MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
REPUBLIC OF LATVIA

Areas with Natural Constraints
(ANC)

Part 2

✓ Fine-tuning

Content

Introduction

REGULATION (EU) No. 1305/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 17 December 2013 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No. 1698/2005 provides for that, during the planning period of 2014–2020, areas facing significant natural constraints might be delimited and support payments of 25 to 450 EUR/ha a year can be made in these areas.

According to the conditions of the Regulation, the following three categories of areas are distinguished:

(a) mountain areas;

(b) areas, other than mountain areas, facing significant natural constraints;

Fine-tuning

Simultaneously, the Regulation provides for that after the aforementioned categories have been identified, Member States shall carry out fine-tuning, which means the identification of certain areas and their deprivation of ANC status, if it is justifiably established that the economic constraints in the identified areas have been overcome by investments or by normal land productivity, or the management system compensates for income loss or added costs.

(c) other areas affected by specific constraints.

In Latvia's case, mountain areas have not been identified, wherewith activities have been carried out to identify the areas of Latvia, which would correspond to the category of areas, other than mountain areas, facing significant natural constraints.

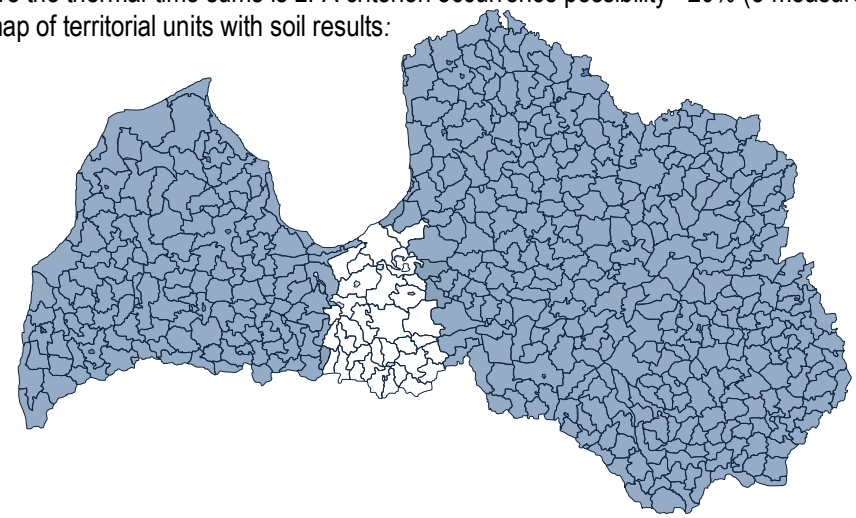
REGULATION (EU) No 1305/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 17 december 2013 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 **Article 32 Designation of areas facing natural and other specific constraints**
1. Member States shall, on the basis of paragraphs 2, 3 and 4, designate areas eligible for payments provided for in Article 31 under the following categories: (b) areas, other than mountain areas, facing significant natural constraints; 3. In order to be eligible for payments under Article 31, areas, other than mountain areas, shall be considered to be facing significant natural constraints if, at least 60 % of the agricultural area meets at least one of the criteria listed in Annex III at the threshold value indicated.

In order to identify areas, other than mountain areas, facing significant natural constraints in compliance with Article 32, Clause 1(b) and Article 32, Clause 3 of the Regulation, a report "Testing the biophysical criteria for Areas with Natural Constraints" has been prepared.

As a result of the report, based on the biophysical criteria, the areas compliant with ANC conditions have been identified.

To identify areas, other than mountain areas, facing significant natural constraints, Latvia has used the following criteria: Low temperature.

