

Peatland in Poland: policy challenges and current political agenda

Wiktor Kotowski
Wetlands Conservation Centre
&
Faculty of Biology
University of Warsaw



Fot. Jan Kucharzyk, peat extraction on a fen in SE Poland with stands of numerous threatened species (Polesie Lubelskie).

remaining
natural and seminatural peatlands
(c. 245 000 ha)













drained
(c. 1 350 000 ha)

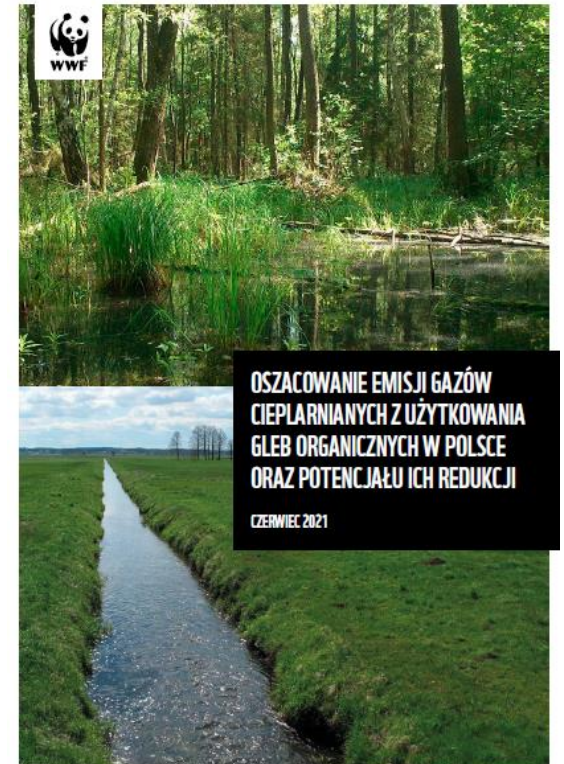


Estimation of emissions from Polish drained peatlands

> 35 MT CO₂ e

> 10 % of all reported GHG emissions

> 100% reported emissions from agriculture





Grasslands on
drained peat
 $17-29 \text{ t CO}_2\text{-e ha}^{-1}\text{y}^{-1}$

Total estimation:
22,1 MT



Arable land
on drained peat
 $37 \text{ t CO}_2\text{-e ha}^{-1}\text{y}^{-1}$

Total estimation
6,9 MT



Forests of
drained peat
(average)
 $12 \text{ t CO}_2\text{-e ha}^{-1}\text{y}^{-1}$

Total estimation
3,3 MT



Peat extraction sites

In situ:

12,4 t CO₂-e ha⁻¹y⁻¹

Ex-situ:

