# Topics for discussion for Protected Area targets

**Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process**

- How to identify the best areas to improve the **coherence** of the protected area network? (Facilitation: Kalev Sepp, note takers: Heini Kujala, Louise O'Connor)
- How to **identify** the best areas for **strict protection**? (Facilitation: Kalev Sepp, note takers: Heini Kujala, Louise O'Connor)
- How to **manage** strictly protected areas? (Mart Külvik)
- What are **OECMs** and how could they become important roles for the targets? (Irene Bouwma)

# How to identify the best areas to improve coherence of the protected area network?

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- What do we mean by **coherence**?
    - How well different **species** and **habitats** are represented
    - Ecologically **functiona**l and **well-connected** network
    - Covering habitats and species of **conservation significance**
- **How to identify**? Can have different objectives when selecting new areas:
    1. I**ncreasing** the **size** of current PAs
    2. Improving **connectivity**
    3. Focusing on **poorly** protected **regions**
- **Prioritisation**
    1. Have a good r**epresentation** of many different habitats**.**
    2. Important to understand what is the attitude in different countries. SE attitude: much more important to achieve 15% of **strict protection** and less **PA** overall. Risk of greenwashing because no clear criteria for the other 20%. OECM can be misused
    3. **Cost-effective** analyses, what is max benefits in terms of **money, biodiversity, connectivity** etc

# How to identify the best areas to improve coherence of the protected area network?

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- **Need data** about the presence of species and habitats (although there is already a lot in some countries) For **habitats data OK**, data needs higher for especially **less well known species**
- Spatially explicit Climate Change models
- Could use **species models** and **strategic planning** tools to improve data and identify priority areas (European, national level, local)
- How to get **private land**owners on board? (funding, monetary compensation, increasing knowledge)
- Considering areas **both inside and outside PAs**, coherences of PAs can be improved by other measures (actions/land use restrictions) outside PAs
- Could also think not just where are the important sites now but where there is a **lot of potential** e.g. for passive restoration, **future core,** areas of high social value, e.g. sacred places, understandable for the people

# How to identify the best areas for strict protection?

- Depends a lot on how to define **"strict**". To achieve the 10% strict protection targets, we likely need **to loosen** the **definition** of strict, it is unlikely we find enough areas
- **Strictness** could be dependent on the **sensitivity of the biodiversity** value that we're trying to conserve, e.g. semi-natural grasslands vs bird nesting areas
- The baseline protected areas that we are expanding on? **IUCN categories** are **not always helpful** nor compatible with the way MS are operating
- What for, what biodiversity? **Combined value** for **habitats** and **species**, need a prioritisation to identify the best sites
- For some habitats (e.g. meadows/grasslands) **you need management** to maintain them, otherwise they lose their value. Managed strict PA sounds weird in EU.
- **Land ownership** is important to consider. ⇒ In some countries they put priority for setting new sites on state/gov owned land, more realistic
- Yet we need **large areas** to protect some species. Importance of the structure of the protected area. Need to avoid edge effect. ⇒ **compactness, buffer zones, connectivity. Look at landscape scale.**

# How to manage strictly protected areas?

- Within the Boreal region, **different** ecological conditions and **conservation practices** can be found for the "**strict protection**": from absolute **non-management** (cases in Baltic countries) to **tolerated** tourism or (reindeer) herding (cases in FIN-SWE).
- Generally, **management** is applied if **will sustain** or **enhance natural processes** or **restore** natural values.
- **Consultations** should be continued to see if **common standards** of **strict protection** for the Boreal region can be applied.
- Strict protection reserves should **often be scaled** up to have supporting management (like wildfires or flooding) at the **landscape scale**?
- **Guidance** and **examples** required on the **management of strict protection** on **private lands (forest** and other biotopes)
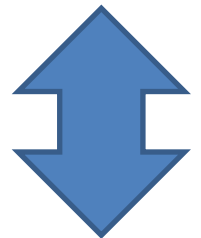
# What are OECMs and how could they play an important role for the targets?

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- Advantages
  - ✓ Less contested compared with protected areas –> voluntary buy-inn/less apprehension
  - ✓ Boreal region: opportunities for extensive agricultural/ forestry use without need for strict protection

Formalising  OECMS might increase bureaucracy and monitoring requirements undoing the advantages

- Disadvantages
  - ✓ Often small areas (with exemption of military areas)
  - ✓ How to ensure long term protection

Benchmark