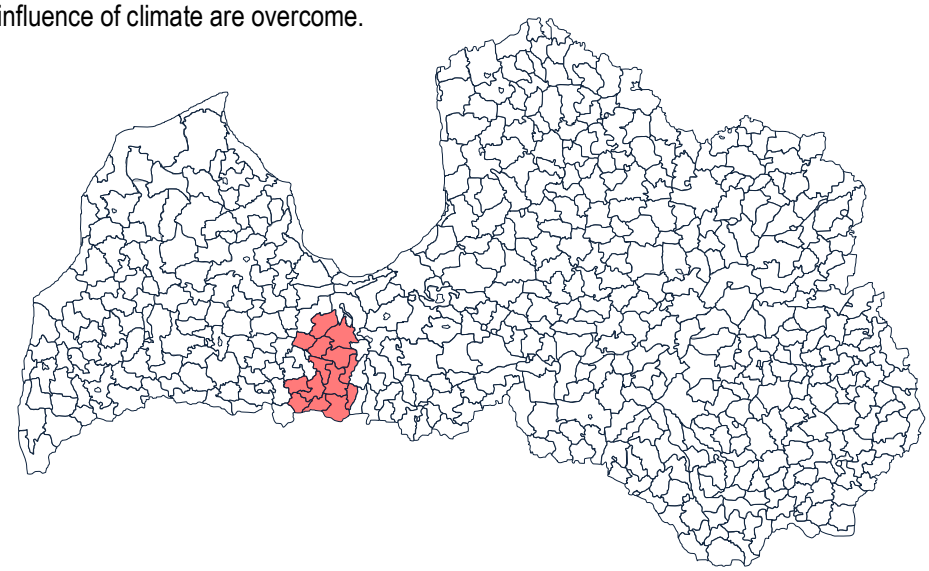
Territories where the thermal-time sums is LFA criterion occurrence possibility >20% (8 measurement method, period 1968-2008) on the map of territorial units with soil results:



In this report, the work is continued to simulate the situation by applying the fine-tuning approach.

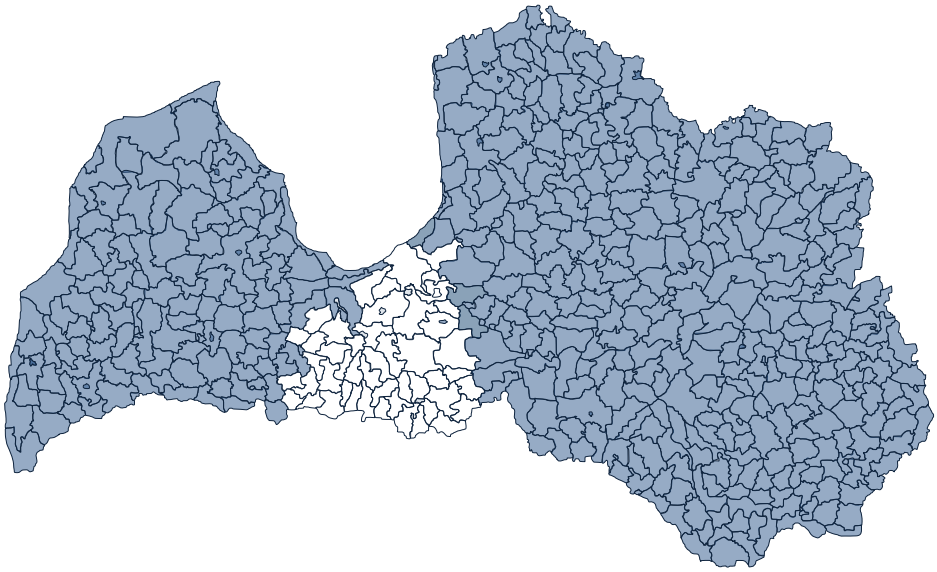
Summary

Taking into account the considerations described in report, Latvia has identified territorial units to be excluded from ANC by means of Fine-tuning method, substantiating it with favourable production conditions, by which the constraints created under the influence of climate are overcome.



In the identified area during fine-tuning modulation, the Agricultural area is 55.2 thsd ha or 2.3% of the total Agricultural area in the country.

