

Summary Workshop Report

Conflict management in the Natura 2000 network

In the framework of the DG ENV Contract No. 07.0310/2008/5151147/SER/B2

The project "Dealing with conflict in the implementation and management of Natura 2000 network - Best practices at site level" (LOT 3)

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1 Introduction

This report presents the findings of a series of four workshops organized on behalf of the European Commission, DG Environment as part of the project, “Dealing with conflicts in the implementation and management of the Natura 2000 network - best practices at the local / site level”. The project was led by ALTERRA (Wageningen UR, the Netherlands) with the partnership of Eurosite (Den Bosch, the Netherlands) and ECNC – European Centre for Nature Conservation (Tilburg, the Netherlands).

The central aim of the project is to promote best practices for implementation and management. Attention is focused on a balance between multiple uses and multiple interests in Natura 2000 sites in order to ensure both the engagement of the regional population and the respect of the values of the site. Specific objectives of this project are to:

- Assess the current situation;
- Identify and review good examples;
- Contribute to transposition of lessons learned.

The objective of Task 3, coordinated by ECNC was to collect information directly from relevant stakeholders, experts, practitioners and policy makers about conflicts arising during the designation of Natura 2000 areas and the setting up of management plans and ways to avoid, manage and/or resolve them.

A series of four workshops was organised to that end. The first workshop had a European-wide focus. It was organised at Mundo-B in Brussels (Belgium) and brought together the representatives of European networks, NGO's representing the interests or opinions of various stakeholder groups (agriculture, forestry, fisheries, hunters, transport, industry, tourism, sports etc). Also European level policy makers practitioners and experts took part in this first workshop.

The three other workshops had a regional focus. The first of these regional workshops was organised at the headquarters of the Regional Environmental Centre (REC) in Szentendre (near Budapest, Hungary) and focused on Central and Eastern European stakeholders, experts policy makers and practitioners.

The second of the regional workshops took place at the headquarters of in Barcelona (Spain) and focused on Southern European (Mediterranean) audience.

For the third regional workshop, focusing on the Northwest European audience, Brussels (this time at the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences) was again chosen as the venue, due to its easy access, good venues and proximity to the EU institutions.

All workshops were chaired by Dr Leon Braat (Alterra), and were attended by a total of 145 stakeholders representing European-level and regional interest groups from various sectors: forestry, agriculture, nature conservation, hunting, etc. experts and organisations.

2 Executive summary

The project ‘Dealing with conflicts in the implementation and management of the Natura 2000 network- best practices at the local / site level’ was commissioned by DG Environment in January 2009. As part of this project one European and three regional workshops were organised, attended by 133 participants from different groups of landowners and land users (economic sectors, NGOs, protected area administrations) to discuss their views and experiences on the management of Natura 2000 areas.

The Management of Natura 2000 areas is a complex and cumbersome process. A great number of people and organizations have a direct or indirect stake in the decisions that are being made about the land designated under Natura 2000. Conflicts are bound to occur, as is indeed the case. If management plans are developed they need to be carried out with great care because it is important to gain the support of the key stakeholders for their successful implementation. A wonderfully designed management plan (from an ecological or conservationist point of view) is worth nothing in terms of delivering conservation objectives if the key stakeholders (landowners and land users) do not support it. Imposing restrictions through penalties might work from a technocratic point of view, but this is far inferior to a plan which is endorsed by the stakeholders. Many of the contributions of the experts and other stakeholders expressed at the workshops focused on the process of the management of the site or on the designing of a management plan.

The successful delivery of Natura 2000 management plans (in which (potential) conflicts were either avoided or resolved) depended to a great extent on the level of organization and preparation. Such a process should be transparent, clear and flexible. This means that clear (SMART) objectives should be defined and agreed between the stakeholders and that flexibility should be allowed

in the ways that these objectives are reached.

The role of the site manager was also identified as critical. This person (or organization) should understand the local circumstances and be a good communicator. But in general the image arose of a 'jack of all trades' who must understand ecological and socio-economic aspects and have good skills in project management, coordination, planning, analysis and communication.

As many of the reported conflicts had arisen as a consequence of poor consultation of those affected by the plans, many participants underlined the need for an early involvement, consultation and participation of the key stakeholders (including the grass-roots level). But in order to keep the process manageable a stakeholder analysis should result in a differentiated approach whereby key stakeholders are fully involved and other stakeholders consulted or informed in the relevant phases. But for all involvement of stakeholders, the right timing was deemed essential; in general, the earlier the better. Also, any consultation or participation process should be a genuine part of the whole process and not merely pro forma, as this will only disenfranchise the stakeholders.

The approach to be followed in the development of Natura 2000 management plans should be focused on searching for positive and practical outcomes, identifying win-win situations and opportunities for nature and society, and should not focus on legal or ecological restrictions which aim only to conserve habitats and species. A balance between People, Planet and Profit therefore needs to be struck.

The main conclusions from the workshops can be summarized as follows:

Site governance – Implemented at site (cluster) level and developed through national level guidance, a good governance structure for Natura 2000 sites, in which the main stakeholders can participate or be represented, is essential for a good management of the site. Good approaches have been developed (for example, the 'comités de pilotage' in France) which can (partly) serve as a model to apply in other countries.

Public participation – An open and transparent participation process should be based on a stakeholder analysis, identifying groups which each require their own approach. For example, a small number of key stakeholders (often landowners) should be involved from the start and throughout the process, whereas other groups may only need to be informed and or consulted at key stages.

Communication and information – A differentiated communication approach according to the target groups is essential. For example, landowners and Natura 2000 site users need short, clear and brief factual explanations about rules and (land-use or business) opportunities at local level, whereas policymakers and the general public would need reports outlining the wider benefits to society in terms of ecosystem services provided by the Natura 2000 Network.

Education and training – The most urgent training and education need refers to communication and facilitation skills, as, often, conflicts that hamper the process of developing a site management plan fail due to poor communication skills of the process manager.

Knowledge and scientific underpinning – A good scientific baseline and a functioning monitoring programme are important for targeted and adaptive management and in order to avoid the needless application of the precautionary principle leading to blanket protection and disenfranchised stakeholders.

Networking and sharing of experiences – Across Europe, much information and many examples of best practices are available on multifunctional land use in Natura 2000 sites and integration in regional planning and policy. This information should be better disclosed and disseminated through networks, publications and events for the benefit of all.

Sectoral and policy integration – Natura 2000 should be better reflected in other policies, and the provisions of the Birds and Habitats directives should be better mainstreamed in other policies. Instead of being the last element included in local and regional spatial planning ('because the EU tells us to do so'), efforts should be made to have Natura 2000 considered as an integral component in spatial planning frameworks.

Socio-economic dimension – The livelihoods of local stakeholders often depend on the land comprised in the designated Natura 2000 site. If the designation represents a change or restriction to their current practice, they should be offered sufficient (financial) means (such as payments or compensation) or freedom to develop new forms of land use (innovation) to continue making a living.

The human and cultural dimension – The success of the management of Natura 2000 sites is fully dependent on a positive attitude and cooperation from a range of stakeholders, who have personal ambitions, feelings, emotions and cultural backgrounds. This should be better reflected in the processes and sufficient time should be allowed for stakeholders to adjust, as they often have a strong emotional bond to the land.

3 Detailed summary report from the four workshops

The following section brings together the main issues and recommendations raised during the four workshops. The issues and recommendations from the four workshop reports (see annexes) are presented under the following headings:

1. Process management
2. Institutional issues and governance
3. Communication, education and public awareness (CEPA)
4. Knowledge, science and data
5. Socio-economic factors
6. Socio-cultural factors
7. Time, space and scale integration

3.1 Process management

3.1.1 Management and organization

Introduction

The good management of the process of Natura 2000 implementation is essential to realize good results. It is related to most of the other themes identified below (stakeholder involvement, governance, communication, socio-economic and cultural factors, etc.). Poor management of the Natura 2000 implementation process is a major source of conflict and therefore one that deserves much attention and can lead to a better delivery of Natura 2000 objectives.

Issues

The main reported management issues that lead to conflict and poor implementation of Natura 2000 are related to a combination of a lack of clear (management) objectives and too rigid regulation. Associated with these two main factors is a lack of transparency as regards the rules and process. Just as in any planning process, if the objectives for the exercise are not defined from the outset it will very quickly lose direction and the support of the people who need to carry out the actions. A failure to define the objectives for site protection during the designation process has resulted in the disillusionment of landowners and managers and has therefore made it extremely difficult to plot a course for the future management of the sites.

In several countries, there is a lack of a Natura 2000 governance model, which leads to a lack of coherent management.

In many reported cases, if objectives are set, they are defined in a static way that does not reflect the dynamic nature of biodiversity, ecosystems and also society. This rigidity and lack of flexibility makes the development of effective management plans more difficult.

Often measures or plans are discussed with representatives or 'organizations' and not with the owners themselves – although the organizations have no direct connection to the sites.

Recommendations

Good organization, planning and coordination of the process shows commitment to the process and can have an important positive effect on the support for and, therefore, on the success of the process. Most importantly, special attention should be paid to ensuring ways to maximize transparency, define clear (SMART) goals (at an early stage and in a participatory way; see below) and allow flexibility in the setting-up of local management measures for Natura 2000 sites.

Organize a good team - Ensure that sufficient skills are included within any team charged with delivery (e.g. project management, human resource management, etc.).

Define conflict and problematic issues in each site - Interview key stakeholders prior to commencing the process and/or organize group meetings or focus groups in order to identify or brainstorm key issues and problems, in particular those that are a source of conflict.

Act and show it - Focusing on early action and obtaining early results is important to create or maintain the support of the stakeholders. The identification and communication of quick wins to show the benefits of the Natura 2000 management is important.

Process efficiency – In order to maximize the efficiency, the process should be kept as simple as possible, and involve the smallest

number of local and directly active key stakeholders. The process should be based as much as possible on practical and not legal foundations. In the implementation of the management, clear roles and responsibilities should be assigned.