0,9 t CO₂ m⁻³

Total estimation

1,2 MT









Photo K. Brzezińska

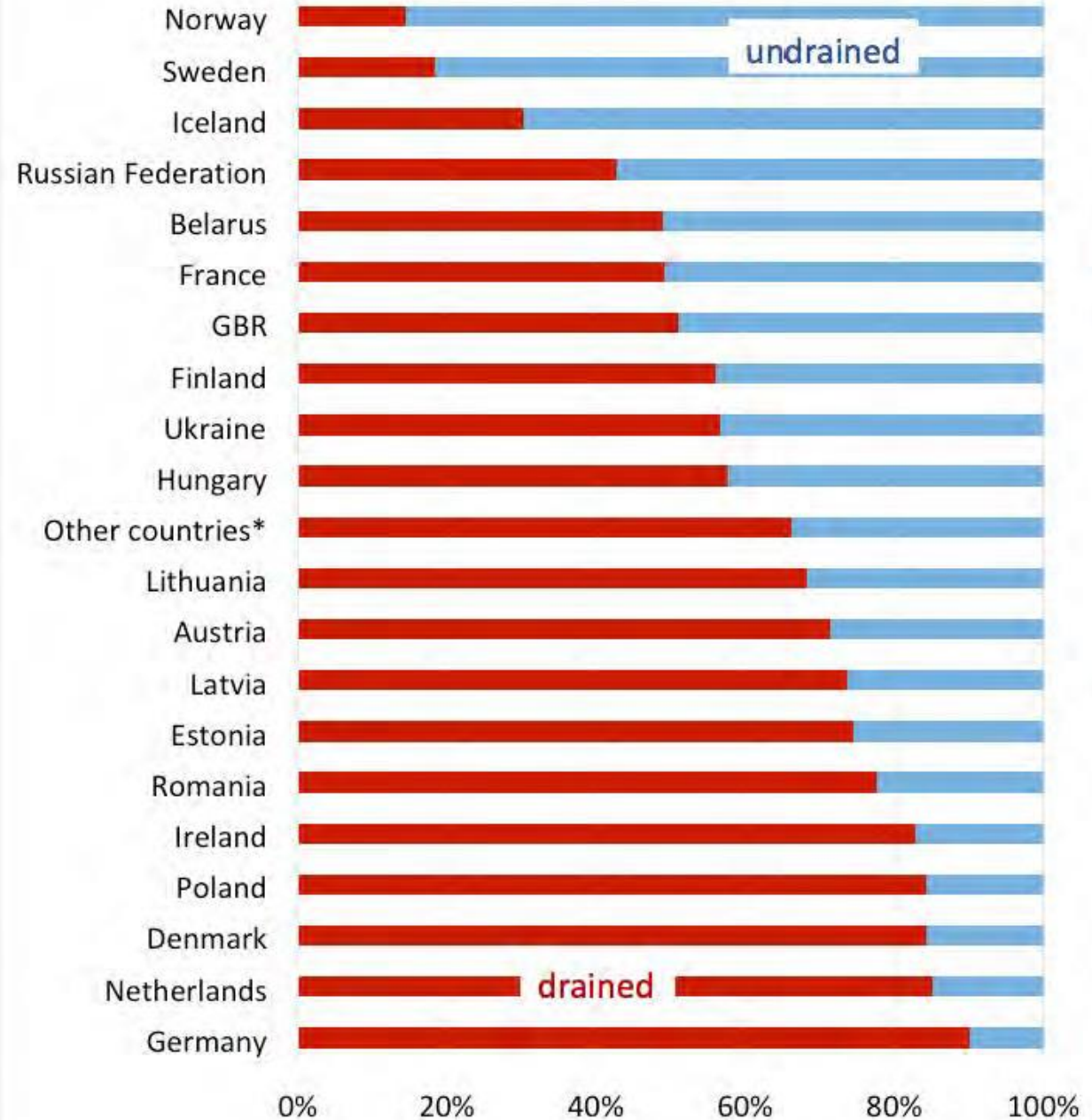
Global Peatlands Assessment: The State of the World's Peatlands

EVIDENCE FOR ACTION TOWARD THE CONSERVATION, RESTORATION,
AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF PEATLANDS

