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Natura 2000 Seminars Mediterranean Biogeographical Region



Under the auspices of:



Natura 2000 Kick-off Seminar DRAFT Programme

**Thessaloniki, Greece
26th * to 28th May 2014**

Venue: Makedonia Palace Hotel

2, Megalou Alexandrou Avenue, GR-54640 Thessaloniki
[tel: +30 2310 897210 <http://www.makedoniapalace.com>]

* Note that, as the Seminar starts at 9.15 a.m. on Monday 26th May, delegates are likely to have to travel on the 25th May to be in good time.

This Seminar is organised as part of the continuing 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 Natura 2000 sites;*
- *Share experience, build knowledge and develop consensus about priority management actions required for particular habitat types in the Mediterranean 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.*

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Introduction to the Mediterranean Kick-off Seminar

Hosted by the Ministry of Environment, Greece, and the Axios, Loudias and Aliakmonas Management Authority, the Mediterranean Kick-off Seminar provides an important opportunity for participants to ensure progress in the Region towards the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy targets - for example, by building common understanding about practical ways to halt biodiversity loss, to inform and increase restoration actions where necessary and prioritised, to stimulate new know-how about effective management approaches and techniques, and to improve the favourable conservation status of priority habitats and species.

This Seminar has been developed to launch a continuing process of networking, information sharing and knowledge building, of direct benefit to stakeholders across the Mediterranean biogeographical region. It is the first in a series of themed Workshops and Seminars that will be developed in the months and years ahead to improve practical management know-how in priority habitats across the Mediterranean region. Through such networking events, as well as the Natura 2000 (knowledge & information) Platform, the core aim is to achieve maximum benefits for nature and improve essential cooperation amongst all stakeholders as that is required to achieve progress towards the 2020 targets.

Over the course of this three-day Mediterranean Seminar, we will aim to:

- Identify and agree practical concrete actions and cooperation priorities, which can be developed and taken forward by various actors in the Region.
- Share information and experience, capitalising on completed projects, available guidance and potential new proposals to increase synergies and collaboration opportunities.
- Seek new commitments to develop networking in future and, where possible, propose a firm timetable for future Mediterranean events.

At the kick-off seminar there will be four Habitat Working Groups, one for each of the following habitat groups: Coastal, Forests, Freshwater/Wetlands and Grassland/Heaths/Scrubs. Seminar participants should come prepared to share their expertise, information and knowledge about the Natura 2000 habitats of which they have experience. Especially in the interactive Habitat Group sessions, participants will gain understanding about how the Natura 2000 biogeographical process can be used to contribute to EU and MS strategic priorities, as well as about practical steps to help them in their work. Participants will discuss & begin to:

- Explore how the Seminar (the possible actions and expected outcomes generated) can be linked to and be useful for national and regional priorities attached to improved management of specific habitat types.
- Discuss and define possible follow up cooperative actions to improve practical habitat management and agree levels of priority about what can be done together.
- Specify the scope of what can be done following the Mediterranean kick-off Seminar.

Mediterranean Natura 2000 Seminar – programme

DAY 0: Sunday, 25 th May 2014

- Arrivals

(Note that at 19.30 (TBC), there will be a final brief preparatory meeting for Habitat Group Chairs, Facilitators and other key actors.)

DAY 1: Monday, 26th May 2014

NOTE THAT ALL TIMINGS WITHIN THE PROGRAMME ARE INDICATIVE ONLY.