By combining the biophysical criteria and results obtained during fine-tuning modulation, Latvia has identified ANC area, the amount of Agricultural Areas is 2123 thsd. ha or 88.8% of the total agricultural area in the country.



Fine-tuning

REGULATION (EU) No 1305/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL
of 17 december 2013 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005

Article 32
Designation of areas facing natural and other specific constraints

When delimiting the areas concerned by this paragraph, Member States shall carry out a fine-tuning exercise, based on objective criteria, with the purpose of excluding areas in which significant natural constraints, referred to in the first subparagraph have been documented but have been overcome by **investments** or by, **economic activity**, or **by evidence of normal land productivity**, or in which production methods or farming systems have offset the income loss or added costs referred to in Article 31(1).

Pursuant to the conditions of the Regulation and Guidelines "Fine-tuning in areas facing significant natural and specific constraints" Annex I – Correspondence table of biophysical criteria and fine-tuning indicators, the indicators, which are to be used in carrying out fine-tuning, have been identified and tested :
:

- *Irrigation*
- *Artificial drainage*
- *Greenhouses*
- *Tree density*
- *Livestock density*
- *Average yield*
- *Farming system*
- *Production method*
- *Standard output*
- *Normal land productivity*

Having assessed the output data and background information regarding the said criteria, we have concluded that the application of such criteria as *Irrigation, Greenhouses, Tree density, and Livestock density* within the framework of fine-tuning is unjustified, since the areas affected by these criteria are small and they are scattered and are not concentrated in any particular territorial unit.

The *Artificial drainage* and *Irrigation* criteria have not been included in the guidelines on criteria applicability, since the basic criterion for delimiting ANC in Latvia is Low temperature.

The application of average yield as one of the criteria is inexpedient, as in our opinion, it partly duplicates normal land productivity criterion, which is significantly emphasized for the implementation of fine-tuning exercise in Latvia's case. The application of farming systems and production method is not adequate for Latvia.

Standard output is one of the parameters, which is widely used when analysing agricultural data and is compared at EU level. The analysis of available data suggests that management intensity in Latvia, if assessed according to *Standard output* criterion, is significantly lower and amounts to 24% of the average level of EU Member States. In assessing at national level, it is to be concluded that due to low average base, as well as small territorial units, any more serious economic activity considerably affects area indicators and exceeds the threshold of 80% specified in the Guidelines, without reflecting the general actual situation in the particular area at the same time. In this regard, we consider that it is not objective to apply *Standard output* criterion for the implementation of Fine-tuning on a national scale.

Within the framework of fine-tuning, Latvia has carried out the simulation of criteria referred to in the Guidelines "Fine-tuning in areas facing significant natural and specific constraints", based on the available information and we came to the conclusion that land productivity is the best one.

Normal land productivity

The characterising indicator of the *Normal Land Productivity* criterion in Latvia is *Evaluation of Soil in Points*.

Evaluation of Soil in Points

The quality of land used for agriculture characterises land productivity (or the benefit the soil can give to its owner, if it is properly cultivated and used). In Latvia, the quality of land used for agriculture or qualitative evaluation is expressed in points and one land value point corresponds to 70 kg of rye, which amounts to EUR 9.30 (based on Central Statistic Bureau: CSB data on rye prices in 2008–2012).

Evaluation specialists of the State Land Service annually determine the qualitative evaluation (in points) of land used for agriculture for the particular land unit by using cartographic materials — principal maps of quality evaluation of land used for agriculture or land quality evaluation and soil mapping materials. Evaluation points are determined in absence, without inspecting the land unit on site.

The information used to apply the criterion has been obtained from the State Land Service[1]. The State Land Service (hereinafter — "SLS") is a governmental institution of the Republic of Latvia which was established in 1992 to implement land reform. The SLS is in charge of real property object data accumulation and dissemination to institutions responsible for land management and supervision. The SLS is supervised by Minister for Justice.

