

Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process



An Roinn Ealaíon, Oidhreachta,
Gnóthaí Réigiúnacha, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta

Department of Arts, Heritage,
Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs



2nd Atlantic Seminar

Ireland

***25 to 27 October 2016**

***Venue: Falls Hotel & River Spa
Ennistymon Co. Clare V95 D2PC***

Tel: +353 (0)65 7071004,

Programme

**** Note that, as the Seminar starts at 09.00 on Tuesday, 25 October 2016, delegates are likely to have to travel on Monday 24th October to be in good time for the start of the programme.***

This Seminar is organised as part of the Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process. Launched by the European Commission at the end of 2011, the aim is to improve and strengthen the implementation of Natura 2000 and ensure progress towards key EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy targets. The process provides the means for Member States and expert stakeholder networks to:

- Work together and collaborate on practical habitat management issues identified as being of common priority and shared importance;
- Take stock of the current conservation status of specific priority habitats in a biogeographical region and determine what needs to be done collectively to improve, maintain or restore the condition of habitats and species of Community interest;
- Share experience, build knowledge and develop consensus about priority management actions required for particular habitat types in the Atlantic region;
- Take specific agreed cooperative actions to restore or maintain favourable conservation status for those habitats that fall within their territory;
- Network and exchange management experience information, to continue to build know-how about the most effective ways to achieve more for habitats and species of Community importance.

The primary purpose of the Natura 2000 Seminars is to help sharpen focus on the strategic targets to be achieved and contribute to meeting the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy objectives. Specifically, the seminar will identify and, where possible, agree future practical management actions that are required to improve favourable conservation status. Through the Process' networking events, as well as the Natura 2000 Communication Platform, the collaboration amongst all stakeholders will be encouraged and enhanced.

Introduction to the 2nd Atlantic Seminar

The second Atlantic Biogeographic Seminar is being hosted by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), part of the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, of Ireland. This Seminar provides an important opportunity for participants to improve and strengthen the implementation of Natura 2000 in the Region and ensure progress towards the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy targets. This includes building common understanding of practical management issues identified as being of common priority, stimulating new know-how about effective management approaches and developing cooperation and networking activities on issues of shared importance.

This Seminar is a milestone in a continuing process of networking, information sharing and knowledge building, of direct benefit to stakeholders across the Atlantic Biogeographical Region. Over three days, the Atlantic Seminar will aim to generate concrete outputs as identified by participants, which can be further developed following the Seminar. Although some attention will be given to reviewing progress since the first Atlantic Seminar (held in the Netherlands, December 2012), the focus is very much forward-looking - this will include:

- Taking stock of the activities implemented since the kick-off seminar and identify and agree further concrete actions and cooperation priorities, which can be developed and taken forward by various actors in the Region – with the aim of reaching favourable conservation status (FCS).
- Identifying possible new conservation issues/priorities – new cooperation actions based, in particular, on the lessons learnt from the latest State of Nature Report, including a 'Roadmap' of agreed future collaborative actions.
- Compiling sources of information and experience that capitalise on completed projects, available guidance and potential new proposals to increase synergies and collaboration opportunities.

The seminar will also discuss:

- The possibilities and practicalities of identifying so-called 'low hanging fruit' (LHF) i.e. habitat and species whose conservation status could be improved in the short-term using reasonably straightforward management measures. This reflects the urgency to demonstrate progress towards achieving the targets of the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy in the short to medium term.
- How to develop the most useful form of cooperation and implementation strategies for biogeographical level favourable reference values (FRVs).
- Any additional conservation issues of common interest that will have been identified in the expert consultation process preceding the seminar.

As a reference for discussions during the Seminar, the Seminar Input Document will be made available sufficiently in advance of the seminar. It will also be available on the Natura 2000 Platform and will be available to download from the following link:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/platform/events/263_second_atlantic_natura_2000_seminar_en.htm

2nd Atlantic Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process Seminar – Programme

DAY 0: Monday 24 October 2016

Time	Activity	Description
TBC	Transfer from Dublin Airport	<i>For participants arriving at Dublin Airport, a bus transfer to the Falls Hotel will pick-up at Dublin Airport late afternoon on the 24th October – exact time TBC, but not later than 17.00.</i>
	Transfer from Ennis Bus Station	<i>There is a regular bus service from Dublin Airport to Ennis, as well as a train service from Dublin City centre. From there, a shuttle service to the Falls Hotel is provided during the afternoon and evening of 24 October.</i> <i>Bus times and ticket prices can be searched via the following link: http://www.dublincoach.ie/services/dublin-coach-journey-planner.php</i>
	Transfer from Shannon Airport	<i>Shannon Airport is the closest regional airport to Ennistymon, about 40 minutes away. A shuttle service to the Falls Hotel is provided during the afternoon and evening of 24 October.</i>
19.30 to 21.00	Registration	

NOTE THAT ALL TIMINGS WITHIN THE PROGRAMME ARE INDICATIVE ONLY.

