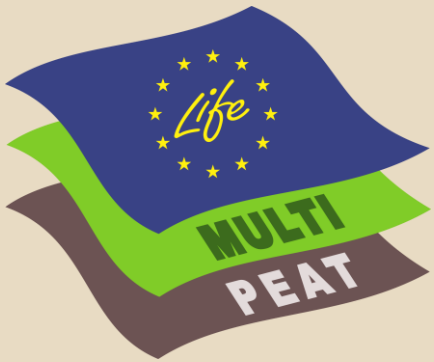




Policy Lessons from Germany's peatland-focused Agri-Environmental and Climate Measures

Jennifer Merten (NABU)



Power to the Peatlands - 3rd September 2026

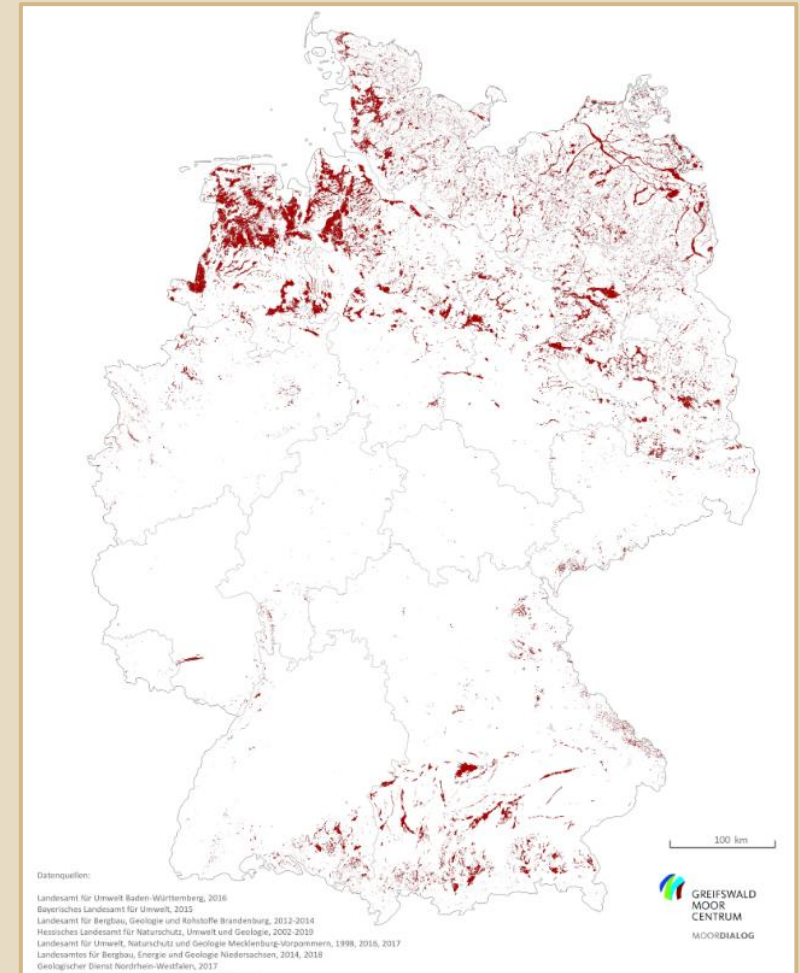


**Co-funded by
the European Union**

J. Etzold

Background – peatlands in Germany

Peatland map of Germany



- > 95 % of peatlands have been drained
- > 70 % of peatlands are used for agriculture

⇒ Rewetting agriculturally used land is indispensable to achieve climate neutrality

Prevailing paradigm of voluntary rewetting

⇒ **CAP payments may act as most efficient instrument to rewet drained peatlands**





Background – AECM in Germany

Selection and design take place at the state (Länder) level

National Strategic Plan provides common framework since 2023

Intervention “Management obligations to improve climate protection” (EL-0101) includes peatland specific AECM such as

- Conversion of arable land into permanent grassland
- **Rewetting**
- Paludiculture
- Landscape water retention
- Cooperative climate mitigation measures





Peatland AECM for climate protection

AECM	Brandenburg	Baden-Württemberg	Bavaria	Mecklenburg Western Pomerania	Lower Saxony	Schleswig-Holstein
Conversion of arable land into permanent grassland	✓	x	✓	(✓)	✓	(✓)
Extensive grassland management	x	x	x	x	x	✓
Rewetting	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	x
Paludiculture	✓	x	✓	✓	x	x
Landscape water retention	x	x	x	x	x	x
Cooperative climate mitigation measures	✓	x	x	x	x	x