External mediation of the process - Appoint a skilled external mediator / facilitator who can carry forward the process of stakeholder involvement as a clearly unbiased and independent person who is not obviously associated with any of the key stakeholders, in particular the ministry / state institute.

3.1.2 Stakeholder involvement, consultation and participation

Introduction

Natura 2000 is about adapting site management practices for the conservation of selected species and habitats, or maintaining existing ones that are adequate. But maintaining good conservation management practices can hamper the economic development of an enterprise or region. It affects large areas of (mainly rural) Europe and therefore also many individuals and institutions. The positive contributions of these individuals and institutions is essential for a good delivery of the Natura 2000 Network. Great care should therefore be taken to involve them in the right way.

Issues

Stakeholder involvement is an essential component of a successful Natura 2000 management plan and its implementation. Many individuals and organizations are directly affected by the Natura management and are key to the successful delivery of the Natura 2000 site objectives. It is therefore essential to carefully manage the involvement of stakeholders.

However, the designation and management of Natura 2000 areas has led and still leads to many conflicts with different stakeholders. Often these conflicts arise from genuine competition and conflicting interests and require a search for consensual solutions or tough measures (such as expropriation) which do not solve the conflict but permit achievement of the objectives. But in many cases the conflict stems from flaws in the design or implementation of the participation process which could in principle have been avoided.

Conflicts with stakeholders are mostly related to a real (or perceived) lack of information, consultation and (genuine) participation. Also, the timing of engaging the stakeholders in the process is important. Credibility in the real intentions of the management diminishes greatly if information or consultation starts when the process is already at an advanced stage, or if the consultation and participation are perceived to be pro forma, and not to really take into account the opinions of the stakeholders.

Insufficient consideration for, involvement or consultation of key stakeholders, landowners and land managers in the design and process of management planning results in them feeling undervalued, excluded and generally put upon, leading to an unwillingness to cooperate and the subsequent heightening of the likelihood of conflict.

The general failure to define important stakeholders in the process (often leading to them being left out altogether), the involvement of some stakeholders and not others (leading to accusations of favouritism, cronyism, etc.) can completely collapse the process of agreeing management and management plans.

Recommendations

Careful analysis of the key stakeholders is a first step - Knowing the key stakeholders, their attitude towards the process and their power to influence the outcome is essential to devise a better stakeholder involvement strategy. Resources should be targeted towards the need of each stakeholder group, and in particular on those most likely to influence the process (in a positive or negative way). In this way, the process of stakeholder involvement remains manageable. The Stakeholder Analysis should result in the identification of key stakeholders who need to be fully involved and other groups that merely need to be informed or consulted at key stages of the process. A good analysis also reduces the danger of overlooking key stakeholders who, if not properly involved, can jeopardize the process.

Early involvement – As a general rule, the earliest possible involvement of the smallest number of key stakeholders in the process is likely to lead to the best results in the field, or at least avoid conflicts linked to a lack of consultation. Also, the goals to be reached should be agreed as soon as possible in the process. Roles and responsibilities need to be clearly agreed and will lead to an increased sense of ownership and support.

Scale matters – The choice of stakeholders who should be consulted or involved depends on the scale at which decisions regarding Natura 2000 site management must be made. At an international, national or regional level, dealing with policymakers, experts, NGOs and interest groups such as sectoral business groups, landowners' organizations or farmers' groups is an effective way to involve larger groups of stakeholders in a manageable way. At the local level, specific management options should be discussed as

much as possible with the actual individuals (landowners, etc.).

Genuine and dynamic process - Ensure that the consultation and participation are genuine, continuous and dynamic. If people perceive it is only a once-off formality they will feel disenfranchised. Most importantly, make sure that the people most directly affected (owners, tenants, dwellers) are heard. This requires regular communication and convening meetings at key stages of the process. Make the consultation and participation process as easy, clear and open as possible, and try to involve those directly affected in the whole range of the process. Allow all parties to be taken seriously by making it clear how issues and objections are taken into consideration and by considering the introduction of a formal appeals procedure.

Importance of (local) political support – A positive attitude of some key stakeholders towards Natura 2000 will depend on the endorsement of local politicians or opinion leaders / personalities. Their support is therefore essential to bring key people around the table and convince some stakeholders who might otherwise oppose the process of establishing and implementing site management plans.

Building trust – Many landowners and other key stakeholders have an innate distrust of nature-related and environmental institutions. In order to win their support, extra attention should be given to winning their trust. Essential components of a trust-building communication (further developed below) are: transparency, clarity, personal informal contact, openness, and time.

Respect and make use of local knowledge and traditions – Local landowners and land users have often accumulated vast amounts of knowledge and experience about the management of the land and biodiversity. The use of this knowledge will not only make the development of a management plan far more effective and pertinent, it will also increase the goodwill of the stakeholders and their sense of ownership of the Natura 2000 management plan.

Mediation as a last resort - In cases of irresolvable stand-off, there is the possibility to resort to professional unbiased mediators to bring the parties around the table and look for a consensual solution.

3.1.3 Guidance, support and exchanges of best practice

Introduction

For many stakeholders, Natura 2000 is a new concept when they are confronted with the designation and the need to contribute to the development and implementation of site management plans. Not only poor information and communication, but also the lack of clear practical guidance can erode the support for contributing to the site management measures.

Issues

In many reported cases, guidance, if provided, appears to be far from unequivocal and clear. As nature conservation is not the main business of many landowners and land users, they do not wish to have to spend too much time in understanding and applying the guidance.

Throughout Europe, many examples of best practice exist that show how Natura 2000 can be combined with novel practices of land use and sustainable economic development. The problem is that much of this practical information is poorly disclosed and difficult to access.

The many parties involved in Natura 2000 site management decision making mean that stakeholders do not always know where and to whom to address their objections or complaints about the requested management measures.

Recommendations

EU level platform for the exchange knowledge and best practice - Specific issues that should be dealt with at EU level are the provision of specific guidelines for the management, and providing a European platform for the exchange of knowledge and best practices, especially regarding existing good governance models for Natura 2000 sites.

Better guidance - Provide more, clear and targeted guidance on Natura 2000 site management, preferably based on the knowledge and experience already collected throughout Europe, and specific to the Natura 2000 habitats and/or ecoregions.

Exchange of best practice - Facilitate the Europe-wide exchange of information regarding Natura site management by investing in the creation of learning networks for the exchange of knowledge, but also for on-site training and events.

Promote the exchange of best practices (also outside national borders) in integrated Natura 2000 site management (i.e. where the management of species and habitats goes hand in hand with sustainable economic development).

Set up an ombudsman who can investigate complaints regarding the implementation of Natura 2000 and attempt to resolve them, through recommendations (binding or not) or mediation.

Promote the setting-up of local contact points for each Natura 2000 site or region, where the stakeholders can get direct information and guidance tailored to their needs.



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3.2 Institutional issues and governance

3.2.1 Institutions and governance

Introduction

Institutional and governance issues are important for a smooth implementation of the Natura 2000 Network. All levels of government, from the EU to the local level are involved in the implementation of the Natura 2000 Network. The many governance layers involved create coordination and communication challenges.

The nature of the institutional issues is very much related to the governance level. However, at all levels, the efficient implementation of the Natura 2000 Network is hampered by a lack of horizontal and vertical consistency (in cooperation, coordination and communication).

Issues

Lack of horizontal consistency - At all levels, there is still a lack of cooperation, coordination and communication between the ministries and departments that are directly or indirectly concerned with Natura 2000. This is further complicated by the fact that key policy and decision makers not directly involved in Natura 2000, but whose decisions have a bearing on the Network, often have a poor understanding of its functioning. Local practitioners perceive that, at EU level in particular, there is a marked lack of cooperation between the directorates general (especially DG Environment and DG Agriculture), which hampers the effective implementation of Natura 2000, in particular regarding the application of agri-environmental schemes and other funding opportunities.

Lack of vertical consistency - Communication and coordination of activities from the EU to the local level and back are filtered through various levels of administration, resulting in a slowing of the process. In several Member States, stakeholders feel it seems that especially the national level is a bottleneck for a smooth and efficient coordination.

Moreover, as the development and implementation of Natura 2000 management plans are carried out at local level, but supervised at the regional level, there are marked inconsistencies, especially in federal countries such as Spain or Germany, where almost all responsibilities regarding Natura 2000 have been devolved to the regional level.

At all levels, politics play an important role in the final decision making that has a direct or indirect impact on Natura 2000. Also

power games between influential groups or organizations are not fair or balanced. Powerful lobbies can have a decisive bearing on the outcome of a decision-making process regarding Natura 2000.

Lack of means - A generalized lack of financial means and human resources means that staff of many key departments dealing with Natura 2000 are insufficiently trained and overworked, and therefore not able to provide the needed support to the process.

Lack of a governance model at Natura 2000 site level - Many participants reported the absence of a good and functioning governance model at site level, in which the roles and responsibilities and the decision-making process are clearly defined.

Recommendations

Improving horizontal consistency - At the EU level, more effort needs to be put in horizontal consistency between policy fields. There should be a better communication and cooperation between the various DGs whose competencies affect the management and conservation status of the Natura 2000 Network.

Improving vertical consistency – Communication from the EU to the local level is filtered through various levels of administration, resulting in a slowing of the process. Encouraging more direct communication and exchanges between the EU level and the regional or local level would be a possible solution to improving vertical cooperation.

Ensure political support - The political commitment to the Natura 2000 process at all levels of governance should be achieved, as this will be an important factor for sectors and stakeholders to support it. Politicians need to be forced to take a firm stance.

Exchange of best practices - Although no one solution fits all different situations, many successful governance models have been developed across Europe. Some countries, such as France, have developed and institutionalized such a model (comité de pilotage COPIL) that can serve as inspiration for other countries.

3.2.2 Cross-sector and policy integration

Introduction

The policy and legislation concerning Natura 2000 has an intrinsic relation with many other sectoral policy fields. The designation and management of Natura 2000 affects the type and intensity of land use, and development of infrastructure. Many conflicts and difficulties arise from the poor integration or reflection of the policies into these other policy fields. But conflicts also arise from the opposing interests even if these are well reflected in the policies.

