

## SUMMARY OF EUCALAND PROJECT WP 1.

### DESCRIPTION METHODS FOR EUROPEAN AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPES: DEFINITIONS, CULTURAL CHARACTER AND VALUES

Maria Dolores VELARDE<sup>1</sup>, Michael ROTH<sup>2</sup>, Matthias BUCHECKER<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Rey Juan Carlos University

Tulipan s/n 28933, Mostoles, Madrid, Spain, e-mail: mariadolores.velarde@urjc.es

<sup>2</sup>Dortmund University of Technology, School of Spatial Planning

August-Schmidt-Straße 10, 44227 Dortmund, Germany, e-mail: michael.roth@udo.edu

<sup>3</sup>Swiss Federal Research Institute WSL

Zürcherstrasse 111, 8903 Birmensdorf, Switzerland, e-mail: matthias.buechecker@wsl.ch

The European Landscape Convention states that ‘landscape contributes to the formation of local cultures and is a basic component of the European natural and cultural heritage, contributing to human well-being and consolidation of the European identity’ (COUNCIL OF EUROPE 2000, Preamble pp.2).

This paper presents a synthesis of the results of one part of the Eucaland Project (European Culture Expressed in Agricultural Landscapes (Eucaland). Culture Programme. European Commission. 2007–2009) dealing with landscape description. Full Project outcomes have been published in PUNGETTI et al. (2010).

For the purpose of the Eucaland Project, the partners have agreed on a description of agricultural landscapes as those landscapes which are strongly related to past and present agricultural activity, which may contain some of these elements:

- farmland, cultivated land, grasslands, meadows
- horticulture, viticulture, olive trees, fruit trees
- small infrastructure elements, roads, agricultural buildings, farmhouses, agrarian settlements
- ditches, stone walls, terraces
- vegetation structures, green corridors, hedges
- patches of forest and single trees within an agricultural context
- remains and relicts of past agricultural activity

Little has been done so far to describe agricultural landscapes at a European level, despite the fact that contemporary policies have a more complete vision that includes landscape in rural development.

In order to describe the cultural dimension of agricultural landscapes, a combined approach seems most useful, integrating methods and techniques from different descriptive perspectives.

A first distinction has been considered on the two main functional levels of landscape: landscape as a framework for action (space) and landscape as a carrier of social meaning (place). Characteristic of landscapes is that they are normally understood to lie at the conceptual interface of space and place. This is the reason why, in order to address the analysis, a gradient running from the physical level to the meaning level has been useful (Figure 1).

Taking into account OECD (1999, 2001) classifications, the following three descriptive levels have been identified related to the cultural value of agricultural landscapes. It is necessary to consider that these levels are not clearly differentiated but very much interlinked. Therefore, they should be considered as a kind of gradient where the borders are rather diffuse (Figure 1).

First descriptive level: physical object description (structure). This corresponds to the physical level of analysis, where data sources would be topographic maps, land use data, statistics and aerial photos. Landscape elements present on the matrix (the space) are to be considered at this stage.

Second descriptive level: people – physical object interrelationship (function). This would be halfway between the physical level and the meaning level. Data sources would be thematic maps and literature.

Third descriptive level: intangible quality (value). The meaning level (place) is to be described at this level. Data sources may be interviews, questionnaires, literature or pictures.

**References**

COUNCIL OF EUROPE 2000: European Landscape Convention. CETS N0. 176. Florence: Council of Europe.  
 OECD 1999: Environmental Indicators for Agriculture. Volume 2. Issues and design. The York workshop. Organisation for economic co-operation and development, Paris.  
 OECD 2001: Environmental Indicators for Agriculture. Volume 3. Methods and Results. Organisation for economic co-operation and development, Paris.  
 PUNGETTI, G., KRUSE, A., RACKHAM, O. (Eds.) 2010: European Culture Expressed in Agricultural Landscapes. The Eucaland Project Book. Palombi Editori, Rome, Italy (in press)  
 VELARDE, M. D., ROTH, M., BUCHECKER, M. 2010: Criteria for the description of agricultural landscapes focusing on their cultural dimension. In: PUNGETTI, G., KRUSE, A., RACKHAM, O. (Eds.): European Culture Expressed in Agricultural Landscapes. The Eucaland Project Book. Palombi Editori, Rome, Italy.

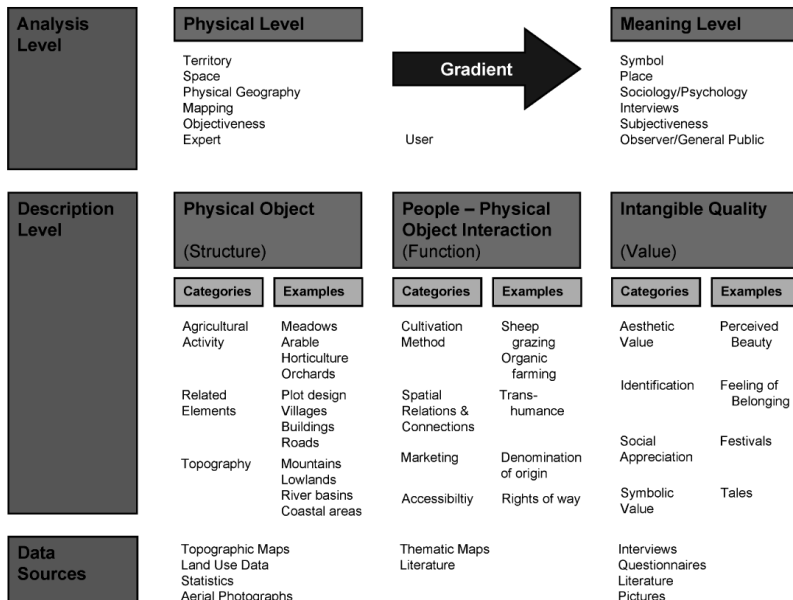


Figure 1. Descriptive process for agricultural landscapes focusing on their cultural dimension (VELARDE et al, 2010)  
 1. ábra Leirőfolyamat az agrártájak jellemzéséhez a kulturális vetület tükrében (VELARDE et al, 2010)