



**European Conference  
Promoting the  
Socio-Economic Benefits  
of Natura 2000**

**Brussels, 28–29 November 2002**

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**Conference Proceedings**





**Proceedings of the  
European Conference on  
'Promoting the Socio-Economic  
Benefits of Natura 2000', Brussels,  
28–29 November 2002**

*Report by the  
Institute for European Environmental  
Policy (IEEP), December 2002*

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### Institute for European Environmental Policy

The Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP) is a leading centre for the analysis and development of environmental policy in Europe. Our work focuses on European Union (EU) environment policy, and environmental aspects of other sectoral policies such as transport, regional development, agriculture and fisheries. We are also actively engaged in the development of policy in EU Member States and in Central and Eastern Europe. IEEP seeks both to raise awareness of European environmental policy and to advance policy-making along sustainable paths.



WWF is one of the world's largest and most experienced independent conservation organisations, with almost 5 million supporters and a global network active in more than 90 countries.

The mission of WWF is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by:

- Conserving the world's biological diversity
- Ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable
- Promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

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# 1. Introduction to the Conference

The European Conference on Promoting the Benefits of Natura 2000 was jointly organised by IEEP and WWF. The conference was part of a one-year project to identify and communicate the actual and potential benefits of Natura 2000 among socio-economic actors and authorities across Europe. At the step of the new phase of establishment of long term management planning for the Natura 2000 network, the aim was to increase people's understanding and appreciation of the positive opportunities that Natura 2000 can bring to local communities and economies.

## 1.1 The Natura 2000 Network

Natura 2000 is the network of special areas for nature conservation established under the Habitats Directive. Although Natura 2000 is supposed to be in place by 2004, work is very much behind schedule. The delays in creating Natura 2000 are partly due to local concerns that Natura 2000 designation will damage prospects for economic development in these areas. In practice, however, there is increasing evidence that Natura 2000 designation can lead to opportunities for local communities and economies, as well as to society as a whole given the right conditions. As Natura 2000 enters a new phase focusing on the management of sites, there is a chance again to address the tension between nature conservation and economic and social development, and as far as possible, to resolve conflicts and maximise benefits.

## 1.2 IEEP/WWF Project – Promoting the Socio-economic Benefits of Natura 2000

IEEP and WWF came together to identify the socio-economic benefits and, using their network of contacts and communication expertise, to promote these benefits widely. A major part of this process has involved preparing six case studies looking at proposed Natura 2000 sites in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia and Spain. Local seminars provided an

opportunity to raise awareness of, and exchange information on, potential and actual benefits of the Natura 2000 network. Importantly, these local events attracted participants from the range of stakeholders potentially affected by Natura 2000 designation, including farmers and landowners, local authorities and business.

These efforts culminated in the publication of a series of local brochures, produced in original language and translated into English, on the following actual or potential Natura 2000 areas (see map):

<i>Austria</i>	Steirische Grenzmuir, floodplains corridor along the Mur, bordering Slovenia
<i>Belgium</i>	Pond Complex of Central-Limburg
<i>Denmark</i>	Lille Vildmose – A raised peat bog unique in size and history
<i>Estonia</i>	Emajõe Suursoo Mire and Piiirissaar Island
<i>Latvia</i>	Ainazi Town and its Rural Territory (ATRT)
<i>Spain</i>	Riaza River Gorges – habitat of largest population of griffon vultures



Local input was organised by WWF Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Latvia and Spain, as well as the Peipsi Centre for Transboundary Cooperation, Estonia.

### **1.3 European Conference to Promote the Socio-Economic Benefits of Natura 2000**

The European Conference, held in November 2002, gathered ideas and lessons on the perception of Natura 2000 and ways to promote it 'better' among local communities and economic players. The conference showcased the results of the six case studies, as well as cases collected from other regions of the EU and the new Member States. It exchanged experience and good practice, for example, in relation to employment creation, and rural and tourism development in or around Natura 2000 sites. It examined future opportunities to maximise benefits, and ways to realise these such as through better communication or increased local participation and access to EU funding.

A substantial Conference background report was produced to inform discussions and to provide a useful reference for delegates and others wishing to promote the benefits of Natura 2000. It also constitutes a source of information for those wishing to benefit individually or collectively from Natura 2000. The report presents potential socio-economic benefits of Natura 2000, providing concrete examples and good practice drawn from the six case studies.

In preparing this Conference, and in the course of the project as a whole, we have tried to provide an honest and balanced picture of existing practices and opportunities, including opportunities for individual landowners, local communities and society more broadly. In so doing, it was recognised that while some benefits are already being reaped, in many cases substantial additional effort is needed to harness the full potential of Natura 2000.

The presentations and discussions during the conference resulted in a set of conclusions, summarised at the end of these proceedings. The lessons learned can be brought into various fora, including discussions on communicating and financing Natura 2000, review of the Common Agricultural Policy and the future of the EU budget. This includes in particular the Candidate Countries, so that some of the mistakes made by the existing EU countries can be avoided.

### **1.4 Support for the project and Conference**

Organising this project and conference would not have been possible without the financial support of others. We are particularly grateful to the European Commission (DGENV, Communications and Civil Society Unit), as well as the Danish Forest and Nature Agency; English Nature; Scottish Natural Heritage; the Ministry of the Flemish Community, Nature Direction; and the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for their support.

We are also grateful for the considerable contributions of other individuals, including staff at IEEP and the WWF European Policy Office, as well as the many contributions of the chairs, rapporteurs and speakers during the Conference.

### **1.5 Structure of the Proceedings**

These proceedings provide a brief and accessible overview of the Conference presentations and subsequent discussion. The main part of the proceedings contains short summaries of each of the presentations during the plenary and working group sessions, followed by summaries of the question and answer sessions (Section 2). A short synthesis of key conclusions drawn from the Conference and recommendations for subsequent work, follows in Section 3. Finally, the annexes include the Conference Programme (Annex I) and the final delegate list (Annex II).

These proceedings are complemented by the six case studies, produced in national language and English, the published report 'Promoting the Socio-Economic Benefits of Natura 2000', as well as presentations from the Conference and other background material. The various project outputs are available on the IEEP and WWF web sites: [www.ieep.org.uk](http://www.ieep.org.uk) and [www.panda.org](http://www.panda.org), respectively.

Web sites for project partners are:

IEEP	<a href="http://www.ieep.org.uk">www.ieep.org.uk</a>
WWF European Policy Office	<a href="http://www.panda.org/epo">www.panda.org/epo</a>
WWF Austria	<a href="http://www.wwf.at">www.wwf.at</a>
WWF Belgium	<a href="http://www.wwf.be">www.wwf.be</a>
WWF Denmark	<a href="http://www.wwf.dk">www.wwf.dk</a>
WWF Estonia	<a href="http://www.wwf.es">www.wwf.es</a>
WWF Latvia	<a href="http://www.wwf.lv">www.wwf.lv</a>
Peipsi CTC	<a href="http://www.ctc.ee">www.ctc.ee</a>

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## 2. Summary of Presentations and Discussions

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### SESSION 1: INTRODUCTIONS AND SCENE-SETTING

#### Welcome and introductions

*David Baldock, Director, IEEP*

David Baldock opened the Conference, introducing the main objectives for the Conference and the general context for a discussion on the socio-economic benefits of Natura 2000. He noted that 2002 was the 10th anniversary of the launch of the Habitats Directive, which calls for the creation of the Natura 2000 network of excellence. The Habitats Directive is nothing less than epoch-making legislation, highly ambitious, and unique in the world. WWF and IEEP have been following the development and now the implementation of this Directive and the Birds Directive with great interest. While progress has been slow, it has nevertheless been remarkable.

#### The state of play on Natura 2000

*Nicholas Hanley, Head of Nature and Biodiversity Unit, DGEV, European Commission*

Nicholas Hanley summarised the state of play on Natura 2000 in the EU. He clarified that Natura 2000 sites, taken together, account for an area approximately the size of Germany. Furthermore, the 60 million hectares, being designated in the current 15 EU Member States, will rise to at least 85 million hectares when sites in the Candidate Countries are included. In the accession negotiations there were no derogations given regarding Natura 2000, and the Commission therefore expects lists of proposed sites to be ready on the day of accession. In the meantime, the Candidate Countries are already sitting in on Habitats Committee meetings, and are engaging in regular bilateral discussions, facilitating the

challenge of communicating Natura 2000 lists by the date of accession. Another important issue is that the Candidate Countries will not be getting support under the CAP in the same way as existing Member States currently do. By the time they are fully eligible for CAP support, the CAP is likely to have changed. While Mr Hanley acknowledged the fact that there is the risk that enlargement is to the detriment of nature, he emphasised that the full implementation of Natura 2000 offers the best type of guarantee to ensure that nature conservation is balanced with economic and social development.

#### Developing a vision for sustainable rural development

*Kim Carstensen, CEO, WWF Denmark*

Kim Carstensen presented a vision for sustainable rural development. He started by outlining the key historic developments that have affected rural development, noting, inter alia, the tremendous intensification of agriculture in the EU and the growth in road building. There is also a rural social crisis, with depopulation causing difficulties in many areas. Agricultural systems must or will change given the inevitable need to reduce agricultural subsidies, whether influenced by WTO decisions or the costs of EU enlargement. He noted the increased fragmentation of nature, continuing despite progress in setting up the Natura 2000 network, and underlined the need to improve ecological 'connectivity' so as to allow nature to function properly. Some conservation sites are too small, and larger areas are needed to allow for more site integrity and a better response to pressures, such as global warming and pollution impacts from outside sites.

The Habitats Directive now includes around 15,000 sites, covering 0.5 million km<sup>2</sup>. Mr Carstensen emphasised that it is important to address issues such as compensation to landowners affected by Natura 2000, and ways of

integrating Natura 2000 into rural development more broadly. Furthermore, progress is dependent upon there being proper public participation, anchoring and acceptance of Natura 2000. It is evident that sites offer new opportunities (eg Lille Vildmose in Denmark), and these chances need to be explored, in order to identify what the particular value or competitive advantage is in each case. Overall, the key is to move away from a simple focus on conventional land-use patterns (agricultural production, road-building, etc), to a form of development that includes the opportunities offered by Natura 2000. In this regard, it is important to explore the differences between 'leader' regions and others 'lagging' behind. In the case of the former, there should be a focus on using existing strengths and qualifications, diversifying income sources and rural amenities, and prioritising public involvement. In 'laggard' rural areas, there is a greater need to build capacity, to make it possible for these areas to become leaders in future. At the strategic level, attention should be given to establishing a network of core sites (Natura 2000), as well as ecological corridors between protected areas. Mr Carstensen further stressed the need for greater policy and programme integration and coherence, and for an emphasis on strengthening local capacity and local governance. With these efforts, the opportunities of Natura 2000 for sustainable local community development can be realised.