Issues

A large area covered, many sectors affected - The Natura 2000 Network has an important impact on many sectors of society which compete for or use the same land. Consequently, Natura 2000 management plans need to take into account the interests and views of a large number of stakeholders, and be well integrated into other sectors and policies.

Conflicting interests - Problems arise when the management of Natura 2000 conflicts with other uses, interests or policies. Many sectors and policies are directly or indirectly affected by decisions made in the context of Natura 2000. Conversely, many decisions made in other policy fields have an impact on Natura 2000.

Regulations for plans and projects - Regulation and legislation are in place to reduce or avoid the negative impacts of plans and projects on Natura 2000 sites, but this does not necessarily ensure the support of stakeholders.

Lack of cross-sectoral policy integration - In general, stakeholders report a perception of a lack of cross-sector consistency regarding the Natura 2000 policies and legislation. Different policies give conflicting advice on land-use decisions. There is also a lack of a comprehensive rural development model, of which Natura 2000 should be a full component.

Opportunities are left unused - Opportunities for creating synergies with other processes, such as the Local Agenda 21 process, are left unexplored.

Lack of internal Natura 2000 consistency - It was pointed out that (for instance in the UK) certain sites were originally designated for their bird interest as SPA and management objectives were set; later they were designated as SAC with a further set of management objectives that in the view of land managers conflicted with what they had been asked to do in order to manage the birds.

Recommendations

Better policy integration - The principles of Natura 2000 should be better integrated in community policy and its transposition into national policy.

Greening policies across the spectrum - In general, a greening of policies of which Natura 2000 should be a part should be the leading principle for more sustainable overall community and Member State policies. Especially important at EU level is a good integration of Natura 2000 in the Common Fisheries and Common Agricultural policies. There should be more cross-compliance with other regulations.

A key role for spatial planning - The strong interdependence of Natura 2000 and other sectors and policies requires a cross-sector and integrated approach to Natura 2000 planning and implementation. Natura 2000 should be further mainstreamed in other sectors and policies. As we are speaking about areas, land use and land management, spatial planning is a key process to allow this integration, the communication of alternatives to stakeholders and the making of well-informed decisions.

A comprehensive rural development model - In policy and spatial planning, the environment (ecosystems, protected areas such as Natura 2000) should be considered as the central concept in planning framework, and not the issue that gets the least attention.

3.2.3 Administration, regulations, rules and procedures

Introduction

The administration, rules and procedures of Natura 2000 are the factors that can cause conflicts or resentment and should therefore be carefully scrutinized and revised if needed in order to improve the effectiveness of Natura 2000 implementation.

Issues

Complicated rules - Complicated regulations regarding management measures and their control lead to an administrative burden for the site manager, the officers, the landowners and land users. Restrictions imposed by the Natura 2000 regulations are perceived as being too strict and are not accompanied by alternatives or solutions to the situation that changed as a result of the Natura 2000 designation.

Excessive regulation - The rules and regulations of Natura 2000 are perceived as being very technical, complicated and imposing a heavy administrative burden on the officers and direct stakeholders. These complicated rules and regulations result in a poor understanding of Natura 2000, its objectives, its benefits and its restrictions. Particularly the latter seem to be widely misinterpreted by landowners and land users, who widely believe that no activities are allowed after an area has been designated as a Natura 2000 site.

Rigid application of rules and regulations – Not only are Natura 2000 regulations too rigid as far as management options of land users are concerned, they also seem too rigid in view of the dynamic nature of the environment (e.g. effects of climate change).

Heavy workload for local officials - The heavy administrative burden and complicated regulations of Natura 2000 put a high pressure on the officers. They are therefore inclined to aim for the basic operations to keep the administration functioning and are not that open to exploring innovative opportunities, which are consequently lost.

Lack of enforcement and control - The high administrative load and complicated regulations mean that enforcement, control and the imposition of penalties are lagging strongly behind. In many places Natura 2000 regulations have not yet led to conflict situations because penalties for infringements are not yet enforced. There is a large potential for conflicts once the Natura 2000 management regulations are controlled and enforced.

Recommendations

Focus on objectives rather than on the application of rules - Instead of imposing complicated and strict rules on the site-specific management measures, Natura 2000 regulations should focus on the formulation of simple, clear and measurable objectives. This will make the monitoring of progress easier, and increase the sense of ownership and responsibility of the landowners and land users, who are then inclined to look for innovative management solutions to reach these objectives. Regulations should therefore be limited to the minimum. A pragmatic and personal instead of a rigid juridical approach should be followed.

3.3 Communication, education and public awareness (CEPA)

Introduction

Communicating about Natura 2000 is essential in order to create understanding of the background, objectives and benefits of the Network among a wide audience. This is needed to create support for the Network among all stakeholders. In many instances good information material exists and is communicated in a clear and understandable way. However, there are many cases where the communication process with stakeholders presents severe flaws, giving rise to conflict and poor management. These communication flaws are related to:

- the process (e.g. absence of, or poorly timed, communication);
- the form (e.g. wrong way of presenting communication or wrong type of language);
- the content (incomplete or erroneous information, poor messages).

Sound communication plans should be developed at all levels of Natura 2000 implementation and management, from the EU level to the local level. The process, form and content of the communication related to Natura 2000 management can lead to conflicts and result in poor implementation. A lack of information can lead to a poor understanding of the process, and limited awareness of the benefits reduces the support for Natura 2000.

Issues

Process and strategy - A major source of irritation that can lead to conflict results from the absence of clear and timely information about the background, objectives and consequences of the Natura 2000 management plan. Even if the information is available it often does not reach its target audience. On the other hand, an overdose of complex and confusing information in our information society tends to switch people off.

Form - Information about Natura 2000 is often communicated in a way that does not resonate well with the target audience. In many cases management and designation documents that should inform the consultation process or the management procedure are written in a scientific and difficult language.

Content – The information presented to the stakeholders and other audiences is often not sufficiently clear and complete about essential issues such as impacts and consequences of the designation and management of the site on the activities of the land-owners and land users. Such ambiguous or incomplete information can generate confusion, misunderstanding, fear and eventually refusal to cooperate. For example, business opportunities associated with Natura 2000 designations are rarely if ever utilized as a means of reducing the potential for conflict. Thus, a number of points, elaborated below, were made in relation to, for example, tourism, house prices, hunting and branding.

Awareness – There is still too little awareness among the general public about the great importance for society of a well-preserved environment and biodiversity, which Natura 2000 sets out to protect. This lack of awareness among decision makers, landowners, businesses and the public alike means that short-term economic interests still generally prevail over the longer term sustainable use of our environment. Probably as a result of insufficient or inadequate communication, owners and managers of land do not have a proper awareness of the legal consequences of their management actions following designation. Such lack of understanding and the associated uncertainty can lead to conflict. Alternatively, owners or users are aware of the legal consequences, and the seriousness of the repercussions arising from their breaking the law is deemed by them to be an outrageous infringement of their civil liberties.

Recommendations

Communication and information and resulting awareness and understanding of Natura 2000 are essential for increasing the acceptance of the Network and to prevent some of the potential conflicts from occurring. As many conflicts are reported to arise from poor communication, the process, form and content of any communication effort / campaign should be well planned and prepared and adapted to the wide range of audiences that have a stake in the Natura 2000 process. Such a communication plan should be part of any Natura 2000 management process.

As a general rule communication should be as brief and as simple as the complexity of the subject allows. A balance should be struck between information and overdose. In our information society, many people feel they get too much information to digest. Therefore, in order to get the target's attention, the message should be as brief, clear, targeted, convincing and appealing as possible.

3.3.1 Process and strategy

Planning and timing – Not only the form and content matter in the transmission of a message, but also the timing and dissemination. Information that arrives too late can often have a more detrimental effect than no communication at all. This is especially true for information related to the engagement of stakeholders in participatory processes. Information about Natura 2000, its impacts and benefits should be timely planned.

Promote and 'sell' Natura 2000 – The poor acceptance of Natura 2000 can partly be blamed on failed communication at all levels. Given this situation there is an urgent need to promote Natura 2000.

Use the media – In reaching out to the different stakeholders at all levels, the media should play an important role. They should be used in communication, for example about the consultation and participation process, and in order to reach the non key stakeholders that are not contacted directly.

Explore innovative ideas – Examples such as a Natura 2000 branding of local products and services related to Natura 2000 sites, a Natura 2000 Award (already introduced in France) or a new Natura 2000 logo could help increase the public perception of the Network.

Plan ahead – As Natura 2000 is here to stay to safeguard our natural heritage for future generations who will be tomorrow's custodians, it is essential not to focus only on the current stakeholders, but to start teaching schoolchildren.

3.3.2 Form

Adapt form of communication to your audience - The form of the information that is communicated to the stakeholders should be adapted to their level of understanding and interest. There is no point in imposing long, scientifically written reports on land users who do not have the scientific background to understand them and for whom nature conservation is not their main concern, but only one of the issues they have to deal with in their day-to-day business or activities.

Training the people in communication – As many conflicts and irritations reported by the stakeholders result from poor personal communication skills, it seems essential to train people in key positions who deal with different groups of Natura 2000 stakeholders on how to communicate. Especially important are the attitude, tone and level of language that should be adapted to the target audience ('scientific arrogance' was an often heard complaint).

3.3.3 Content

Adapt content of communication to the audience - Content of the communication related to Natura 2000 should also be differentiated according to the target group. Communication to local stakeholders should focus on direct benefits in terms of development opportunities, innovative solutions, whereas communication to policy and decision makers should also stress the wider benefits of Natura 2000 in terms of the ecosystem services it provides to society and the economy.

Creating a long-term and appealing vision for Natura 2000 - The many existing success stories should be used to communicate the local and wider benefits of the Network where management goes hand in hand with innovative and successful activities and businesses. It should also underline the indirect benefits to society at large.

3.3.4 Awareness

There still is a lack of general public awareness about the essential need to conserve nature for the survival of humankind, that our future depends on the conservation of Earth's life support systems, and that Natura 2000 plays an important role in securing the conservation of large tracts of nature that give us these essential ecosystem services. Such an awareness should lead to greater public support for policies and decisions that favour Natura 2000.



