Strengthening investment in Natura 2000 and wider biodiversity under EU funds – the role of Prioritised Action Frameworks (PAFs) and LIFE funding

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The Natura 2000 network

Areas of high biodiversity value managed & protected in a coherent network
• 27 863 sites (18 % EU land & 9 % EU seas)
• Largest co-ordinated protected area network in world
• Sites have strong legal protection but much wider than nature reserves

• Key challenges
  ❖ Finalise establishment (esp. gaps for marine)
  ❖ Ensure legal designation & necessary management / restoration measures in place
  ❖ Ensure sufficient funding & better integration with key sectors (especially CAP)
  ❖ Optimise the benefits for people & economy (e.g. rural development, tourism)
Priority of EU Action Plan is “Strengthening investment in Natura 2000 and improving synergies with EU funding instruments”

- including updating of PRIORITISED ACTION FRAMEWORKS (PAFs)
What are PAFs?

- **Strategic multi-annual planning tools providing comprehensive overview of measures needed to implement Natura 2000 and related green infrastructure**

- **Specifying financial needs and priorities and linking to relevant EU funds.**

- **Article 8 of the Habitats Directive already foresees the need to develop PAFs**
Why a new format:
- old format → no systematic information on PAF contribution to the overall objective
- no clear link between priorities and measures
- did not allow aggregation of data
- some info not relevant other important info missing
- European Court of Auditors special audit recommended more harmonised approach to the PAFs

Requires Member States to identify:
- Objectives & priorities for the next 7 years
- Measures to achieve these priority objectives
- Quantification of priority measures
- Estimated costs
- possible national or EU (co-)financing sources
## The New PAF Format

### Structure:

- **A.** Introduction
- **B.** Summary of priority financing needs for the period 2021-2027
- **C.** Current state of the Natura 2000 network
- **D.** EU and national financing of the Natura 2000 network during the period 2014 – 2020
- **E.** Priority measures and financing needs for 2021 – 2027
- **F.** Further added values of the prioritized measures

### Annexes:

1. Guidance for completing the PAF
2. Fictitious example of a completed section D
3. Fictitious example of a completed section E.2.4
B. Summary of priority financing needs

- Maintenance versus restoration (annual versus one-off)
- 3 main types of needs (horizontal, ecosystem-related, species-specific)
- Inside Natura 2000 (Art. 6.1) versus outside Natura 2000 (“green Infrastructure”)
- Ecosystem breakdown according to MAES categories
- No distinction between SCIs/SACs/SPAs

| 1. Horizontal measures and administrative costs related to Natura 2000 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1.1. Site designation and management planning |
| 1.2. Site administration and communication with stakeholders |
| 1.3. Monitoring and reporting for Natura 2000 and the EU Nature Directives |
| 1.4. Remaining knowledge gaps and research needs |
| 1.5. Natura 2000-related infrastructures for communication and education, visitor access & other socio-economic benefits |
| **Sub-total** |

| 2.a Natura 2000 site-related conservation and restoration measures for species and habitats |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2.1.a Marine and coastal waters |
| 2.2.a Heathlands and shrubs |
| 2.3.a Bogs, mires, fens and other wetlands |
| 2.4.a Grasslands |
| 2.5.a Other agroecosystems (incl. croplands) |
| 2.6.a Woodlands and forests |
| 2.7.a Rocky habitats, dunes & sparsely vegetated lands |
| 2.8.a Freshwater habitats (rivers and lakes) |
| 2.9.a Others |
| **Sub-total** |

| 2.b Additional "Green infrastructure" measures beyond Natura 2000 (contributing to further coherence of the Natura 2000 network) |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2.1.b Marine and coastal waters |
| 2.2.b Heathlands and shrubs |
| 2.3.b Bogs, mires, fens and other wetlands |
| 2.4.b Grasslands |
| 2.5.b Other agroecosystems (incl. croplands) |
| 2.6.b Woodlands and forests |
| 2.7.b Rocky habitats, dunes & sparsely vegetated lands |
| 2.8.b Freshwater habitats (rivers and lakes) |
| 2.9.b Others |
| **Sub-total** |

| 3. Additional species-specific conservation measures not related to specific ecosystems or habitats |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 3.1. Species-specific measures and programmes not covered elsewhere |
| 3.2. Management of conflict species |
| **Sub-total** |

| **Grand total (annual)** |

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**Priority financing needs 2001-2027**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Yearly running costs (Euros/year)</th>
<th>Annualised one-off / project costs (Euros)</th>
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EU funding approach for Nature