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## DISCUSSION: MAIN POINTS

The need for more 'joined-up' thinking on Natura 2000, particularly as regards the integration of its objectives into sectoral policies, was discussed.

Participants identified structural barriers to communicating in relation to Natura 2000. In Germany, for instance, communication between the *Länder* governments and NGO can be slowed down given (perceptions of) the *Länder's* political affiliation. It may be helpful to outline ways of communicating more effectively, with localities, regions and groups choosing the approach most suitable for them. Initiatives like 'Car Free Cities' for Natura 2000 may also be useful.

People are often suspicious of government interference, though perhaps less so of local government than central government. Dialogue needs to be open, with people feeling listened to and taken seriously. In relation to site designation, it must be clear whether landowners are being consulted or just being 'told', otherwise it may prove

difficult to get landowners to follow advice subsequently. A forestry sector representative noted that strong consultation is standard practice in some countries and this should be extended to other regions. If not, then the chance to communicate the positive aspects of Natura 2000 may be missed, while resentment is created towards 'Europe'.

It seems that many people are still unaware of the Natura 2000 protection 'tool', its overall aims and why individual sites are designated. It is often difficult for people to visualise their local piece of the landscape as part of a greater European network. Some sites are designated to protect existing habitats and species, others to restore aspects of the site, or to ensure greater connectivity between core areas by providing wildlife corridors.

The participants further acknowledged a need to involve corporate interests in site discussions, notably water companies and the tourism industry. Benefits to the insurance, banking and other service sectors should also be examined. Good natural surroundings also make it easier to attract employees across the board.

Smaller businesses also need to be involved more closely. This may be facilitated by addressing groups of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) when communicating the objectives of Natura 2000 and exploring associated business opportunities. It was noted that much urban development stems from SMEs, and that these experiences could perhaps be transferred to rural areas.

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## SESSION 2: IDENTIFYING SOCIO-ECONOMIC BENEFITS

The aim of this round table session was to present the overall picture of socio-economic benefits of Natura 2000 (Patrick ten Brink of IEEP), based on work carried out by IEEP, WWF national and partner offices, and national experts. Presentations were made on three of the six project case studies, with Michael Jungmeier, E-C-O Institut, Austria, focusing on the Steirische Grenzmur study and the specific methods used to identify benefits. Peteris Strautins, WWF Latvia, presented aspects of the Latvian Ainazi Town and its Rural Territory study, and suggested ways of using Natura 2000 as a regional development tool. Luc Dries, WWF Belgium, focused on

generating local awareness and debate, based on experiences gained in the Pond Complex region of Central Limburg. The presentations were followed by a 'response to the presentations' from Jacqui Cuff, Rural Horizons, notably identifying the key conditions for realising benefits.

## Identifying the socio-economic benefits of Natura 2000

*Patrick ten Brink, Senior Fellow, IEEP*

Patrick ten Brink presented the context for and approach to IEEP's and WWF's work on promoting the socio-economic benefits of Natura 2000. The core of the work involved six case studies, which focused on a bottom-up site-specific analysis of the potential socio-economic benefits of Natura 2000, with insights obtained through extensive stakeholder discussions and workshops, backed up by regional expertise and analysis. The aim was to generate a common understanding of existing and potential benefits for each of the six sites. The lessons gained from this local work have been drawn together in the Conference background report, and can be used to support activities in many of the current 15,000 or so sites making up Natura 2000. The case studies can also be read alongside the more global valuations of natural systems that have been made elsewhere (see Conference background report).

Patrick ten Brink emphasised that benefits include economic opportunities such as avoided costs for pre-treating drinking water or for flood control, resulting from ecosystem services. There are also economic benefits from increased tourism spend, such as the purchase of local (branded) products, further development of ecological farming with associated revenue streams, as well as the possibility to attract significant quantities of outside funding from national and EU sources to support site management. As for social benefits, proper development of the Natura 2000 sites can help in diversifying employment, lengthening employment periods, and retaining youth, labour and skills in the region. Natura 2000 sites may be used as centres for teaching, may attract volunteer support, and generate 'simple' health and amenity benefits (through activities such as walking, fishing etc). While employment figures for individual sites may appear small (eg 100 jobs supported in the Lille Vildmose in Denmark, if all Natura 2000 development opportunities are realised), they are significant for the local community. Furthermore, bearing in mind the 15,000 Natura 2000 sites across the EU, benefits to the Union as a whole are considerable.

## Developing methods for identifying benefits

*Michael Jungmeier, E-C-O Institut, Austria*

Michael Jungmeier summarised the methodology used by his Institute to calculate benefits in the case of the Natura 2000 site 'Steirische Grenzmuur' (Austrian case study). His presentation showed the value of providing an in-depth and honest analysis of the sectors which may win or lose in light of Natura 2000 designation, using both optimistic and pessimistic scenarios. This analytical evaluation was complemented by extensive stakeholder consultation, both as an input to the analysis as well as to test the robustness of the results. Two Austrian stakeholder workshops focused on how to minimise any costs and risks associated with Natura 2000 designation, for example, by clear zonal planning for continued gravel extraction. The workshops were also used to identify opportunities inherent in the Natura 2000 site, and ways in which these can be embraced and the benefits realised.

## Using Natura 2000 as a development tool

*Peteris Strautins, WWF Latvia*

Peteris Strautins presented the case study area of Ainazi town and its rural territory (ATRT) in Northern Latvia. The site offers great ecological potential, opportunities for social and economic rural development and increased employment. The area includes River Salaca, which is an important salmonoid river, and also a prospective Natura 2000 site. One of the tools for promoting the sustainable development of this area is sound tourism. The prospect of revenue generated by tourism can encourage the local population to pay more attention to environmental problems and may lead to a change in attitudes. For instance, there is already growing opposition towards illegal salmon fishing in the region. Revenue from tourism can also be channelled into environmental protection activities, thus enhancing further the attraction of the region. The prospect of development generated by tourism may also influence decision-making at municipal level in a positive way. Mr Strautins provided an example from nearby Staicele town, where plans for the construction of a hydro-electric dam were cancelled for this reason.

The main tourist attractions in the area are the Salaca River, with its fishing and boating opportunities, Ainazi beach, and two museums in Ainazi town. Approximately



20,000 people visit ATRT annually, and the number of visitors is growing by approximately 7% each year. About 1.8% of local revenue and a similar share of employment is generated through the tourism sector. These shares could increase to about 3.5% in the next 5 years, if growth continues at the current pace (and expenditure per tourist growths in line with the fast growth of Latvia's GDP). If tourism is actively promoted, shares could also grow to about 8% in the respective period.

## **Generating local awareness and debate**

*Luc Dries, WWF Belgium*

Luc Dries outlined the process used by WWF Belgium in discussing socio-economic benefits with local stakeholders. In order to avoid suspicion, and to collect as much information as possible, meetings were organised with groups of similar stakeholders, or with individuals, allowing direct contact and more time for in depth and private discussions, thereby creating a relationship of trust and mutual understanding.

Nonetheless, WWF Belgium had to face some considerable communication problems with certain private landowners. Individuals used the occasion to ventilate their frustrations, showing little interest in the broader objectives of the case study. It was found that most people were poorly informed about the selection and designation criteria, about the restrictions that designation might create on further management practices, about the financial implications of designation, and about potential opportunities of Natura 2000. Such lack of information leads to uncertainty, creating unnecessary resistance towards new developments. This can hinder progress and innovative solutions to possible costs. A key lesson from the Belgian experience is that authorities should be more proactive in communicating requirements and opportunities under the Natura 2000 scheme on a regular basis. In order to create broad public support, ownership and a platform for the values of nature, such communication should not be limited to one-off events, but should constitute an open and continuous dialogue.

## **Key conditions for realising benefits**

*Jacqui Cuff, Rural Horizons*

Jacqui Cuff responded to the preceding presentations, looking in particular at ways to ensure benefits are generated more widely and more routinely. Rural areas face numerous challenges, including aging populations, agricultural dependence/subsidy culture, remoteness/

access issues and a declining skills base. Positive development will often depend on a closer partnership between NGOs and key stakeholders affected by Natura 2000. In addition to the usual interest groups, key stakeholders include community groups and sometimes, key individuals. In practice, this requires capacity building with regards to the value of natural assets in supporting social and economic development. Ms Cuff stressed that there needs to be more 'participation' on the ground. This involves active involvement of stakeholders in developing options for rural development within Natura 2000 sites. Mere consultation on pre-prepared documents is not enough. The principle of 'active involvement' of stakeholders is now enshrined in the Water Framework Directive, and lessons can be learnt from this for Natura 2000, particularly, but not exclusively, in wetland sites. Care, however, does need to be taken to manage stakeholder expectations, as these need to be realistic and need to be followed by action.

Keys to success include:

- closer inter-linkages between social, economic and environmental objectives and opportunities;
- blocking leakages from the local economy and adding value to Natura 2000 products;
- using innovation and imagination in projects and policies;
- providing adequate rural services to maintain rural communities within Natura 2000 sites;
- securing active involvement and real stakeholder participation; and
- providing training in both new and traditional skills.

Financial support is also crucial. We are currently in a 'pump priming' culture, where development aid is often targeted at initial capital investment projects rather than supporting longer-term revenue costs. There is a need to adopt a new approach focused on regenerating areas in the long-term, and making small-scale and non-capital investment projects mainstream, rather than 'add-ons' to agricultural and regional policies. Enlargement will place additional pressures on limited financial resources, and makes it even more critical that funding is used in a way that secures maximum long-term economic sustainability.

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## **DISCUSSION: MAIN POINTS**

**A key point in the discussions was that the Natura 2000 network often establishes public benefits at**

some private cost. The issue is not just to understand the level of benefits, but to whom and under what circumstances these benefits accrue. Similarly, it is important to understand the level of costs, and who faces them. This allows one to identify who are the winners and losers, in many ways building on the approach adopted by the Austrian case study.