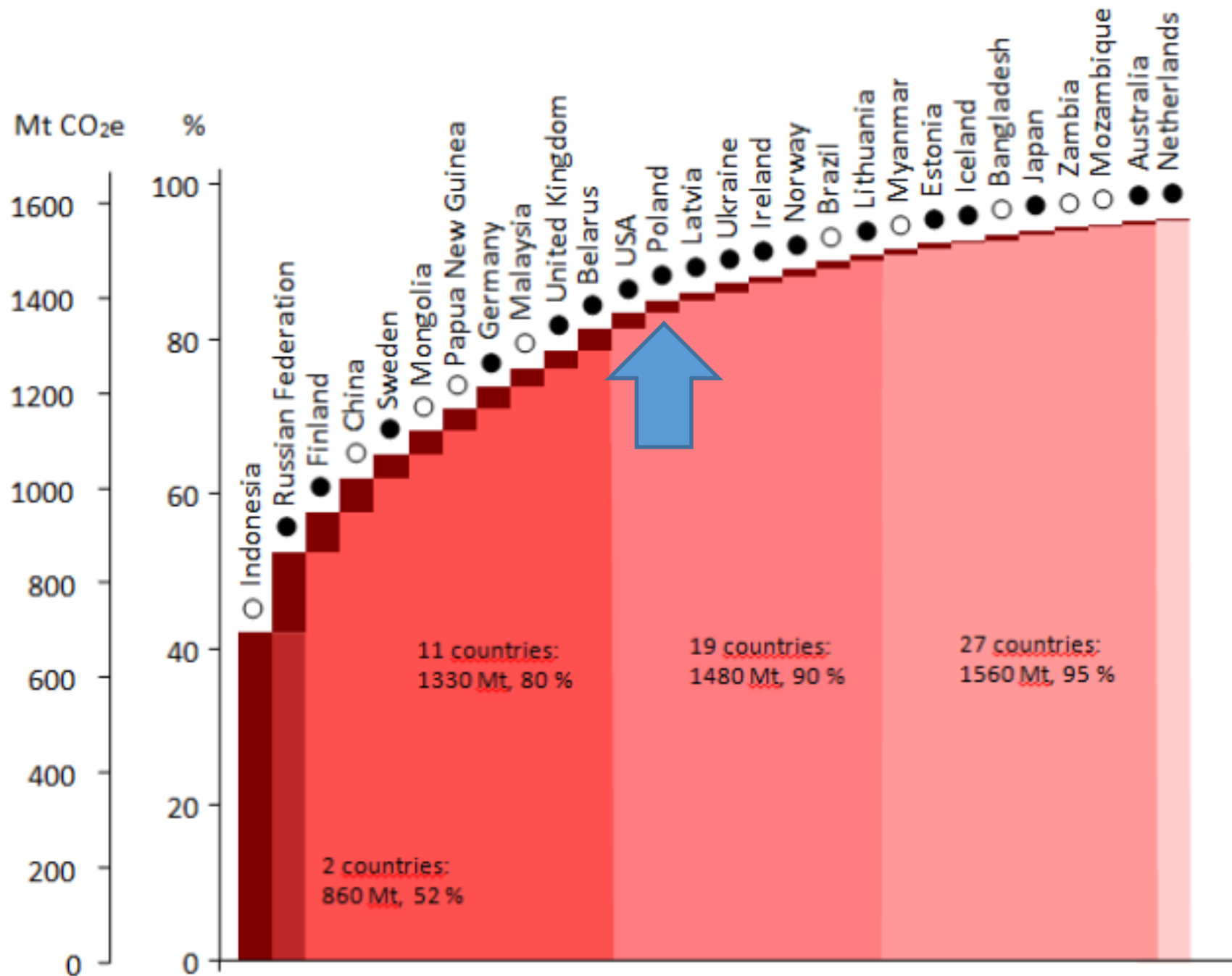
MAIN REPORT



Status of peatlands (%)



Polska jest #13
światowym
emiterem CO₂ z
odwodnionych
torfowisk



Policy

Division of responsibilities

Ministry of Climate & Environment:

- biodiversity
- forests

Ministry of Agriculture:

- CAP
- agrienvironmental schemes

Ministry of Infrastructure:

- water management (rivers, lakes)

Ministry of Technology and Development:

- spatial planning



Peatland-related policies

Act on Nature Conservation:

- peatlands protected only if they harbour protected species or habitats
- peatlands may be assigned status of „ecologically used land” (established by the local government)
- peatlands are subject to protection in nature reserves and several national parks



