland habitats starting MBG scheme;
 - ▶ Equal support for grasslands with contrasting management difficulties;
 - ▶ regulations of MBG scheme – late mowing and mulching.

- ▶ **To improve MBG results in the future:**
 - ▶ cancel mowing date - **done**;
 - ▶ prohibit mulching - **done**;
 - ▶ country-scale inventory of habitats – **not yet**;
 - ▶ differentiate support according to management difficulties – **partly**.

RDP 2007-2013

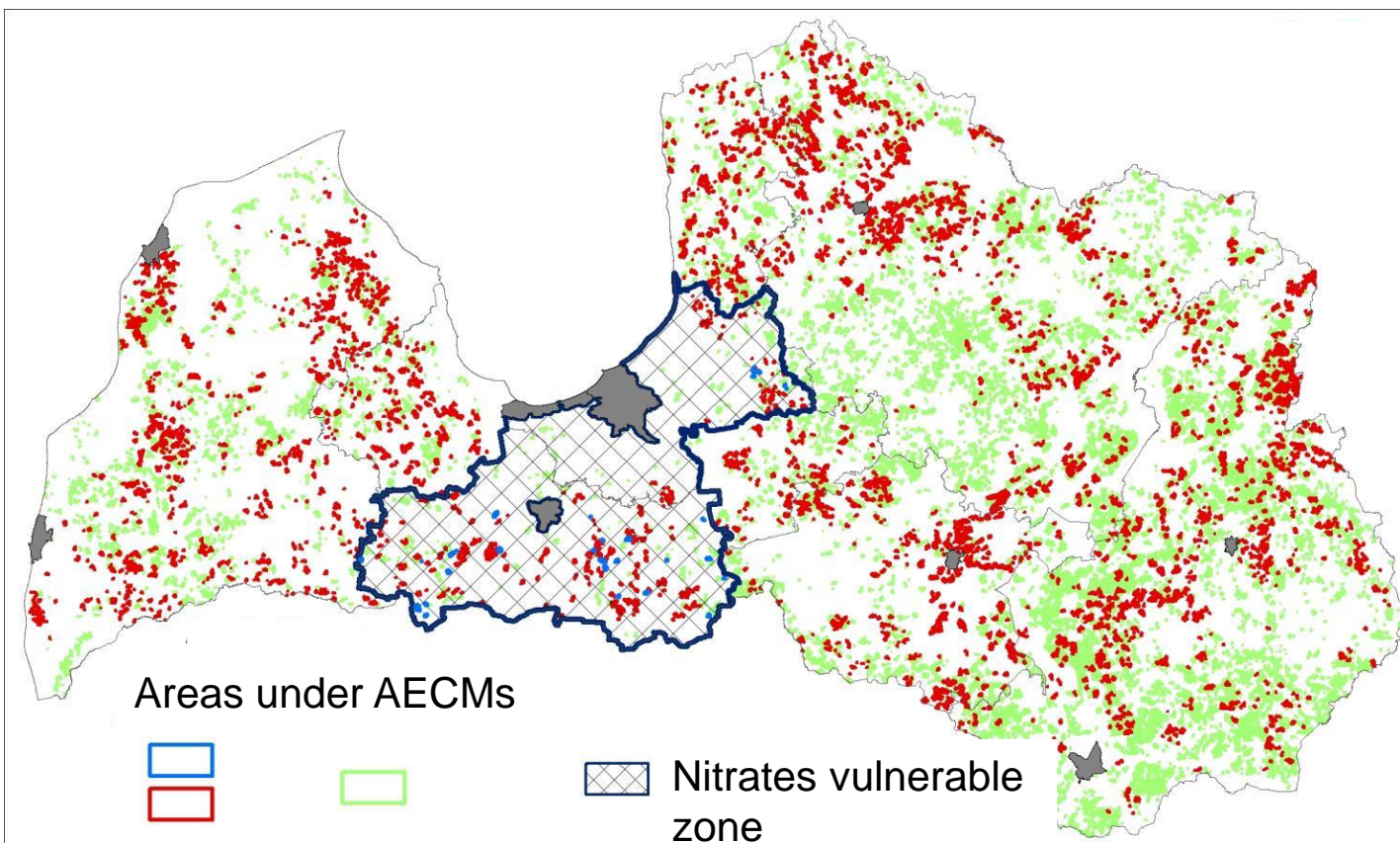
128 EUR/ha for mulching

RDP 2014-2020

84 EUR/ha for mowing with hay removal

Evaluation of AECMs

- Contributions of AECMs on improving environment as a whole in Latvia are moderate. Most important input are related with total supported areas under AECMs (263 000 ha, 8 500 beneficiaries)
- Areas under AECMs are spatially unequal distributed. AECMs are not enough introduce in specific target areas (Nitrates vulnerable zone, Natura 2000 etc.)



Lessons learnt

- National Environmental Monitoring Programme doesn't provide enough data and scientifically approved information/answers for evaluation (so as planning) of AECMs
- An action plan of evaluation activities (incl., topics of case studies, funding, terms) should be done at the beginning of RDP
- Intervention of AECMs have strong relationship with SAP, eligibility criteria, greening, which should be taken into account in evaluation