A related issue concerns funding or compensation relating to the management of Natura 2000. This is frequently a grey area, which many wish to see clarified. In relation to Natura 2000, it may be preferable to talk of 'incentives' or 'payments', rather than 'compensation' or 'subsidies'. After all, the emphasis should be on private parties performing public services for which they are being rewarded. Delegates also noted the need for funding that is secure over the long-term, to guarantee the appropriate management of sites and the maintenance of conservation values into the future.

The point was made that in the EU, the approach to designation and compensation has been inappropriate. There is a tendency for site to be designated and only subsequently, a discussion of why this designation has occurred and what type of compensation might be made available as a consequence. There is an opportunity to avoid this mistake in the Candidate Countries, given that proposed site lists have not yet been drawn up. However, engaging in consultation and then drafting these lists would present a considerable challenge, given the time-constraints and the many other priorities facing the new Member States.

Finally, there was some discussion of rural service provision, which was noted as being key for rural areas. Population retention in rural areas is linked to whether there is at least a minimum service infrastructure accessible (eg post office, schools and churches). In relation to skill retention, it was underlined that preserving old skills was equally important as attracting new skills. However, lots of traditional skills relevant to high nature value farming are being lost as older generations disappear.

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## SESSION 3: REALISING THE BENEFITS

The aim of Session 3, chaired by Jane Dalglish of the Scottish Executive, was to explore in greater detail the socio-economic benefits of Natura 2000, building on lessons learnt within the 6 project case studies, but also drawing on good practice from other regions. The Session commenced with a presentation from Jouni Paavola of the University of East Anglia, exploring the global value of nature, based on the findings of a recent research project. This was followed by three parallel working groups: i) Generating economic benefits through Natura 2000 management; ii) Marketing the Natura 2000 brand; and iii) Natura 2000 as an asset for regional development. In each of these, good practice was discussed (how to make good practice standard practice), as well factors affecting the potential for benefits. This included discussions on the barriers associated with promoting benefits, and how these could be addressed (What can we do now? What needs to change to make this happen? How do we get people on board). The results of each of the break-out sessions were presented back to the plenary, and followed by a general discussion.

### The global value of nature

*Jouni Paavola, University of East Anglia*

Jouni Paavola presented the results of a literature review on the values associated with conserving intact or relatively unmodified units of key biomes across the world. The study compared the difference in the value of the economic benefits provided by wild ecosystems and of the value of those same ecosystems when converted to human use. According to Paavola, a single year's habitat conversion costs in the order of \$250 billion per year, in net terms. The overall benefit/cost ratio of an effective global programme for the conservation of remaining wild nature is thus at least 100:1. The main points raised in the presentation concerned ways of valuing nature, importantly including caveats, the different levels of benefits arising in relation to different habitat types (temperate forests and rangelands, tropical forests, temperate wetlands and mangroves and coral reefs), and trends and costs of conservation. Mr Paavola concluded that the evidence strongly suggests that conservation and sustainable use are often economically more feasible use options for marginal units of a resource than their conversion or intensive use. Existing valuation studies do not serve well environmental decision-making

and management; the distribution of multiple benefits and costs should be explored further in future studies. More attention should also be paid to institutions that realise multiple-use benefits, so that stronger incentives can be created for conservation.

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### **WORKING GROUP 1: GENERATING ECONOMIC BENEFITS THROUGH NATURA 2000 MANAGEMENT**

This session was structured around two presentations – one by Aldina Franco, Centre for Ecology, Evolution and Conservation, University of East Anglia, which focused on Portuguese experience, and the other by Luis Suarez, WWF Spain/Adena which focused on the Spanish experience. The presentations were followed by an extensive debate, with the main conclusions noted below.

#### **Targeting agri-environment schemes at Natura 2000 in Portugal**

*Aldina Franco, Centre for Ecology, Evolution and Conservation, University of East Anglia*

Aldina Franco introduced the 'Castro Verde Zonal Plan', an agri-environment scheme established for the Castro Verde Special Protection Area as part of a LIFE project run by LPN (a Portuguese nature conservation organisation). The project involved local farmers, schools, and other local community members, in the protection of steppe birds. Ms Franco outlined some of the key factors that made the project a success. Co-operation between all stakeholders was essential, with one NGO working with the pro-environment local council to develop a local and regional territorial plan for zoning. The plan was helpful in identifying areas suitable for continued activity, areas remaining open for development and areas needing stricter protection. In addition, a large number of seminars were held to explain the project aims and proposed results to farmers associations. These discussions helped identify and put in place good farming practice, eg ploughing after 15 March to allow eggs to hatch, harvesting after 15 June, etc. The site also attracted LIFE funding, allowing the purchase of 1,700 hectares of (low fertile) land, and the provision of breeding towers. Education plans were developed with local schools, including organised visits. Aldina Franco noted that other councils in the area were less interested in developing similar projects, and suggested that this was likely to reflect the fact that other regions

are more fertile, and thus incentives to increase production greater. This highlights the importance of understanding early on who are the winners and losers of site protection.

#### **Exploring options for the Riaza River Gorges, Spain**

*Luis Suarez, WWF Spain/Adena*

Luis Suarez introduced some of the main points of the Spanish case study. The concerned area is home to the largest population of griffon vultures in Europe. Regarding the socio-economic context, he noted that the economically active human population in the area makes up less than 30% of the total. Given a significant loss of youth to urban areas and in the absence of local industry, the average age of local villagers is comparatively high. As regards farming activities, the area is famous for its sheep and extensive grazing practices. People commonly drive 1.5 hours from Madrid to enjoy the products and local cuisine. Tourism is increasing in the region, with available accommodation facilities having increased from 5 to 11 establishments over the last few years. There is a significant potential to further develop sound tourism activity, as well as to build on existing extensive agriculture to develop ecologically accredited practices and products. Extending the product range to include more locally branded products is one possibility. The site has facilitated training and awareness raising of the local population, and there has been substantial use of volunteers, with over 500 WWF/Adena volunteers engaged over the years. There is also a new Interpretation Centre of the Natural World (Leader project).

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#### **DISCUSSION: MAIN POINTS**

*Annali Bamber-Jones reported back to the plenary on the main points arising from the working group discussion, as follows.*

**TIMELY INFORMATION** From the Portuguese experience the group concluded that it is important to identify early those likely to be proactive or positively reactive. Landowners' fear that they will be affected by designation can be exacerbated by a lack of prior discussion about the implications of Natura 2000 designation. In Basel, banks decided that Natura 2000 sites would be worth 30% less (in terms of land value) after designation. This could perhaps have been avoided, had the opportunities of Natura 2000 been adequately communicated to the banks in the first instance.

**ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS** The Spanish experience underlined the need for practical organisation that is responsive to people's individual circumstances. In this case, starting meetings in the evening (19.00) facilitated stakeholder attendance at events. The best point of influence are not always the farmers/landowners, but sometimes their wives and children, as well as relevant organisations or other networks. These can usefully be included in participation and consultation exercises. Furthermore, work in Hungary and Slovenia demonstrates the value of 'leaders' or 'champions' to liaise between government authorities and locals. Following privatisation, the number of farmers has increased, making the task of communicating more difficult. Respected local individuals can help champion the cause instead. In Austria, Denmark and Portugal zoning has proved to be a valuable instrument for communicating the different types of activities that can continue after site designation. Consideration should be given to promoting this as a constructive instrument for broader use.

**ECONOMIC SIGNALS/FINANCE** It was noted that the first pillar of the CAP offers 100% financing, while the second pillar offers only co-financing, giving different signals to farmers. Similarly, in Natura 2000 sites, there is greater scope for support for forestry than for sustainable agriculture. Existing incentive structures need reviewing, to ensure the right signals are being given. This could usefully be done at site level, facilitating the assessment of local winners and losers, and of the likely impact of different incentives on their behaviour.

In the long run, direct subsidies are expected to disappear. It is important, therefore, to identify the public goods/services provided or conserved by managing sites, including the retention of eco-system services, and to allocate payment for the provision of such services. Moreover, sites should not be expected to be fully self-financing, but should rather try to maximise benefits only where this is sustainable. Government support should also be made available for public service provision, complementing other income streams.

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## **WORKING GROUP 2: MARKETING THE NATURA 2000 BRAND**

### **The Natura 2000 Green Days: experiences in the Netherlands**

*Roelof Heringa, Staatsbosbeheer, Netherlands*

Roelof Heringa is a district manager for Staatsbosbeheer, the largest nature management organisation in the Netherlands, as well as working to promote Natura 2000. His presentation outlined the way in which EUROSITE is promoting Natura 2000 to the general public, under the 'Green Days' initiative. The idea of Green Days is to spread the message of Natura 2000 throughout the EU. The aim is to reach as many people as possible, informing the public about the importance of Natura 2000 for their own local environment but also to draw the link to other sites within the network. EUROSITE members were encouraged to organise events that would arouse curiosity and generate discussion, and to encourage a feeling of pride in these sites.

EUROSITE produced a 'toolkit' of promotional materials, such as leaflets in eight languages, posters, banners and information for site managers explaining the importance of Natura 2000. This initiative was supported by Green Days teams in many countries. Overall, 431 events took place under the Green Days banner; 85 in the Netherlands, involving 31 sites. Throughout Europe over 22,000 people participated in Green Days 2002.

### **Creating a Natura 2000 brand for 'Vildmose potatoes'**

*Mogens Ove Madsen, Aalborg University, Denmark  
and Uffe Gjøl Sørensen, WWF Denmark*

Mogens Ove Madsen presented an overview of the case study area, Lille Vildmose, which is in North Jutland County and covers approximately 78 km<sup>2</sup>. The site is one of the largest remaining, continuous nature areas in Denmark, despite the fact that peat mining has been a central activity in the area since the 18th century. The area considered for landscape protection is broadly similar to the territory considered for Natura 2000 designation. Lille Vildmose is particularly suitable for Natura 2000 designation because of its active raised bogs, species-rich commons, grass moors on more or less acid soil and alder and ash woods. Designation would promote the restoration of degraded raised bog. The central part of the bog is currently still used for peat

mining and farming. The phasing out of these practices will result in the loss of a small number of workplaces, and may cause claims for compensation. However, these can be compensated by increased employment elsewhere. This could include more sustainable employment in nature conservation, grazing guilds, tourism, education and research. There could also be a different pattern of settlement as a result of the unique natural environment.