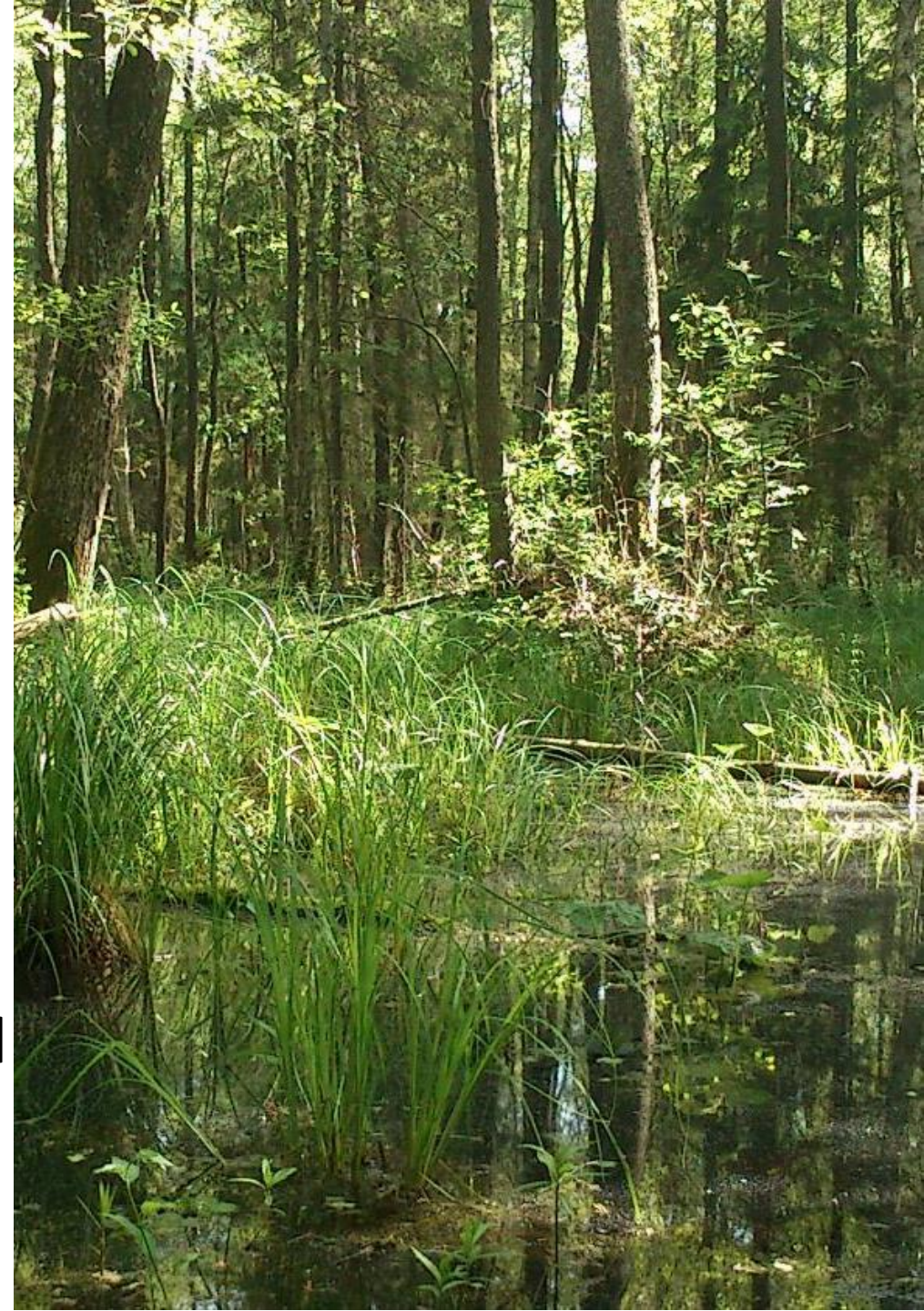
Peatland-related policies

Act on forests

requires „preserving natural mires and peatlands”

Law on protection of agricultural and forest land

treats peatlands as agricultural or forestry land but also calls for their protection



Peatland-related policies

Strategic Plan / CAP

Seminatural N2K (peatland) habitat types are subject to voluntary agrienvironmental programmes

Scheme „peatlands” assumes active management, at least minimal shrub removal

Payment for flooded land: 60 EUR / ha / yr on meadow habitats flooded for at least 2 weeks

Peatlands protected from ploughing only from 2026!

