

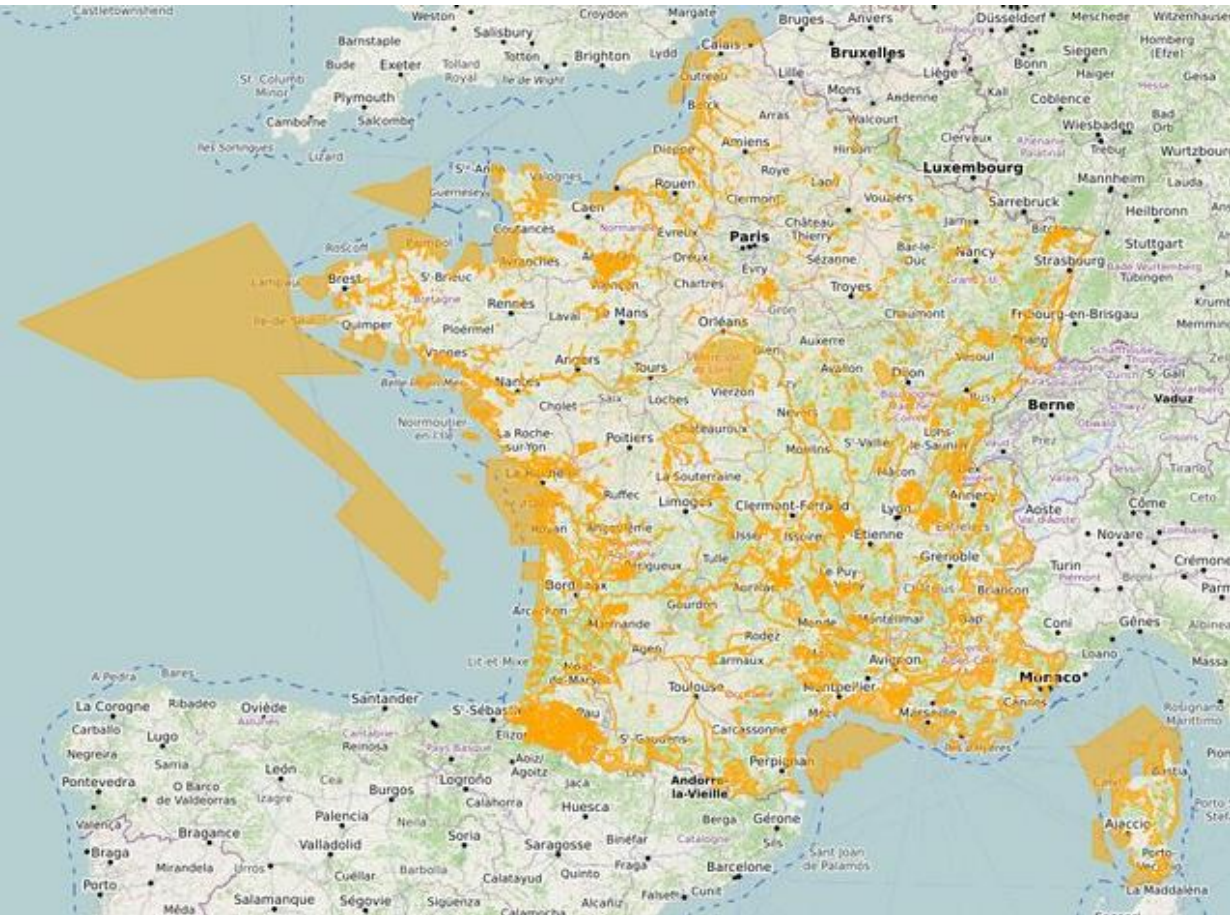


# The French approach towards setting site-specific conservation objective

*Olivier Argagnon, Idaline Laigle,  
Aurélien Carré, Paul Rouveyrol*

# Natura 2000 in France: Overview

- 1 761 sites (SPAs and SACs)
  - Covering 13 % of the metropolitan terrestrial territory
  
- ¾ of Natura 2000 sites also benefit from other protection status
  - Overlap or preceding other types of Protected areas