Uffe Gjøøl Sørensen outlined ways in which the unique quality of the local nature offers potential for branding initiatives. Two local products already illustrate the key elements of branding. Firstly, promoting a clear identity of the product: potatoes produced on fields at the fringe of the Lille Vildmose are already sold under the name 'Vildmose kartofler' (i.e. potatoes from the 'Wild Bog'), a well-known product in Denmark. Secondly, the importance of high quality: the extensive raised bog supports extensive heather and therefore supports a good local production of heather honey, which is recognized locally and nationally as a product of the highest quality. The local discussion on the benefits of Natura 2000 has focused on the need for a local strategy of how to develop such new initiatives further, diversifying income and improving organisation.

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## DISCUSSION: MAIN POINTS

*Sandra Jen reported back to the plenary on the main points arising from the working group discussion, as follows.*

**WHAT DO WE PROMOTE?** The ultimate objective must be to ensure the effective conservation of the site, and specifically achieving the ecological objectives agreed for the site. However, labelling/branding allows us to better engage with people, bringing in the social pillar of sustainable development.

**SHORT TERM ACTIONS** The idea of labelling for Natura 2000 is still only in its infancy, but there is clear potential to generate further benefits from Natura 2000. The Green Days 2002 initiative was a successful first attempt at labelling or branding Natura 2000. It showed the need for a clear message about what Natura 2000 is. Branding initiatives need to be underpinned by precise definitions, so that the public is confident about what it is buying into. A label can be applied on the basis of a site's value and its management (regional identity), to the products produced on the site, or to the services provided by the site. There should be a

comprehensive review of these issues, followed by a strategy or guidelines championed by the European Commission. These could build on other initiatives, such as the Charter being developed by the Commission Working Group on Communicating Natura 2000.

**GETTING PEOPLE ON BOARD** There are arguments for a Natura 2000 label to refer to both local sites and the European Natura 2000 network. Such a label could be attractive to local people and visitors to the area. There is a need to develop the idea of local identity, to engage people's emotions, and to use Natura 2000 products and services to engage people's curiosity. The Lille Vildmose products provide a good starting point for developing labels in that region. However, local initiatives and good practices need to be captured in a comprehensive strategy, and promoted in other parts of the EU.

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## WORKING GROUP 3: NATURA 2000 AS AN ASSET FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Natura 2000 as an asset for regional development

*Stephen Warman, Team Manager Cornwall and Isles of Scilly, English Nature*

Stephen Warman outlined English Nature's Wildlife and Geo Tourism Initiative. Tourism was defined as an economic activity involving recreation based (generally) on environmental, social or cultural aspects of a destination. There is a huge range of specialist tourist 'niches', including eco-tourism, where the recreational activity is based on the active appreciation of wild animals, plants or habitats. By some estimates tourism is now the world's largest industry, generating an estimated \$3.6 trillion and accounting for one in twelve jobs worldwide. Because of this high level of activity and the potential impact on natural resources, biodiversity and host communities it is important that tourism is developed according to the principles of sustainable development.

Tourism in protected areas should be developed sustainably, both on-site and for the wider environment. A simple checklist was proposed as a starting point for auditing sustainability in tourism development. The three head points are access, accreditation and action.

**'Access'** includes: physical access – providing low impact transport and appropriate links to the coast and countryside, access for the old, young and disabled, as well as for minority and disadvantaged groups. Access should also be year-round where this can support job security and local economies; intellectual access – including interpretation facilities and visitor centres, and information on the area's cultural and environmental history and its future; and inspirational access – notably including views and open spaces, access to 'wild' places, allowing appreciation of the seasons and wind, and recreation, sport and leisure.

**'Accreditation'** is a tool that can be used to raise standards in environmental sustainability. Awards could be linked, for example, to the provision of transport infrastructure, efficient energy use and waste management, and local sustainably sourced food. One might even have 'green visas' to accredit visitors themselves.

**'Action'** includes: identifying priorities for biodiversity, interpretation facilities, ensuring visitor 'payback' so that the tourism revenue could be captured for the benefit of the site, developing policies for green spaces, and reviewing transport provisions. Tourism Action Plans for Natura 2000 sites should be considered.

## Generating tourism on and around Lake Peipsi, Estonia

*Rein Kuresoo, Estonian Fund for Nature*

Rein Kuresoo presented the Estonian case study of Emajõe Suursoo Mire and Piiressaar Island. The area comprises a more or less large, flat wilderness area with an integral system of different types of peatland, rivers and lakes, coasts and an island. The total permanent population in the area is 160, although this increases two or threefold during the summer. The major source of income for local people is fishing and onion growing (especially on Piiressaar Island). Importantly, the population on Piiressaar Island forms one of the most compact Old Believers community, which has been present on the island for more than 200 years. This community makes up a very conservative religion-oriented society, defying consumerism.

Estonia has a very rich natural heritage and is one of the most rewarding birding sites in Europe. Consequently, the country is gaining popularity as a nature tourism destination. Presently, nature tourism development in Estonia is concentrated around the popular tourist

destinations (eg Western-Estonia with its famous Matsalu nature reserve). In these regions tourism facilities and services are relatively well developed. Many other valuable areas lie outside the popular destinations and are, at present, more difficult to reach. Since increases in eco-tourism are expected, it will become important to improve facilities and services in these destinations. This will help to meet the demand and dissipate the tourist load. While there is some potential for an increase in tourism activity in the case study area, this should be taken forward with responsibility and with respect for the needs of the local community.

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## DISCUSSION: MAIN POINTS

**DEVELOPING APPROPRIATELY** There was agreement that development needs to be tailored to the natural values that sites are to protect. In practice, this means that some sites will be more suited to regional development than others. It is important that a site by site approach is taken, identifying the more robust sites and areas within sites, and defining their carrying capacities. The concept of zoning is a useful instrument here.

In similar vein, prospects for tourism or other development will differ from region to region. In some regions there will be greater scope to attract tourists, particularly if the Natura site is just one of several attractions in the area. For other sites, it will be very difficult to develop tourism.

**OFFERING A QUALITY EXPERIENCE** Operators increasingly recognise the need for quality in relation to tourism and other outdoor sectors. Natura 2000 sites should contribute to the quality of the experience in visiting local areas. These are qualities that are available year round. In Spain, the regions are starting to offer Natura 2000 as a visitor attraction.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING** Natural values need to be fully reflected in regional development plans, as well as sector specific plans such as tourism plans. This should ensure that the regional economy benefits from the site's assets, but also ensure that regional development or sectoral interests do not undermine site integrity. Individual operators/investors, for example tourism operators and corporations, need to develop their own strategic vision, within which nature will almost certainly play a central role.

**PAYING FOR NATURA 2000** To be effective, Natura 2000 sites need management and restoration. This needs to be placed within a broader regional development context, emphasising the value of nature both with regards to strengthening the character of local areas, and in terms of benefiting local economies and attracting greater funding opportunities. Some users, such as tourists or hunters, may also be benefiting directly from on-site activities, in which case there may be scope for 'user charges'.

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## SESSION 4: GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS

### Communication and cooperation in Natura 2000: lessons from the Flemish region of Belgium

*Els Martens, Nature Direction, Ministry of the Flemish Community*

Els Martens noted that conservation measures for Natura 2000 must take account of scientific, as well as economic, social and cultural requirements. This assumes the full participation and support of all partners involved. Natura 2000 has implications for other non-environmental sectors, and key concerns must therefore also be reflected in sectoral actions. Ensuring appropriate implementation requires an understanding of the Habitats Directive and an appreciation of the opportunities and benefits. This can be achieved through communication, including awareness raising about why nature is a common concern. Also critical are participation and consultation, based on mutual understanding and trust, and the development of partnerships.

General public awareness-raising initiatives have included training on the Directive, including Article 6 procedures. At the site level, project brochures and newsletters provide project specific information, setting out the long-term vision for the site, information on partners and consultation processes and financial aspects. In some cases, there is also action specific communication, eg in relation to species protection projects. Each site also has its own web page. Partnerships are promoted through a number of additional means, notably agri-environment measures, nature project contracts and municipal nature development projects. However, much more needs to be done in this respect and others, such as increasing media

interest and political support, identifying more benefits of Natura 2000, and improving information exchange on these. Other sectors also need to be more actively involved in communication action.

### Natura 2000 and the Green Spider Network

*Dorte Bennedbaek, member of the European Green Spider Network, Danish Ministry of Environment*

Dorte Bennedbaek introduced the Green Spider Network, which was set up in 1995 to meet increasing demands for information and communication. The Network was also a response to emerging rights relating to access to environmental information. The Green Spider Network comprises representatives from environmental administrations in the EU Member States, Candidate Countries and their neighbours. The European Commission and the European Environment Agency also participate in the network. It is a key communication network on environmental issues in the EU, stimulating communication processes, supporting liaison between the EU and national administrations, exchanging lessons and good practice examples, etc.

The annual Green Spider meeting in 2002 focused on Natura 2000, examining why Natura 2000 is not 'loved'. A piece of research concluded that there is a general passivity towards the network. What is needed is local communication and cooperation, stakeholder involvement and acceptance. The method of communicating has to be relevant to the target group, potentially including on-site meetings for face-to-face communication. Dorte Bennedbaek encouraged those looking to communicate the socio-economic benefits to make contact with the national communication expert in the network (see [www.ubavie.gv.at/greenspider](http://www.ubavie.gv.at/greenspider)). This could provide a valuable resource for encouraging the proper development of initiatives in and around Natura 2000.

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### DISCUSSION: MAIN POINTS

**It is clear that there is still insufficient information reaching the general public, about Natura 2000 and specific sites. It was suggested that booklets describing Natura 2000 across Europe and its importance would be useful. People should know what the values are and why they should visit or otherwise support these sites.**

**As regards communicating benefits, one delegate emphasised the importance of getting the message**

right. Expectations should not be raised, but communicators should be aware of the different benefits that can exist, possibly supported by good examples of how these benefits are working in other parts of Europe.

It is important that different communication efforts inform each other, in this case the Green Spider Network and the Commission Working Group on Communicating Natura 2000. It is apparent that in fact there is no direct contact between these two initiatives, an issue that should be explored in future.

Several delegates also questioned the approach of the Flemish Community, which was creating different types of sites and networks and thus complicating matters even more.