Time	Activity	Objectives & outcomes	Description
08.00 to 09.15		Registration of participants	
09.15 to 10.30	<p>Welcome & introductions</p> <p><i>Target outcome: Clear understanding amongst participants about expectations from the Kick-off Seminar, in its context as a continuing process.</i></p>	<p>Opening of the Seminar</p> <p>Formal welcomes from the hosts & Greek Ministry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ President of the Axios, Loudias Aliakmonas Management Authority: <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Emeritus Professor Themistoklis Kouimtzi A.U.TH.</p> <p>Introduction to the four Habitat Working Groups' Chairs – Neil McIntosh ECNC:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mrs Stella Vareltzidou (GR) – Wetlands; 2. Ms Zrinka Jakl (HR) – Coastal; 3. Mr Constantinos Papasavvas (CY) – Forests; 4. Prof. Panayiotis Dimopoulos (GR) – Grasslands. <p>The context, importance and purpose of the New Natura 2000 Biogeographical Seminar Process – François Kremer, European Commission.</p> <p>Introduction the site visits and the work of the Axios Management Authority – Mrs Stella Vareltzidou.</p> <p>NOTE: THE TIMING OF THIS SESSION AND THE NEXT MAY BE ADJUSTED TO ACCOMMODATE PRESENTATIONS FROM OFFICIAL SPEAKERS & GUESTS.</p>	<p>Present the Seminar process, approach and methods to be used – the Mediterranean Kick off Seminar:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is a starting point in a continuing, long-term process; ○ Focus on practical management techniques for specific habitats; ○ Identify common priorities and shared interests; ○ Clarify the scope for collaborative and cooperative actions; ○ Seek concrete actions with confirmed actors where possible; ○ Introduce Chairs and Facilitators; ○ The need for participative and constructive dialogue – achieved through group working and exercises to draw out participants' experience and 'real life' examples. <p>Present the Natura 2000 process and its strategic context.</p>
10.30 to 11.00		Coffee & preparation for departure for site visits	
11.00 to 20.00	Site visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departure from the Makedonia Palace Hotel by coach – expected journey time to first site <1 hour approx. <p>PLEASE BRING WATER, SUNSCREEN, MOSQUITO REPELLENT AND SUITABLE OUTDOOR CLOTHING, INCLUDING FOOTWEAR. ALSO, PARTICIPANTS SHOULD BRING THEIR CAMERAS AND BINOCULARS.</p>	<p>The primary purpose here is to provide a benchmark of priority habitats as a basis for discussions in the group sessions.</p>
	Site visits	<p>One of the most important wetlands in Greece is located on the western shoreline of the Thermaikos Gulf. The Axios - Loudias - Aliakmonas Estuaries National Park, consists of the deltas of the Axios and Aliakmonas rivers, the estuaries of the Gallikos and Loudias rivers, the Kalohori lagoon, the Nea Agathoupoli marsh and the Alyki Kitrous lagoon. This is a large complex wetland system with a total surface area of around 320 sq. kms. Thanks to the great diversity of ecological conditions – ranging from extensive rice fields, grasslands and riparian forests to salty marshes and swamps - the area makes an ideal habitat for many species of wild animals and plants.</p> <p>Together, participants will be able to see how Natura 2000 is being implemented on different sites around Thessaloniki, what challenges there are and what solutions are being applied. Also, of course, delegates will be able to network informally, share their own experiences and discuss the condition of Mediterranean priority habitats, in their countries, "in the field".</p> <p>We are extremely grateful to the Axios Management Authority for organising the site visit and also to them and their partners for arranging our guides to inform us about their work in Natura 2000 sites.</p> <p>Note that a local restaurant has been selected for lunch, which is provided as part of the programme – delegates will enjoy lunch in the beautiful coastal setting of Methoni Village.</p>	