The main tasks of the SLS are as follows:

- the provision of the State Information System of real property cadastre and registration of real property object data – registration and updating of textual and spatial data on land units, buildings, groups of premises, parcels of land, system maintenance and development of Real Property market data base maintenance, provision of data accessibility in on-line mode;
- maintenance textual and graphical information in the State Address Register – textual and spatial addressing objects registration and updating, system maintenance and developing, drafting and updating of administrative territory border descriptions and graphical data;
- mass valuation of real property - land units, buildings, groups of premises, parcels of land, the development of cadastral value base, determination of special values;
- the implementation of national land reform policy – maintenance of Rural Land Privatization Register, taking decisions on renewal of land proprietary rights or transfer of land into ownership for payment in rural areas, consideration of border disputes in rural area,organization of state funded land cadastral surveying for former proprietors;
- the provision of the operation of high detailed elaboration topographic data central database – accumulation of high resolution topographic data of all state territory;
- the maintenance of Information System of restricted zones – registration and data updating of restricted zones and objects;
- cadastral surveying of buildings and groups of premises – obtaining textual and spatial data of buildings and groups of premises for updating the information in the State Information System of Real Property Cadaster, management of cadastral and land survey methodology

The information used to apply the criterion from the Information System of the State Real Estate Cadastre of the SLS regarding the average weighed qualitative evaluation of land used for agriculture in territorial units. In Annex 1, Evaluation of Soil in Points in the cross-section of parishes.

Basis for the evaluation of soil fertility is done on the basis of the land productivity. Characteristics of the plots that form a major part of the factors influencing the number of points are those related to configuration of the plots, local topography, size of the plot, existence of drainage systems and other factors that have been over time influenced by the investment made in each of the local conditions like investments in making more homogenous fields, drainage systems, fertilisations, liming etc.

On the basis of these criteria yield of cereals is closely linked to the fertility score. Example of such evaluation is demonstrated in the table where at the last column the resultant criteria which is very important determining the soil fertility is the yield of cereals.

[1] http://vzd.gov.lv/en/

vērtēšanas kārtība"

Lauksaimniecības zemes vērtēšanas tabula

Aramzemei, daudzgadīgiem stādījumiem, kultivētām ganībām

Zemes novērtējums		Augsne		Reljefs un mitruma apstākļi	Zemes īpašību raksturojums	Graudaugu normatīvā ražība, cnt/ha (klēts raža)
klase	balles	tips, apakštips	mehāniskais sastāvs			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I	100-91	Vk A B	SM;	Reljefs līdzens, augsnes ūdens režīms pilnīgi nokārtots, var būt apūdeņošana vai divpusēja regulācija.	Sevišķi augsti iekultivētas augsnes. trūdsaturs virs 3%, laba struktūra un sakārta, bez podzolēšanās un glejošanās pazīmēm.	51-56
II	90-81	Vk A B	SM mS	Reljefs līdzens,nogāzes slīpums 0-3°, augsnes mitruma apstākļi dabiski labi vai nokārtoti ar drenāžu	Augsnes labi iekultivētas,	45-51
III	80-71	Vk; B; A	a) SM; mS; sS	Reljefs līdzens un viegli viļņots, nogāzes slīpums 0-4°. Augsnes	a) augšņu iekultivēšana virs vidējāslīdz labai;	40-45
		Pv; Pgv	b) SM; mS	mitruma apstākļi dabiski labi vai arī	b) augšņu iekultivēšana laba	

Valuation of the land		Soil		Topography and humidity conditions	Characteristics of the land ("degree of cultivation")	Cereal yields, normative, cnt/ha
Class	points	Type	mechanical composition			

Majority of the characteristics is influenced by farming systems and management practices over time, like investments, including fertilisation.

Agricultural land, depending on the agricultural land quality assessment in points after the legislative productivity (one value of the land the ball - 70 kg rye units) are divided into seven groups of quality.

