



Seminar Report

Terrestrial introductory seminar for the pledge and review process in the context of commitments under the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030

14-15 December 2021

Online

Consortium Information:

Wageningen Environmental Research, Wageningen Marine Research, Wageningen University and Research

In cooperation with:

NatureBureau Ltd.

Estonian University of Life Sciences

CEEweb

Terra Ecogest

Mãe d'água

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Event:

[More information on the Natura 2000 Biogeographic process](#)

[More information on the Third Mediterranean seminar](#)

[Other relevant documents](#)

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1. Introduction

In 2012, the European Commission re-launched the Natura 2000 biogeographical process to help implement the Natura 2000 network to its full potential both on land and at sea and thus to contribute significantly to achieving the objectives of the Nature Directives (Birds and Habitats Directives). Today, the Natura 2000 biogeographical process organises and triggers cooperation between authorities, experts and stakeholders at the scale of the 9 terrestrial biogeographical regions and the 5 marine biogeographical regions. It involves seminars, workshops and cooperation activities to enhance effective implementation, management, monitoring, financing and reporting of the Natura 2000 network.

In 2020, the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: Bringing nature back into our lives set targets for protected and strictly protected areas coverage, as well as for improvement of the conservation status of species and habitats protected under the Nature Directives. The Natura 2000 biogeographical process was therefore expanded to support discussions between EU Member States, stakeholders and experts on the steps to take to meet these new targets.

After the launch of the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, online introductory seminars were organised for the marine and terrestrial biogeographical regions. The terrestrial introductory seminar took place online on 14 and 15 December 2021. The seminar focussed on non-deterioration, alongside the 30% conservation status improvement target and 30% protected areas target - launching discussions on the implementation of the guidance on the targets under the pledge and review process for all biogeographical regions.

There were 158 registered participants from 25 Member States, including 20 people from the European Commission or European institutions and 42 people from various NGOs. This included 14 support staff from the Biogeographical Process Consortium, involved in the organisation and facilitation of the seminar.

The aims for the introductory seminar were:

- To inform about the intended process for the pledge and review process for the targets on protected areas and for the status improvement target for species and habitats;
- To inform about the baseline and distance to target at biogeographical level for both targets;
- To share experiences on promising approaches, processes or strategies undertaken by Member States to achieve the targets;
- To stimulate joint work on cross-border issues, e.g. on transboundary populations or connectivity.

Knowledge was shared with many high-quality presentations, starting with plenary sessions introducing the protected areas target and the conservation status improvement target. The plenary sessions were followed by discussions in 18 facilitated sub-group meetings. Discussion groups were organised around themes that were identified beforehand, and sub-group meetings were scheduled

as parallel sessions so that participants had the opportunity to engage in discussion groups of their choice (Annex 1). Highlights from the outcomes of the thematic group sessions were presented in the final plenary session during the second day.

2. Opening and plenary sessions

2.1. Day 1, Scale-up restoration efforts for non-deterioration and 30% improvement

The seminar was opened by Nicola Notaro, Head of the Nature Conservation Unit of the Directorate General Environment (DG ENV) of the European Commission. He highlighted the importance of the new EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 “Bringing nature back into our lives”. He emphasised that this seminar should stimulate a discussion on how to realise aims and targets for years to come and provide opportunities for joint action and cooperation by Member States.

Frank Vassen, DG ENV of the European Commission, provided context and guidance on the ‘30% status improvement target’ for habitats and species in the context of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030. The Commission requests that Member States ensure no deterioration in conservation trends and status of all protected habitats and species by 2030. In addition, Member States will have to ensure that at least 30% of species and habitats not currently in favourable status are in that category or show a strong positive trend. This target is at the national level, and there is no break-down below this level, e.g., species versus habitats, or towards biogeographical region. The Commission, with the European Environmental Agency, have provided a guidance note (June 2021) on how to select and prioritise species and habitats, which further explains this.

What are major challenges to define status improvement targets?

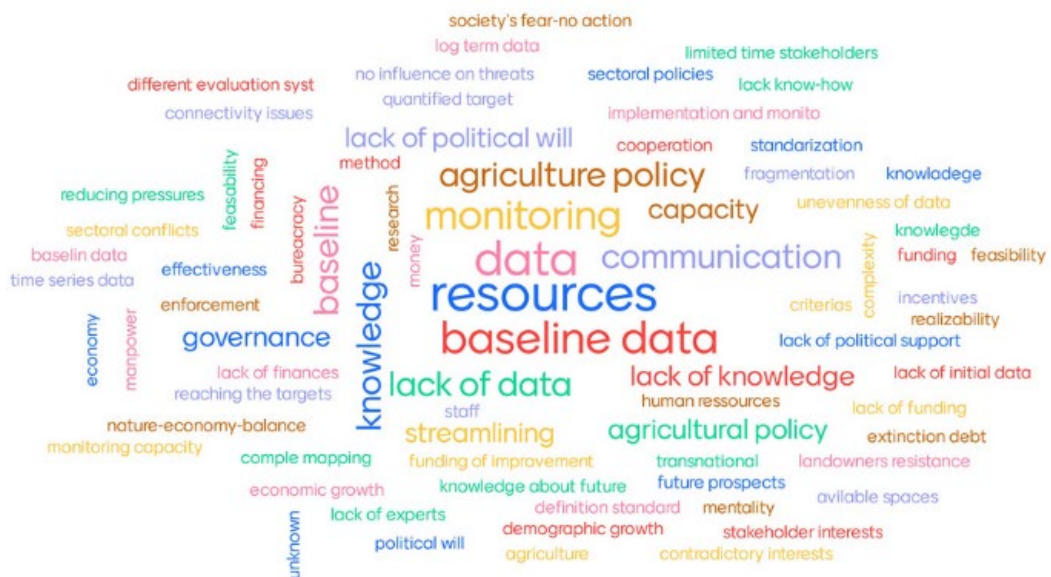


Figure 1: Mentimeter poll on what participants see as major challenges for the status improvement targets

The format for pledges has been prepared and includes a list of species and habitats, but also foreseen measures and a timeline for their implementation. An online reporting tool will be ready by mid-2022. All pledges should be submitted by the end of 2022, after which the review of pledges can take place.

Carlos Romão (EEA) made a presentation on conservation status and trends of terrestrial species and habitats. This included the EU population status of terrestrial birds under the Birds Directive. Of all 226 terrestrial habitats, approximately 31% of the assessments demonstrate a bad conservation status, 40% are poor and only 24% appear good. Likewise, for the 1 312 terrestrial species, 20% are in bad conservation status, 36% are poor, and 32% are good. For the terrestrial birds reported under the Birds Directive, 244 species are not secure (fig. 2). Carlos Romão provided links to the assessments of habitats, species and birds to guide the countries in their selection of species and habitats for the pledges.