Drôme, France, Saxifraga-Jan
van der Straaten

Communicating the benefits of Natura 2000 - some examples

It is important to communicate to the policymakers and spatial planners the benefits of Natura 2000 (as well as other semi-natural ecosystems, protected or not) in terms of the multiple goods and services they provide to society.

Examples of cross-sectoral issues that can be exploited to the benefit of sustainable tourism development can help in understanding the economic and wider benefits of Natura 2000 sites and Natura 2000's other spin-off benefits to a range of stakeholders.

In Lithuania the tour guides are familiar with, know and like national parks but do not have an awareness of Natura 2000 (which is often within all or part of national park boundaries).

Communicate advantages: In Austria it has been shown that the housing market is stronger near to Natura 2000. (Note: this advantage applies to house owners, not landowners.)

In the Czech Republic, Natura 2000 has been linked to a regional and now cross-regional branding scheme. This builds on local pride. (However, it should be noted that the understanding of the delegates was that Natura 2000 in itself cannot be a brand.)

The question was asked 'whether the Commission wants Natura 2000 as a brand' Life project (Lithuania). The national park got stakeholders around the table; people were frustrated that being in the park gave them no benefit. The group very quickly realized that there were no products / services for tourists within the national park. Suddenly everybody had something to talk about / collaborate over. The conflict went away immediately. Having a list of practical / achievable things to do brought everyone together. Everybody can see the benefit. Simple language was used throughout and facilitation was provided by trustable individuals with no interest in the outcome. The key lesson was that it is not possible to run projects which the locals do not need. (This process was facilitated by an independent NGO.)

The price for leasing hunting rights within Natura 2000 (in Austria) can be up to €10,000 per year; this is a much greater reward than tourism and is favoured by local communities. The reason for this is that tourism disrupts local communities, whereas hunting is a specific activity that allows villages / local communities to get on with their business much as they have done in the past.

'Pro' arguments should be innovative and look at, for example, the increased price of housing in Natura 2000 areas; the greater certainty of agri-environment funding for land management within Natura 2000 compared to outside; increased prices for hunting permits; etc.

3.4 Knowledge, science and data

Introduction

A reliable knowledge base is essential for the planning, designation, coherent management, monitoring and communication of the Natura 2000 Network. It allows the making of informed decisions, to support the choice for priorities and is an essential resource for an open and objective decision-making process with stakeholders regarding the management of Natura 2000 sites. However, data and knowledge about the status and trends of species, habitats and ecosystems of the Natura 2000 Network are still very patchy and of variable quality.

Issues

Lack of a baseline – The absence of a reliable ecological baseline for many Natura 2000 sites is recognized as an important issue with different implications that can result in conflicts and hamper the process of developing a good management plan and monitoring the effect of site management measures.

Lack of information results in too strict management measures - Many stakeholders feel that the lack of reliable data together with the use of the precautionary principle may result in too strict restrictions on the management. If more scientific and management

data and knowledge were available about the Natura 2000 designations, then it would be less necessary to rely on a precautionary approach to their management because the location of particular sensitive species and/or habitats might be known. At a national level the lack of biological facts is perceived to have resulted in blanket protection of areas and the inclusion of land with a relatively low ecological value simply because the detail was not available to the officials carrying out the designation. Better biological data and information should therefore be made available, perhaps through the initiation of survey and recording, if still possible prior to designation (although almost all sites are designated).

Lack of information does not allow monitoring of progress and effectiveness of measures - The lack of baseline ecological information also makes it difficult or impossible to monitor progress and to assess the effects of site management measures.

Lack of information hampers the design of (adaptive) management plans - The lack of reliable data makes it difficult to draft a comprehensive, transparent and convincing species and habitats management plan. This is an issue when negotiating site management issues with sceptical stakeholders.

Lack of information hampers effective communication and awareness raising – Without good baseline and monitoring information about species and habitats, sound communication, convincing reporting and celebration of success (an important action to generate support among the stakeholders) are not possible, as it is never known if or when management objectives have been reached.

Lack of information and knowledge results in lack of trust - A lack of trust is often generated by the failure of officials to provide proper scientific justification for the designation and subsequent management of the land in question. In such circumstances there is a perception that the land has been identified on the basis of personal preference by scientists who may have visited the land without the owner's permission (in certain circumstances this appears to be a genuine belief) causing widespread resentment and subsequent conflict.

Recommendations

Invest in building a sound ecological baseline for Natura 2000 - More time and money need to be invested in gathering clear and scientifically reliable data about status and trends of species and habitats and the effects of management practices.

Make greater use of existing and local knowledge about species, habitats and management: this helps to fill information gaps and has the additional advantage of engaging the stakeholders and increasing their trust, pride and sense of ownership of the process. Also use the existing knowledge and data as widely as possible and translate it to the different uses (information, communication, promotion, etc.) and to practical site management recommendations.

Make sure that discussions about site management are as much as possible supported by sound and reliable science and data. The availability of data in relation to the success of protection and management measures would help to justify decisions and would support dialogue with stakeholders, potentially reducing conflict. Without a strong biological argument that is based on data and information scientists and officials are reluctant to talk about why the site is important and has been made Natura 2000, are restricted in what they could say about suitable management, and are therefore reluctant to communicate because they cannot tell the stakeholder why actions have been taken that may potentially disadvantage them (note links to communications issues).

Use best available science / knowledge to make management recommendations as specific as possible - Underpin site management decisions with the best available science in order to prevent blanket protection as a result of the need to resort to the precautionary principle because of lack of data. Specific management measures could be targeted at sensitive species and habitats, perhaps allowing a more pragmatic approach to be taken in other areas as that would encourage a positive attitude from land managers and owners.

3.5 Socio-economic factors

3.5.1 Historical context

Introduction

Natura 2000 designation and subsequent design of site management plans do not start on a 'tabula rasa' (blank slate). They involve stakeholders that have a long history linked to the site / area, and a history of previous dealings with each other (including with the state and statutory nature agencies, for example). These historical antecedents can easily resurface during Natura 2000 negotiations and their potential effects should therefore be anticipated. An existing conflict can merely be revived by the negotiations around Natura 2000 and jeopardize their success.

Also pre-existing site management agreements that were made under other (regional, national or international) schemes (such as a protected area, Man and Biosphere Reserve, World Heritage Site) can hamper the success of the Natura 2000 site management plan as they may conflict with Natura 2000 objectives.

Issues

Individual attitudes - At an individual level, attitudes of stakeholders towards Natura 2000 site management discussions differ depending on their previous experiences with government agency officials and with the nature conservation movement. These historical (and often cultural) issues can have an important impact on their willingness to collaborate over site management issues.

National nature conservation history - Also the nature conservation history in a particular country in general bears on the ease and willingness with which local stakeholders adopt and contribute to the implementation of the Natura 2000 site management. Where nature conservation is less well integrated into society, implementing Natura 2000 will be more difficult.

Difficult preconditions - The local natural and cultural preconditions also influence the ease with which Natura 2000 can be implemented and the potential success of management measures.

Time horizons differ between stakeholders – The different stakeholders adopt different time horizons to plan their activities and measure the results. External consultants have a time horizon of a few months in which they give their advice, politicians have a time horizon of a couple of years (until the next elections), but the landowners and land users often have time horizons of decades in order to repay their investments or adapt to the new management conditions. Conflicts can thus arise because the designation of Natura 2000 is 'forever' and compensation contracts for management are temporary. This creates much uncertainty on the part of the landowners and land users.

Recommendations

Preparation - Before engaging in a negotiation process and in order to anticipate some unsuspected problems it is wise to enquire whether there is a legacy of pre-existing conflict.

Acknowledge the heritage and be pragmatic - The historical legacy of previous conflicts that revive as a result of Natura 2000 negotiations about site management is a fact of life. Sometimes it is wise to change staff – if trust is lost new staff might be a solution - or change the process not top-down anymore, but participatory; acknowledge 'failures' in the past or rebuild relationships through socializing.

Allow for sufficient time to complete the process – Especially towards the landowners and land users, who are ultimately responsible for carrying out the nature management practices, sufficient time should be allowed for them to adapt their land-use practices, and give them the assurance that they can invest in novel land-use techniques.

3.5.2 Resources: natural, financial and human

Introduction

The management of the Natura 2000 Network and of the individual sites composing it requires large amounts of human and financial resources. These resources go into scientific research, monitoring, developing tools, communication, process management, site management and not least, into financial compensation or payment for ecosystem services. But Natura 2000 also provides natural resources that are a benefit to local stakeholders or society at large. The problem here is that these services that represent a monetary value are not yet considered as such in economic accounting. Although the existing compensation mechanisms provide a first attempt, equally sharing the costs and the benefits of Natura 2000 is a problem that still needs to be satisfactorily resolved.

Issues

Absence or complexity of financing opportunities and compensation - The difficulty of acquiring financial support or compensation for site management measures in Natura 2000 areas puts many stakeholders off. Even if financing is available, it is often very hard to get and involves a lot of administrative hassle. Also the time lag between the request for support or compensation and the actual payment is often so long that many beneficiaries become disillusioned.

Uncertainty of long-term financial compensations - The current financial compensation, if available, is very uncertain, depends to a large extent on agricultural policy and can change according to changes in priorities in the CAP. This makes investing in change a risky business for the land users.

Natura 2000 might turn against its own objectives - The lack of opportunities to continue a profit-making business following the Natura 2000 designation is a driver for land abandonment in some agricultural Natura 2000 sites. Without proper land manage-

ment by the landowners and land users, these areas return to some kind of climax vegetation and lose the specific biodiversity for which they were originally designated.

Natura 2000 designation discourages investment and innovation – The restrictions imposed following Natura 2000 designation decrease income that can be invested in more technology and therefore discourage land users from searching for innovative alternative solutions. Also the often reduced income prohibits land users from adapting to changing markets.