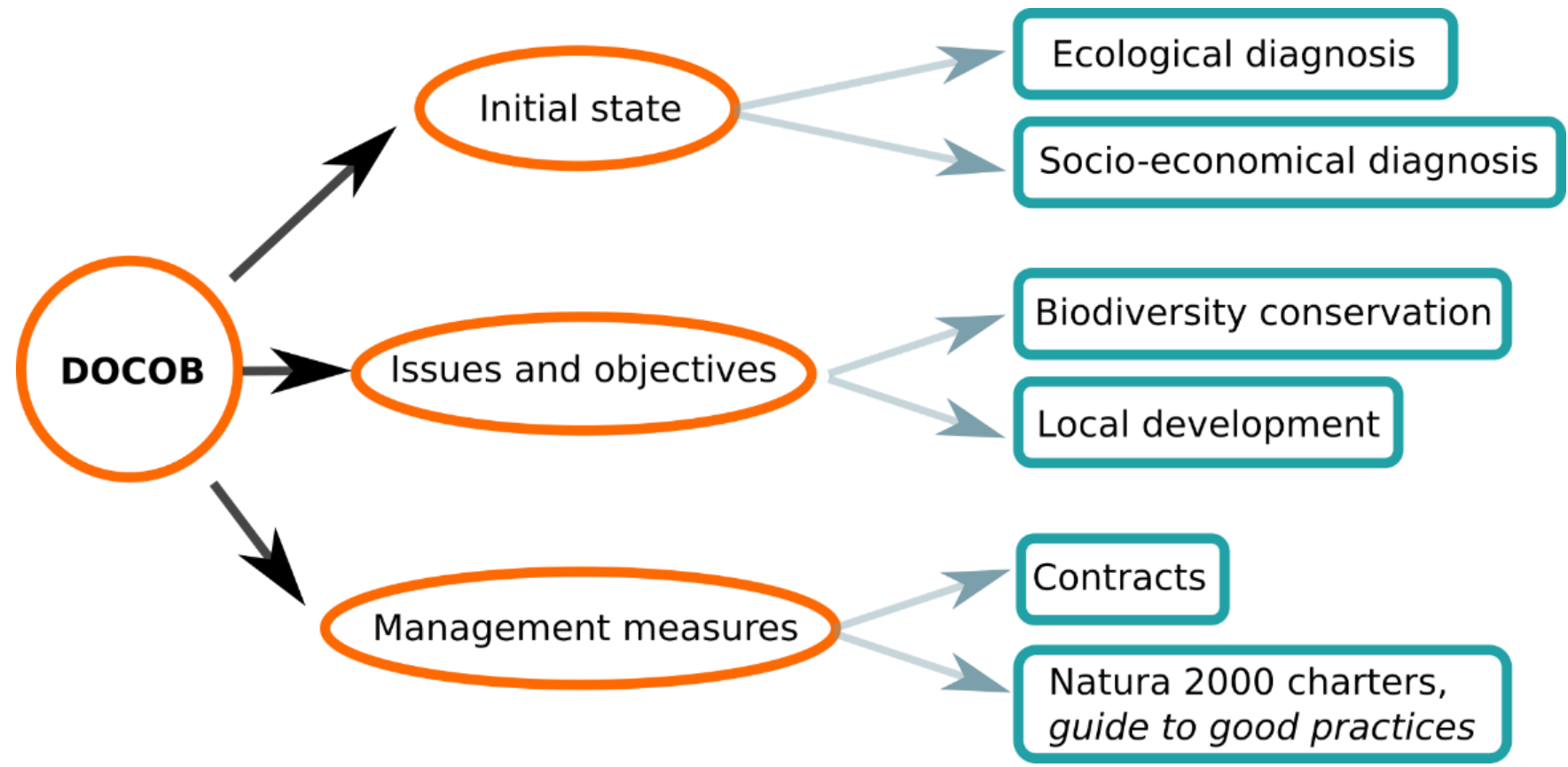


- **Steering committee** (COPIL) with a local facilitator
- **Participatory approach** among all site stakeholders to define objectives and measures implemented through “**chartes**” and agricultural or non-agricultural **contracts**
- Administrative Regions are **responsible for supporting Facilitators** of Natura 2000 sites and for **financing** site management **actions** (except agricultural contracts financed **by national authorities**)
- National authorities lead the process for the **designation** of new N2000 sites or the **extension** of existing sites, and are referent for **impact assessments** in N2000 sites



# Natura 2000 in France: the DOCOB as a central pillar

The **DOCOB** (DOCument d'OBjectifs) content follows the *Guide for Developing Management Plans for Natural Area*