DAY 2: Tuesday, 27 th May 2014			
Time	Activity	Objectives & outcomes	Description
09.00 to 09.30		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflections on Day 1 as a framework for the Habitat Group sessions. • Biogeographical region overview based on the background document and feedback from national experts. • Invited speakers will profile 'real life' experience of management approaches in priority habitats. 	<p>During the day, all delegates are invited to comment on the status of the habitats according to their experience at national/transnational levels. This will be illustrated by several case studies within each group.</p>
09.30 to 11.00	<p><u>Habitat Groups: session 1</u></p> <p>“Where are we now and where to we need to be?”</p> <p><i>The aim of this session is to develop shared understanding of the 'bigger picture' based on current experience at regional, national & local levels.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To allow group participants to meet & introduce themselves. • To provide an overview of the current status and condition of priority Mediterranean habitats from biogeographical region, national & local levels. • To grow understanding about the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy targets to be reached and specific implications arising for their habitat. <p>Planned outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To allow participants to develop their ideas about how the Natura 2000 biogeographical process can help them to achieve their priorities for their habitats. • To begin to sharpen focus on the practical habitat management issues, possible solutions and proposed actions. 	<p>The key questions to discuss here, per habitat group, are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the favourable conservation status of each habitat? • Where are we now in relation to achieving the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy targets? <p>Each habitat group will benefit from (at least) one specific site-level case study.</p> <p>CASE STUDY PRESENTATIONS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ms Anila Shallari (France) – Wetlands; 2. Ms Vasiliki Tsiaoussi (Greece) – Wetlands; 3. Dr Lydia Alvanou (Greece) – Coastal; 4. Dr Graziano Caramori (Italy) – Coastal 5. Ms Sophie Bourlon (France) – Forests; 6. Dr Miguel Bugalho (Portugal) – Forests; 7. Dr Javier Cabello (Spain)- Grasslands; 8. Dr Jasenka Topic (Croatia) – Grasslands. <p>All delegates are invited to participate actively in the discussions, share available information, highlight gaps in knowledge and, collectively, contribute to the identification of common issues/problems, shared priorities, scope for solutions and possible collaborative actions.</p>
11.00 to 11.30		Coffee break	
11.30 to 13.00	<p><u>Habitat Groups: session 2</u></p> <p>“What needs to be done?”</p> <p><i>Continuing from the previous session, grow understanding of how the Natura 2000 Biogeographical process can be useful for and used by participants to achieve shared interest and priorities. Start to focus on the scope for collaborative working and cooperative actions that can be usefully developed through the process.</i></p>	<p>What needs to change, what can be improved, and what new actions can be developed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to the Habitat Group section in the Seminar Document and the previous sessions' discussions, to start to prioritise issues and identify practical solutions. • To share practical habitat management experiences and identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What works? • Where are the challenges, issues or problems? • To propose solutions where there is consensus about the need for practical habitat management actions, as well as common understanding about the steps that can be taken. • To develop solutions that evidence collaboration and cooperation between stakeholders – all inputs from stakeholders should be justified in terms of their contribution to achieving progress towards the important strategic targets for their habitats. <p>Planned outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To begin to develop a level of consensus about common priorities and shared interests that can or need to be addressed, relevant for each habitat group, to ensure progress towards achievement of the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy targets. • To identify gaps to be prioritised for future consideration: equally, to note any differences of opinion that may exist. 	<p>The main purpose of this session is to discuss participants' examples and experiences of current joint-working approaches they are aware of and know to work; alternatively, where there would be value and need to develop new joint working. Reflecting also on the case study presentations, basically, two questions are posed here:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the problems? • Where is there scope for useful collaboration? <p>Ideas from current or proposals for planned projects will be shared. Examples about existing joint-working focussing on practical management knowledge sharing will be discussed – for example, strategic level initiatives (such as guidelines/ advice etc.), and policy-related initiatives, but the focus should remain on practical management collaboration opportunities.</p> <p>Areas where there are recognised gaps in know-how should be identified and discussed in terms of what practical steps can be developed to address these gaps.</p>
13.00 to 14.30		Lunch	