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## SESSION 5: GETTING THE CONDITIONS RIGHT

### Natura 2000 – a new focus for EU funding programmes?

*Astrid Kaemena, DG Environment, on behalf of the Article 8 (Co-financing) Working Group*

Astrid Kaemena presented the main results of the *Final Report of the Working Group on Article 8 of the Habitats Directive*. Article 8 of the Directive contains provisions for Community co-financing of sites containing priority habitats or species, reflecting the exceptional burden that the Directive places on the Member States. The Working Group approached the issue more broadly, however, assessing the total financial costs associated with the management of the Natura 2000 network as a whole (including bird sites) to range between €3.5 and €5.7 billion per year for the next ten years.

Astrid Kaemena outlined the key recommendations on ways of securing additional Community co-financing. Many existing instruments are potentially relevant but complex and not geared to Natura 2000, with LIFE Nature the main exception. Significant policy changes are therefore needed, with the Working Group suggesting that existing funds be modified, including the Rural Development Fund and Structural Funds, and the LIFE instrument. Significant change would not be possible before 2006/7, since the overall EU budget is fixed until 2006. However, the Mid Term Review of the Common Agriculture Policy may give possibilities as early as

2004/5. In the short term, the Group recommended that a clear reference to nature conservation be introduced as part of the mid-term review of the Structural Funds.

### Putting Natura 2000 at the heart of the CAP

*Thierry de l'Escaille, European Landowners' Organisation*

Thierry de l'Escaille noted the importance of providing financing for Natura 2000 as a whole, and not just isolated sites as this would mean that Natura 2000 would remain a dead letter. The future enlargement of the EU will simply reinforce the need for a broader, more comprehensive approach to financing Natura 2000. Environmental benefits should be regarded as supporting socio-economic objectives in the use of agriculture funds. For example, it should be possible to fund nature management, which would support farmers' incomes. When seen in this context, investment in Natura 2000 management would lead to direct economic and social benefits even where it does not directly generate jobs or enhance incomes; the added benefit is in promoting the development of new activities.

However, Thierry de l'Escaille pointed out that agricultural activity needs to be possible in Natura 2000 areas, otherwise the eligibility for the rural development funds should be questioned. Access to funds by farmers and landowners should be clear. The Rural Development Regulation should assist the development of new concepts such as 'environmental farms' that could provide reservoirs of good environmental practice. They could act as demonstration farms for extension of environmental land management on more conventional crop and livestock units. A funding scheme was also suggested, to encourage agricultural and forestry land-use practices that provide increased carbon sinks, and an EU-wide scheme based on area payments to meet environmental standards.

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### DISCUSSION: MAIN POINTS

There was considerable discussion of the issue of co-financing, and whether the €3.5–€5.7 billion/year figures were realistic. Nicholas Hanley emphasised that Natura 2000 was a major undertaking, covering a total territory of the size of Germany.

It was emphasised that not all of the necessary funding was expected from the EU; the Member States also have to provide significant additional co-financing themselves. Tony Long also noted that



Natura 2000 covers already 15% of the EU territory, and the estimated funding requirements represented less than 10% of the annual CAP and Structural Funds budgets.

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## CLOSING SUMMARY

### Building on the El Teide conclusions?

*Nicholas Hanley, Head of Unit, DG Environment*

Nicholas Hanley drew some conclusions at the end of the Conference, noting that the event had been very useful in generating discussion on the important issue of promoting benefits of Natura 2000. Natura 2000 is an ambitious instrument, as reflected by the fact that 15 per cent of all Commission complaints are related to nature protection legislation. But this also suggests that EU nature policy is something that citizens understand and realise to be important.

We are now at the phase of implementation and need to engage social aspects more strongly. There has to be sufficient courage to look at Natura 2000 from different perspectives, including from economic and social development perspectives. At the site level, managers need to give greater consideration to off-site opportunities and interests. The Article 8 Working Group had involved a wider range of stakeholders, including landowners and NGOs. Its recommendations are more realistic and more challenging as a result.

The issue of financing Natura 2000 needs to be at the heart of the debate on the EU budget, placing nature within a socio-economic context. Many benefits can and do accrue directly from Natura 2000 sites, leading to wider benefits for communities due to the 'multiplier effect' discussed during the Conference. We should not exaggerate these benefits, or lose sight of the natural values, but increasingly there is evidence to show that investment in nature conservation and Natura 2000 has wider positive impacts. Rural development is not only about agriculture, but involves a mosaic of activities. The outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease in the UK provided evidence of this, showing the economic importance of tourism and recreation sectors. Leisure time is growing and Natura 2000 is well-placed to benefit from and support this growth.

The challenge is to make the most of the assets we have. Through communication and participation, people need

to realise the full values of these assets and how to benefit from them in the long term. Natura 2000 areas are linked to the people who live and work there and their participation is essential to maintaining the natural values of sites, as well as realising socio-economic benefits.

Finally, there is an EU political commitment to halting biodiversity loss by 2010, agreed at the Göteborg Summit in 2001. If the EU does not implement Natura 2000, then the Göteborg commitment will simply not be met.

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# 3. Summary and Ways Forward

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## SUMMARY

The Conference brought together over 100 people from across the EU and the new Member States, and from national and EU administrations and agencies, NGOs, economic sectors and landowners. The aim was to facilitate the exchange of ideas on **how better to promote** the range of benefits that can potentially arise in relation to Natura 2000. Administrators and stakeholders from the Candidate Countries, in particular, benefited from this exchange of experience, and are in a position to learn from the best practices and the mistakes that existing Member States have made.

Through the plenary presentations and discussions in the working group, it was clear that **promoting the benefits of Natura 2000 is recognised as a key challenge** for the future of the network. Many rural areas throughout Europe are facing a social crisis, and there is a need to rethink the relationship between nature and rural economies, reconnecting the two. The Conference represented an important first step in this process, and needs to be followed by further initiatives at the local, regional, national and EU level.

There is a **growing body of work seeking to catalogue and where possible quantify the socio-economic benefits** of Natura 2000. This includes the six project case studies (see Section 1). Apart from helping to secure European biodiversity, benefits include direct employment and income generation, contribution to health and recreation, and benefits to society as a whole. While employment figures for individual sites may appear small, benefits to the Union as a whole are significant. There are also essential ecosystem services which are safeguarded by Natura 2000, resulting in real savings to the public purse and to corporate interests, such as water companies. The identification and quantification of the benefits, including associated methodologies, deserves additional attention.

Some benefits accrue at the individual or local level, others at the regional level and to society as a whole. Actual benefits will depend on the individual site, in terms of its robustness, its accessibility, and the surrounding environment in which it is located. **Efforts to generate benefits should not compromise the natural values** of sites. In practice, this means that some sites will be more suited to social or economic activities than others. It is important that a site-by-site approach is taken, assessing the site's potential and defining carrying capacities. A proper zoning system for each site, with clear objectives and rules for socio-economic usage, can avoid repeated conflicts of interests.

### Supporting regional and rural development

In seeking to generate benefits, sites should be seen firmly within the context of regional development.

**Regional or spatial planning, including zoning, can be an important tool** to secure strong linkages and coherence between social, economic and environmental objectives.

**Regions are not equally well placed to benefit from Natura 2000.** In some regions, it is appropriate to focus on using existing strengths and qualifications, diversifying income sources and rural amenities, and prioritising public involvement. For other rural areas, there will be a greater need to build capacity. Rural service provision and skills retention will always be key, however.

There is **clear potential to use labelling or branding**, to better engage with people and to generate added value for Natura 2000 related products or services. Labels could be applied on the basis of a site's value and its management, to the products produced on the site or to the services provided by the site. There should be a comprehensive review of these issues, followed by a Commission strategy or guidelines. These could build on other initiatives, such as the Charter being developed by the Commission Working Group on Communicating Natura 2000.

Note that there is no single prescription for all sites, but there is a **growing body of best practice examples**, and enormous scope to extend such good practice to many regions around Europe. Innovation and imagination will remain critical in developing projects and policies. Local initiatives and good practices need to be captured in a comprehensive strategy, and promoted in other parts of the EU.

### Strengthening local governance

There is clear scope to strengthen local governance, including improved communication with the public and stakeholders, and **active public participation in the management process**.

At the outset, there is a need for **raised awareness of the value of designated sites**, of the ultimate aim of the Natura 2000 network, and its potential in supporting social and economic development. The right message needs to be communicated to the general public, but also to the actors at the various levels at which the benefits arise. Other sectors also need to be more actively involved in communication.

**Better communication channels** need to be established between local authorities and stakeholders, including corporate interests and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). Community leaders or 'champions' can be effective in communicating to groups of stakeholders. The proper communication of a precise zonal planning, which clearly describes what types of activities can be allowed in each zone, can be a major instrument to get certain restrictions accepted by the local stakeholders and to raise public support for Natura 2000. It may be desirable to outline different 'good practices' in relation to communicating with different groups. Initiatives such as 'Car Free Cities' may provide useful examples from other sectors.

Natura 2000 areas are linked to the people who live and work there, and **active public involvement** in developing options for rural development within or around Natura 2000 sites is essential. Open and early dialogue is needed to create broad public support, ownership and promote the values of nature. Stakeholder expectations need to be realistic, however, and followed by action.

### Financing

Natura 2000 is a major undertaking, with around 15,000 sites, in total covering an area the size of Germany. With enlargement, the span of the network is

expected to increase significantly. Sites should not be expected to be fully self-financing, but should rather try to maximise benefits only where this is sustainable.

**Significant additional funding will be needed** to pay for its proper management, estimated to be in the region of €3.5 to €5.7 billion per year, for the next ten years, for the existing Member States. Not all of this funding is expected from the EU; the Member States also have to provide significant additional co-financing. This funding will in itself generate significant social and economic benefits.

Different funding streams are potentially available. To make EU regional aid and CAP funds more relevant, there needs to be a **stronger focus on the long-term regeneration of rural areas and the promotion of small-scale and non-capital investments**. Greater levels of support should also be made available for ongoing public service provision, complementing private income streams. Payments for managing sites need to be competitive, so that nature management becomes a realistic option for landowners.

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## WAYS FORWARD

The conference presentations, discussions, and supporting case studies have offered a wealth of ideas as to how the challenge of promoting the benefits of Natura 2000 can best be met. These range from 'small' but invaluable insights, such as the need to identify local individuals who could 'champion' the path to socio-economic benefits of Natura 2000, to more broad policy insights, such as the need for more 'joined-up' thinking in planning, policies and financing. Each of these is worthy of serious consideration by stakeholders. From this long list, IEEP and WWF have identified the following ten steps as particularly important to further promote the benefits of Natura 2000:

### Promotional measures

- Strengthen the social and economic dimension of nature conservation, including links with rural development initiatives, eg within LEADER Community Initiatives. Local stakeholder workshops should explore the links of the site to the social and economic dimension.
- Invest in cost/benefit methodologies and their application, to provide information on individual to society-wide benefits from Natura 2000. This can

usefully be included as part of local stakeholder discussions and workshops, and indeed help clarify appropriate, pragmatic and realistic development plans. Linkages with corporate interests, including water and tourism sectors, and SMEs should also be elaborated.