DAY 1: Tuesday 25 October 2016

Time	Activity	Description/ Session objective
07:45	Pre-seminar briefing meeting	Only for chairs, facilitators and other key actors
08.00 to 09.00	Registration	
09.00 to 10.00	Official welcome & introductory statements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Ciaran O’Keeffe, Director National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS), Ireland • Dr Micheal O’Brian, Deputy Head of Nature Protection Unit, European Commission, DG Environment. 	
	The Natura 2000 Biogeographical Seminar Process in its strategic context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr François Kremer, Policy Coordinator Natura 2000, European Commission, DG Environment. 	Present the seminar and its context, along with the approach and methods to be used
	Overview of the seminar programme and the thematic working groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Neil McIntosh, ECNC 	Thematic groups are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated management approaches to Natura 2000 • Adaptive approaches to agriculture and nature conservation • Communication and stakeholder engagement • Setting conservation priorities

Time	Activity	Description/ Session objective
	Introduction to the site visits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Andy Bleasdale, Scientific Unit NPWS, Ireland 	The site visits provide participants with an opportunity to see 'on the ground' the threats and issues, management practices and management planning approaches being applied in different Natura 2000 sites. Experts and guides will provide overviews of the current status and condition of visited habitats, describe conservation objectives and measures and explain the features and management regimes. However, this is also an opportunity for participants to share experiences about related issues and management approaches in their countries.
10.00 to 10.30	Coffee break	
10.30 to 18.30 approx.	Site visits Departures from Falls Hotel by coaches	<i>PLEASE BRING WATERPROOF OUTDOOR CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR. ALSO, PARTICIPANTS SHOULD BRING THEIR CAMERAS AND BINOCULARS.</i>
	1. Coastal - the north coast of Co. Clare	This trip will track around the Atlantic-facing north Clare coast taking in a variety of habitats including cliffs, estuaries, dunes, lagoons, shingle and reef. Issues include visitor management, managing dynamic coastal habitats, aquaculture and port development. The return trip will be through the high Burren.
	2. Wetlands and peatlands- east Clare, Galway	This trip will head east to visit the peatlands of the Slieve Aughty mountains and Coole Park, which hosts a complex of habitats, including turloughs and limestone pavements. Issues include afforestation, wind farms, land abandonment, peat-cutting, flooding and management for hen harrier. The return trip will be through the high Burren.
	3. Grasslands and associated habitats of the Burren	This trip will visit Mullaghmore in the Burren National Park and farms that are participating in the BurrenLIFE agri-environmental programme. Habitats that will be encountered include limestone pavements, species-rich grasslands, fens and woodlands. Issues include balancing visitor access, nature conservation and archaeological priorities, stakeholder engagement, grazing management and results-based agri-environmental schemes
	4. Aran Islands (NB weather dependent! An alternative option will be available in the event that this site visit is cancelled)	This trip will visit Inis Oírr via a ferry from the village of Doolin. This is the smallest island of the three Aran Islands where a LIFE project is currently underway. AranLIFE aims to develop best conservation management practices in conjunction with local farmers. Habitats include limestone pavements, species-rich grasslands and machair. Issues include living and working in a designated island landscape, grazing management and land abandonment

Time	Activity	Description/ Session objective
19:00 to 21:00	<p>Knowledge Market</p> <p>The Knowledge Market will be officially opened by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irish hosts' representative(s); and, • Dr Micheal O'Briain, Deputy Head of Nature Protection Unit, European Commission, DG Environment. <p>Following the official opening, a buffet and drinks reception will be served.</p>	<p>This interactive networking session is designed to stimulate discussion between Seminar participants, share and gather information, and to provide useful inputs for further projects, collaborations and co-operations.</p> <p>Recognising the important contributions and new opportunities from the LIFE Programme, the Knowledge Market will include completed or ongoing LIFE Projects in the Atlantic Region, as well as LIFE Programme information.</p> <p>Participants are invited in advance to provide information material about (planned, ongoing or concluded) relevant Natura 2000 projects or related work. This may (but need not) be a poster and information folder/flyer.</p> <p>This is an informal information gathering opportunity – there are no presentations in plenary. Anyone attending the Seminar and interested to have space at the Knowledge Market should indicate this on the registration form, which will be provided shortly.</p> <p>Representatives from local stakeholder organisations and producers of local products will also be invited to this session.</p>

