

# Master Thesis: Public preferences for supporting the rewetting of peatlands and Paludiculture

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## Background

The rewetting of drained peatlands and subsequent cultivation with specific crops, known as paludiculture, has become a significant strategy for climate change mitigation in Germany, other parts of Europe, and worldwide. In Germany alone, drained peatlands account for approximately 5.4% of the total greenhouse gas emissions. This transformation process entails profound changes in farming practices and land-use patterns. In the short and medium term, it will be crucial to provide farmers with sufficient financial incentives through supportive policies to facilitate this transition. Several policy options exist, ranging from public subsidies and emission pricing mechanisms to product labelling, all of which have implications for consumers and taxpayers.

## Research aims

Therefore, this proposed thesis aims to generate insights into citizens' preferences, attitudes, and beliefs regarding these policy options, which will be essential for developing effective policy scenarios. The research will be based on a comprehensive review of existing academic and grey literature and will include a survey to assess the public's preferences, attitudes, and beliefs about policy instruments to promote peatland rewetting.

## Research questions

- Which incentive-based policy instruments can potentially support the rewetting of peatlands and the adoption of paludiculture? What would be the implications for consumers and taxpayers?
- What are the public's preferences and attitudes regarding these policy instruments, and which policy options receive the most support?

## Research approach/methods

- Literature review to identify potential policy instrument that incentivize farmers to undertake rewetting and adopt paludiculture and
- Develop and implement a survey targeting the broader public to identify their preferences and attitudes regarding acceptable policy instruments.

## Starting points

Glenk, K., Martin-Ortega, J., 2018. The economics of peatland restoration. *Journal of Environmental Economics and Policy* 7, 345–362. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21606544.2018.1434562>

Tanneberger, F., Birr, F., Couwenberg, J., Kaiser, M., Luthardt, V., Nerger, M., Pfister, S., Oppermann, R., Zeitz, J., Beyer, C., Van Der Linden, S., Wichtmann, W., Närmann, F., 2022. Saving soil carbon,

greenhouse gas emissions, biodiversity and the economy: paludiculture as sustainable land use option in German fen peatlands. Reg Environ Change 22, 69. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10113-022-01900-8>

### Requirements

- Student in economics, agricultural economics, human geography, or related fields of study, currently registered at a university in Germany or abroad
- A good knowledge of both English and German is required
- Solid knowledge of quantitative data analysis (statistics)
- Interest in scientific work, prior experience with scientific work is of advantage

### We offer

- Being part of an international and interdisciplinary research team
- A friendly working environment, which encourages independent and self-reliant work
- (Co-)Supervision of the master's thesis will be provided by ZALF staff.

For further information and/or to submit your application in German or English as a PDF file, please send an email to: [tobias.vorlaufer@zalf.de](mailto:tobias.vorlaufer@zalf.de)