No real rewetting schemes or paludiculture included



Peatland-related policies

Geological and mining law:

regulates concessions
for peat extraction



Peatland-related policies

Water Law:

Covers peatlands as water-dependend ecosystems



Peatland-related policies

Act on sharing information on the environment and its protection, public participation in environmental protection and **environmental impact assessments**

- peat extraction
- peatland drainage (new drainage systems)
- water reservoirs

May require EIA report (upon decision by a regional authority)



Peatland-related policies

Act on Spatial planning

Spatial plans should be based on physographic studies that analyse natural assets and are subject to EIA



Project of Wetland Strategy for Poland 2022-2032

Ewa Jabłońska
Wiktor Kotowski
Marek Giergiczny

PROJEKT
STRATEGII OCHRONY MOKRADEŁ W POLSCE
NA LATA 2022-2032



Listopad 2021



Sfinansowano ze środków
Narodowego Funduszu
Ochrony Środowiska
i Gospodarki Wodnej

Pressure analysis



Stressor	Driver	Priority / extent
Drainage	<u>Agriculture</u> (Forestry) (River training) (Water extraction) (Mining)	High / widespread
Peat extraction	Horticulture / mushroom production	High / local
Inappropriate management	Lack of competence Subsidies / private ownership	High / local
Succession / overgrowth	Lack of management Drainage	Medium / local (partly solved by AE schemes)
Eutrophication	Agriculture	Low / local
Flooding	Fish aquaculture Hydropower	Medium / local
Infrastructure	Roads & railway, urbanization	Medium / local

Goal #1 of the Strategy for 2023-33:
reduce peatland emissions by 30%
rewet 300 000 peatlands

Selected tasks



Prohibit digging new
ditches on undrained
peatlands



Significantly reduce peat extraction and do not open new deposits in nature-valuable peatlands

Introduce legal protection of peatlands and mandatory consideration of the impact on peatlands functions in environmental impact assessments



