



EC guidance on criteria for selecting habitats and species for conservation status improvements

& further process of the work on EU targets after 2021

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Protected area targets for 2030

Legally protect a minimum of 30% of the EU's land area and 30% of EU's sea area as part of a Trans-European Nature Network, and integrate ecological corridors.

Strictly protect at least a third of the EU's protected areas (10% of EU land and sea area), including all remaining EU primary and old-growth forests.

Effectively manage all protected areas, with clear conservation objectives and conservation measures, and monitor these areas appropriately.

EU Nature Restoration Plan

Achieve **non-deterioration** of all protected habitats and species

Ensuring that **at least 30% of habitats and species** not currently in **favourable status** reach that category **or** at least show a strong **positive trend**

Strengthening the EU legal framework for nature restoration

↳ Proposal for **legally binding** EU nature restoration **targets** by 2021

to restore degraded ecosystems, particularly those with **high potential to:**

- **capture and store carbon:** wetlands, old-growth forest, peatlands, etc.
- **prevent and reduce the impact of natural disasters:** floodplains, coastal habitats, etc.

“30% improvement target” for species and habitats

Criteria for selecting habitats and species to be improved by 2030 („in favourable conservation status or [at least] show a strong positive trend“)

➔ Whereas the target also covers non-deterioration of all species and habitats, criteria in the guidance focus on **selecting those species and habitats that shall be improved by 2030.**

Baseline:

- **Habitats and species (EU Habitats Directive):** statuses and trends in the national report according to Article 17 of the Directive (2019) - habitats and species not in favorable status
- **Bird species (EU Birds Directive):** Status of the species on the basis of the EU Red List of Birds at EU level (2020) - species in a non-secure status
- Guidelines for **national prioritization** (protection priorities / synergy with environmental and climate goals / easily achievable goals) and for the **identification of cross-border coordination needs** (migratory species, cross-border threats, etc.)

“30% improvement target” for species and habitats

Remaining issues and discussion points:

- Target applies to individual Member States, **without any further breakdown** (at regional level, biogeographical level, marine vs. terrestrial, species and habitats, etc.)
- How to deal with cases **where deterioration cannot be influenced** at national or EU level alone (climate change, overexploitation of migratory bird species outside the EU, deterioration of wintering areas, etc.)
- Need for **timely delivery and improvement of the quality, completeness and reliability of national reporting**, especially under the Habitats Directives, to strongly reduce the proportion of national assessments that conclude an “unknown” status or trend, are based on outdated monitoring data or only on “expert opinions “.
- Need for an additional **measures-based reporting?**
- Need to clarify the **definition of "strongly positive trend"** (= "conservation status trend")

“30% improvement target” for species and habitats

Next steps (before end 2021)

- Commission Guidance to be finalised by mid-2021 (only few comments on last version)
- Preparatory work on scoring of habitats & species (incl. birds), based on the agreed prioritisation criteria:
 - **Biodiversity conservation-based**: conservation urgency, national responsibility, « umbrella effect »
 - **Synergies-based**: climate adaptation, climate mitigation
 - «**Low-hanging fruits**»: more easily achievable targets
 - Opportunity and need for **transnational cooperation**
- Clarify structure and content of national pledges for improvement

Role of the Biogeographical Process: support to target achievement

Tentative time planning for biogeographical region-level meetings under the process :

	What?	When?	What for?
1	Virtual introductory meeting(s)	early 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ launch the process▪ clarify what Member States are expected to submit in terms of pledges▪ discuss how the contribution of each MS should be ensured
2	Face-to-face biogeographical seminar	1 st semester 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ discuss and review initial MS pledges received▪ Possibly leading to proposals for revising them
3	Virtual meeting	late 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ assess progress in view of an interim evaluation of the Strategy



Thank you for your attention !