Benefits are for all but costs are for the landowner / land user - Natura 2000 is of European Community / local community interest, but its implementation calls for a 'sacrifice' by landowners and managers, for which they should be compensated. The sacrifice should therefore be 'shared'.

Recommendations

Need for a Natura 2000 funding mechanism - More financial resources should be made available for the site management of Natura 2000 sites. Instead of giving the responsibility to Member States and the local stakeholders (landowners and land users) to collect funds from various community sources (such as Leader, Life+, EFRD, CAP, etc.), an EU-wide Natura 2000 financing mechanism with clear regulations could be developed and established. It could draw its resources from the CAP and other existing mechanisms. Ideally, these sources of funding should be earmarked for Natura 2000 management and implementation and be distributed according to clear and simple rules based on objectives rather than on measures. Alternatively, the EU could impose a certain percentage of the CAP to be reserved for Natura 2000 management.

Make long-term financial commitments to land users and landowners - Additional investments and changed land-use practices limit the competition of land users in Natura 2000 areas. To win the trust of landowners and land users, it is essential to assure them that they will be compensated for loss of revenue due to changed land-use practices resulting from the designation of their land, and this is the only fair way to proceed.

As a priority, make sure that compensation schemes are being made operational in all Member States – Several Member States (such as Hungary) have no financial compensation schemes operational. This puts the implementation of Natura 2000 site management plans under pressure.

Promote the benefits associated with Natura 2000 – Natura 2000 is not only about landowners and land users losing money and opportunities. There is a wide range of potential benefits that need to be promoted, shared and exploited. These include branding local and regional products and promoting ecotourism.

3.6 Socio-cultural factors

3.6.1 Human, social, personal and psychological factors

Introduction

The management of Natura 2000 is essentially a human enterprise. It often involves an emotional bond between people and the land, and between these people and the rest of society. Therefore, human factors (feelings, emotions) play an important role (which is also partly reflected in the other headings of this report, such as communication and information).

Issues

The nature of human interactions - The nature of people and of human interaction means that there will always be a potential for conflict. In particular circumstances, certain personalities will be likely to generate a degree of conflict between their peers or between themselves and officialdom. Emotional reactions such as indignation also arise from the paternalistic attitudes of some institutions or process managers. For example, 'farmers are not gardeners', but professional entrepreneurs, who need to integrate the new Natura 2000 requirements into their business plan. Pride about their trade makes many of them prefer not to have to depend on compensation or other financial aid, but to develop new ways to make a decent living within the constraints imposed by Natura 2000. This is often difficult.

Human response to change - Fear, a common human response to change is often reported as an important impediment to the smooth development of a site management plan: people fear losing money, power or land. But also a lack of trust between stakeholders (and especially towards officials and distant policymakers) hampers good and open communication. The need for negotiation is often perceived as a feeling of losing (for example, having to adapt your land management to the new management rules for habitat conservation or restoration).

Regional socio-cultural differences – Also, the regional socio-political history (e.g. in former communist countries) can influence people's ability actively to take part in participatory processes. Traditional cultural practices such as wood cutting, harvesting of forest products, overfishing or overhunting, can, if not regulated, put additional pressure on Natura 2000 species and habitats.

Recommendations

Understanding the psychology of change - Recognizing that for the landowners and land users there can be an important emotional impact associated with changes proposed by a Natura 2000 management plan is a first step towards reflecting the emotional and cultural dimension in the process of developing such plans. It is about understanding the psychology of change management in the planning approach.

Showing empathy and patience - The person or organization managing the process needs to show empathy and understanding and the willingness to allow people the time to adapt to the new situation. Therefore, it is essential to allow sufficient time in the overall implementation process of Natura 2000 site management plans. But this applies not only to the fears, but also to the real need to settle things such as ownership issues.

Celebrating achievements - It is also important to recognize the efforts that landowners are making to contribute to reaching the objectives of the Natura 2000 management plan by celebrating success and communicating it. This will increase their goodwill for possible future changes and serve as a good example to remove the possible fears of stakeholders at other sites.

Sharing experiences - Stakeholders of sites where management plans are being developed can also be invited to go and visit similar sites where it has been shown that Natura 2000 management and sustainable use of the sites' resources can go hand in hand.

Stakeholders to be taken seriously - Owners and users of land designated under Natura 2000 want and deserve to be taken seriously and not to be treated like children. They should be given as much responsibility as possible and rewarded on the basis of their merits.

3.6.2 Values, perceptions and interpretations

Introduction

Even in a well-informed process, misunderstandings and conflicts can arise as a result of personal or institutional perceptions or interpretations. Whether they are based on facts or not, perceptions and interpretations can thus have a profound impact on the stakeholders' attitudes and behaviour towards the Natura 2000 process (see below). Different levels of understanding complex issues can lead to misinterpretations by one or more parties involved.

Issues

Lack of trust - A common reason for not solving a site management issue with the stakeholders lies in the lack of trust in the common information base (such as number of birds, levels of pollution, etc.) or in the lack of understanding of complex information that should guide the process.

(Under)valuation of nature - More deeply rooted differences in opinion are associated with differing values regarding the importance of nature and its conservation. This is partly a question of education, information and awareness raising, but deeply rooted conviction (religious or political) can also underlie such refusal to acknowledge the importance of nature. The difference in values between the different parties involved (e.g. regarding the importance of nature conservation) also leads to a narrowing of the field for which a consensual solution can be found.

Misinformation leads to misinterpretation and misunderstanding - A lack of information and the buzzing around of non-factual information also leads to a widespread misinterpretation of Natura 2000, how it works and what it stands for. A common misinterpretation is that Natura 2000 designation precludes any form of land use or exploitation. Whether or not this is the case, the idea is highly destructive to future collaboration and a source of conflict.

Unequal treatment related to power an influence - There is a strong perception that larger organizations and business concerns or major projects are treated differently in the designation and management process than small landowners. Whether true or not, if there is a feeling that others receive special treatment, this is actually quite destructive to the process of collaboration required for effective site management.

Wide range of stakeholders require different approaches - Everyone is likely to have a different perception and understanding of the information they received about what must be done to manage their land; because of this the communication requirements become more complex and difficult to manage, particularly on sites with a large number of owners and occupiers.

Recommendations

Clear and open information and communication - Recommendations to deal with problems associated with perceptions and values have much in common with those mentioned before, in particular regarding management, communication and information. Perceptions are personal interpretations of information. Therefore, good, clear and open communication about Natura 2000, its objectives and functioning is essential to help discard those misinterpretations that arise from lack of understanding and awareness.

Encouragement and reward - Creating a positive attitude towards Natura 2000 among the locals people can be achieved by making them feel proud of the areas they live and work in, and linking their identity to the area and its distinctiveness. Punishment should be kept to a minimum, with preference given to encouraging good initiatives for them to develop flexible management plans.

Peer pressure - Peer pressure can be used as an effective tool to change the perceptions and attitude of landowners and land users. In some cases it works if the other stakeholders from the same sector (from other areas) convince their peers.

Avoid people feeling marginalized – Parties often feel powerless. Make sure they feel that their opinion matters and that they are owners of the solutions proposed.

Recognize and understand differences in values and perceptions - Managers whose responsibility is to achieve the Natura 2000 site objectives should be sure to recognize the different values and perceptions people have about nature and its conservation, and be careful in the way Natura 2000 objectives (that often stem from educated, urban-based values) are not always shared by the local stakeholders.

3.6.3 Behaviour and attitudes

Introduction

The designation of Natura 2000 sites and the subsequent development of site management plans is a dynamic social process. The human factor plays an important role in the success or failure of the endeavour. Not only feelings and perceptions, but also personal attitudes are determinant for the success of the implementation. Originally, Natura 2000 is a top-down, scientifically driven, EU policy programme for the safeguarding of habitats and species. However, as it must ultimately be implemented at the local level and in the field, this means that a very wide range of people and organizations are involved. The scientifically, politically or ideologically driven (as in the case of hard-line conservationists) paternalistic attitudes often lead to clashes with the local stakeholders.

Issues

Attitude and arrogance of experts, managers and advisors - Workshop participants reported that conflicts that have to do with a clash of attitudes can be very detrimental to the success of the process. For example, a lack of consideration for the terrain, species and management knowledge of the local stakeholders, combined with scientific arrogance of the manager or advisors, can jeopardize the stakeholders' willingness to cooperate.

Bad behaviour - Behaviours that are detrimental in society in general, such as favouritism, corruption and nepotism, can also affect the success of negotiations around Natura 2000 management plans. But also day-to-day negative attitudes and behaviour, such as stubbornness, lack of empathy or consideration, can make a difference for the worse.

Recommendations

Courtesy and respect - During the workshops, some general behavioural rules and guidelines were identified that should ideally be followed by all participants in the process to allow its successful completion: respect for and understanding of the opinions and needs of others, listening, using clear speech, showing enthusiasm and energy, and being open-minded, to name a few. It is also essential that those participating are willing to solve the problem. But also be prepared to say no. Finally, establish your willingness by good communication.

Trust and compromise - Personal attitudes are very important in order to engage in a constructive dialogue among stakeholders. These should be adopted by all participants, but more so by the 'requesting party' (which will be the organization wanting to implement the Natura 2000 site management plan). Basic attitudes are willingness to trust and to compromise, but there is always the personal chemistry.

Flexibility and patience - What is expected from the person managing the process is leadership / belief / drive, aiming for common ground, and looking for joint solutions (win-win). Honesty, openness, flexibility and patience are also important when dealing with local initiatives in order to be able to take into account local, regional and national conditions and variation. At a more strategic level, it is important to develop attitudes that permit the creation of useful relationships.

3.7 Time, space and scale integration

Introduction

Time-related factors seem to play an important role in the development and implementation of Natura 2000 site management plans. Landowners and managers have to plan their management operations for the long term, not only for the future of their families who may manage the land after them, but also because crops such as forestry and timber require an extremely long-term perspective to be taken. This contrasts with the approach of consultants who are probably only involved in the project for one or two years, and politicians and decision makers whose perspective it is rather medium term. This impacts on the availability of funding from management, increases the uncertainty for landowners and occupiers in relation to the future management of land and is another important cause of conflict.