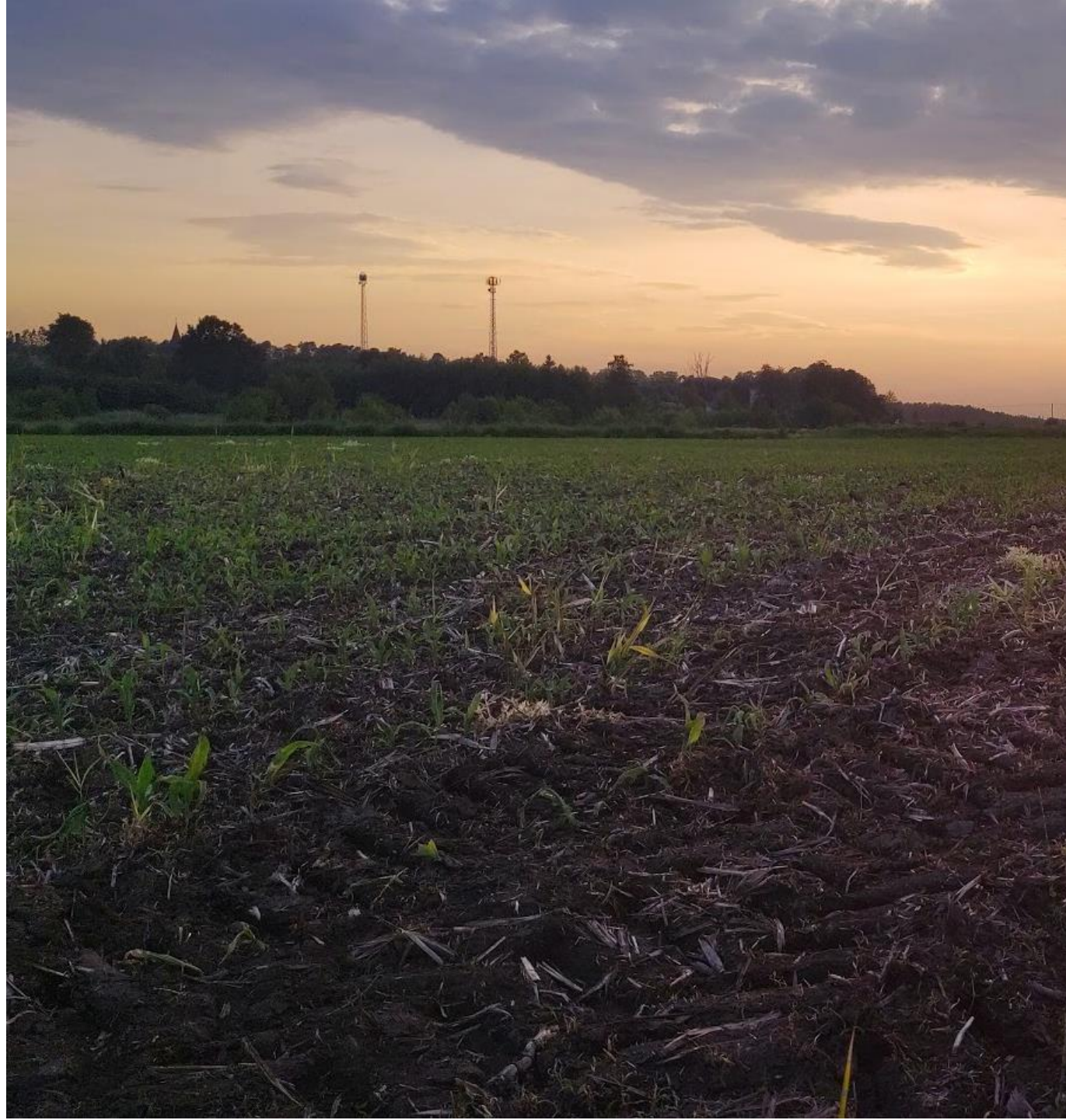
Development and implementation of new guidelines for peatlands in N2K areas, following the principle of minimum necessary intervention & making conservation methods independent of CAP guidelines



purchase of the most valuable peatlands for conservation purposes by the state or NGOs



Complete
cessation of use of
peatlands as
arable land



Ecoschemes / payments
to paludiculture and full
rewetting in CAP



Support to
paludiculture





Cease drainage of
all peatlands in
State Forests

Introduce a Polish
standard for certification
of carbon offsets from
peatland restoration

Franziska Tanneberger & Wendelin Wichtmann (eds.)

Carbon credits from peatland rewetting

Climate – biodiversity – land use



Schweizerbart
Science Publishers



politics



Goniądz, August 2021

We will create a peatland and wetland restoration program that will take full account of the interests of Polish farmers to protect the environment. It is estimated that man-drained peatlands emit more greenhouse gases in Poland than the power plant in Belchatow.

"(...) we will implement a mire and peatland restoration program "

Governmental coalition contract, # 9

2.02.2024
political on
peatland
restoration



What's in the air?

Governmental group on wetland restoration with representatives of 5 ministries:

- Environment and climate
- Agriculture
- Infrastructure (waters)
- Technology and development (spatial planning)
- Finances

What's in the air?

Programme for wetlands to be adopted by 20 March (based on draft Ramsar strategy)

4 complimentary projects >100 M EUR for wetland restoration and conservation in State Forests

Connected: promise to withdraw 20% of forests from management

What's in the air?

Farmer's protests vs Nature Restoration Law & EU Green Deal



Thank you