- Undertake a comprehensive review of labelling or branding Natura 2000, leading to Commission guidelines to support and encourage suitable labelling initiatives. The aim is to get the sites working as motors for local and regional development throughout Europe and get acceptance of the site.
- The promotion of Natura 2000 benefits should be supported by concerted efforts to develop innovative projects, using the results to support exchange of experiences and good practice across the EU and Candidate Countries.

### Communication measures

- Dissemination of booklets clarifying the basic aims of the Natura 2000 network, the values of individual sites, both in their own right and as part of the larger network, and their potentials and limitations. This should include clear and accurate messages as regards benefits, including the link between local initiative and global benefits.
- Develop good practice guide with a 'menu' of ways of communicating with stakeholders, including more dialogue on the socio-economic benefits of Natura 2000 and its role as an integrated part of the sustainable development of local communities.
- Apply lessons from public participation under the Water Framework Directive, such as the legal obligation of Article 14 and the Common Implementation Strategy guidance documents on public participation.

### Integration of Natura 2000 within other policies

- Ensure the proper integration of Natura 2000 within other sectoral policies, notably agriculture and fisheries, transport and regional policies, including through the appropriate application of impact assessment procedures.
- Ensure the revision of EU funding instruments, notably the Structural Funds and CAP, reflects Natura 2000 and its financial needs. This should ensure security of initiative in the long-term, acknowledging the role of

Natura 2000 in sustainable regional and rural development.

- Develop an initiative on land-use planning and Natura 2000, leading to specific recommended actions on how to strengthen the link between the two, including integrating Natura 2000 within planning instruments and the full use of zoning to clarify types of permitted activities in and around sites.

The European Union and the ten new Member States are committed to halting the decline in biodiversity by 2010. If the ongoing work to implement Natura 2000 is reinforced in the ways suggested above, and complemented by the wealth of lessons of good practice noted by speakers and participants and case study stakeholders, then this will make a substantial contribution towards achieving the 2010 target. This will be done in a way that will not only protect our natural heritage, but also offer significant social and economic benefits.

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## Annex I: Conference Programme

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### Promoting the social and economic benefits of Natura 2000

European Conference, 28 and 29 November 2002.

Brussels – Auditorium Maria Baers, Martelaarsplein 7

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#### 28 November 2002

14:00

##### **PART I: INTRODUCTION AND SCENE SETTING**

Chair: David Baldock, IEEP

14:10

##### **a) Welcome and introductions**

David Baldock, Director, IEEP

14:30

##### **b) Natura 2000 – state of play**

Nicholas Hanley, Head of Nature and Biodiversity Unit, DGENv, Commission

15:00

##### **c) Developing a vision for sustainable rural development**

Kim Carstensen, CEO, WWF Denmark

##### **d) Q&A to the Panel**

16:00

##### **PART II: IDENTIFYING SOCIO-ECONOMIC BENEFITS**

Roundtable presentations on the project findings, including the case studies. Followed by critique of studies and outline of ways forward.

16:00

##### **e) Identifying the socio-economic benefits of Natura 2000** Patrick ten Brink, IEEP

16:15

##### **f) Roundtable on different European experiences –**

Developing methods for identifying benefits

Michael Jungmeier, ECO Institut, Austria

Using Natura 2000 as a development tool

Peteris Strautins, WWF Latvia

Generating local awareness and debate

Luc Dries, WWF Belgium

17:15

##### **g) Key conditions for realising benefits**

Jacqui Cuff, Rural Horizons

##### **h) Discussion**

18:00 – CLOSE

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#### 29 November 2002

09:00

##### **PART III: REALISING THE BENEFITS**

Chair: Jane Dalglish, Scottish Executive

09:00

##### **i) The global value of nature**

Jouni Paavola, University of East Anglia

09:20

##### **j) Introduction to break-out session**

Three parallel sessions to discuss and develop ideas; each with presentations on case study experience and best practice

09:30

##### **1. Generating economic benefits through Natura 2000 management –**

Targeting agri-environment schemes at Natura 2000 in Portugal

Aldina Franco, Centre for Ecology, Evolution and Conservation, University of East Anglia

Exploring options for the Riaza River Gorges, Spain

Luis Suarez, WWF Spain/Adena

##### **2. Marketing the Natura 2000 brand –**

The Natura 2000 Green Days: experiences in the Netherlands

Roelof Heringa, Staatsbosbeheer, Netherlands

Creating a Natura 2000 brand for 'Vildmose potatoes'

Mogens Ove Madsen, Aalborg University, Denmark

##### **3. Natura 2000 as an asset for regional development –**

Natura 2000 as an asset for regional development

Stephen Warman, Team Manager Cornwall and Isles of Scilly, English Nature

Generating tourism on and around Lake Peipsi, Estonia

Rein Kuresoo, Estonian Fund for Natura

11:30

##### **k) Reporting back to plenary with conclusions**

12:30 – LUNCH

14:00

##### **PART IV: GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS**

Chair: Tony Long, WWF

14:00

##### **l) Communication and cooperation in Natura 2000: lessons from the Flemish region of Belgium**

Els Martens, Nature Direction, Ministry of the Flemish Community

14:20

##### **m) Natura 2000 and the Green Spider Network**

Dorte Bennedbaek, member of the European Green Spider Network

15:00

##### **PART IV: GETTING THE CONDITIONS RIGHT**

15:00

##### **n) Natura 2000 – a new focus for EU funding programmes?**

Astrid Kaemena, DG Environment, on behalf of the Article 8 (Co-financing) Working Group

15:30

##### **o) Putting Natura 2000 at the heart of the CAP**

Thierry de l'Escaille, European Landowners' Organisation

16:00

##### **p) Panel discussion**

16:20

##### **q) Closing summary – building on the El Teide conclusions?**

Nicholas Hanley, Head of Unit, DG Environment

16:30 – CLOSE

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## Annex 2: Delegate List

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**Vincent Attard**

Nature Trust, Malta  
info@naturetrustmalta.org  
Postal: P.O. Box 9, Valletta CMR 01, Malta  
Offices: 11, Antonio Agius Street, Floriana

**David Baldock**

IEEP, United Kingdom  
dbaldock@ieeplondon.org.uk  
Dean Bradley House, 52 Horseferry Rd,  
London SW1P 2AG

**Annali Bamber-Jones**

A Rocha, Belgium  
a.bamber@arocha.org  
c/o Doodoo, Rue G et J. Martin, 13; 1150  
Brussels

**Hubert Bedoret**

Inter-Environnement Wallonie,  
Belgium  
hubert.bedoret@swing.be  
Boulevard du Nord 6, 5000 Namur

**Dorte Bennedbaek**

Danish Ministry for the Environment,  
Denmark  
dbe@mim.dk  
Hoejbro Plads 4; DK-1200 Copenhagen K

**Arjan Berkhuisen**

Stichting Natuur en Milieu,  
The Netherlands  
a.berkhuisen@snm.nl  
Donkerstraat 17, 3511KB Utrecht

**David Beyen**

Stichting Limburgs Landschap,  
Belgium  
limburgs-landschap@pi.be  
Dekenstraat 39, 3350 Heusden-Zolder

**Edouard-Alain Bidault**

Coordination Nationale Natura 2000,  
France  
fdc49@unfdc.com  
31 Avenue de Ségur, 75007 Paris

**Catherine Blin**

Directrice scientifique des formations,  
Institut Eco-Conseil, Belgium  
catherine.blin@skynet.be  
Boulevard de Merckem 7, B-5000 Namur

**Patricia Bode**

Ministry of Agriculture, Nature  
Management and Fisheries, The  
Netherlands  
p.d.bode@n.agro.nl  
P.O.Box 20401, 2500 EK The Hague

**Dirk Bogaert**

Arteveldehogeschool, Belgium  
dirk.bogaert@arteveldehs.be  
Sint-annaplein 31, 9000 Gent

**Jean Lois Bosteels**

Royal Saint-Hubert Club de Belgique,  
Belgium  
jl.bosteels@storrer-law.net  
154 Avenue Fr Roosevelt, B-1050 Brussels

**Brigitta Bozso**

WWF Hungary, Hungary  
Németvölgyi út 78/B, 1124 Budapest  
Brigitta.Bozso@wwf.hu;  
brigittabozso@yahoo.co.uk

**Charles Butler**

Student, Ireland  
chastible@hotmail.com  
8 Tivoli Terrace North, Dun Laoghaire,  
Dublin

**Kim Carstensen**

WWF Denmark, Denmark  
Ryesgade 3F, DK-2200 Copenhagen  
k.carstensen@wwf.dk

**Tim Christophersen**

IUCN, Belgium  
tim.christophersen@iucn.org  
Rue Vergote 15; 1030 Brussels

**Shirley Clerkin**

An Taisce, Ireland  
ecoscape@indigo.ie  
Tailors Hall, Back Lane, Dublin 8

**Clare Coffey**

IEEP, Belgium  
ccoffey@ieeplondon.org.uk  
Ave. des Gaulois 18, 1040 Brussels

**Alain Cordonnier**

Ministère de la Région Wallonne,  
Belgium  
A.Cordonnier@mrw.wallonie.be  
DGRNE/DNF 7 au Prince de Liege,  
5100 Namur

**Desmond Crofton**

National Association of Regional  
Game Councils, Ireland  
nargc@iol.ie  
6 Sandford Rd., Ranglagh, Dublin

**Jacqui Cuff**

Rural Horizons, United Kingdom  
jac.cuff@virgin.net  
48 Newtown, Potton, Bedfordshire,  
SG19 2QJ

**Jane Dalglish**

The Scottish Executive,  
United Kingdom  
jane.dalglish@scotland.gsi.gov.uk  
Wildlife and Habitats Unit, 1-H, Victoria  
Quay, Leith, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ

**Alain De Jamblinne**

Société Royale Forestière de Belgique,  
Belgium  
srfb@srfb-kbbm.be  
Galerie du Centre Bloc II; 1000 Bruxelles