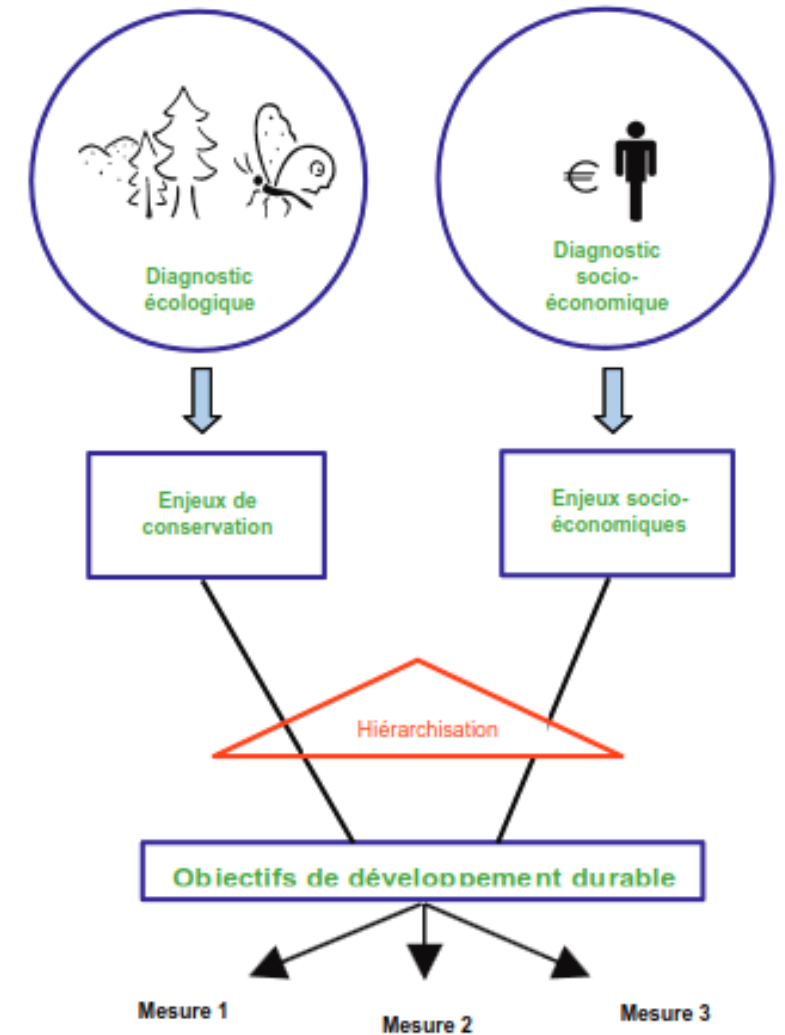


# 1. Setting site-specific conservation objectives and measures



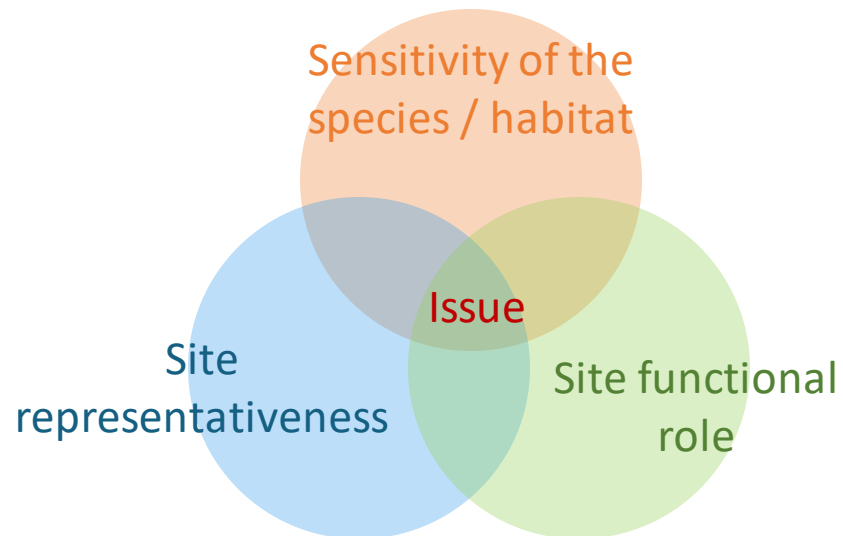
# 1. Setting site-specific conservation objectives and measures

- Long term objectives are divided into operational objectives to compose **sustainability objectives**
- Measures/actions are associated to operational objectives
- Aim at acting on influence factors affecting issues to improve conservation status