'Terrestrial' species – Birds Directive

453 species and sub-species selected

- 3 Bustards: 1 Secure
- 10 Cranes, Rails, Gallinules & Coots: 3
- 2 Cuckoos: 1
- 43 Ducks, Geese & Swans: 18
- 10 Falcons: 5
- 5 Grebes: 3
- 32 Hawks & Eagles: 21
- 13 Herons, Pelicans, Ibises & Spoonbills: 12
- 4 Kingfishers, Rollers, Bee-eaters & Hoopoe: 3
- 3 Loons & Divers: 3
- 13 Owls: 7
- 200 Passerines: 95
- 29 Pheasants, Partridges & Grouse: 7
- 12 Pigeons & Doves: 6
- 2 Sandgrouse: 0
- 3 Storks & Flamingo: 3
- 8 Swift & Nightjars: 0
- 47 Waders, Gulls & Hawks: 15
- 14 Woodpeckers: 12

209 Secure – 244 Not Secure

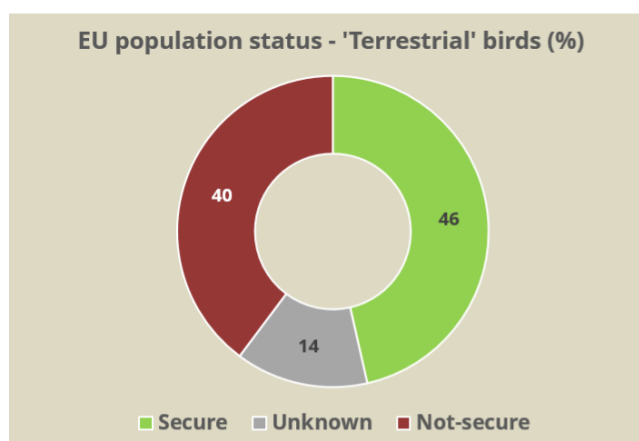


Figure 2: Assessment of conservation status of birds under the Birds Directive (from [presentation](#) Carlos Ramao, EEA)

Finland, France and Slovenia each presented their national approaches and observations, to spark ideas and stimulate discussion on the different ways to set priorities for the Strategy.

Fanny Lendi Ramirez (French Ministry of the Ecological Transition) and Camille Gazay (Joint Research Unit on Natural Capital at the French National Natural History Museum) presented the French approach. So far, a prioritisation of species and habitats has been conducted based on two criteria: vulnerability and level of responsibility (defined on the basis of range or population size). This resulted in a score for species and habitats. Next, the ambition level was defined and necessary measures were identified. In a forthcoming LIFE-SNAP project, France will build further on this approach.

Next, Olli Ojala (Senior Ministerial Adviser of the Ministry of the Environment of Finland) presented how Finland is preparing its national pledge. The Forest Biodiversity Programme for Southern Finland (METSO 2008–2025) aims to develop site selection criteria to strengthen a network of protected areas. METSO focuses on private forests and allows for land owners to be fully compensated if they agree that their land will be protected. The criteria for identification of potential protected areas are based on structure, presence of threatened species, restoration possibilities, spatial configuration and the presence of high quality habitats.

Which criteria do you feel are most applicable to set the target?

Mentimeter

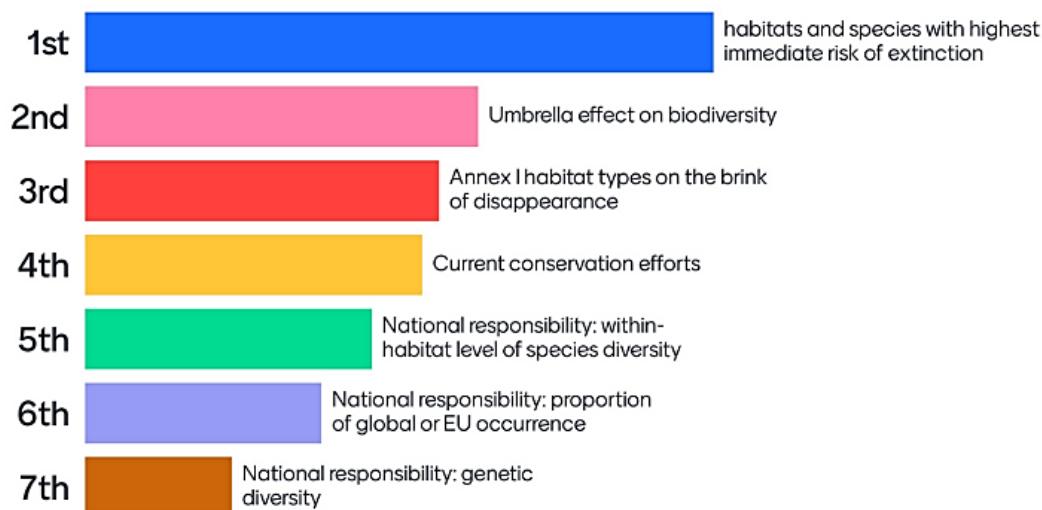


Figure 3: Results from a Mentimeter poll on what criteria for target-setting are considered most applicable (23 respondents)

2.2. Day 2, Targets on protected areas

After the opening, Joaquim Capitào, DG ENV of the European Commission, introduced the new EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 “Bringing nature back into our lives”. The Strategy entails the development and strengthening of a coherent network of protected areas within the EU, which includes legal protection for a minimum of 30% of its land area, to form a Trans-European Nature Network. This includes strict protection of at least one third of all protected areas, including all remaining primary and old-growth forests. The Commission, working with the EEA, Member States and stakeholders, produced criteria and guidance for identifying and designating additional areas, including a definition of strict protection, as well as for appropriate management planning. This would be published at the beginning of 2022 as a Commission Staff Working Document.

Mette Lund, from the European Environment Agency, presented the situation of species and habitats in the EU based on the Habitats Directive Article 17 reporting. She began by presenting the situation per Member State. In relation to the habitats, Mette Lund highlighted that those showing a better conservation status and positive trends are rock, heath and scrub habitats. Those in the worst situations are dune and coastal habitats, which are threatened by urbanisation (mainly related to coastal tourism). This is followed by bogs, mires and fens, threatened by agriculture and modification of the water regime.

In relation to species, vascular plants, amphibians and reptiles are improving, whilst molluscs and fish are performing the worst. The main pressures include agriculture, forestry, urbanisation and modification of water regimes. It was highlighted that there is still an important lack of information in relation to invertebrates and non-vascular plants.

Please rank in terms of importance for completing the network: Mentimeter

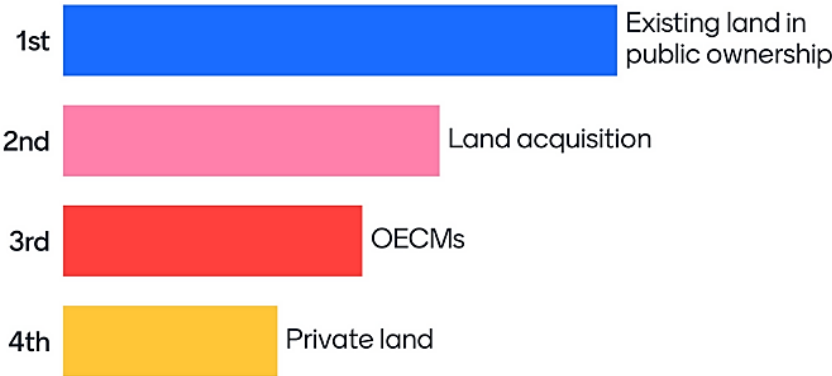


Figure 4: Results from a Mentimeter poll on best approaches to complete the nature network (67 respondents)

3. Discussion group sessions

Below follows a summary of the main points raised by participants during the sessions. The ideas presented and reported were not all endorsed by all participants not do they all reflect the point of view of the European Commission.