Peatland AECM for climate protection

AECM	Brandenburg	Baden-Württemberg	Bavaria	Mecklenburg Western Pomerania	Lower Saxony	Schleswig-Holstein
Conversion of arable land into permanent grassland	✓	x	✓	(✓)	✓	(✓)
Extensive grassland management	x	x	x	x	x	✓
Rewetting	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	x
Paludiculture	✓	x	✓	✓	x	x
Landscape water retention	x	x	x	x	x	x
Cooperative climate mitigation measures	✓	x	x	x	x	x





AECM Rewetting – Funding concepts

	Bavaria	Brandenburg	Mecklenburg- Western Pomerania	Lower Saxony
Commitment period	12 yrs	5 yrs	5 yrs	5 yrs
Target water level (BGL)	20 cm	10/20/30 cm + winterly water retention at GL	10/30 cm	20 cm
Water table drawdown	on application	x	on application	up to 40cm BGL
Extensification	x	no pesticides, no mineral fertilization	no pesticides, no fertilization	no pesticides
Premium	900€/ha	140-199€/ha	150-450€/ha	536€/ha





AECM Rewetting – Applications

	Bavaria	Brandenburg	Mecklenburg- Western Pomerania	Lower Saxony
Offered since	2024	2016	2023	2023
Funded area	-	5,884 ha (2023-2024) 5,733 ha (2016-2024)	2,706 ha (2023-2024)	968 ha (2023-2024)
Number of applicants	-	84 (2023-2024) 74 (2016-2024)	47	~40





Do's and Don'ts

Dos

- Transparent, Simple Procedure
- Economically attractive offer
- Need of multipliers (consultants, farmers)
- Support by external technical service providers
- Refining guidelines over time
- Strengthen collaboration between institutions

Don'ts

- Let farmers be responsible for permit processes & hydrological modelling
- Changing things that work
- Raise wrong expectations
- Be perfect about the calculation of eligible area





Achievements & Limitations

- ✓ Partly high demand from the agricultural sector
- ✓ Increased social acceptance of rewetting
- ✓ High diversity of applicants

- ✓ > 10.000 ha (partially) rewetted peatlands in 2 years!
- ✓ Average GHG savings of 10 t CO₂-eq./ha/yr
- ✓ Increased water retention

- x Implementation mainly on “uncomplicated” areas
- x Significant lowering of water levels in summer
 - ⇒ Rapid implementation comes at the expense of climate protection
- x Subsidy is attractive, but the sale of biomass is not
 - ⇒ No new establishment of value chains

- x Achievements far below national needs for peatland rewetting
 - ⇒ Lower Saxony: funding of 0,3% of GAEC 2 area
 - ⇒ Mecklenburg Western Pomerania: reduction of 0,7% of total GHGE from peatlands





Conclusion/ Outlook

! AECM may serve as powerful instrument to increase awareness and social acceptance for peatland protection among farmers

Need to increase spatial reach beyond “uncomplicated” areas

- ⇒ Holistic financial support needed
- ⇒ Diversification of funding programs, regional approaches and whole business approaches

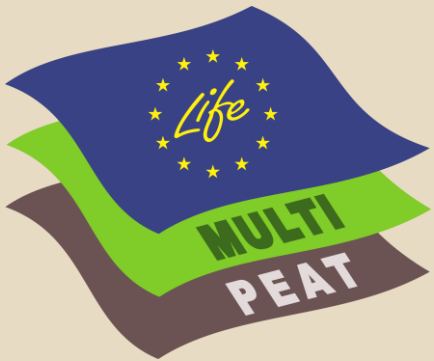
Need for restoration at landscape level to improve climate effects

- ⇒ Regionally focused and/or adapted funding programs
- ⇒ Cooperative compensation schemes

Prevailing bottlenecks:

- Consent requirements from affected third parties
 - Lack of profitable value chains
- ⇒ Need to combine voluntary funding programs with adaptations of legal frameworks and market conditions





Thank you!

NABU e.V.

Dr. Jennifer Merten

Jennifer.Merten@nabu.de

+49 30 2849841801

Learn more at: [**www.multippeat.org**](http://www.multippeat.org)

Or subscribe to the
Peatland Post

