Assessment of soils according to their performance

BEWERTUNG VON BÖDEN NACH IHRER LEISTUNGSFÄHIGKEIT

Soils are dug out, sealed and covered for settlement and traffic areas, raw material extraction and other structural measures.

With the "Reclaim land in Baden-Württemberg" alliance, substantial efforts are already being made to reduce land use (Baden-Württemberg Ministry of the Environment, 2005). Local authorities are called upon to consistently implement the basic principle of "internal development before external development" by reusing already sealed, structurally modified or built on land and using vacant plots. Nonetheless, soils will continue to be used for settlement and traffic areas, for raw material extraction or infrastructure projects and developments will also take place "on green field sites".

In the interests of sustainable management of the resource soil, stocks of which cannot be increased, it is necessary to balance the use of soils both quantitatively and qualitatively and to turn to soils which, due to precontamination or naturally, have the least possible performance. In this way, the requirements of Baden-Württemberg's Soil Conservation and Contaminated Site Law (BodSchAG) and the Building Code (BauGB) for sparing, careful and balanced handling of soil are also met. Proper and practical assessment of soils is prerequisite, in order to take these requirements into consideration in planning.

Until now, the guidelines of Baden-Württemberg's Ministry of the Environment, "Assessment of Soils according to their performance" ("Bewertung von Böden nach ihrer Leistungsfähigkeit") (Umweltministerium Baden-Württemberg, 1995) were available as the basis for this. These guidelines have proven their worth in practice. According to the requirements of the Federal Soil Conservation Law (BBodSchG) and the LBodSchAG, the principle of determining the performance of soils by assessing soil functions has proven to be the right way to include soils in planning and approval procedures. The soil functions are assessed with clearly understandable criteria and measurable parameters.

However, after 15 years, this revision was necessary. For example, the digital base data has been developed further. By adjusting the assessment scale, it is possible to harmonise the procedure with the approaches used for other sensitive receptors, and last but not least, experience acquired from 15 years of practical use is taken into account.

The revision essentially includes:

- Simplification of the assessment procedure while retaining the assessment system used to date as far as possible
- Reduction of the number of assessment stages
- Alignment of the assessment results of different base data

The requirements for assessment of the soil functions create the necessary basis for controlling the

use of land. Implementation of the assessment shows how high the losses in soil functions will be due to a specific project, and is therefore also prerequisite for use of the practical guide: "The sensitive receptor soil in legal nature conservation impact mitigation regulation" ("Das Schutzgut Boden in der naturschutzrechtlichen Eingriffsregelung" - LUBW, 2011).

The guidelines are intended for the relevant administration departments, experts, project funders and all persons involved in the planning and consent procedures. It provides a practical and, where possible, generally understandable overview of the assessment of soils and their functions.