



OSCAR – Optimal Strategies for Climate change Action in Rural areas

Climate change is a long-term challenge that potentially affects us all. Human activities make a significant contribution to increased concentrations of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere, which in turn impacts upon climate. There are two key climate objectives for society to tackle, firstly to mitigate GHG emissions and secondly to adapt to the changes that do arise and ensure that the ecosystem services upon which society rely are sustained. Rural areas, businesses and communities have their role to play with regard to these objectives, with agriculture alone accounting for 9% of Europe's GHG emissions. There have been numerous policies and programmes implemented to support rural communities, most notable of which is the Common Agricultural Policy and the integrated Rural Development Programme (RDP). The current RDP ends in 2013 and this provides an opportunity to develop more holistic measures and operations in order to tackle both rural issues and climate change. Hence a research project has been funded by the European Commission to support the development of these measures by developing targeted guidance for Member States.



The OSCAR Project



OSCAR – ‘Optimising Strategies for Climate change Action in Rural areas’ is a 1-year collaborative research project between the University of Hertfordshire, UK, Wroclaw University of Life Sciences, Poland and Solagro, France.

The approach will involve evaluating each current RDP measure using Life Cycle Assessment coupled with an Adaptive Capacity Impact Assessment, to provide an evaluation of mitigation, adaptation, productivity and practicality. Geographical Information Systems techniques will then be used to identify

Regional Variation Categories across Europe in relation to climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the development of marginal abatement cost curves and marginal adaptation cost curves for RDP measures to provide an overview of the costs and benefits of each measure. This information will be used to develop an RDP manual and checklist to facilitate the optimisation of national rural development programmes to support the delivery of climate policy objectives. For more information see the OSCAR website at: <http://www.herts.ac.uk/aeru/oscar/index.htm>.