3.1. Day 1, Scale-up restoration efforts for non-deterioration and 30% improvement

Conservation Status Improvement Targets Discussion topics	Monitoring	Improve the monitoring of species and habitats with unknown conservation status
	Synergies	Make use of synergies with other policy areas to achieve the target
	Cross-border	Organize cross border cooperation on non-degradation and status improvement
	Scale-up	Scale-up restoration efforts for non-deterioration and 30% improvement

Theme 1 – Improve the monitoring of species and habitats with unknown conservation status.

Chairs: Theo van der Sluis, Rene Henkens; Rapporteurs: Richard White, Kristina Wood

Questions for discussion:

- What steps are you considering to improve monitoring to reduce the unknowns for habitats?
- What steps are you considering to improve monitoring for species?

The breakout groups consisted of approximately 50 participants (two rounds, three groups). The discussion focussed on the reasons for unknown conservation status. Generally, the information most lacking within the EU is about trends. Also, the 4-50% range for unknown status demonstrates the vast differences between countries and indicate that certain Member States need to increase efforts to solve the remaining knowledge gaps.

There are various causes for unknown conservation statuses but those most often identified are:

- not enough knowledge of species or habitats;
- few relevant specialists;
- large number of species or habitats;

- taxonomic problems;
- habitats or species difficult to monitor;
- lack of resources;
- rapid changes and outdated knowledge.

Some countries have joined the European Union more recently and (especially if they are rich in species and habitats) they need a lot of resources (for contracts or staff, etc.) to fill the data gaps. In some cases, only a few specialists are available so it might be impossible to cover all sites in one year and authorities in charge will have to prioritise. Moreover, in some Member States, several biogeographical regions need to be covered, as in Romania who has 5 biogeographical regions.

Not all unknowns will be resolved because some species are quite hard to locate/are rarely observed: they are found by chance and there is no good monitoring method. It might not make sense to remove unknowns for a whole species group when this is a mixture of common and uncommon species and some can only be identified genetically (e.g. amphibians and fishes). It would be expensive to implement a baseline for a whole set of species.

When it comes to trends there are more unknowns: for habitat areas, countries are working on a longer (often 12 year period) monitoring schedule of sites to assess whether an area has disappeared or not. Countries use old maps which are not always very reliable, especially where the understanding of the habitat has evolved. Thus it is hard to know whether a change is real or due to a shift in methodology. In addition, beyond unknowns there are also uncertainties, because the outcome of the assessment of the structure and function of habitats relies on the sampling approach (e.g. a participant mentioned using 150-170 plots per habitat which are visited over 12 years).

Some countries have started research programmes focusing on those species and habitats with poorly known conservation statuses. However, some participants also wish to flag that political will to ensure good data collection may be lacking in some cases.

Monitoring also means improving the quality of data. Citizen science is important, with about 60% (higher for birds) of the people involved in reporting data being volunteers. The north-western European countries have a longer history of field biology, usually involving a network of NGOs collecting field data and using citizen science to complement the data. Some countries have mapped all habitats, but now struggle to keep their records up to date. Reflecting on which methods are the most suitable is necessary and also requires funding.

Several countries identify a need to have a joint approach to standardise monitoring, for example to share protocols for invertebrate species, to allow for comparison across Member States. Furthermore, forest habitat assessments differ between Member States. Some countries noticed that even with different teams doing inventories, the approaches differ. The biogeographical seminars are useful to flag this, and Spain has taken the initiative to define FRVs, which are important. However, there is no legal basis making it compulsory to develop a common methodology.

The most pressing issues include:

- Concerns over lack of standardisation for monitoring methods and for assessment of quality between Member States;
- Lack of funding for long-term monitoring, especially in small Member States and across multiple biogeographical regions;
- Lack of expertise in some Member States, along with different emphasis on the use of NGOs and/or experts;
- The political support to help unlock funding; and
- Increasing links between nature data and other policy and legal issues, including climate change mitigation and adaptation.

There should be more connections between data collection and policy/legal issues, e.g. Natura 2000 data can influence the CAP. Data are also crucial for capturing changes that occur and checking if policies are successful.

Further information in relation to data completeness: [Available here](#).

The E-bind handbook (part A) focuses on topics around data and monitoring: Improving the availability of data and information on species, habitats and sites (europa.eu): [Available here](#).

Theme 2 – Make use of synergies with other policy areas when selecting species and habitats.

Chairs: Irene Bouwma, Paul Goriup; Rapporteurs: Joaquim Capitaó, Rui Ruffino

Questions for discussion:

- Which steps should be taken to realise synergies between social, economic and environmental policies and the conservation status improvement targets?
- How could you use these synergies to mobilise resources?

The breakout groups consisted of approximately 45 participants (two rounds, four groups). Some participants state that both synergies and conflicts are part of the question: local solutions are needed and site-based policies have to consider synergies. For various policy fields synergies are already in place although some could be strengthened, in particular concerning climate change mitigation and adaptation policies, agricultural policies (CAP), the implementation of the Water Framework Directive and forest policies. At the same time, it was acknowledged that creating synergies is often difficult as each policy field has specific goals and targets which are sometimes difficult to relate to those of the EU nature and biodiversity policy. The Nature Directives do not directly protect nature but specific species and habitats. For instance, in the case of climate policies it is difficult to show that a natural grassland type (which is protected under the Directive) might sequester more carbon than a reseeded low-biodiversity grassland.

It is not clear how the water quality standards of the Water Framework Directive complement the requirements of specific protected species. Earlier this year, Sweden produced draft guidance on the restoration of rivers and a target for about 2 500 km of free-flowing rivers. According to the strict definition of free-flowing rivers, however, the target can best be achieved by placing works in the vicinity of long distances of unaffected water courses. At present, a lot of work in the WFD is taking place in urban and more exploited areas, but the target for free-flowing rivers might have the consequence of shifting the focus to unaffected stretches of rivers where the target is already achieved.

The transition to renewable energy is triggering further declines in bat species. The EU Action Plan on Bats states that by 2024, 50% of bat species should have an improved conservation status, but most of the goals listed are not taken up by new policies and funding for renewables or energy efficiency.

Synergies in policy formulation and implementation need to be created at all levels; at EU, national and (if applicable) regional and local levels. For instance, improved coordination between DG-AGRI and DG-ENV might help avoid contradictory demands regarding implementation at ground level.

In some Member States, close contact exists between those responsible for the implementation of different sectoral policies, as staff are part of the same department or Ministry. In other Member States it is difficult to achieve synergies as the responsibility for developing policies is allocated to different Ministries and awareness of the need to integrate biodiversity into sectoral policies is recent and still incomplete. Biodiversity conservation must be seen as cross-sectoral, just as mitigating and adapting to climate change are. This requires a change of mindset, including at government and administration levels.