DAY 2: Wednesday 26 October 2016		
Time	Activity	Description/ Session objective
09.00 to 09.30	<p>Setting management of Natura 2000 in an Atlantic Biogeographic context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Andy Bleasdale, Scientific Unit NPWS, Ireland <p>Overview of Low Hanging Fruits (LHF) method</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Douglas Evans, ETC/BD 	Introducing some typical issues surrounding management of Natura 2000 habitat and species in the Atlantic Region, reflecting on the field visits of the previous day
09.30 to 10.30	<p>Four presentations to focus on themes of current interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated management of estuaries, Mr Christian Michalczyk, Hamburg Ministry of Environment and Energy • Management of dunes, Mr Luc Geelen, Waternet, NL • Controlling nitrogen deposition, Ms Clare Whitfield, JNCC • Stakeholder engagement in the Burren, Dr Brendan Dunford 	Includes outcomes from the most recent events in the Atlantic Region – integrated management of estuaries; coastal and inland dune habitats and nitrogen Deposition.
10.30 to 11.00	Coffee break	
11.00 to 13.00	Thematic working groups	<i>Four Thematic Working Groups will work in parallel to identify common issues and potential practical solutions</i>
	<p>1. Integrated management approaches to Natura 2000 <i>Chair: Dr Chris Mainstone</i></p>	Theme includes development of integrated management plans and management for multiple benefits, such as flood mitigation; coastal zone management
	<p>2. Adaptive approaches to agriculture and nature conservation <i>Chair: Dr James Moran</i></p>	Theme includes approaches to tackling nitrogen deposition; locally-led and results-based agri-environmental schemes
	<p>3. Communication & stakeholder engagement <i>Chair: Ms Anita Prosser</i> <i>Presentation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen Science – Ms Karin Dubsy, Coastwatch 	Theme includes approaches to initiating and continuing communication; dealing with conflict
	<p>4. Setting conservation objectives <i>Chair: Dr Douglas Evans</i> <i>Presentation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FRV –outline of the EC study - Dr.Ir. Rienk-Jan Bijlsma, Wageningen UR, NL 	Theme includes identification of “low-hanging fruit”; setting conservation objectives at different scales; dealing with potentially conflicting conservation priorities
13.00 to 14.15	Lunch	

14.15 to 15.45	Habitat working groups- session 1	<i>Four Habitat Working Groups will work in parallel to focus on issues of particular relevance to their group</i>
	1. Coastal- dunes & estuaries <i>Chair: Mr Luc Geelen, Waternet, NL - Coastal and dunes; Mr Christian Michalczyk, Hamburg Ministry of Environment and Energy - Estuaries</i>	Aim is to identify future management issues and common priorities, particularly ones common to Atlantic region
	2. Wet & dry grasslands <i>Chair: Dr James Moran</i>	
	3. Heaths & bogs <i>Chair: Dr Greg Mudge</i>	
4. Rivers & lakes <i>Chair: Dr Chris Mainstone</i>		
15.45 to 16.15	Coffee break	
16.15 to 18.00	Habitat working groups- session 2	<i>Four Habitat Working Groups continue to work in parallel</i>
	1. Coastal - dunes & estuaries	Explore practical solutions for issues identified; focus on scope for collaboration and co-operation
	2. Wet & dry grasslands	
	3. Heaths & bogs	
4. Rivers & lakes		
19.30	Gala dinner and entertainment	

DAY 3: Thursday 27 October 2016

<i>08.00 to 09.00</i>	<i>Finalise presentations</i>	<i>For working group chairs and facilitators only!</i>
Time	Activity	Description/ Session objective
9.00 to 9.10	Recap on day 2 and introduction to day 3 <i>Mr Neil McIntosh, ECNC</i>	
09.10 to 09.30	The LIFE Programme <i>Ms Silvia Donato, EASME</i> <i>Mr Bent Jepsen, NEEMO</i>	Opportunities available through the LIFE Programme to support implementation of activities identified by Atlantic Seminar participants.

09.30 to 11.00	<p>Thematic & Habitat Working Groups feedback and discussion</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Integrated management approaches to Natura 2000</i> 2. <i>Adaptive approaches to agriculture and nature conservation</i> 3. <i>Communication & stakeholder engagement</i> 4. <i>Setting conservation objectives</i> 5. Coastal dunes & estuaries 6. Wet & dry grasslands 7. Heaths & bogs 8. Rivers & lakes <p>Following the groups' feedback, there will be time for questions and plenary discussion.</p>	<p>The main aim of this session is to report each Thematic & Habitat Working Group's discussions and, where possible, confirm cooperation actions identified for implementation in future.</p> <p>The feedback will focus on the key points and the outcomes achieved and agreed by each groups' participants during Day 2.</p> <p>Each theme has been notionally 'linked' to a specific Habitat Group where that theme is recognised as being a particularly important issue: however, of course, the themes transcend habitats and will be open for discussion in this plenary session.</p>
11.00-11.30	Coffee break	
11.30 to 12.15	<p>Atlantic seminar closing session</p> <p>Following a plenary discussion, the floor will be given to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Rebecca Jeffrey, Scientific Unit NPWS, Ireland • Dr Micheal O'Briain, Deputy Head of Nature Protection Unit, European Commission, DG Environment <p>Note of thanks</p>	<p>Reflecting on the feedback and earlier discussion, this final session aims to summarise outcomes, in particular noting specific cooperation actions identified on agreed common priorities.</p>
12.15 to 14.00	Lunch	<p>Note that a bus transfer to Dublin Airport will leave the hotel at 12.30 prompt. A packed lunch will be arranged with the hotel. The journey time is approximately 3 hours 30 minutes – <i>the estimated arrival time at Dublin Airport is therefore 16.00.</i> All participants wishing to use this service <i>must</i> ensure that they have sufficient time to check-in at Dublin Airport for their return flight.</p>
14.00	Other departures	