

# AgoraNatura (DE)

## Background

[AgoraNatura](#) is the first independent, German-wide online-marketplace for biodiversity and ecosystem services credits (open crowdfunding platform for certified nature conservation projects). Through voluntary payments citizens & companies purchase area-related certificates, enabling farmers to carry out measures that support biodiversity and ecosystem services. The platform was launched at the end of 2020 with first conservation projects in Brandenburg, Bavaria, Lower Saxony, Thuringia and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania.

## Objective

We want an agricultural landscape in which diverse land use predominates. In some areas, it should be possible that agricultural production is not the main focus, but that biodiversity and ecosystem services are also taken into account or even clearly focussed on. Many farmers and landowners across Germany want to use their land and expertise to create valuable habitats and manage these areas in ways that facilitate the provision of vital ecosystem services. However, the current economic framework makes this very unattractive. Government support instruments are sometimes bureaucratic and poorly targeted. At the same time, there is a growing awareness and demand for the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services among the population at large. With AgoraNatura, philanthropists and citizens can finance regional measures to support the provision of public goods, complementing governmental fiscal instruments. They can thus have a direct influence on the landscape they want to live in. This is where the farmer meets the committed entrepreneur and the landscape conservationist meets the bee lover. Together they ensure more biodiversity and ecosystem services in the landscape: some through their commitment in the field - sowing, tending or careful retreat. The others through their financial support. Together they create additional nature conservation areas with measurable added value. In order to ensure the ecological impact, each project is externally certified by the [Natur<sup>plus</sup>](#) standard.



Figure 1: „Discovery Tour“ in Ferbitz (June 2019) © K. Karkow

## Contact CIL AgoraNatura

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Potential Contract Solution (“Dream Contract”)  
 Online marketplace for biodiversity & ecosystem services

**Objective**

A new marketplace to enable engaged societal actors to fund conservation projects on agricultural land. A results- & action-based approach that encourages suppliers of conservation projects (i.e., farmers and landowners) to define specific steps they will take to enhance a site's biodiversity value provided they receive the necessary funding. Investors (businesses and private citizens alike) will be able to choose from a range of projects on a map and thereby help support the provision of ecosystem services in their region.

**Measures**

All measures and practices that benefit biodiversity and further ecosystem services will be considered. Pilot projects include: flower strips and meadows, orchards, pond care for amphibians, or special mowing regimes to support bird populations.

**Contract Type**

- Payments for Ecosystem services (PES)



**Contract Features**

- Action-based Payments
- Results-based Payments

**Targeted Public Goods**



Figure 2: View of Wittbrietzen (Brandenburg) ©V. Gehrman

## **Actors & Structure**

- Farmers and landowners (including land management associations)
- Investors (companies or citizens)
- AgoraNatura as an intermediary / broker

## **Contract Duration**

Securing enough investments to run the projects over five years or more would be ideal.

## **Payments**

- Private funding by companies / citizens wishing to go beyond their legal requirements for environmental protection
- The payments will be based on actions taken to get specific outcomes. Though, the results are not contractually guaranteed
- The funding of the project is organised via conservation certificates, each certificate representing conservation actions on 100m<sup>2</sup> per year.

## **Controls & Checks**

A combination of practices and results is monitored. All projects on AgoraNatura will be certified by the [Natur<sup>Plus</sup> standard certification scheme](#).

## **Expected Benefits**

### **Social/Ecological Advantages**

- The projects offered through this marketplace are designed with the goal of enhancing biodiversity and ecosystem services. The specific ecosystem services provided are explicitly labelled.
- Given that functioning ecosystems and the services they provide are inextricably linked to public health and to economic prosperity, all of society ultimately benefits from this new approach to secure funding. Further, businesses whose value chains rely on specific ecosystem services benefit from investing in them, and local residents benefit from being able to visit these sites for recreation.

### **Advantages for Farmers**

- Contribute to conservation goals: Many farmers wish to use their land and their expertise to be a part of the solution in the effort to restore biodiversity and secure the provision of ecosystem services. To this end, parts of their land need to be taken out of agricultural production which often is not economically possible. The financial support through AgoraNatura however enables them to implement conservation projects

- Flexibility: AgoraNatura offers farmers and other land managers the opportunity to implement conservation projects which don't fit into existing funding schemes. It gives them agency over the process and higher flexibility in comparison to policy-driven schemes.
- Recognition: AgoraNatura enables the recognition of nature conservation action as an achievement, allowing for recognition and a remuneration beyond opportunity costs. Also, it enables the realisation of own ideas – increasing self-interest and intrinsic motivation of farmers to perform well, which will likely improve the projects' effectiveness.