In federal States such as Germany, Spain, Austria and Belgium, synergies are even more complicated due to the additional need to coordinate policies at both the national and regional levels, while there is limited staff capacity to handle this. For example, in Belgium there exist three regions and a federal government. All have to be involved to develop a pledge. Involving stakeholders in addition will be a difficult task.

At local level, practitioners and local administrations are faced with the contradictory demands arising from various policies. Consulting them on implementation challenges would be wise as they often know the difficulties at the local level. This is particularly important in the foreseen process, as many authorities are now increasing efforts, developing new ambitions and strategies to halt the ongoing decline of biodiversity. This does create a certain level of apprehension amongst stakeholders, and if they are not taken on board in time this might be counterproductive. It was also underlined that several stakeholders (hunters, landowners) already undertake actions to protect and restore biodiversity: this should be acknowledged and lessons should be drawn from the results achieved in order to avoid reinventing the wheel.

In addition, there is a need for advisory systems that can support land managers to find good solutions for implementing the myriad of policies they are concerned by. Ministries often have limited staff resources for implementing the Nature Directives, so there is a need to set-up (and allocate funding for) advisory services that can assist in contacting farmers and other land managers. But in any case, land managers are not inclined to act for biodiversity in the absence of incentives or means to generate income.

Economic arguments must be put forward to demonstrate that investing in protecting biodiversity today will cost much less than if we let the situation go on deteriorating and that nature restoration can have positive economic impacts. Biodiversity conservation can offer benefits to other sectors and initiatives should be taken, such as with health ministries on wellbeing, finance ministries on natural capital accounting, banks and ethical investment funds on pro-biodiversity projects and creating green bonds to develop business. There is a need to be more proactive in approaching the private sector (such as the EU Business and Biodiversity Platform).

Theme 3 – Organise cross-border cooperation on non-degradation and status improvement.

Chair: Theo van der Sluis; Rapporteur: Kristina Wood

Questions for discussion:

- How can we expand cross-border cooperation based on your experiences?
- What organisational measures do you plan to improve cooperation across borders?

The breakout group consisted of approximately 25 participants (one round).

The level of cooperation and information exchange differs, often related to existing networks and similarity of shared ecosystems e.g. in the Boreal countries there is generally a high degree of collaboration. NGOs tend to work across borders, for example BirdLife is concerned about migratory birds and their habitats along migration routes. Moreover, ecological corridors cross borders, so cooperation is important, in particular to identify issues on a national level. There are however three set-backs:

- all frameworks are time-consuming and governance takes time;
- there is often a lot of discussion that does not result in much action at the local level;
- there is a language and habitat interpretation/definition issue: definitions can differ on two sides of a border.

At the pan-European level, the European Commission and Council of Europe share information and experience concerning the Natura 2000 and Emerald Networks. For example, a representative of the Council of Europe participated in the last Boreal Natura 2000 seminar.

Recently a study was conducted by the European Topic Centre on Biodiversity (ETC-BD), looking at transboundary cooperation in the Strasbourg area (Germany and France). The structures exist and are very useful. However, those involved felt that the cooperation was stagnating as people were focusing on national policies. Also, there was a large staff turnover, and good staff with knowledge across the border was lacking.

Five workshops on habitat interpretation have been organised by the Spanish Government to devise methodologies to create a coherent network. For example, with Portuguese colleagues they are working on issues with habitat definitions. This has produced a scheme for continued work in the Mediterranean region at the biogeographical level to design concepts, definitions and procedures for common work on the conservation status definition, assessment and required actions on habitat types of community interest.

Are there species for which you are already developing cross border restoration plans?



Figure 5: Results from a Mentimeter poll in sub-group three on species for which cross-border restoration plans are developed (12 respondents)

Theme 4 – Scale-up restoration efforts for non-deterioration and 30% improvement.

Chair: Sandra Mesquita, Carlos Sunyer; Rapporteur: Diana Pungar, Orsolya Nyárai

Objectives

- Which steps are you considering to scale up restoration efforts?
- How can we achieve this quickly?

The breakout groups consisted of approximately 50 participants (two rounds, three groups). Scaling up restoration efforts is a crucial issue, but requires sufficient capacity, resources, and careful planning. Private and public land are both important for the restoration target, but some participants think that the focus should be on the latter as it can be fully controlled: in their view, it is easier to manage and bigger areas can be improved. Working on private land requires the involvement of owners, which often results in very small and inefficient projects. Therefore, they find it more cost-effective to scale

up restoration effort on public land although conflicts of interest may still arise between State agencies (e.g. in some cases forestry agency versus nature conservation agency).

Nevertheless, the role of private landowners is more than far from negligible: farming alone has a huge impact on biodiversity. It is key to involve owners in the implementation of conservation policies. This needs encouragement through:

- Recognising who is managing biodiversity in a given area, and making it interesting for the land owner (in a practical, rather than a theoretical way);
- Improving communication;
- Providing accessible guidance on restoration;
- Relaxing legislation, because rather than prohibiting and forcing, it is necessary to convince and stimulate;
- Putting in place economic stimuli and agri-environmental schemes with legal certainty over time.

Conservation measures on private land can also be funded through LIFE. Some suggestions from the participants:

- LIFE integrated projects (LIFE IPs) can support the implementation of conservation measures in the context of restoration targets, quality of environment, sustainable forestry etc. This however requires an agreement with the owners, which is hard to achieve;
- Learn from good practices and start with easy restoration sites;
- Start with cost-effective measures. Some of the cheaper measures do enough to prove efficiency of the approach (restoring water regime in peatlands). In addition, some restoration measures have effect on several habitats/species;
- Eliminate and reduce pressures:
 - This would apply, above all, to the agriculture and forestry sectors, where there are still many incentives that promote negative practices for biodiversity;
 - This measure could also speed up restoration processes.
- Analyse efforts and best practices before developing new steps. It is important to prioritise and assess the impact on the restoration goals.
- Ensure that there is enough capacity for the planned restoration activities: in some cases it was found that there was not enough man power or technical equipments to achieve large restoration programmes.

Participants summarised that adapting restoration efforts to the specificities of both types of land ownership is necessary. Implementation of restoration projects on State property can be quick and large scale which will allow for an interesting degree of effectiveness. Engaging private landowners will often take time and compensation, but is often crucial to improving conservation status at the national biogeographical level.

3.2. Day 2, Targets on protected areas

Targets on protected areas Discussion Topics	Complete	Complete a coherent protected areas network
	Management	Ensure adequate management of protected areas
	Connectivity	Improve connectivity of the network
	Strict protection	Identify and develop strictly protected areas

Theme 1 – Complete a coherent protected areas network

Chairs: Irene Bouwma, Sandra Mesquita; Rapporteurs: Orsolya Nyárai, Richard White

Questions for discussion:

- How do you identify gaps in the protected areas network?
- How do you plan to fill the gaps and come to the designation of additional areas or other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs)?