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14.30 to 15.45	<p><u>Habitat Groups: session 3</u></p> <p>“How do we proceed?”</p> <p><i>The aim of this session is to plan desired outcomes & define cooperation or collaboration objectives.</i></p>	<p>To begin to focus discussions and develop agreement about the scope for collaboration and cooperation to take forward common interests and shared priorities, relevant to their habitat group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To agree (realistic & measurable) objectives that can be achieved appropriate for cooperation and collaboration – consider who will be involved, how they could work & what they could do/ contribute. 	<p>Building on the previous sessions, Group participants will be able to discuss (in some detail) solutions, possible actions and proposed first steps required to take forward agreed, common priorities.</p>
15.45 to 16.00		Coffee break	
16.00 to 17.30	<p><u>Habitat Groups: session 4</u></p> <p>“Planning for action – what, who, how & when”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To work together to seek commitments from within the group (where possible) to achieve the outcomes. To develop a proposed action plan for collaboration and cooperation within the Mediterranean region in terms of what, where & when. To identify and select short-term actions (coming months) and longer term actions (future years). To agree and propose tangible priority actions, which need to be taken, where possible including by whom and when. 	<p>This session will be used to sum up the key points arising from the day’s discussions, especially to capture the common priorities and shared interests where it is agreed there would be most value in developing further cooperation. Focus will be given to specific actions that aim to improve management practice and quality: also, there will be scope to include attention for relevant, identified cross-cutting issues, such as stakeholder engagement practices, communication & outreach, mitigation of and adaptation for climate change impacts etc.</p>
17.30 to 18.00		Free time/ networking	
18.00 to 20.30	<p>Knowledge Market</p>	<p>This session will be formally opened by our Seminar hosts, representatives from the Greek Ministry of Environment and the Axios Management Authority.</p> <p><i>This is an interactive session provided by stakeholders and Seminar participants to showcase their work, their materials and best practice examples.</i></p> <p><i>A buffet reception and drinks will be served during the Knowledge Market.</i></p>	<p>Further details of the Knowledge Market are provided below.</p>

Note that any concrete actions deriving from cross cutting issues will be discussed within habitat groups. Reflecting levels of interest and priority, the aim will be to firm up actions proposed for cross cutting issues of common / shared interest and avoid general discussion – only those cross-cutting issues with potential to be covered by the actors of the new biogeographical process in collaboration will be noted.

DAY 3: Wednesday, 28th May 2013

Note: 08.00 to 09.00 – Habitat Group Chairs and Facilitators will finalise their group presentations for the plenary session on Day 3.

Time	Activity	Objectives & outcomes	Description
09.15 to 09.30		Recap on Day 2 & introduction to Day 3	
09.30 to 11.00	Habitat Groups – feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentations from each of the Habitat Groups; Plenary discussion about results Confirmation of proposed recommendations. 	<p>Each Habitat Group will present an overview of the key points discussed on Day 2 and the outcomes achieved and agreed by group participants. Each Group will have been asked to propose 3 priority Seminar follow-up actions and to signal commitments to take forward these actions. The presentations will be made by the Habitat Group Chairs, supported by their facilitator.</p>
11.00 to 11.30		Coffee break	
11.30 to 12.30	Mediterranean Seminar: Closing session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To summarise outcomes and agreed, common priorities. To confirm results and concrete actions identified during the Seminar; To plan and confirm timescales for next steps. Note of thanks & close 	
12.30 to 13.00		Departures	

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The Mediterranean “Knowledge Market”

The “Knowledge Market” offers the possibility for Member State and stakeholder representatives to present best practice examples from nature protection activities with a specific focus on Natura 2000. This can include: presentation of management plans; ongoing or concluded LIFE projects; stakeholder integration activities; regional, national or local initiatives for Natura 2000; display of posters, maps and other relevant materials; dissemination of guidance, information resources or other literature; and, display of posters. The aim is to share news about those activities and initiatives which target improving the quality and practices of nature conservation in Natura 2000 areas, or the wider landscape.

This interactive 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.

Participants are requested 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. A Seminar participant should be able to comment about the project, the work or activities and be prepared to discuss with interested experts from other Member States or stakeholder organisations. This is an informal information gathering opportunity – no formal presentation is necessary.

Tables, panels and WIFI will be at your disposal to showcase publications, posters, powerpoints and/or websites (for the latter you should bring your own laptop through).

To reserve dedicated space at the Knowledge Market, please register via the following link:

[Knowledge Market Registration](#)

... by 19th May 2014, at the latest!

This will enable us to know your display plans (what materials you propose to bring) and some details about what you wish to share with Seminar participants.