## 2. Setting site-specific conservation objectives and measures

### ➤ Prioritising conservation issues for species and habitat



- ✓ Conservation status and trends from the habitat/bird Directives
- ✓ Conservation status from IUCN red lists
- ✓ ZNIEFF status

## 1. Setting site-specific conservation objectives and measures

- Measures/actions are implemented through **contracts** with volunteer stakeholders



- Some measures/actions will be easier to contractualise
- Some objectives will be easier to reach





**= Often opportunity dependent**



## 2. Effectiveness assessment to achieve favourable conservation status



## 2. Effectiveness assessment to achieve favourable conservation status

<p><b>very large standing trees</b> Forest habitat national survey</p>  <p>Significantly faster increase of the very large tree density inside the Natura 2000 network than outside it.</p>	<p><b>Permanent grassland</b> agricultural national survey</p> <p>Evolution positively correlated to the coverage of this commune by the N2000 network. This effect is amplified by the amount of AECM contracted.</p> 
<p><b>Land use changes</b> Corine Land Cover data</p>  <p>Built-up areas and intensive cultivation have increased less inside the network than outside. These differences in trend are also visible before sites designation.</p>	<p><b>common bird populations</b> French Bird Breeding Surveys</p> <p>Positive effect on global trends and on farmland species: decline is weaker outside the network. No effect on woodland species and generalist species.</p> 

- 4 studies comparing the evolution of conservation status indicators inside and outside the network after site designation
- Converging results : Natura 2000 network added value proven with each indicator

Princé, K., Rouveyrol R., Pellissier V., Touroult J., et Jiguet F. 2021. "Long-Term Effectiveness of Natura 2000 Network to Protect Biodiversity: A Hint of Optimism for Common Birds." *Biological Conservation* 253. [10.1016/j.biocon.2020.108871](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2020.108871).

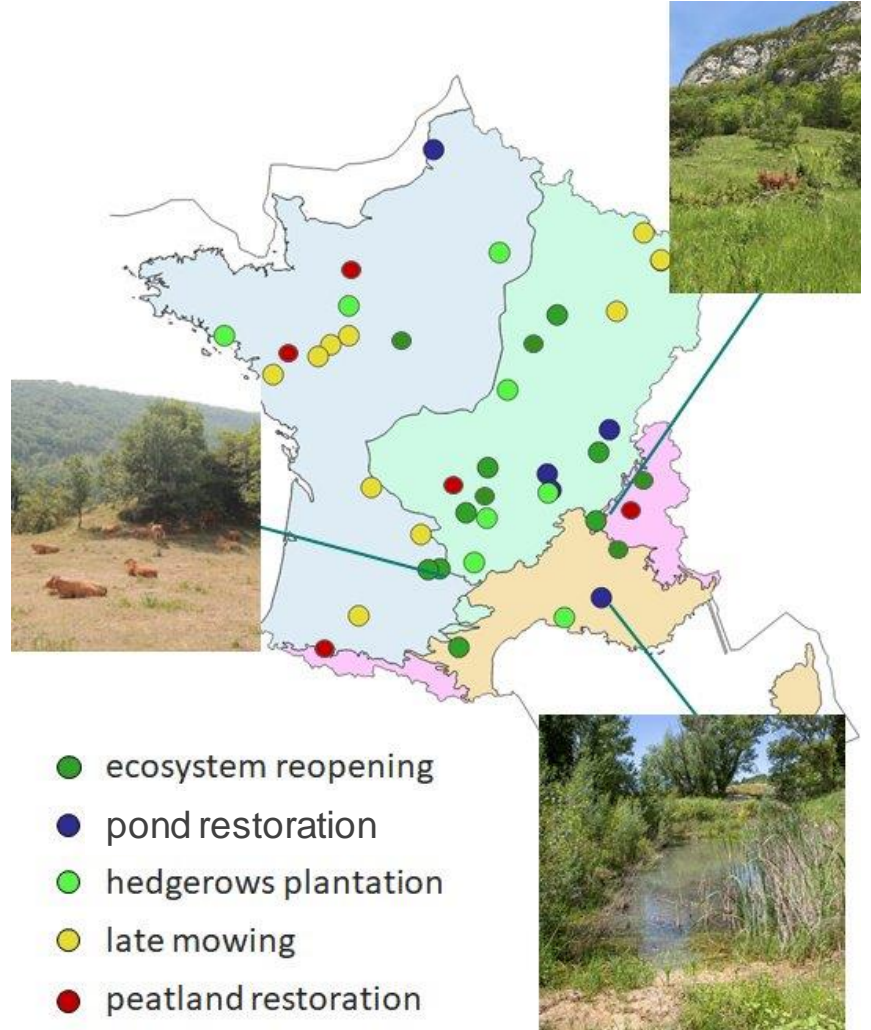
## 2. Effectiveness assessment to achieve favourable conservation status