The breakout groups consisted of approximately 52 participants (two rounds, four groups). Participants indicated that in several Member States work is ongoing to assess the current state of the network and the distance to target (Belgium, Netherlands, Latvia). The main issue is whether regional designations or spatial planning categories meet the criteria set in the guidance note, and if not, what changes are required. The representative of the ETC-BD indicated that gaps are significant for the marine Natura 2000 network but less so for the terrestrial Natura 2000 network. It was also highlighted that it is important to reduce the share of “unknown” assessments in the current coverage of the network for all species and habitats. Several participants indicated that they might use additional criteria such as endangered species at the national level (Poland), or regionally endangered habitats (Belgium), or all habitats and vertebrates (Italy). A participant from Sweden indicated that in the framework of a new Freshwater Strategy (2021-2030), lakes and rivers of high value are reviewed with the aim of identifying gaps in the network. Birdlife Poland has already undertaken an assessment of IBAs that might be designated as SPAs. However, legal designation is usually a slow process, which also counts for other Member States. The Latvian representative indicated that they now have new data available based on a recent habitat inventory and data from LIFE projects that will allow them to identify new areas, however the process has just started. They plan to start discussion with

stakeholders on the sites that will be identified, but this process is challenging. A participant from Italy underlined that data is still often lacking and there is limited time for additional research. The participant from Hungary explained that Hungary does not yet have a strategy to identify gaps of the network but has almost completed its Natura 2000 network: although reaching the 30% target is a challenge for Hungary, the coherence of the network is ensured primarily through the National Ecological Network that is embedded in spatial planning so that some of these sites and other protected areas might qualify as areas to complete the network.

The representative of the EC indicated that it is up to the Member States to strike a balance between scientific robustness and progressive updating of their pledges. The representative also underlined that the pledges can be refined during and after review seminar discussions as well as if new scientific evidence comes to light.

Other Member States (Poland, Croatia, Bulgaria) have already (or almost) reached the target with the current Natura 2000 network and other designated protected sites. They feel that the challenge in their country is to ensure adequate management, particularly on privately managed lands. Representatives of European Landowners (ELO) and the European Anglers Association (EAA) expressed their concern that the new targets might increase the burden on private landowners and other users. In particular, the 10% strictly protected areas target is creating much uncertainty, as it is not sufficiently clear which activities are allowed. The interests of private actors need to be taken into consideration when identifying new protected areas or changing the level of protection on existing areas. The representative of the Anglers Association expressed his concern that anglers will be banned from the 10% strictly protected areas: he indicated that this should be considered on a site-by-site basis and that anglers could play a role in monitoring and surveying. There was discussion on the 30% pledge, and whether this related to EU or national level. The representative of the EC clarified that the protected areas targets are set at EU level and are expected to be reached also at biogeographical region level. The representative of the Society for Ecological Restoration Europe referred to a 2019 article of Dinerstein (<https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/sciadv.aaw2869>) that provides a sound scientific underpinning for this percentage.

How do you plan to fill the gaps and come to the designation of additional areas or OECMs?

There was some discussion on OECMs. At the level of the CBD, there is a discussion about the definition of OECMs. A survey of 15 Member States undertaken by the EEA and ETC-BD showed that OECMs were not often used. In Denmark, some experience has been gathered to develop a new payment model in the SINCERE project (<https://sincereforests.eu/>). Croatia indicated that they are considering OECMs, particularly for the marine environment. Romania is considering a change to their legislation to include OECMs. Other representatives confirmed the EEA and ETC-BD assessment that limited work was undertaken on OECMs in their countries so far.

Theme 2 – Adequate management of protected areas.

Chairs: Paul Goriup, Carlos Sunyer; Rapporteurs: Rui Rufino

Questions for discussion:

- What additional measures or actions are required to ensure adequate management?
- How can we best secure the necessary staff and financial resources?
- How can you improve transboundary protected area management?

The breakout groups consisted of approximately 64 participants (two rounds, four groups). The participants agreed that it is important to ensure adequate management of the designated protected areas. Several Member States have developed management plans to organise the management of sites – whilst others underline that the number of management plans are limited and that this is a priority to ensure adequate management. Funding for management on private land remains a challenge. There are good examples of ensuring management of private land through subsidies or good and timely involvement of landowners (e.g. the LIFE project: Land is Forever). Several participants underlined the need to involve private landowners and local authorities as important stakeholders. At the same time, participants also underlined that better communication and involvement of landowners remains a challenge and requires many resources. Furthermore, it is necessary not only to manage land, but to also undertake restoration of it. It is important to distinguish between restoration action and regular management to maintain the habitat.

Participants discussed the need for reviewing site management at the landscape level as a way to ensure adequate management. This approach is particularly suitable in cases of clusters of small sites or where (often small) sites are influenced by pressures from outside the site itself. In some Member States this is more of an issue (mentioned by participants from Belgium and Germany), while in other countries pressures from outside Natura 2000 areas are limited (e.g. Cyprus). A reference was made to the IUCN guidance on buffer zones for protected areas. Although some participants stressed the need for more EC guidance on the use of pesticides and fertilisers in Natura 2000, it is up to Member States to decide on which measures are needed, and this might be Member State and site specific.

Monitoring is essential to know whether management is effective. In Croatia monitoring is incorporated in the management plans and in Cyprus some indicators are used to assess effectiveness, but more are needed. Other participants indicated that monitoring is too limited in their country on Natura 2000 sites to allow adequate assessment of effectiveness.

Theme 3 – Improve the connectivity and coherence of the network.

Chairs: Theo van der Sluis; Rapporteur: Kristina Wood

Questions for discussion:

- Does your current legislation contain specific instruments for conservation of corridors?
- Which approaches have you considered to foster transboundary connectivity?

The break out groups consisted of approximately 45 participants (two rounds, three groups). The connectivity should be taken into account and used in the planning of the Natura 2000 network. The EU guidance note on protected areas provides more explanation on this issue and states that it includes rivers and cultural landscapes. The participants discussed how the current connectivity and coherence of the Natura 2000 network could be improved, and what the current status is in their countries. Representatives of several Member States indicated that they have national spatial planning systems (the Netherlands, Estonia, Italy, Hungary) or legal frameworks (Germany, Romania, Slovenia) for habitat connectivity or corridors that might be used for strengthening connectivity in the Natura 2000 network. Sweden has no such legislation at present, but the work being done under the Water Framework Directive might support connectivity in watercourses, which will strengthen Natura 2000 sites. Finland is renewing the Nature Conservation Act, but the legal implications of corridor designation and compensation are not clear for stakeholders and so there is a lot of discussion on the topic with stakeholders. In Germany, although legislation exists, implementation is lacking - particularly when reviewing the connectivity around Natura 2000 sites. Furthermore, there is no complete analysis of connectivity in the Natura 2000 network for the species and habitats of the Habitats Directive which would be a rather complex undertaking. In the Netherlands, work has been ongoing on this issue for many years. In Romania, legislation is present, but no actual corridors have been designated, although studies on large carnivores have been conducted to identify the corridors. In Slovenia work is ongoing and for some species (large carnivores, amphibians) good data are available for corridors, but as in Germany, for other species and habitats information is lacking. This makes it difficult to justify why some developments cannot take place. In Poland, although many studies have been undertaken on this issue in the past (EcoNET), no legislation is available. In particular, on the border between Poland and Belarus there is a need to protect connectivity as many physical barriers are built without considering the need for connectivity. The Italian representatives indicated that although regional plans identify ecological corridors, this does not pose explicit restrictions on development even if they are sometimes considered during environmental assessments. The Slovenian representative suggested that legislation might be helpful to include connectivity in the strategies for other sectors such as transport, spatial planning and forestry. One study has reviewed the need for connectivity at that EU level which might be of interest:

<https://www.rewildingeurope.com/wp-content/uploads/publications/boosting-ecological-restoration-for-a-wilder-Europe/index.html>

Which approaches have you considered to foster transboundary connectivity?

