

## *Project Title*

**Sustainable Land Use Planning for Biodiversity and Nature Conservation in Ukraine**

## *Project Data*

| Duration              | Funding | Project location/ Region |
|-----------------------|---------|--------------------------|
| 01.09.2026-31.08.2027 | 17.610€ | Ukraine / Kharkiv region |

## *Project Partners*

### **Who are the project partners?**

- Dmytro Motornyi Tavsia State Agrotechnological University (TSAU, Ukraine)
- Technical University of Darmstadt (TU Darmstadt, Germany)

### **What does each partner specifically contribute to the project?**

- Prof. Andriy Popov and the team of Geoecology and Land-use Planning Department at TSAU contribute deep expertise in Ukrainian land management, firsthand knowledge of post-war land use challenges, and direct access to Ukrainian stakeholders (local communities, land planners, and policymakers). TSAU team leads the field research, stakeholder surveys, and case study implementation in Ukraine.
- Prof. Hans-Joachim Linke and the team of Land Management Department at TU Darmstadt bring proven methodological expertise in land consolidation, spatial planning, and biodiversity-sensitive land management tools developed in the EU context. TU Darmstadt provides access to its

broad network of European researchers and practitioners, hosts all four project meetings, and ensures the scientific quality and international transferability of the developed framework.

## About the Project

---

**What is the problem – and what do you want to change about it?**

Ukraine faces an unprecedented combination of environmental and land-use crises. Over 40% of agricultural land suffers from erosion, 16 million hectares are mine-contaminated, vast forest and shelterbelt systems have been destroyed by the war, and biodiversity continues to decline due to decades of intensive agriculture. At the same time, Ukraine has committed to the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030, which requires placing 30% of land under protection - a target that currently seems out of reach.

Ukraine currently faces a critical gap in sustainable land-use planning. There is no unified framework to address ecological conservation, post-war reconstruction, and sustainable agriculture simultaneously. Current practices are highly fragmented and driven by short-term economic interests. Additionally, decentralization reforms have eliminated vital public land-planning instruments without offering viable alternatives for local communities.

This project aims to change that by developing a coherent, evidence-based methodology that makes biodiversity and nature conservation an inseparable part of land-use planning decisions in Ukraine rather than an afterthought.

**What are you doing specifically to achieve this goal?**

The project is structured around four sequential work packages over 12 months. It begins with a comprehensive review of the scientific literature and policy frameworks in the EU and Ukraine to identify best practices and methodological gaps (WP1). This is followed by engagement with 70-100 Ukrainian stakeholders (local authorities, land-use planners, landowners, and scientists) through structured surveys and expert interviews, including

|                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                           | <p>meetings with German researchers from the TU Darmstadt (WP2).</p> <p>Based on this data, the team develops and tests a conceptual model for sustainable land-use planning through scenario modeling, multi-criteria assessment, and simulation games involving both Ukrainian and German experts (WP3). The final phase (WP4) focuses on knowledge transfer: publication of the results in an indexed international journal, presentations at four international conferences in Europe and Ukraine, and preparation of policy briefs for relevant Ukrainian parliamentary committees.</p> <p>Throughout the project, three workshops and one final meeting at the TU Darmstadt ensure continuous methodological coordination between the Ukrainian and German partners, while online meetings allow for the direct involvement of Ukrainian local communities in the research process.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <p><b>What is special or new about your approach?</b></p> | <p>Several features make this project truly innovative. First, it combines two worlds that rarely meet in practice: the strict European science of land management and the urgent, complex realities of a country recovering from an active war. Rather than simply transplanting EU models, the project critically assesses which German and European instruments, such as land consolidation, can be realistically adapted to Ukraine's fragmented land tenure structure and post-war conditions.</p> <p>Second, the project purposefully integrates top-down planning with bottom-up participation. Scenario modelling and simulation games allow local farmers, representatives of local communities, environmental groups, and investors to jointly study future "what if" options. This will make trade-offs between agricultural production, land restoration and nature protection visible, understandable and debatable.</p> <p>Thirdly, the project clearly addresses the gap in land-use planning created by the decentralization reform in Ukraine, offering new tools that can function within the framework of the existing governance reality, rather than ignore it. The result is not an ideal plan, but a practical, proven in practice methodology developed for work in real Ukrainian conditions.</p> |

|                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>The figure: What does the project actually do?</b></p>                                        | <p>... (Please give a specific figure for one of the results)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <p><b>What remains?</b> What concrete results are achieved, and who can use them in the future?</p> | <p>The project envisages a number of tangible and long-term results. It is based on a practical methodological guide to sustainable land-use planning, focused on biodiversity and nature protection, specially adapted to the ecological and post-war context of Ukraine. It will become a ready-to-use tool for Ukrainian local planners, municipalities and authorities rebuilding rural areas after the war.</p> <p>Scenario analysis and multi-criteria assessment will allow politicians and local communities to get a clear idea of the long-term consequences of various land use options - from agricultural intensification to habitat restoration and development of ecological corridors.</p> <p>Analytical notes will be developed for the relevant Ukrainian parliamentary committees, which will ensure that the results of the studies are taken into account in the national legislation and land reform processes. A peer-reviewed scientific article will include the results of the project in the international academic discussion on post-war ecological restoration and sustainable land use.</p> <p>Finally, the project lays the foundation for future pilot initiatives in Ukrainian territorial communities, EU-funded programs for the development of rural areas, and subsequent scientific cooperation between TSAU and the TU Darmstadt, turning a one-year scholarship into a long-term partnership of the Council for the Ecological Future of Ukraine.</p> |

**See the project images**  
on the following pages



## Project images

---

Image 1 of 3



Some landscapes in the Rohan territorial hromada (community) in Kharkiv oblast serve as habitats for the rare pasqueflower (*Pulsatilla patens*). Recognized by the Red Data Book of Ukraine and the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species, these beautiful landscapes urgently need our protection and conservation.

Photo: © Andriy Popov

## *Project images*

---

Image 2 of 3



Neglected shelterbelts (green corridors) in the study area. Without proper care, these crucial landscapes are fading and can no longer provide a safe home for native animals and plants.

Photo: © Andriy Popov

## *Project images*

---

Image 3 of 3



Wetlands have been converted to agricultural land within water conservation zones. This destroys natural habitats, emphasizing the urgent need for riverine wetland restoration.

Photo: © Andriy Popov