Issues

Time also plays a role in the psychology of adaptation to a new situation. Stakeholders often report not being given enough time to adapt physically and psychologically to the new situation imposed by the Natura 2000 designation and the development of the site management plan.

The point was made that much of the management of Natura 2000 sites is contract based; contracts normally only last four to five years; this therefore conflicts with the aims and objectives of site management that have a much longer time horizon. To put it in an extreme way: 'Natura 2000 is forever while financial compensation is not.'

Recommendations

There must be a clear time frame for the site management planning process. The site management plan should be planned properly and realistically. The progress should be carefully monitored and reported back to all the stakeholders involved. It must be realized that it does not stop after the plan is written, and that the process should include feedback and evaluation. For the psychological adaptation of the stakeholders to the new situation it is essential to allow sufficient time for ideas to take root.

4 Detailed reports of the four workshops

4.1 Workshops method and programme

The programme of each workshop followed the same structure:

- Morning session for the introduction and contextual
- Afternoon session for the interactive participation of the delegates with facilitation of breakout groups

Morning session - During the morning session contextual information was provided through a series of presentations, which approached the subject from scientific, policy and practical points of view. Progress from the other project tasks (desk study and review of case studies) was presented by the project partners.

- Registration and coffee
- Welcome and opening - Dr Leon Braat - Alterra
- Introduction to the workshop and participants - Ms Aysegul Cil – ECNC
- Natura 2000 in Europe- challenges for implementation - Mr Francois Kremer – European Commission, DG Environment
- Introduction to the project “Dealing with conflicts in the implementation and management of the Natura 2000 network - best practices at the local / site level” and first results” - Ir Irene Bouwma / Dana Kamphorst – Alterra

For each workshop, two key-note speakers were invited to deliver a speech addressing the management of conflicts in the Natura 2000 network from the public and the private point of view.

Each morning session was concluded by a ‘questions and discussions’ session with moderation to reflect on common themes and to set common issues and problems.

Afternoon session – The afternoon sessions were devoted to active participation of the delegates in breakout groups facilitated by ECNC staff. The main objective of the facilitated sessions in breakout groups was to get feedback from experts and practitioners to encourage discussion about a series of key questions related to the management and resolution of conflict in Natura 2000 areas.

Each afternoon session followed the same structure:

- Introduction to the working groups
- Working groups (with facilitation): What are the critical success factors in avoiding, managing and resolving conflict in N2K implementation?
- Working groups (with facilitation): Key stakeholders and sectors: benefits and threats of N2K implementation. Learning points, solutions and recommendations.
- Feedback from the working groups
- Recommendations for the project and regional workshops – the way forward
- Closing – recap of the day



Workshop Natura 2000, Barcelona, 3 March 2010, ECNC

List of keynote speakers at the workshops

European-wide Workshop - Brussels (Belgium), 18 June 2009

- Mark Thomasin-Foster, President, European Landowners Organization: NATURA 2000 - The Resolution of Conflict in Designation and Management
- Bernard Fleming, Senior Specialist, Natural England: Conflict resolution in the Humber Estuary Natura 2000 protected area

Central and Eastern European Workshop - Szentendre (Hungary), 9 December 2009

- András Schmidt, Office for Nature Conservation, Ministry of Environment and Water: Use & management of Natura 2000 sites: the Hungarian Government's point of view
- Attila Králl, Natura 2000 Coordinator, Birdlife Hungary: Natura 2000 conflict management: an NGO viewpoint

South European (Mediterranean) Workshop - Barcelona (Spain), 3 March 2010

- Carles Castell Puig, Head, Oficina Tècnica de Planificació i Anàlisi Territorial, Diputació de Barcelona: Nature 2000 in the spatial planning of the Barcelona Region
- Miquel Rafa, Director Àrea de Territori i Paisatge, Obra Social Caixa Catalunya: Use and management of Natura 2000 sites: a viewpoint from NGOs

North West European Workshop - Brussels (Belgium), 17 March 2010

- Ignace Schops, Director, Regionaal Landschap Kempen en Maasland (Belgium): Use & Management of Natura 2000 - the NGO's point of view: Hoge Kempen National Park, an interesting case?
- Lucille Rambaud, Head of the Unit Natura 2000 Network, French Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable development and the Sea: Conflict management in the natura 2000 network: The french way to involve the stakeholders

4.2 European-wide Workshop, Brussels (Belgium), June 2009

Morning session

Key note speech 1:

Conflict resolution in the Humber Estuary Natura 2000 protected area

By Bernard Fleming, Senior Specialist – Coastal & Marine, Yorkshire & the Humber Region, Natural England

The first keynote speaker, Mr. Bernard Fleming, began his presentation with an overview of the role of Natural England (NE) which manages over 4,000 Site of Specific Science Interests (SSSI) in England (almost all in private ownership). Site protection is governed by national and European law (e.g. the Habitats Directive) and NE provides advice directly and through others. He then described the Humber Estuary protected area where a range of conflicts and their solutions from designation through to implementation occurred during the management of the area.

Estuaries and coastal zones in Europe are particularly interesting because, for millennia, they have been a natural interface between human activity, trade and travel, and the Marine and coastal environment. In spite of the intensity of this activity they still support high-quality landscapes and provide a focus for vibrant wildlife, nature and biodiversity; they therefore also provide a major challenge for integrating the various interests through long-term sustainable development. The Humber Estuary is the point at which 1/5 of England's rivers drain into the North Sea. It is located on England's north-east coastline and divides the two geopolitical areas (counties) of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. It is crossed by the Humber Bridge, which at over 1 ½ kilometres in length was once the largest single span suspension bridge in Europe.

The estuary is over 60 km long and contains a wealth of wildlife, much of it designated for its international importance. It is the 10th most important in Europe for its assemblages of wild birds. These include ducks, waders and seabirds, both breeding and on migration. As well as water birds and waders the migratory species include a range of passerines and other species that are otherwise rare visitors to the United Kingdom. It also has a range of marine features, such as permanently submerged sandbanks, coastal features such as salt marsh, saline pools and reed beds which are internationally important in their own right and which support a range of protected and rare species. In summary it is one of the most important wildlife sites in Britain.

The Estuary is dominated by the City of Hull which has a population of almost 1 ½ million people, and its five major ports are now the fastest growing in Europe and import and export the highest throughput tonnage of goods in the United Kingdom. Its beaches

and seaside towns and, increasingly, its nature reserves are a major attraction for tourists and visitors all year long. The juxtaposition of different interests (economic, social and environmental) creates a range of pressures and drivers which, ultimately, have the potential to impact significantly on the biodiversity of the Estuary. However, the majority of the marine and coastal habitats are designated under the Habitats and Birds Directives, which affords them protection against all forms of development and any ongoing management of the Estuary.

Developments include:

- The expansion of the harbours and ports, for instance through land take, the creation of new docks for a larger ships and the establishment of moorings within the main shipping channel (which allowed extremely large oil tankers and other ships to off-load and take on board cargo).
- The ongoing dredging of the shipping lanes.
- The extraction of sand and gravel from submerged and tidal sandbanks within and around the mouth of the estuary.
- Recreational activities such as angling and wildfowling (shooting with dogs).

According to the wildlife legislation (Habitats and Birds Directives) any development, within or adjacent to the designated areas, which is judged by the Natural England to have the potential for delivering a significant impact on their biodiversity, must be subject to an appropriate assessment. An appropriate assessment is very similar to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). It requires that a development be described in detail, in terms of its construction phase, its operational and decommissioning phase (if relevant). The activities which comprise the different phases of the development must then be evaluated in terms of their likely impact on the wildlife interest. In order for this evaluation/assessment to be carried out there must also be a detailed knowledge of the distribution and abundance of wildlife and ecological features of the area under consideration.

Mr. Fleming presented four different situations in relation to the management of this particular site that were intended to illustrate different aspects of conflict and conflict management.

The first concerned the designation of the area as a Special Protection Area (SPA) which was first attempted in 2000; however, this attempt failed because NE really did not fully understand the issues around multiple use and multiple stakeholders and what this meant for the people involved; equally, it was clear that the stakeholders did not understand the objectives of NE. At the time, scientific evidence was poor and there were limited resources (particularly in terms of time availability) and there was a failure to address a highly vocal minority opposition to the designation.

Following this failed attempt, NE began a thorough scientific review while also giving adequate time to listen to stakeholders, understand their positions, hopes, fears and expectations, and also to explain Natural England's own role and requirements in relation to site designation. In addition NE established the Humber Management Scheme (with full stakeholder participation) and demonstrated through increased liaison and dialogue that they could be an effective and trustable partner, in particular to business and industry. Designation was finally made in 2004 with no major objections from owner-occupiers and with the active support of one of the key stakeholder organisations, Associated British Ports (ABP). The time given up for listening to stakeholders has resulted in good working relationship with many of them (individuals and organisations) to date.

The second example was from Immingham Outer Harbour (IOH). ABP had tried (and failed) to expand their port and harbour capacity elsewhere in the UK; they therefore proposed to expand their operations on the Humber estuary creating a major threat to biodiversity and providing the first major test of the Natura 2000 designation on the Humber. However, as a result of the good working relations that had already been established through the Natura 2000 designation in 2004, there was already active dialogue between the key parties and a rapid agreement (without the need for expensive studies and research) that the proposed development would cause a significant impact on the biodiversity interest. Subsequently a compensation package was quickly agreed and, at a purchase cost of (approximately) €3.5 million and a construction cost of €1.5 million, 66.2 ha of land in two sites (at Chowderness and Welwick) was converted from agriculture into salt marsh, also providing much-needed flood relief in relation to climate change impacts on the estuary.