Several participants mentioned good examples of cross-border parks and actions to improve cross-border connectivity. However, this requires a strong institutional background, e.g. through conventions. Also, to ensure progress there needs to be staff on the ground as well as long-term financial resources so that activities continue after projects end (especially those involving landowners for whom a long-term perspective is important).

Overall it appears that although instruments are available in several Member States the implementation is not always well advanced, even when there is scientific information for specific species or habitats about where corridors might be useful to improve their conservation status.

Theme 4 – Identify and develop strictly protected areas.

Chairs: Kalev Sepp, Carlos Sunyer; Rapporteurs: Rene Henkens, Diana Pungar

Questions for discussion:

- How to identify existing or new protected areas that would benefit from strict protection?
- How does your current legislation address the issue of strict protection?
- Do you have protected areas that fulfil the criteria of strict protection?

The break out groups consisted of approximately 69 participants in two rounds (3 groups). The participants discussed the challenges of increasing the area of strictly protected areas. Participants of various Member States noted that, at present, the area of strictly protected areas is well below 10 % and that it will be a huge challenge to reach this target. In many cases land is privately owned and strict protection is not yet feasible, as funding to compensate for the economic loss is not often available. Participants felt that it might be easier to increase strictly protected areas on public lands. Several participants felt that forest might be an easier category to designate as non-intervention management has been practiced already. At present most (potential) strictly protected areas concern old growth forests - often detected using remote sensing. Grasslands are generally not included as strictly protected areas. This is also due to the fact that strictly protected areas are generally considered non-intervention areas, while grasslands do need substantial management intervention to prevent succession into forests. The Biodiversity Strategy and the Commission guidance clarify that strictly protected areas may be non-intervention areas but may also be areas which require active management. Also, participants discussed the surveillance and monitoring required for areas designated as strictly protected.

How does your current legislation address the issue of strict protection?

The situation concerning strictly protected areas differs substantially between Member States: some are already approaching 10% like Sweden and Finland, others are still at 1% and consider 10% to be too ambitious. Some, like the Netherlands, do not have legislation in place to have strictly protected

areas. It will be difficult for small crowded countries to set aside 10% as strictly protected. Romania will undertake a project under the National Recovery and Resilience Plans to identify the 10% strictly protected areas and amend the national law to introduce provisions indicating the 10% target. It depends on the criteria what would qualify as 'strictly protected'. For instance: does spatial zonation, like closure during the breeding season, qualify as strictly protected?

Do you have protected areas that fulfil the criteria of strict protection?

Several Member States have protected areas designated under the IUCN categories 1a, 1b and 2, like forest reserves and bogs. These areas may already fulfil the criteria for strict protection. Some parts of zones of the IUCN categories 4 and 5 may also be eligible. However, further assessment is needed as not all sites under the mentioned IUCN categories will automatically qualify 1:1 as strictly protected, whilst others do. National Parks in Sweden and Finland for instance are generally only used for hiking, while there are no other interventions allowed. Does this make them strictly protected?

In most protected areas the term 'strictly protected' does not refer to areas as a whole, but more to certain parts of the area that are zoned as strictly protected, or something similar. The EU management guidance on Natura 2000 sites describes zones that may qualify as strictly protected.

4. Closing remarks and following steps

Nicola Notaro, Head of the Nature Conservation Unit in DG ENV, concluded the seminar with a few take away messages. He welcomed the active participation of representatives of Member States, sector representatives and other stakeholders in the meeting. He acknowledged that formulating the pledges for delivering on the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and reaching the targets is a challenge for Member States. At the same time, it also offers opportunities and options for meeting the shared ambition to protect biodiversity in the EU. He thanked the Member States who have started the process of defining their pledges for their willingness to share their practical experiences. He admitted that there are still various knowledge gaps which should be addressed through collaborative action, and underlined the need to involve sectors and stakeholders in the definition of the pledges both at EU and at national levels.

In 2022, the biogeographical process will keep a focus on the exchange of experience and the development of cooperative action, and it will also become a forum for Member States to discuss their pledges. This strategic discussion will provide coherence on the conservation status non deterioration and improvement target and the protected area targets at a biogeographical level.

Nicola Notaro closed the meeting with thanks to participants, speakers, chairs and the organising team.

All presentations from the seminar are available on the [Natura 2000 biogeographical process webpage](#) or on the [Working together for Natura 2000](#) wiki.

ANNEXES

Annex 1 – Programme of the seminar

Day 1 (14 Dec. 2021) – Conservation status improvement target		
Time	Topics	Speakers
08.45-9.00	Opening online channel for participants to test access to the session	
9:00-9:10	Opening and welcome.	Nicola Notaro, chair (Head of the Nature Protection Unit, ENV D3)
9:10-9:15	Housekeeping (use of Mentimeter and chat).	Team supporting the Natura 2000 biogeographical process
9:15-9:35	The non-deterioration and 30% status improvement target for habitats and species in the context of the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030: context, guidance, criteria and format for pledges.	Frank Vassen (ENV D3)
9:35-9:45	Questions from participants.	
9:45-10:00	Baseline and distance to target: conservation status and synergies with other policies.	Carlos Romao (EEA)
10:00-10:10	Questions from participants.	
10:10-10:45	Invited presentations and interventions.	Finland, France, Slovenia
10:45-10:50	Housekeeping (organisation of breakout sessions).	Team supporting the Natura 2000 biogeographical process
10:50-11:00	Break	
11:00-11:45	Discussions in 4 break-out sessions – 1st round . Each participant joins one of the following groups	
	Improve the monitoring of species and habitats with unknown conservation status;	Facilitators: Irene Bouwma Paul Goriup Theo van der Sluis Sandra Mesquita Carlos Sunyer Rene Henkens
	Make use of synergies with other policy areas to achieve the target;	
	Organize cross border cooperation on non-degradation and status improvement;	
Scale-up restoration efforts for non-deterioration and 30% improvement.		
11:45-11:50	Break	
11:50-12:35	Discussions in 4 break-out sessions – 2nd round . Each participant changes group to discuss a second theme among those proposed during the 1 st round. For links to the break-out session see above	
12:35-12:45	Break	
12:45-13:00	Plenary: first impressions and next steps under the pledge and review process.	Nicola Notaro, chair (Head of the Nature Protection Unit, ENV D3)