Basis for the evaluation and regular update of the fertility estimates of land:

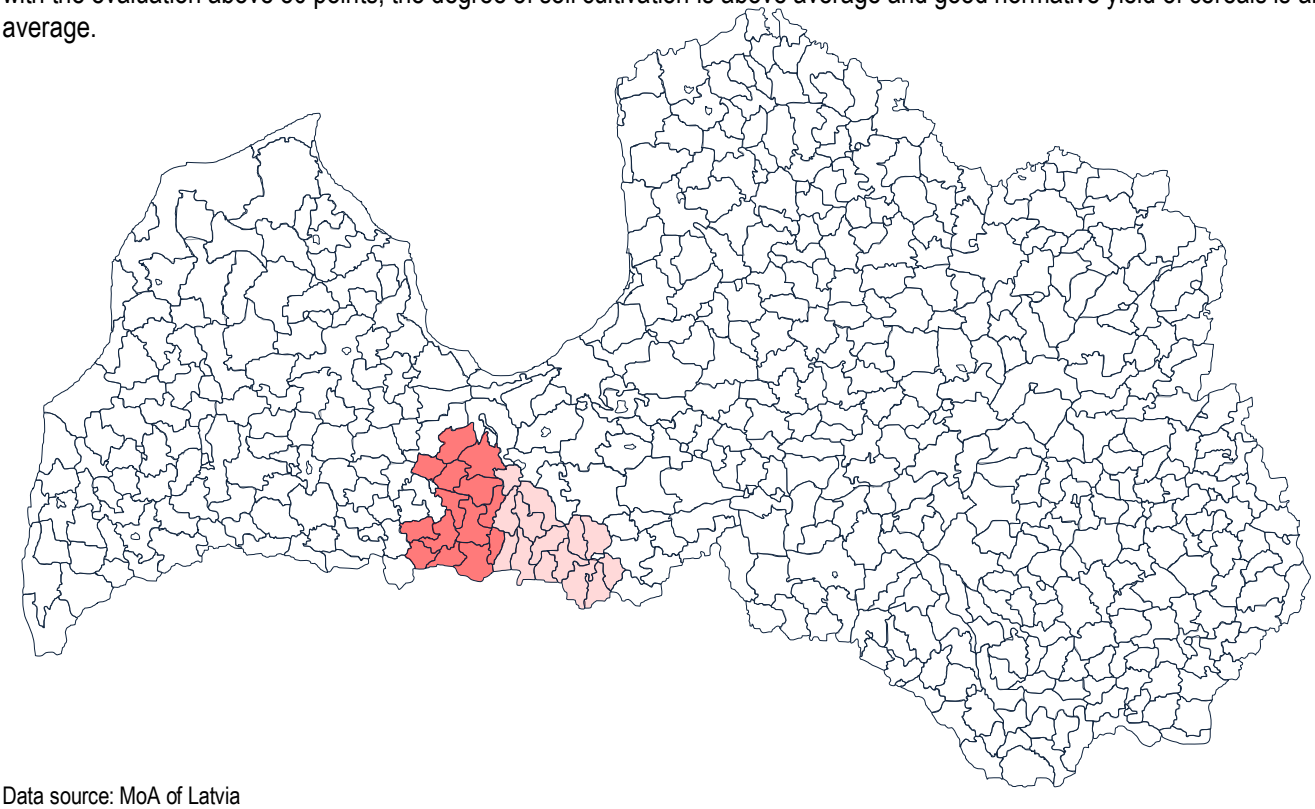
1. The Cabinet regulations on Cadastral evaluation stipulate that State Land Service (SLS) regularly updates information on the value of agricultural land. One of the elements of value of the land (point 28) is the quality of land, i.e. fertility value (point 27). See http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=134568,
2. Following points explain the fundamental principles of regular update carried out by the SLS
    a. 87. The quality assessment of the utilised agricultural area in points shall be determined by the State Land Service by normative productivity without exploration on site (office work), using approved base maps of quality assessment for utilised agricultural area or land quality assessment and soil mapping materials.
    b. 88. The quality of utilised agricultural area in points shall be determined for the unit of land as the weighted average quality assessment. A quality assessment in points of the utilised agricultural area specified for the unit of land shall be applied to a part of the unit of land.
    c. 89. If, in assessing the information of the assessment base map, it is determined, that non-utilised agricultural area has been acquired in the unit of land to be assessed in comparison with base the map or the amelioration situation has changed, or the types of use of utilised agricultural area have been changed, the assessment of the transformed land area quality shall be adjusted using the land assessment tables and designations of the soil type and mechanical content (Annexes 5, 6 and 7).
3. As can be seen from the Annex 2, the biggest differences are due to in particular easiness of cultivation.

