3 December 2020

Leibniz Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research (ZALF)

Seal of approval for environmental management system:

ZALF receives EMAS certification

On December 03, 2020, the Leibniz Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research (ZALF) became the first institution of the Leibniz Association and the second non-university research institution in Germany to receive certification for the European sustainability label EMAS. With its environmental management according to the EMAS standard, ZALF is on its way to becoming a sustainable and climate-neutral research institution. In a first step, the site in Muencheberg was certified for this purpose.

The European environmental management system EMAS (Eco-Management and Audit Scheme) goes well beyond legally required environmental standards. It helps organizations and companies reduce their "ecological footprint". As part of the voluntary EMAS certification, ZALF undertakes to systematically measure and reduce the emission of greenhouse gases and the consumption of resources in its operations. For this purpose, environmental objectives were defined, a catalog of measures was developed and implementation was started.

On December 3, 2020, the Administrative Director of ZALF, Cornelia Rosenberg, received the certification certificate from the Chief Executive Officer of the IHK (the Chamber of Commerce and Industry) Ostbrandenburg, Mr. Gundolf Schülke.

Researching sustainability and acting sustainably

Sustainability has high priority for ZALF and its employees. Research on sustainable agriculture of the future contributes to finding solutions for global challenges such as climate change, food security, biodiversity conservation and resource scarcity. "With environmental management in accordance with EMAS, we want to ensure that not only our research but also our operating processes are optimized even more intensively in future from a sustainability perspective", explains Rosenberg. "To this end, we have agreed on extensive measures in many areas of operation:

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Purchasing, the vehicle fleet, facility management, and the canteen are to make even more sustainable use of resources in the future." Nature conservation also plays a major role at ZALF. "We specifically support in-house projects that help to preserve biodiversity on the ZALF site", says Rosenberg. "A lot of potential for reducing the consumption of resources lies in our everyday work," adds Michael Berg-Mohnicke, who accompanied the introduction of EMAS at ZALF as Environmental Management Officer. "That's why we're now also providing all our employees with a sustainability guide that contains lots of advice on how to be more sustainable in their everyday work."

Continuously monitoring and communicating progress

The ZALF environmental team has developed an environmental statement in a multi-stage evaluation process. It initially records key performance indicators relevant to the main site in Muencheberg, Brandenburg, such as energy, water and material consumption, waste quantities and CO_2 emissions. The environmental statement makes ZALF's environmental objectives and necessary measures transparent and assigns responsibilities for their implementation. EMAS-certified organizations are audited every three years by an independent external body. Internally, environmental objectives and measures are revised annually to continuously improve the organization's environmental performance. The other ZALF sites in Dedelow and Paulinenaue are to follow in 2022.

Sustainability in all areas

ZALF's environmental objectives include, for example, a more economical use of water, the reduction and better separation of waste, the reduction of paper consumption, the expansion of opportunities for in-house energy generation, and the reduction of CO_2emissions, for example during business trips.

ZALF employees are actively involved in the development and implementation of the measures. For example, a volunteer working group, together with ZALF's facility management, takes care of nature conservation on the ZALF site: Thus, flowering areas are specifically promoted, nesting boxes are set up and in one project solutions for the protection of amphibians are implemented.

Further information:

https://www.zalf.de/en/ueber_uns/emas/Pages/default.aspx

Download the ZALF environmental statement (German):
https://www.zalf.de/de/ueber_uns/emas/Documents/ZALF_Umwelterklaerung.pdf

The Leibniz Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research (ZALF) was the first institution of the Leibniz Association to be awarded the European environmental label EMAS. In the picture: Cornelia Rosenberg, Administrative Director of ZALF, Gundolf Schülke, Chief Executive Officer of IHK Ostbrandenburg | The image is released for editorial purposes, provided the source is given: ©Hendrik Schneider / ZALF | Image source in color and print quality: http://www.zalf.de/de/aktuelles

In the picture: Gundolf Schülke, Chief Executive Officer of IHK Ostbrandenburg (left), Cornelia Rosenberg, Administrative Director of ZALF (third from left), and members of the ZALF environmental team. | The image is released for editorial purposes, provided the source is given: ©Sibylle Krickel / ZALF | Image source in color and print quality: http://www.zalf.de/de/aktuelles

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About the Leibniz Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research (ZALF) in Muencheberg, member of the Leibniz Association:

Mission of ZALF is to deliver solutions for an economically, environmentally and socially sustainable agriculture –together with society.

As a contribution to overcoming global challenges such as climate change, food security, biodiversity conservation and resource scarcity, we develop and design crop systems, integrated in their landscape contexts that combine food security with sustainability. Therefore we process complex landscape data with a unique set of experimental methods, new technologies and models as well as socio-economic approaches.

ZALF research is integrated systems research: starting from processes in soils and plants to causal relationships on the field and landscape level up to global impacts and complex interactions between landscapes, society and economy. www.zalf.de