- No single large EU dedicated fund for nature
- LIFE is strategic small fund with strong nature/biodiversity component
- Main EU funding is through integration of nature into key sectoral funds (esp CAP, ERDF, EMFF)
- No earmarking for nature but significant opportunities for nature investment in all relevant EU funds (Commission proposals)
Budget: 5.45 billion EUR

Climate (1.95 billion EUR):
- Climate Adaptation and Mitigation
- Clean Energy Transition

Environment (3.5 billion EUR):
- Circular Economy and Quality of Life (1.35 billion EUR)
- Nature & Biodiversity (2.15 billion EUR).

Types of project
- Traditional
- Integrated – including strategic nature projects (SNPs) to implement PAFs
- Technical assistance
New mechanism:

- CAP to be ‘more targeted, more ambitious yet flexible’...

- CAP strategic plans (both pillars) – env authorities to be consulted; must be consistent with env planning tools (PAFs)

Two pillars, two funds:
- EAFG:
  - Direct payments to be reduced
  - Greening to discontinue
  - Eco-schemes

- EAFRD:
  - More target oriented less compliance oriented
  - 30% for environment
  - Synergies with LIFE to be ensured
  - Common indicators

- Shifts between pillars to be kept
**THE NEW CAP GREEN ARCHITECTURE**

- **New, enhanced conditionality**
  - (on climate/environment, 14 practices built on EU standards (related to climate change, water, soil, biodiversity and landscapes) and requirements from Nitrates Directive, Water Framework Directive and Natura 2000 Directives)

- **Voluntary for farmers**
  - Eco-schemes in Pillar I
  - Knowledge transfer
  - Farm advisory services
  - Innovation
  - Higher ambition
  - Cooperation
  - Greater flexibility

- **Mandatory for farmers**
  - Investments
  - Area-specific disadvantages
  - Environmental and climate management commitments in Pillar II (>30%)

- **Mandatory for MS**
  - Matching realities
  - 40% of budget climate relevant

(European Commission)
Specific thematic objective:

- 2b(vii) enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment, and reducing pollution;
- Proposed amendment: "enhancing nature protection, biodiversity and green infrastructure, in particular in the urban environment, and reducing pollution”.

- European Territorial Cooperation (ETC), i.e. Interreg to continue as before:
  - cross-border (Interreg A)
  - transnational (Interreg B) – multi-regional programmes
  - interregional (Interreg C) – one pan-European programme
4 main objectives, including 3 for env:

- Healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and aquaculture
- Promoting blue economy
- International governance, safety and security

- Budget: 6.14 billion EUR (Art.5) – 15% less
- Art. 22 - the EMFF may support actions for the protection and restoration of marine and coastal biodiversity and ecosystems, including in inland waters:
  - the management, restoration and monitoring of Natura 2000 areas in accordance with the PAFs;
  - the protection of species pursuant to the Birds and Habitats Directives.

- Art. 23 – support for sustainable aquaculture
- Art. 26 – Community-led Local Development
- Art. 27 – support for collection of data/monitoring
• proposed allocation - €97.6 bn
• no specific biodiversity or nature objective; but biodiversity and natural capital related research can be funded under the „Food and Natural Resources“ cluster
• specific multiannual programme to set out objectives and rules for the implementation;
• funding primarily delivered through calls for proposals;
Key forthcoming EU milestones regarding nature

- « New Green Deal » a priority for incoming European Commission
- New EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030
- Need for nature restoration plan with ambitious commitments for protected species/habitat
- State of Nature in EU 2020 assessment as baseline for change
- PAF key tool to help strategically strengthen investments for nature under EU funds for 2021-2027 period
For more information, please consult:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/index_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/environment