**Thierry De l'Escaille**

European Landowner Organisation,  
Belgium  
Elo@skynet.be  
Avenue Pasteur, 23; B – 1300 Wavre

**Hans Desmyttere**

WES – Onderzoek en Advies, Belgium  
hans.desmyttere@west-vlaanderen.be  
Baron Ruzettelaan 33,  
8310 Assebroek-Brugge

**Nina Dobrzynska**

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Poland  
nina.dobrzynskz@minrol.gov.pl  
30, Wspolna Street, Warsaw

**Luc Dries**

WWF Belgium, Belgium  
luc.dries@wwf.be  
90, Boulevard E. Jacquain, 1000 Bruxelles

**Thomas Dudrap**

European Parliament, Belgium  
tdudrap@europarl.eu.int  
ASP 2H259 Rue Wiertz, 1047 Brussels

**James Dunne**

National Association of Regional Game Councils, Ireland  
nargc@iol.ie  
6 Sandford Rd., Ranglagh, Dublin

**Gilles Duperron**

European Parliament, Belgium  
dupergil@club-internet.fr  
ASP 7H263 Rue Wiertz, 1047 Brussels

**Otto Dürr**

Ministry for Agriculture (Baden-Wuerttemberg), Germany  
otto.duerr@mlr.bwl.de  
Square Vergote 9, B-1200 Brussels

**Ralf Eisenbeiss**

Federation of Associations for Hunting & Conservation of the E.U., Belgium  
conservation@face-europe.org  
82, Rue F. Pelletier, B-1030 Bruxelles

**Aulotte Etienne**

WWF Belgium, Belgium  
etienne.aulotte@wwf.be  
Boulevard Emile Jacquain 90, 1000 Bruxelles

**Aldina Franco**

Centre for Ecology, Evolution and Conservation; University of East Anglia, United Kingdom  
a.franco@uea.ac.uk  
Norwich NR4 7TJ, UK

**Anna-Lise Freulund**

Sejflod Kommune, Denmark  
alf@sejflod.dk  
Stationsvej 5; 92 80 Storvorde

**Alistair Gammell**

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, United Kingdom  
alistair.gammell@rspb.org.uk  
The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 1ER

**Pierre Gathy**

Council Supérieure des Forêts Wallon, Belgium  
0032 (0)4 342 7725

**Ronan Girard**

European Landowners' Organisation, Belgium  
elo-dircom@skynet.be  
Ave Pasteur 23; B 1300 Wavre

**Lily Gora**

Afdeling Natuur, Belgium  
liliane.gora@lin.vlaanderen.be  
Gouverneur Roppesingel 25, 3500 Hasselt

**Olivier Guillitte**

Universite de Liege, Unite de recherche GIREA, Belgium  
girea@ulg.ac.be  
Institut de Botanique de la Vie, B22, Start Tilman, B-4000 Liege

**Nicholas Hanley**

European Commission, DG Environment, Belgium  
Nicholas.hanley@cec.eu.int  
DG Environment Unit B.2; 200, rue de la Loi; BU-9 03/201; B – 1049 Bruxelles

**Petr Havlik**

Institute National de la Recherche Agronomique – Laboratoire Montpellierais in d'Économie théorique et appliquée, France  
havlik@ensam.inra.fr  
CU de Boutonnet, B105, 119 Fg de Boutonnet, 430 90 Montpellier

**Robert Henderson**

The Scottish Executive, United Kingdom  
lesley.baillie@scotland.gsi.gov.uk  
Wildlife and Habitats Unit, 1-H, Victoria Quay, Leith, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ

**Roelof Heringa**

Staatsbosbeheer, Region Flevoland – Overijssel, The Netherlands  
R.Heringa@sbb.agro.nl  
P.O. Box 716, 8000 AS Zwolle

**Tim Hoggarth**

Federation of Associations for Hunting & Conservation (UK), United Kingdom  
tim-hoggarth@countyside-alliance.org  
The Countryside Alliance, 367 Kennington Rd, London SE11 4PT

**Andrej Hudoklin**

Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, Slovenia  
andrej.hudoklin@zrsvn.si  
Vojkova 1b, 1000 Ljubljana

**Marion Hughes**

Scottish Natural Heritage, United Kingdom  
marion.hughes@snh.gov.uk  
12 Hope Terrace, Edinburgh EH9 2AS

**Jozsef Hunyady**

Somogy Provincial Association for Nature Conservation, Hungary  
j\_hunyady@axelero.hu;  
spanc@axelero.hu  
Kossuth u. 62, 8708 Somogyfajsz

**Agnese Jakovica**

Lauku ce\_ot\_js (LCTA) Country traveller, Latvia  
lauku@celotajs.lv  
Kugu Str. 11, Riga LV-1048

**Sandra Jen**

WWF European Policy Office, Belgium  
sjen@wwfepo.org  
Ave de Tervuren 36, B-1040 Brussels

**Jørn Jensen**

Danish Forest and Nature Agency, Denmark  
Jje@sns.dk  
Haraldsgade 53, DK-2100 Copenhagen

**Susanne Joergensen**

Danish Forest and Nature Agency, Denmark  
ssj@sns.dk  
Haraldsgade 53, 2100 Copenhagen

**Michael Jungmeier**

E-C-O Institute for Ecology, Austria  
jungmeier@e-c-o.at  
Kinoplatz 6, 9020 Klagenfurt

**Astrid Kaemena**

European Commission, DG ENV.B.2, Belgium  
Astrid.Kaemena@cec.eu.int  
Rue de la Loi 200, 1049 Brussels

**Helena Kaminska**

Ministry of the Environment –  
Department of Nature Protection,  
Poland

helena.kaminska@mos.gov.pl  
Ministry of Environment, Wawelska  
52/54 Street, 00-922 Warsaw

**Jan Kappel**

European Anglers' Alliance, EEA,  
Belgium

eea.aepl@skynet.be  
Rue du Parnasse 42, 1030 Brussels

**Tadas Kastanauskas**

Lithuanian Fund for Nature, Lithuania

tadas.k@glis.lt  
Algirdo St. 22–3, LT–2006 Vilnius

**Simone Kieffer**

Association des Viticulteurs d'Alsace,  
France

s.kieffer@viticulteur-alsace.asso.fr  
12 Ave de la Foire aux Vins; B.P. 1225,  
68012 COLMAR CEDEX

**Johannes Kind**

European Economic and Social  
Committee, Belgium

johannes.kind@esc.eu.int  
Rue Ravenstein 2, B-1000 Brussels

**Inga Kolomyjska**

WWF Poland Programme Office,  
Poland

ikolomyjska@wwf.pl  
Wisniowa 38 Street, 02-520 Warsaw

**Andras Krolopp**

The Central and East European  
Working Group for the Enhancement  
of Biodiversity, Hungary

Krolopp@ceeweb.org  
Ülői ut 91/b, H-1091 Budapest

**Rein Kuresoo**

Estonian Fund for Nature, Estonia

rekuresoo@hotmail.com  
Rukki 2-4, Käärdi 61510, Rõngu vald

**Stafanie Lang**

Consultant, Belgium

Stephanie.Lang@wanadoo.be  
110 Rue Lesbroussart B-1050 Brussels

**Yves Lecocq**

Federation of Associations for Hunting  
& Conservation of the E.U., Belgium

ylecocq@face-europe.org  
Rue F Pelletier 82, B – 1030 Brussels

**Rachel Lee**

Royal Society for the Protection of  
Birds, United Kingdom

rachel.lee@rspb.org.uk  
The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL

**Carmen Linares**

Consultant, Spain

carmenyluis@inicia.es

**Tony Long**

WWF European Policy Office, Belgium

tlong@wwfepo.org  
Ave de Tervuren 36, B-1040 Brussels

**Rainer Luick**

FH Rottenburg, Germany

luick@fh-rottenburg.de  
Feldbergstr. 14, D-78247 Hilzingen

**Mogens Madsen**

Aalborg University, Denmark

mom@adslhome.dk  
Fibigerstraede 1; 9220 Aalborg

**Els Martens**

Afdeling NATUUR, Ministerie van de  
Vlaamse Gemeenschap, Belgium

els.martens@lin.vlaanderen.be  
Koning Albert II laan 20, 4de verdieping,  
lokaal 4G43; B – 1000 Brussel; BELGIE

**Britta Meinke**

Darmstadt University of Technology,  
Germany

meinke@pg.tu-darmstadt.de  
Residenzschloss, D-642 83 Darmstadt

**Andre Mertens**

Royal Saint-Hubert Club de Belgique,  
Belgium

andre.mertens@rshcb.be  
Bd. Lambermont, 410, 1030-Bruxelles

**Arno Mohl**

WWF Austria, Austria

arno.mohl@wwf.at  
Ottakringerstr. 114-116, 1160 Vienna

**Claire Monkhouse**

IEEP, United Kingdom

cmonkhouse@ieeplondon.org.uk  
Dean Bradley House, 52 Horseferry Rd,  
London SW1P 2AG

**David Morgan**

UK Nature and Landscape Office,  
Belgium

David.Morgan@JNCC.gov.uk  
18 Ave des Gaulois, B-1040 Bruxelles

**Krzysztof Mularczyk**

Foundation for the Development of  
Polish Agriculture, Poland

fdpa@fdpa.org.pl  
Mokotowska St. 14, 00-561 Warsaw

**Christian Muller**

Ministere de l'Environnement,  
Luxembourg

christian.muller@mev.etat.lu  
L-2918 Luxembourg

**Theodota Nantsou**

WWF Greece, Greece

t.nantsou@wwf.gr  
26 Filellinon Street, 105 58 Athens

**Aude Neuville**

Ministère de L'Ecologie et du  
Développement durable, France

aude.neuville@environnement.gouv.fr  
20 ave de Sigur; 75 302 Paris 07 SP

**Olivier Noiret**

Societe Royale Forestiere de Belgique,  
Belgium

srfb@srfb-kbbm.be  
Galerie du Centre Bloc II; 1000 Brussels

**Marta Novakova**

Ministry of Environment, Czech  
Republik

Marta\_Novakova@env.cz  
Vrsovicke 65, Praha 10, 100 00

**Nicole Nowicki-Caupin**

EUROSITE Programme and  
Development Office, Netherlands

nnowicki@euosite-nature.org  
PB 1366, 5004 BJ Tilburg

**Jouni Paavola**

Centre for Social and Economic  
Research on the Global Environment;