The third case study was in relation to dredging of the main shipping lanes in the estuary which has occurred for hundreds of years and is vital port operations. 30 million cubic metres of sediment are removed each year, with complex impacts (on sedimentation regimes, nutrient loads, hydrological issues, etc) and requiring complex decision-making. The approach taken on the Humber resulted in a protocol being drawn up for regular review of all ongoing dredging by the harbour authority, appropriate assessment of the activities (which allows for better decision-making for all parties) and the establishment of a sophisticated GIS/map-based representation of all past, present and future dredging areas allowing transparency of decision-making and clarity for all stakeholders involved. The weaknesses of the approach that it relies on the honesty of the dredging operators, it is based on commercial information which, because of its sensitivity, may sometimes be withheld and the operators themselves don't see the value of it (be-

cause they don't yet understand the rationale behind the Natura 2000 designation). In addition the decision-makers (including staff of Natural England) may not give the system sufficient scrutiny because of time constraints. However, it is presently seen to work well enough to have been selected as the basis of an approach that will be applied nationally in the UK and which is perceived as national best practice.

The final example was provided by wildfowling (the hunting of duck and geese with sporting guns) in conservation areas. This has been a popular hobby on the estuary for over 100 years. It is carried out by small, active and passionate groups but has the potential to cause significant disturbance to the birds for which the estuary is also designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA). Whilst the solution to these problems should be very simple (and has been with a number of all the wildfowling groups) there have been long-running problems with a number of them that have yet to be resolved. The staff of NE had listened actively and explained the designation; they have sought expert advice and brought experts to talk to the wildfowling groups; they have involved other cooperative local and national wildfowling groups; used mediation; and produced best practice guidance. This example illustrates that however much good practice is applied, in certain situations personalities and the human condition mean that resolution may never be found.

Mr Fleming concluded with a list of issues/advice that he considered relevant for practitioners:

- There is always limited time to search, absorb and analyse data and information; however as much time as possible should be given to this process in order to support dialogue with key stakeholders.
- A ballot should be struck between a precautionary approach and taking risks that in the medium to long term will provide more sustainable solutions to conflict and its associated problems.
- Whilst there may often be confrontational debate, most parties realise that they do not know everything (about issues, impacts, process, etc) and the answer is usually to work as closely as possible with other key stakeholders be they regulators, industry or the public.
- Expert knowledge of our business (nature conservation) and awareness of affairs is vital even if they have neither!
- Strong interpersonal skills are vital.

Key note speech 2:

NATURA 2000 - The Resolution of Conflict in Designation and Management

By Mark Thomasin-Foster, President, European Landowners' Organisation (ELO)

The second keynote presentation was given by Mr. Mark Thomasin-Foster, President of the European Landowners Organisation (ELO). He first provided an overview of the ELO. It was created in 1972 as the "Federation of National Landowners' Organisations" and involves 57 National Organisations representing all of the 27 Member States. ELO is Independent and non Profit Making; accredited by EU Commission as a Green Organisation. He indicated that landowners are the "resource holders" not just stakeholders.

During Mr. Thomasin-Foster's overview of Natura 2000 he pointed out that active debate continues on the provenance and need for increased food production and environmental issues are seldom out of the limelight. However, he stressed that neither food nor environment should dominate. There is now a clear need for a greater output of both agricultural production and environmental provision. He described the two global challenges: food and environmental. The challenges from the food come from: a) Population & economic growth; b) The scarcity of new agricultural land; c) The decline in growth of crop yields; d) Soil losses and water availability. Therefore, the intensity of production (output per hectare), especially on good agricultural land will have to increase and in addition to this, Europe should not expect to increase its dependence on imported food (because other countries will also need to satisfy their internal needs for food in the context of growing population and climate change). The challenges from environment come mainly from considerable and continuous loss of biodiversity; and huge threat and pressure on the resources of soil water and air. He underlined the necessity of halting the loss of biodiversity and increasing the protection of the resources (humanity depends on soil, water and air):

- Most of these are trans-national issues subject to international agreement and should be dealt with at EU level
- Maintain natural and cultural landscapes – Our environment is not just biodiversity
- Europe must continue its exacting standards for environmental protection and display leadership to developing countries

Interaction between the two challenges was indicated as agriculture is highly dependent on the environment whilst in turn the European environment is mostly dependent on agriculture. The three generations of agricultural development are:

- Pre-industrial – low productivity but non-intrusive

- Industrial – highly productive but highly intrusive
- Post industrial – the challenge is to maintain and increase productivity but significantly reduce damage to the environment

He pointed at that people are faced with: 1) a technical challenge to maintain and increase productivity yet reduce the environmental impact; and 2) an incentives challenge to bring about the right result. After giving a warning on the impact of climate change on environment and food security, he briefly discussed the case for “European Food and Environmental Security Policy”.

His discussion on Natura 2000 was divided into the process of: a) designation; b) implementation; c) management. As for the designation process, he made a review:

- There was no early recognition that management costs money. EU estimates indicate at least 6bn Euros per year are required to manage these sites towards favourable condition.
- Many Natura 2000 sites were notified not on sound science but through desk exercises with little knowledge of the detailed conservation value of the particular area.
- Designation was often imposed by a “stop all activity” regulation. Such negative thinking inevitably attracted negative response

Mr. Thomasin-Foster reviewed the implementation process as:

- Designation removes a property right from an owner often without compensation. This is a form of land use nationalisation. Considerable care is needed when applying this approach.
- There are likely to be negative impacts on the economics of a rural business and possibly even its viability.
- The first approach must be right. The quality of staff designating a site is of paramount importance.
- Recognition and appreciation of the owner’s past stewardship is highly important. This is a precursor to on-going management.
- Open and understanding negotiation is required in agreeing the management and activities allowed to continue on the site.
- Ensure that an owner’s interest and enthusiasm is retained. Lose that interest and you have lost the best ally that site will ever have

Finally the management process was reviewed based on the viewpoint of ELO as:

- Owners need confidence that their positive conservation efforts do not automatically lead to ever increasing site designation.
- If the scientific value of a site is lost then de-designation must be an option.
- Beware the status of pseudo designations, e.g. HVNF and local wildlife sites. Although valuable these areas are not statutory.
- Funding of management is absolutely basic to the future of the Natura 2000 series. A policy of realistic positive payments for positive management is a core essential.
- The Common Agricultural Policy and its 2013 reform remain critical to ensuring rural businesses remain viable and to enable them to continue to act as managers.

Conclusions of the presentation from Mr. Thomasin-Foster were highlighted the following issues:

- The demands on what we want from our farmers and land managers is increasing
- They have a critical role in achieving food and environmental security
- There are serious market failures surrounding the activities of environmental delivery
- Dealing with these market failures has, correctly, been allocated to the EU policy
- We must secure the appropriate budget and enable further evolution of the Common Agricultural Policy

Mr. Thomasin-Foster summarised the need for true nature conservation:

- Sound science base
- Capable and trained staff
- Clear communication
- Appreciation of owner’s effort
- Adequate positive funding
- Pragmatic management plans
- Recognition of business viability
- Reduction in Regulation
- Promotion of partnership with owners
- A real partnership between the lobby organisations

Afternoon session

The workshop was divided into two groups, both of which were facilitated and asked to answer the same questions. The results from the groups were different but complementary and are presented here as they were recorded, on a series of flip charts. The differences between them reflect their composition and the experience of the group members.

Group 1

Facilitator: Lawrence Jones-Walters (ECNC)

Q1: What types of conflict have occurred at site level?

The following key points emerged from the facilitated exercise and discussion. The notes which follow each heading based on an exploration with the workshop members of the source of the conflict.

1. Designation process

- Lack of transparency
- The designation process results in insecurity and a lack of clarity that can create tension and conflict that then has a major impacts on the process of management
- Fear due to the uncertainty about the real protection status (which may be different in terms of its impact in/between Member States) but which also has knock-on effects on the process of management

2. Lack of communication and information/use of jargon

- Very often there is a lack of effective communication or available information for those receiving the designation and this situation persists into the management of phase
- Where there is information available or when communication is made with the owners and occupiers of land, it is often presented using unsuitable language and scientific jargon which then impacts on the understanding of the situation by those who receive the information/communication (even when this is face-to-face)

3. Different treatment of site owners/occupiers

- There is a strong perception that larger organisations and business concerns, or major projects are treated differently in the designation and management process from small landowners; the occasion is without may receive a special treatment and this is actually quite destructive to the process of collaboration required for effective site management

4. Individual understanding and perception results in different impacts/reactions

- Everyone is likely to have a different perception and understanding of the information they received about what must be done to manage their land; because of this the communication requirements become more complex and difficult to manage particularly on sites with a large number of owners and occupiers

5. Difference in "history"

- Perspectives of landowners vary, based on their previous treatment by government agencies, officials, etc; these historical (and often cultural) issues can have an important impact on their willingness to collaborate over site management issues

6. Inability to say what the designation will really mean in practice/implications

- In many cases the communication related to be designation of the site, either written or verbal, fails to fully inform the owner/occupier about what it really means for them; there is therefore uncertainty in relation to future management and a resulting level of hostility because in the majority of cases management is directly linked to income

7. Lack of finances

- The availability of financial support for site management is either not clear, or there simply is none; when combined with the issues around a lack of clarity in relation to other management issues this contributes to further conflict
- The general changes in agricultural practice across Europe (for example, from intensification to extensification all organic farming) provide further uncertainties in relation to financial support; promises made in one year may change in the short to medium term because of changing agricultural policy at European and national level (impacting on the willingness of farmers to modify their management practice in a climate of uncertainty)

8. "Personalities"

- The nature of people and of human interaction means that there will always be a potential conflict; under particular circum-

stances certain personalities will be likely to generate a level of conflict between their peers or between themselves and officialdom

9. Natura 2000 reveals unrelated problems that cause conflict

- In some cases conflict has always been around other issues linked to land-use and management; the net Euro 2000 designation and management process simply catalyses/fans the flames of previous or ongoing conflict

10. Lack of scientific data to justify the legislation

- A lack of trust is often generated by the failure of officials to provide proper scientific justification for the designation and subsequent management of the land in question; in such circumstances there is a perception that the land has been identified on the basis of personal preference by scientists who may have visited their land without the owner's permission (in certain circumstances this appears to be a genuine belief) causing a widespread resentment and subsequent conflict