It is of very high importance to have newly delimited ANC from 2015 because

- farmers have political expectations to have more objective system of the newly delimited ANC and ASC as compared to 2007-2013;
- there are elements in greening practices that are dependent on existence of the new delimitation and have to be implemented as early as possible.

Although the origin of the system of soil fertility points dates back 40 years ago and using the data then available, there were regular updates of the fertility points. There is already the system in Latvia that ensures regular update of the data that Latvia applies for the fine-tuning. In 2015 the consistency of land fertility points reflecting the yields on the ground will be re-evaluated, and if necessary, modifications in the fine-tuning will be introduced.

By using qualitative evaluation within the framework of fine-tuning, the areas, the evaluation of which exceeds 50 points, have been identified. The threshold has been determined by using land productivity parameters specified in the monograph issued under the edition of A. Boruks "Use of Land and Cadastre in Latvia", which are based on the result of scientific research. In soils with the evaluation above 50 points, the degree of soil cultivation is above average and good normative yield of cereals is above average.



Data source: MoA of Latvia

Figure 1: Areas in which soil evaluation is above 50 points.

In the identified Agricultural area with the evaluation above 50 points is 169 thsd ha. Fine-tuned Agricultural area (darker red) is 55.2 thsd ha or 2.3% of the total Agricultural area in the country.

Fine-tuning Results

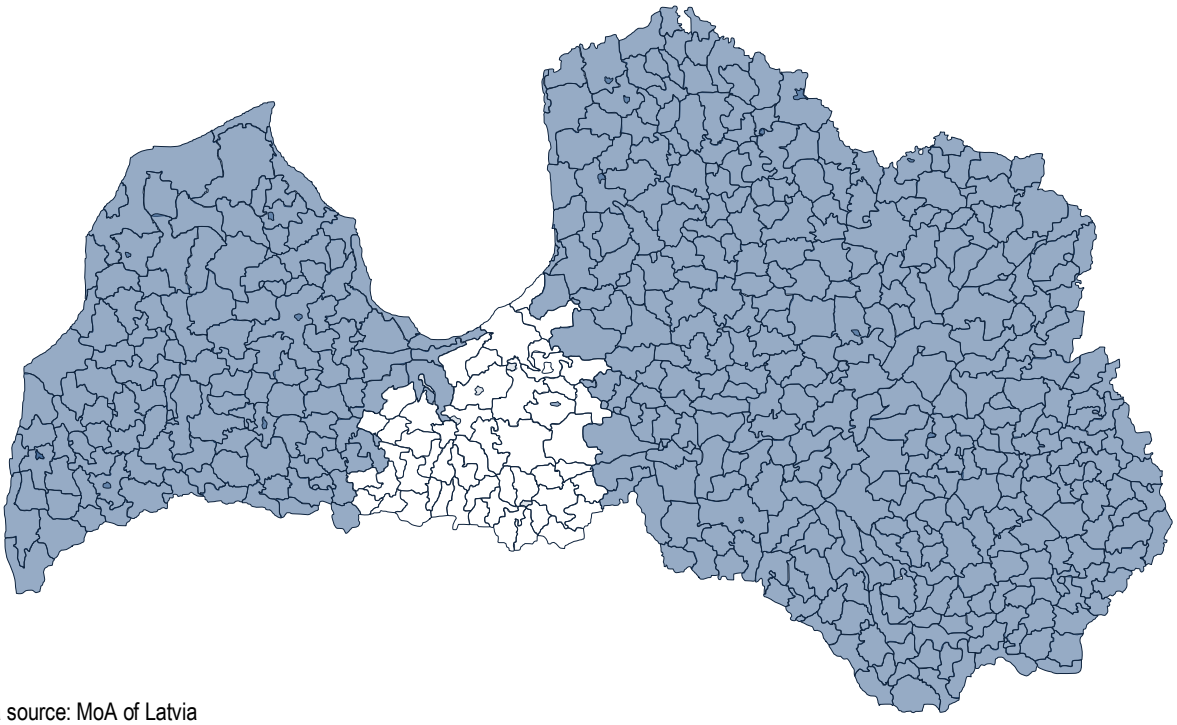
According to the results of assessed criteria, within the framework of Fine-tuning Latvia has identified areas to be excluded from ANC support. In these areas, the assessed results of criteria ensure confidence that the farming constraints caused under the influence of climate are being overcome.