University of East Anglia, United  
Kingdom

J.Paavola@uea.ac.uk  
University of East Anglia, School of  
Biological Sciences, Norwich NR4 7TJ

**Marica-Maris Paju**

Tartu County Environmental  
Department, Estonia

maris.paju@tartu.envir.ee  
Aleksandri 14, 51004 Tartu

**Clairie Papazoglou**

BirdLife International, Belgium

clairie.papazoglou@birdlifeeco.net  
22 rue de Toulouse, B-1040 Brussels



**Maxime Paquin**

Réseau Nature – France Nature  
Environnement, France  
nature@fne.asso.fr  
8, rue Adèle Riton – 67000 Strasbourg

**Belen Pinilla**

ECO/Grupo Empresarios Agrarios,  
Spain  
fundeaiies.es  
Gren Via no 57-4 H, 28013 Madrid

**Rossella Pintus**

European Economic and Social  
Committee, Belgium  
rossella.pintus@esc.eu.int  
Rue Ravenstein 2, B-1000 Brussels

**Agnes Potocnik**

Permanent Representation of Austria  
to the EU, Belgium  
agnes.potocnik@eu.austria.be  
30 Ave de Cotenbergh, 1040 Brussels

**Feiho Prins**

Natuurmonumenten, Netherlands  
f.prins@natuurmonumenten.nl  
P.O. Box 9955; NL-1243 ZS's Graveland

**Taime Puura**

Estonian Nature Education Society,  
Tartu County Environmental  
Department, Estonia  
50002 Tartu  
taime.puura@tartu.envir.ee

**Matteo Rambaldi**

Regione Emilia Romagna, Belgium  
matteo.rambaldi@europe.com  
Rue de la Brosserie 70, 1050 Brussels

**Christian Rasmussen**

Sejlfloed Kommune, Denmark  
cr@sejlfloed.dk  
Stationsvej 5, 92 80 Storvorde

**Heinz Reinoehl**

Ministerium fuer Laendlichen Raum,  
Germany  
Heinz.Reinoehl@mlr.bwl.de  
Kemerplantz 10, D-70182 Stuttgart

**Claus Riber Knudsen**

County of North Jutland, Denmark  
crk@nja.dk  
Niels Bohrsvej 30, DK-9220 Aalborg

**Saskia Richartz**

IEEP, Belgium  
srichartz@ieeplondon.org.uk  
18 Ave des Gaulois, B-1040 Brussels

**Laurent Rigo**

WWF Belgium, Belgium  
etienne.aulotte@wwf.be  
Boulevard Emile Jacquemqin 90, 1000  
Brussels

**Mark Robins**

Royal Society for the Protection of  
Birds, United Kingdom  
mark.robins@rspb.org.uk  
SW England Office, Keble House,  
Southernhay Gdns, Exeter,  
Devon, EX1 1NT

**Metod Rogelj**

Ministry of Environment and Physical  
Planning, Slovenia  
metod.rogelj@zrsvn.si  
Vojkova 1b, 1000 Ljubljana

**Jörg Roos**

Ecologic, Germany  
jorgroos65@hotmail.com  
Pfalzburger Strasse 43-44, 10717 Berlin

**Toby Roxburgh**

Water & Environmental JacobsGIBB  
Ltd., United Kingdom  
toby.roxburgh@jacobs.com  
Gibb House, London Rd,  
Reading RG6 7BL

**Bernard Ryelandt**

Societe Royale Forestiere de Belgique,  
Belgium  
bernard.ryelandt@skynet.be  
25, Ave des Cormorans, 1150 Brussels

**Vincente Sanchez**

ECO/Grupo Empresarios Agrarios,  
Spain  
fundeaiies.es  
Gren Via no 57-4 H, 28013-Madrid

**Francisco Sánchez Aguado**

Consejería de Medio Ambiente. Junta  
de Castilla y León, Spain  
Francisco.Sanchez@sg.jcyl.es  
Plaza Reina Juana 5, 40071 Segovia

**Szilvia Sandor**

National Society of Conservationists,  
Hungary  
szilvi@mtvsz.hu  
1091 Budapest, Üll\_i út 91/b.

**Martin Schneekloth**

WWF European Policy Office, Belgium  
Stag1@wwfepo.org  
Ave de Tervuren 36, B-1040 Brussels

**Werner Simon**

European Commission, DG Regio,  
Belgium  
werner.simon@cec.eu.int  
Rue de la Loi 2000, B-1049 Brussels

**Erika Smrtová**

Agency for Conservation and  
Landscape Protection of the Czech  
Republic, Czech Republik  
smrtova@nature.cz  
Kali\_nická 4-6, 130 23 Praha 3

**Uffe Gjoel Sorensen**

WWF Denmark, Denmark  
ugsorensen@wwf.dk  
Ryesgade 3F, DK-2200 Copenhagen

**Peteris Strautins**

WWF Latvia, Latvia  
peteris\_strautins@sab.lv  
Elizabetes iela 8-4 LV 1010

**Luis Suarez**

WWF/Adena, Spain  
especies@wwf.es  
C/Gran Via de SanFrancisco, 8  
ES-28005 Madrid

**Kerstin Sundseth**

Ecosystems Ltd, Belgium  
kerstin.sundseth@ecosystems.be  
Boulevard General Wahis 21 B-1030  
Brussels

**Carlos Sunyer**

TERRA, Environmental Policy Centre,  
Spain  
csunyer@terracentro.org  
C/Jorge Manrique 1, 28420 La Navata

**Esta Tatrik**

Peipsi CTC, Estonia  
esta.tatrik@ctc.ee  
Riia 15A-28, Tartu, 15010

**Tomy Tchatchou**

Centre Nature 2000 de Rochefort,  
Belgium  
tchatchou.t@fsagx.ac.be  
FUSAGx (Sylviculture); 2, Passage des  
Deportes; 5030 Gembloux

**Patrick ten Brink**

IEEP, Belgium  
ptenbrink@ieep.org.uk  
Ave. des Gaulois 18, 1040 Brussels

**Zsofia Tomcsanyi**

The Central and East European  
Working Group for the Enhancement  
of Biodiversity, Hungary  
tomcsanyi@ceeweb.org  
Ulloi ut 91/B. H-1091 Budapest

**Ellen Townsend**

WWF European Policy Office, Belgium  
Etownsend@wwfepo.org  
Ave de Tervuren 36, B-1040 Brussels

**Ruta Vaiciunaite**

Lithuanian Fund for Nature, Lithuania  
ruta.v@glis.lt  
Algirdo St. 22 – 3; LT - 2006 Vilnius

**Janneke van Veen**

Student, Belgium  
vjanneke@hotmail.com  
Berg en Dalseweg 62, 6522 BM  
Nijmegen

**Paul Vandereyken**

Royal Saint-Hubert Club de Belgique,  
Belgium  
same as Mertens  
Bd. Lambermont, 410, 1030–Brussels

**Sylvie Vanpeene-Bruhier**

Cemagref UR EPM, France  
sylvie.vanpeene@grenoble.cemagref.fr  
2, rue de la papeterie, Domaine  
Universitaire – BP 76,  
38402 Saint Martin d'Hères

**Mojimir Vlasin**

Veronica – ecological institute,  
Czech Republic  
mojimir.vlasin@een.cz

**Stephen Warman**

English Nature, United Kingdom  
stephen.warman@english-nature.org.uk  
Trevint House, Strangeways Villas,  
Cornwall TR1 2PA

**Carleen Weebers**

Ministry of Agriculture, Nature  
Management and Fisheries,  
Netherlands  
C.Y.Weeters@n.agro.nl  
P.O. Box 20401,  
2500 EK The Hague

**Barbara Wilson**

Interpreter, United Kingdom  
bhw@aristeia.demon.co.uk  
13 Church Close, Woking  
Surrey GU21 4QZ

**Anett Zellei**

Centre for Rural Economy, University  
of Newcastle, United Kingdom  
anett.zellei@ncl.ac.uk  
King's Road, Newcastle Upon Tyne,  
NE1 7RU

**Marcin Zielinski**

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural  
Development, Poland  
marcin.zielinski@minrol.gov.pl  
30, Wspolna Street, Warsaw



## PROJECT PARTNERS

---

### IEEP

Clare COFFEY  
IEEP  
18 Ave des Gaulois  
B 1040 Bruxelles  
Belgium  
Tel: 00 32 2 738 7471  
Fax: 00 32 2 732 4004  
Email: ccoffey@ieeplondon.org.uk  
www.ieep.org.uk



### WWF

Sandra JEN  
WWF European Policy Office  
Ave de Tervuren 36  
B 1040 Bruxelles  
Belgium  
Tel: 00 32 2 743 8813  
Fax: 00 32 2 743 8819  
Email: sjen@wwfepo.org  
www.panda.org/epo



---

### NATIONAL WWF OFFICES/PARTNERS

#### ADENA/WWF Spain

Luis SUAREZ  
C/Gran Vía de San Francisco, 8  
ES-28005 Madrid  
Spain  
Tel: 00 34 91 3540578  
Fax: 00 34 91 3656336  
Email: especies@wwf.es  
www.wwf.es

#### WWF Belgium

Luc DRIES  
E. Jacquainlaan 90  
B 1000 Brussels  
Belgium  
Tel: 00 32 2 340 0968  
Fax: 00 32 2 340 0933  
Email: luc.dries@wwf.be  
www.wwf.be

#### WWF Latvia

Ints MEDNIS  
Elizabetes Str. 8-4  
LV-1010 Riga  
Latvia  
Tel: +371 7 50 56 44  
Fax: +371 7 50 56 51  
Email: imednis@wwf.org.lv  
www.wwf.lv

#### WWF Austria

Arno MOHL  
Ottakringerstr 114-116  
A-1160 Vienna  
Austria  
Tel: 00 43 1 488 17 233  
Fax: 00 43 1 488 17 277  
Email: arno.mohl@wwf.at  
www.wwf.at

#### WWF Denmark

Uffe Gjøøl SØRENSEN  
Rymsgade 3F  
DK-2200 Copenhagen N  
Denmark  
Tel: 00 45 35 36 36 35  
Fax: 00 45 35 24 78 68  
Email: ugsorensen@wwf.dk  
www.wwf.dk

#### Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation

Gulnara ROLL  
Veski 69  
50409 Tartu  
Estonia  
Tel. +372 (7) 421 001  
Fax +372 (7) 421 162  
E-mail: gulnara.roll@ctc.ee  
www.ctc.ee



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