Day 2 (15 Dec. 2021) – Targets on protected areas		
Time	Topics	Speakers
08.45-9.00	Opening online channel for participants to test access to the session	
9:00-9:10	Opening and welcome.	Nicola Notaro, chair (Head of the Nature Protection Unit, ENV D3)
9:10-9:15	Housekeeping (use of Mentimeter and chat).	Team supporting the Natura 2000 biogeographical process
9:15-9:35	The protected areas targets in the context of the EU's biodiversity strategy for 2030: role, guidance, criteria and format for the pledges.	Joaquim Capitão (ENV D3)
9:35-9:50	Questions from participants.	
9:50-10:05	Baseline for protected areas and distance to targets.	Mette Lund (EEA)
10:05-10:15	Questions from participants.	
10:15-10:35	Invited presentations and interventions.	Finland
10:35-10:40	Housekeeping (organisation of breakout sessions). Group picture	Team supporting the Natura 2000 biogeographical process
10:40-10:50	Break	
10:50-11:40	Discussions in 4 break-out sessions – 1st round. Each participant joins one of the following groups:	
	Complete the existing protected areas network;	Facilitators: Irene Bouwma Paul Goriup Theo van der Sluis Sandra Mesquita Carlos Sunyer Kalev Sepp
	Ensure adequate management of protected areas;	
	Improve connectivity and coherence of the network;	
Identify and develop strictly protected areas.		
11:40-11:45	Break	
11:45-12:35	Discussions in 4 break-out sessions – 2nd round. Each participant changes group to discuss a second theme among those proposed during the 1 st round. For links to the break-out session see above.	
12:35-12:45	Break	
12:45-13:00	Closing plenary: first impressions and next steps under the pledge and review process.	Nicola Notaro, chair (Head of the Nature Protection Unit, ENV D3)

Annex 2 – List of Participants¹

Organised by Last name

Fist Name	Second Name	Organisation	Country
Annemiek	Adams	Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality	Netherlands
Lisbeth Bjoerndal	Andersen	Ministry of Environment	Denmark
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Erik	Årnfelt	Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management	Sweden
Mora	Aronsson	ETC-BD	Sweden
Pedro Ivo	Arriegas	Instituto da Conservação da Natureza e das Florestas, I.P.	Portugal
Karen Post	Bache	Danish Agriculture and Food Council	Denmark
Sylvia	Barova	CINEA	Belgium
Duarte	Barreto	Institute of Forests and Nature Conservation from Madeira	Portugal
Laszlo	Becsy	DG ENV	Belgium
Andrej	Bibič	Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning	Slovenia
Adam	Billing	Ministry of Environment	Denmark
Gilles	Biver	Ministry of Environment, Climate and Sustainable Development	Luxembourg
Andy	Bleasdale	NPWS	Ireland
Simona	Bonelli	University of Turin/ Butterfly Conservation Europe	Italy
Marie-Alice	Budniok	European Landowners Organization - ELO asbl	Belgium
Marco	Cipriani	DG ENV	Belgium
Sue	Collins	Butterfly Conservation Europe	United Kingdom
Susanna	D'Antoni	ISPRA	Italy
Carl	De Schepper	Agency Nature and Forests	Belgium
Thomas	Defoort	Agency for Nature and Forests	Belgium
Tommaso	Demozzi	IUCN	Belgium
Luca	D'Eusebio	Ministry of ecological transition	Italy
Sabrina	Dietz	FACE	Belgium
Panagiotis	Drougas	Ministry of Environment and Energy/ Directorate General for Forests and Forest Environment	Greece
Jana	Durkošová	Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic	Slovak Republic
Taina	Dyckhoff	Fed. Min. Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety	Germany
Tommy	Ek	Sveaskog/EUSTAFOR	Sweden
Nora	Elvinger	Ministry of Environment, Climate and Sustainable Development	Luxembourg
Stefania	Ercole	Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA)	Italy
Kristian	Ersbøll	Ministry of Environment	Denmark
Jessica	Fenech	Wild Birds Regulation Unit	Malta
Cátia	Freitas	Regional Directorate for the Environment and Climate Change - Regional Government of the Azores	Portugal
Herdis	Fridolin	Ministry of the Environment	Estonia
Lara	Galea	Environment and Resources Authority (ERA)	Malta
Janka	Galvankova	State Nature Conservation of Slovak Republic	Slovak Republic
Diego	García Ventura	EUROPARC-Spain	Spain
Zelmira	Gaudillat	ETC-BD	France
Barbara	Geschier	Agency for Nature and Forest	Belgium
Ton	Goedhart	Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality	Netherlands
Matthew	Grima Connell	Environment & Resources Authority	Malta
Katarina	Groznik Zeiler	Slovenia, Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning	Slovenia

¹ For privacy reasons eleven people have been excluded at their request.

Fist Name	Second Name	Organisation	Country
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Petr	Havel	Ministry of the Environment	Czechia
Mervi	Heinonen	Metsähallitus Parks & Wildlife Finland	Finland
Erik	Hellberg Meschaks	Swedish Environmental Protection Agency	Sweden
Barbara	Herrero Cangas	BirdLife Europe and Central Asia	Belgium
Rafael	Hidalgo	Ministry for Ecological Transition & Demographic Challenge	Spain
Laura	Hildt	EEB	Belgium
Michael	Hošek	EUROPARC Federation	Germany
Lucia	Iglesias Blanco	DG ENV	Belgium
Octavio	Infante	SEO/BirdLife	Spain
Rebecca	Jeffrey	National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Ireland
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Ida	Jelenko Turinek	Ministry of the Environment and Spatial planning	Slovenia
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Jan	Kappel	Euripoean Anglers Alliance	Belgium
Hanna-Leena	Keskinen	Ministry of the Environment	Finland
Elisabeth	Kirsch	Ministry of Environment, Climate and Sustainable Development	Luxembourg
Pavla	Klabanová	Ministry of the Environment	Czechia
Algirdas	Klimavičius	Ministry of Environment	Lithuania
Hélène	Koch	CEPF	Belgium
Irene	Koehling	Fed. Min. Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety	Germany
Jarosław	Krogulec	OTOP/BirdLife Poland	Poland
Leelo	Kukk	EuroParc	Estonia
Mikko	Kuusinen	Ministry of the Environment	Finland
Elisa	Lanzuisi	Ministry of Ecological Transition	Italy
Sabien	Leemans	WWF EPO	Belgium
Fanny	Lendi Ramirez	Ministère de la transition écologique	France
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Olli	Ojala	Ministry of the Environment	Finland
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Merit	Otsus	Ministry of the Environment	Estonia
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Agnese	Priede	Nature Conservation Agency	Latvia