Data source: MoA of Latvia

Figure 2: Areas which have been identified as areas to be excluded from ANC as a result of fine-tuning

In the identified area during fine-tuning modulation, the Agricultural area is 55.2 thsd ha or 2.3% of the total Agricultural area in the country.

By combining the biophysical criteria and results obtained during fine-tuning modulation, Latvia has identified the ANC map.



Data source: MoA of Latvia

Figure 3: ANC map offered by Latvia after applying fine-tuning

In the identified ANC area, the amount of Agricultural Areas is 2123 thsd. ha or 88.8% of the total Agricultural area in the country.

Evaluation of soil in points in the cross-section of parishes

as at 1 January 2014.

Administrative territories and territorial units of regions 3 January 2011	Average weighed qualitative evaluation of LUA p/ha (rounded-off) SLS 01012014
Abavas pagasts	40
Ābeļu pagasts	34
Ādažu novads	40
Aglonas pagasts	27
Ainažu pagasts	35
Aiviekstes pagasts	30
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Aizkraukles pagasts	42
Aizputes pagasts	39
Aknīstes pagasts	36
Allažu pagasts	39
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Alsungas novads	32
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Apes pagasts	35
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Aronas pagasts	31
Asares pagasts	35
Asūnes pagasts	35
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Balvu pagasts	33
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Bārtas pagasts	41
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Beļavas pagasts	33
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Bērzaines pagasts	41
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Bērzes pagasts	57
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Bērziņu pagasts	35
Bērzkalnes pagasts	33
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Extract of Annex to illustrate the principle of regular update of the quality evaluation of the agriculture land pursued by the SLS

5.pielikums
Ministru kabineta
2006.gada 18.aprīļa noteikumiem Nr.305

Zemes vērtēšanas darba tabula
(aramzemes, daudzgadīgo stādījumu, kultivēto ganību zemes kvalitātes novērtējums ballēs)
Table of evalution of land in fertility points (arable, perrennial plantings, sown grassland)

Nr. p.k.	Augsnes tips Soil type	Mehāniskais sastāvs Mechanical content	Iekultivēšanas pakāpe Easinees of cultivation				
			vāja weak (1)	zem vidējas below average (2)	vidēja average (3)	virs vidējas above average (4)	laba good (5)
1.	Vk, Vki	M	20	25-35	40-50	55-65	70
	Vkr	SM1	20	25-40	45-60	65-75	80-85
		SM2	20	25-40	45-60	65-75	80-85
	Bk	SM3	25-30	35-45	50-60	65-75	80-95
	Bn A	mS	25				