Annual call for projects funded by the French Biodiversity Office (OFB)

Objectives :

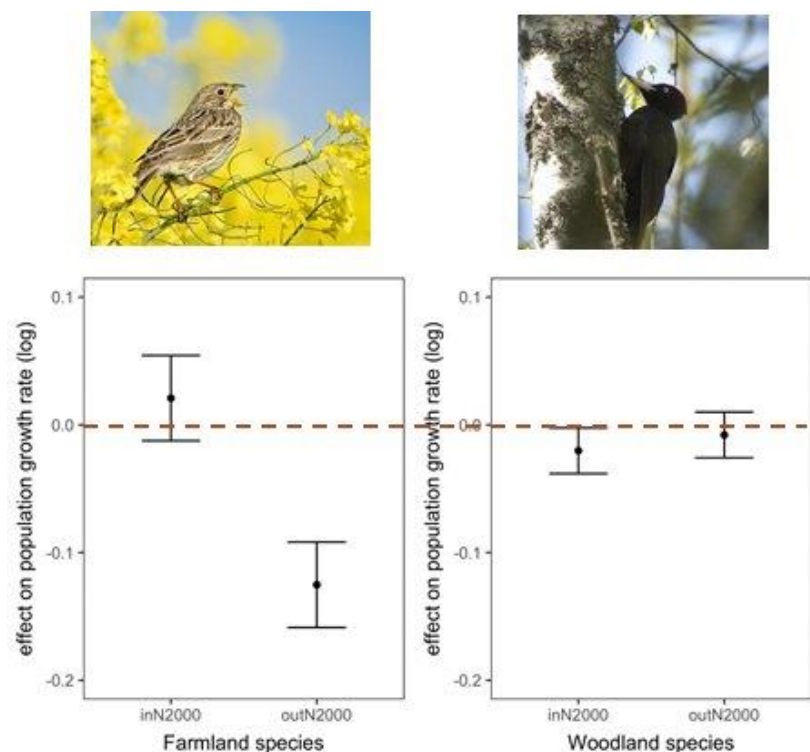
- Financing field surveys of Natura 2000 measures effect on biodiversity
- Use of specific and standardized protocols
- Data analysis at national level

- ✓ 46 study sites in 2024
- ✓ 5 years monitoring
- ✓ 5 studied measures



## 2. Effectiveness assessment to achieve favourable conservation status

From sites to biogeographical regions : *The N2000 policy increases biodiversity...but doesn't reach its objective*



Common bird trends within and outside the N2000 network  
(Princé et al. 2021)

- Only 20% of Annex I habitat types in good conditions in France (Art 17 reporting)
- Positive effect of N2000 network limited to curbing the decline rather than reversing it
- Possibly linked with shortcomings of the system : some pressures are poorly addressed by N2000 tools
  - ✓ Useful to explain results at site level (*“not so good but better than outside...”*)
  - ✓ Recommendations and guidelines formulated at national level

Report summary : <https://inpn.mnhn.fr/docs-web/docs/download/376954>

### 3. site-specific conservation objectives in the Natura 2000 sites the Mediterranean biogeographical region

#### ➤ Priorising conservation issues for species and habitat

A regional (Occitanie) prioritization of Annex I Habitats according to conservation objectives in N2000 sites

- Three different lists, one for each great objectives type:
  - ✓ List of habitats to be preserved (conservation list)
  - ✓ List of habitats to be improved (restoration list)
  - ✓ List of habitats to be maintained (management list)
  
- A regional reference to inform decision at site-level

### 3. site-specific conservation objectives in the Natura 2000 sites the Mediterranean biogeographical region

#### ➤ Going beyond the Eur28 (Annex I habitat) typology

Sometimes the Eur28 habitat types are too broad

- A more precise, exhaustive and site-tailored typology can allow to identify different conservation/restoration concerns and management practices within one Annex I habitat type
- Exemple : 1410 "Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia maritimi*)" => *Juncion maritimi* vs. *Plantaginion crassifoliae*

THANK YOU  
for your attention