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Mário	Reis	Institute for the Conservation of Nature and Forests	Portugal
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Angelika	Rubin	DG ENV	Belgium
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Luisa	Samarelli	DG ENV	Belgium
András	Schmidt	Ministry of Agriculture	Hungary
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Marco	Cipriani	DG ENV	Belgium
Carl	De Schepper	Agency Nature and Forests	Belgium
Thomas	Defoort	Agency for Nature and Forests	Belgium
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Kristian	Ersbøll	Ministry of Environment	Denmark
Mette	Lund	EEA	Denmark
Niels Peter	Noerring	Copa-Cogeca / Danish Agriculture and Food Council	Denmark
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Mikko	Kuusinen	Ministry of the Environment	Finland
Olli	Ojala	Ministry of the Environment	Finland
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Fanny	Lendi Ramirez	Ministère de la transition écologique	France
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Luca	D'Eusebio	Ministry of ecological transition	Italy
Stefania	Ercole	Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA)	Italy
Elisa	Lanzuisi	Ministry of Ecological Transition	Italy
Lorenzo	Serra	ISPRA	Italy
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Gita	Strode	Nature Conservation Agency	Latvia
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Elisabeth	Kirsch	Ministry of Environment, Climate and Sustainable Development	Luxembourg
Danièle	Murat	Administration de la nature et des forêts Luxembourg	Luxembourg
Corinne	Steinbach	Administration of nature and forests	Luxembourg
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Matthew	Grima Connell	Environment & Resources Authority	Malta
Stephen	Saliba	Malta Environment and Resources Authority	Malta
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Ton	Goedhart	Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality	Netherlands
Jeroen	Ostendorf	Association of Dutch Provinces	Netherlands
Nick	Warmelink	Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality	Netherlands
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Ewa	Leś	Coalition Clean Baltic, Polish Ecological Club	Poland
Pawel	Pawlaczyk	Naturalists Club Poland & CEEWeb	Poland

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Duarte	Barreto	Institute of Forests and Nature Conservation from Madeira	Portugal
Cátia	Freitas	Regional Directorate for the Environment and Climate Change - Regional Government of the Azores	Portugal
Dília	Menezes	IFCN - Instituto das Florestas e Conservação da Natureza, IP-RAM	Portugal
Mário	Reis	Institute for the Conservation of Nature and Forests	Portugal
Carla	Silva	Regional Directorate of Environment and Climate Change - Regional Government of the Azores	Portugal
Laszlo	Rakosy	Babes Bolyai University / Romanian Lepidopterological Society	Romania
John	Smaranda	Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests	Romania
Liliana	Virtoeanu	Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests	Romania
Ramona	Zotta-Cherascu	Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests	Romania
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Janka	Galvankova	State Nature Conservation of Slovak Republic	Slovak Republic
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Dávid	Spišský	State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic	Slovak Republic
Libor	Ulrych	State Nature Conservancy of Slovak Republic	Slovak Republic
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Katarina	Groznik Zeiler	Slovenia, Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning	Slovenia
Ida	Jelenko Turinek	Ministry of the Environment and Spatial planning	Slovenia
Diego	García Ventura	EUROPARC-Spain	Spain
Rafael	Hidalgo	Ministry for Ecological Transition & Demographic Challenge	Spain
Octavio	Infante	SEO/BirdLife	Spain
Marta	Viu	Ministry for Ecological Transition & Demographic Challenge	Spain
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Annex 3 – General questions asked by participants (in Mentimeter)

Below are the questions from participants asked through Mentimeter. The answers were provided by the European Commission (*in italic*).

1. What is the relation to the EU legally binding ecosystem restoration targets?
Designation and adequate management of protected areas, in particular strictly protected areas, can provide help in reaching the restoration targets. On the other hand, areas which are restored to address the restoration targets in the Biodiversity Strategy will generally need to be protected, so that the resources used for the restoration work are not wasted.
2. For birds and Art 12: we don't have the FRV at the national level but we do have trends and population size. Is this sufficient to set priorities at the national level?
Given the absence of national-level Conservation status assessments in the reporting under Article 12 Birds Directive, the relevant Commission Guidance note suggests using the EU Red list status of 2019 to decide which species should be part of the baseline basket of species and habitats to be considered for the target, namely all those that occur as breeding birds in the country and are not assessed as "Secure" in the EU Red Birds red list. According to the Guidance, Member States are however free to consider additional passage of wintering bird populations for the target, or any additional species assessed as "Secure" at EU-level, but considered in higher threat categories in a national red list (provide a national list exists).
3. LU-Gilles Biver: an early exchange with the CION about the lists for pledges from MS would be appreciated; so to further develop the pledges. Any ideas/comments when and how this could take place?
The EC will organise, during 2022, workshops to exchange information on specific subjects related to the pledges for which Member States express an interest in such meetings. On 20 May 2022, a meeting with Member States will allow for an update on the work that is being carried out, at Member State and EU level, to prepare the pledges and the pledging tools. Finally, the EC is open to requests from individual Member States for bilateral meetings to discuss issues related to the preparation of the pledges.
4. For birds the rules are quite clear – the trends assessment. But with other species and habitats it could be problem because of different indicators used...
Whereas the short-term population size trend (as reported under Article 12) is being used for bird species, it is the conservation status trend (as reported under Article 17) that is being used for Habitats Directive species and habitat types. Otherwise, the approach in relation to trends is the same.
5. How to interpret a "long-term protection"? 10 yrs? 20? Eternal protection?
The quantification of the duration of the protection regime will depend on the individual cases being addressed. However, the objective should be to reach a state where the conservation results are perennial in time, so that the conservation results are not reverted, which would be a waste of the resources dedicated to the protection of an area;

6. I wonder how collectivity (mentioned in BDS) in reaching the targets will look like. Who will be responsible for assessing which MS should do more and which – less? EC? MSs during bilateral negotiations?

The EC expects all Member States to contribute to the targets in the Biodiversity Strategy in a proportionate way to the natural values and restoration potential they host. The balance between the contributions of different Member States will be assessed in the biogeographical seminars in early 2023 and in the Commission's evaluation of progress in 2024.

7. The allocation key is still not clear. What is the % to protect for each Member State? Is it always 30/10%. Is there for example a correlation with population density?

See the reply to question 7.

8. If each MS does their own pledge (based on their assessment), what will happen if in the end the sum % of future designations at EU level is lower than decided by Biodiversity Strategy 2030?

In 2024, the EC will evaluate the progress that is being made towards the targets in the Biodiversity Strategy and will, at that point, decide whether stronger measures are needed, possibly including a legislative proposal. The EC trusts that Member States will act on the political commitment they took when they endorsed the Strategy and that stronger measures will not be necessary.

9. Does the 3% potentially strict protection refer to 3% of the current protected areas, or 3% of the EU land?

The target for strict protection in the Biodiversity Strategy is one third of the total of protected areas, therefore a minimum of 10% of the EU land surface (and similarly for the EU seas).

Suggestions for improving the seminar were related to problems in accessing the expected breakout groups and to expectations regarding more detailed guidelines regarding the pledges and clearer instructions to be provided to Member States.

What could be better, how can we improve?

The image displays six distinct feedback boxes arranged in two rows. Each box has a unique border color and contains a specific comment or suggestion. The top row includes a blue box with 'All was Perfect!', a pink box with 'Giving guidelines', and a red box with 'Giving guidelines about how to reach the sb 2030 target on protected areas'. The bottom row features a yellow box with a detailed suggestion about breakout groups, a green box with a comment on organization and time, and a purple box with a note about incorrect breakout room links.

All was Perfect!	Giving guidelines	Giving guidelines about how to reach the sb 2030 target on protected areas
For one thing, those who wished to be on the management group landed in the one on strict protection - ensure next time that the breakout links are correct. Also, not only start with questions, but with a specific presentation to spark the discussion	Generally very well organised but clearer instructions and a bit more time for joining breakout groups would have been helpful	The information for the links to the breakout rooms was not correctly given. It was confusing knowing where should go, arrived late to them both times.