



Natura 2000 Networking
Programme on behalf of the
European Commission



Natura 2000 Networking Programme managed in partnership
by project partners EUROPARC Federation, Eurosites and
European Landowners Organization (ELO)

Sustainability of Natura 2000 Network – Combining Environmental Social and Economic Benefits

Workshop Report

a. Introduction/ Background

Sustainability of Natura 2000 Network – Combining Environmental Social and Economic Benefits workshop was held in Peterborough in England, on the 17-18 October 2008. The workshop was held in the Natural England's offices and was organised with the substantial technical and merit-based input from this organisation. The workshop followed the standard Eurosites format used for conservation practitioners, i.e. it was a combination of presentations, working groups and a field visit.

The workshop was clearly addressed to people who develop at different levels innovative approaches towards the sustainable land use on Natura 2000 and other protected sites. We had for example members of innovation teams from Natural England and Scottish Natural Heritage. However, the majority of our participants represented small NGOs from Eastern Europe. Eurosites offered additional funding to invite participants from Eastern Europe, as this is where clearly the development and sustainability issues around Natura 2000 are highly relevant and sometimes controversial. Mostly site managers and other conservationists attended this workshop, but there were also foresters and a scientist. The list of participant per country, type of organisation and stakeholder group is in Table 1 in the Annex.

b. Purpose of Workshop & Expected Outcomes

After the Train the Trainers event in Vienna earlier this year it became apparent that there were three major issues pointed out by the participants:

- a) It was not clear what can be allowed on Natura 2000 sites in terms of the development. The common perception of Natura 2000 in Eastern Europe is such that it stops the development of the country and wellbeing of local people. There was a need to present good practise examples showing that this is usually other way round.
- b) What are the legal requirements and opportunities associated with potential development around or within Natura 2000 sites?
- c) Funding – what are the funding sources available for the implementation of Natura 2000 network, other than the apparent Life+ and agri-environment schemes.

To this end, the aim of the workshop was to clarify the above issues and present good practise examples.

c. Results - key points arising during the workshop

The following were the key points arising from the workshop:

- There was no clarity and trust in national governments that the allocation of funding for biodiversity and sustainable development in the national rural development programmes will be represented at the appropriate level. **Participants would prefer if the Commission had more influence in setting priorities for spending the Structural Funds.**
- The good practise examples for sustainable land use based on working with farmers showed that the local organic meat production has to be heavily (up to 80%) subsidised by the agri-environment schemes for farmers to become profitable. The purely market driven production would not be profitable enough. **Deeper and much more radical reforms within the CAP should be implemented to support sustainable, biodiversity-friendly farming on the larger scale.**

- It was apparent that for initiatives similar to the one above, Life+ remains a major source of funding. This is most readily available funding for conservation driven projects and hidden sustainability criteria under alternative funding streams are less efficient in delivering conservation action and difficult to obtain for conservations. Participants regretted that this funding source was not covered better at the workshop. **Any further diversion from a single funding stream for the implementation of Natura 2000 network is confusing and will result in further biodiversity loss as part of 'sustainable development' initiatives, where primary aim is to boost the local economy and biodiversity comes second or not at all.**
- The importance and benefits of the partnership approach was raised. Examples of positive conservation gains through working with developers and engineers were presented. It is important to engage with high-ranking individuals within these organisations, who then feed back to their staff. Engaging with lower positioned engineers does not work. **Conservationists need to speak different 'languages' and have a much wider scope and agenda if they want to be successful in obtaining funding for sustainable development initiatives, especially outside of the Life+ funding.**

d. Conclusions and further action;

- Nowadays, conservationists need to become smarter and more flexible at obtaining alternative sources of funding for sustainable land use and development.
- Conservationist need to become better at partnership working and collaborating with different stakeholders to secure biodiversity gains as part of the sustainable land use and development initiatives.
- Conservation success stories in the sustainable land use and development initiatives are down to right people in right places, whether it is individuals within your or partner organisations. So just go and do it.

e. Contact details of workshop host

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f. Contact details of workshop participants

- *Name, address, e-mail, website*

Please see Annex

g. Relevant background papers

- Background and Programme
- All presentations and links to further information are here: www.natura-international.org/susnatura_resource