11. Lack of knowledge of legal consequences

- Probably as a result of insufficient or inadequate communication owners and managers of land do not have a proper awareness of the legal consequences of their management actions following designation; uncertainty again leading to conflict
- Alternatively, they are aware of the legal consequences and the seriousness of the repercussions arising from their breaking the law is deemed by them to be an outrageous incursion into their civil liberties

12. 30 to 40 year perspective for landowners versus 1 to 2 year perspective for consultants/officials versus 5 to 10 year perspective politicians and decision makers

- Landowners and managers have to plan their management operations for the long term, not only for the future of their families who may manage the land after them but also because crops such as forestry and timber require an extremely long term perspective to be taken; this contrasts with the approach of consultants who are probably only involved in the project for one or two years, take their money and run, and politicians and decision makers whose perspective it is really more than medium term; this impacts on the availability of funding from management, increases the uncertainty for land owners and occupiers in relation to the future management of land and is another important cause of conflict

13. Governance of management plans

- An inadequate involvement/consultation of key stakeholders, landowners and land managers in the design and process of management planning results in them feeling undervalued, excluded and generally put upon, leading to an unwillingness to co-operate and the subsequent heightening of the likelihood of conflict

14. Failure to define/involve all stakeholders

- Linked to 13 above, the general failure to define important stakeholders in the process (often leading to them being left out altogether), the involvement of some stakeholders and not others (leading to accusations of favouritism, cronyism, etc) can completely collapse the process of agreeing management and management plans

15. Failure to consider cultural values

- Particularly in relation to races of cattle or sheep which may be traditional or favoured by land managers; management plans drawn up by consultants and scientists may completely eaten all these issues (for what they probably believe are good reasons) but result in the disenfranchisement of land managers
- The social values of land managers differ between countries and regions but often the same approach is applied to all
- There is often a lack of understanding about how to carry out it comes to nation (many traditional pastoral societies are based around the village elders who, if they are excluded from process can halt the progress, and the damage done may be almost irreversible in their lifetimes)

16. Core objectives for biodiversity/site protection have not been defined designation

- Just as in any planning process, if the objectives for the exercise are not defined at the beginning it will very quickly lose direction and the support of the people who need to carry out the actions; a failure to define the objectives for site protection during the designation process has resulted in the disillusionment of land owners and managers and has therefore made it extremely difficult to plot a course for the future management of the sites

17. Designation excludes people from areas

- There is a general perception in many countries that site designation will exclude people from the areas under protection; whether or not this is the case in this idea, particularly when held by the traditional managers of land who may believe they cannot anymore enter or manage it, or land managers for whom access by tourists is an important source of economic prosperity, is highly destructive to future collaboration and a source of conflict

18. In 15 years the language to describe nature has changed and the world has changed

- The word biodiversity itself is a recent invention that is not understood by many (in particular managers and land); officials and policymakers continue to invent new language for themselves and impose it on unsuspecting owners and managers of land causing increased confusion and subsequent conflict
- Natura 2000 may not be flexible enough to change in a changing world (for instance in relation to the impacts of climate change)
- The representatives of farmers and landowners in a number of countries have specifically said that Natura 2000 is “too rigid”
- Management plans up to which it (this was felt to be particularly the case given that the emerging debate and agenda around the concept of wilderness)

19. Instruments for Natura 2000 implementation

- The point was made that much of the management of Natura 2000 sites is contract based; contracts normally only last four to five years; this therefore conflicts with the aims and objectives of site management

20. Conflicts around monitoring

- Can take place as a result of a lack of agreement and other observations (often between land managers and the scientists who manage the site)

21. Conflicting SAC-SPA objectives

- It was pointed out that (for instance in the UK) certain sites were originally designated for their bird interest as SPA and management objectives were set; later they were designated as SAC with a further set of management objectives that in the view of land managers conflicted with what they had been asked to do in order to manage the birds

Q2: what are the success factors for solving conflict situations (at site level)?

In this case the main headings represent the success factors and the subheadings are how the workshop delegates felt that they could be achieved.

1. Sufficient means for management: what they are (e.g. how much money, resources, information, support, communication, equipment) and when you can have them

- General political will
- Stakeholder involvement
- Plan for securing the means at the same time that management plan is carried out (not afterwards which was the experience of several delegates)

2. Recognize the contribution of farmer management/agricultural practice has made to generating the biodiversity interest of sites (psychologically reassuring because the human component is considered)

- By involving managers as part of the management plan process
- Ask them to be involved before you start planning (normally if they are involved it eases during the process not before)
- Involve former workers on the land (those who have retired but to hold traditional knowledge)

3. Communication

- Be a friend; build trust
- Are respectful in all cases
- appoint an intermediary who is respected
- In some circumstances just telling the farmer what to do in a straightforward and honest way is appreciated above a circumpect approach
- Her cultural understanding
- Wear the same clothes
- Food and music provide a backdrop to meetings
- Prepare a DVD on the cultural heritage of the area

4. Respect and understand the opinion and needs of others

- Listen
- Use clear speech
- Show enthusiasm and energy
- Be open minded

5. Have to want/be willing to solve the problem

- Are your commitment to others in order to be taken seriously in debate
 - Be prepared to say no
 - Establish your willingness by good communication
6. Give sufficient time for the management planning process
 - Start as early as possible, this helps to resolve conflict
 - Plan properly
 - Ensure sufficient resources
 - Monitor progress and report back to all the stakeholders involved
 - Realise that it doesn't stop after the plan is written and that the process should include feedback and evaluation
 - See it as a joint process
 7. Allow all parties to be taken seriously/be heard
 - Make it transparent how all issues/objections are taken into consideration
 - Evaluate objections and show how that evaluation has taken place
 8. Allow process to be questioned
 - Introduce a formal appeals procedure
 9. Good organisation, planning, coordination of process
 - Shows commitment to process (see 3, 4 and 5 above)
 - Ensure that sufficient skills are included within any team charged with delivery (e.g. project management, human resource management, etc)
 10. Sufficient financial compensation
 - "Will be" (not "maybe") is the language to be used with land managers
 - News precedents if possible (e.g. existing agri-environment funding, other Natura 2000 sites that have received funding from management, etc)
 11. External mediation of process
 - Appoint a skilled external mediator/facilitator who can carry forward the process of stakeholder involvement as a clearly unbiased and independent person who is not obviously associated with any of the key stakeholders in particular the ministry/state Institute
 12. Government must understand that it cannot be the independent mediator
 - The government and/or state Institute/agency charged with delivering the process must recognize that it is a stakeholder as much as any other identified organisations/individuals
 - Unfortunately resources may preclude the appointment of an external mediator but as far as possible this should be done as it is recognized as a key success factor in the process
 13. Other regulatory bodies take responsibility for Natura 2000
 - Municipalities, provinces/regions should be given formal responsibility for Natura 2000 delivery as far as is possible or appropriate within the context of legislation; this has the advantage sharing the responsibility and, in many cases, the disabilities and regions have a far better connection with local communities and stakeholders than ministries or state agencies
 14. Define conflict and problematic issues in each site
 - Interview key stakeholders prior to commencing the process/organise group meetings/focus groups in order to identify or brainstorm key issues and problems, in particular those that are a source of conflict
 15. Make a DVD of previous process and include in an information pack
 - When circulated to landowners and managers/shown in group meetings such a DVD (particularly when it includes open and honest interviews with stakeholders who have been through the process previously) can be particularly helpful in putting people's minds at rest and in answering difficult questions before they arise
 16. Commercial benefits from Natura 2000 designation give added value of the products
 - Use best practice/existing cases to demonstrate the added financial value/potential for creation of niche markets through branding products that come from Natura 2000 sites
 - Provide assistance to site owners and occupiers through small business support and advice and funding

The brainstorm sessions generated a list of sources of and solution to conflict which have been grouped under seven headings to increase clarity: History, People, Resources, Process, Information, Communication and Legislation.

Q1: What types of conflict have occurred at site level?

History and time

- Pre-conflict history: Importance of what happened prior to conflict – what is the historical context. In some areas plans have already been developed for a long time and they are the source for conflicts.
- Prior existing plans can bear negatively on the success of the designation process as the plans might conflict with the new status and lead to disillusion of the local people who counted on the plans
- Lack of nature conservation history (at national level)
- Difficult preconditions (culture, environment, etc)
- Different time horizons between the stakeholders to see results

People and perceptions

- Lack of involvement of local people.
- Different views on biodiversity or nature between the various stakeholders involved in the area.
- Often a difference in view on biodiversity is lacking or if that is not feasible a minimum is that there is an acknowledgement of shared interests. Natura 2000 is characterized by a sector related Nature view
- Support for nature conservation requires a social process / social acceptance that can take time to develop and needs effort to create and maintain.
- Resistance to control and bureaucracy.
- Industry doesn't think green.
- Different objectives about land use and management between owner and statutory body
- Private owners need financial security for their business (an example was given in Germany where landowners have 1 year leases for land (from January to January), which can be taken away each year.
- Fears of change and the unknown
- Lack of information
- Diverging objectives for the development of the area /site and time horizon
- Different perceptions of biodiversity
- Different conservation objectives
- Perception and prejudice between groups of stakeholders or between individual stakeholders
- Not open
- Hidden agenda
- Personal history of people especially if prior experiences with administration have been negative.
- Chemistry: Influence of the person involved in the process is very important - sometimes interpersonal conflicts occur or people are just plain stubborn. Chemistry between people is important but hardly acknowledged.

Means and resources

- Financial compensation (including perceived overcompensation) / lack of incentives/ lack of finances for management measures or plans:
 1. lack of financial incentives or lack of compensation. It is often not so much that there is no money available (at EU level there often is) but that money is:
 2. not optimally used on the national level (on the national level – certain options are not used by the Member States)
 3. given to other priorities (not N2000 sites)
 4. hard to get at due to administrative procedures (EU or national requirements or procedures are hard to fulfil)
 5. unclear is which measures are needed, how much does this cost and what is a fair compensation and where should it come from.
 6. insufficient knowledge or clarity on available funds
- Often the money is there in theory but not in practice: as a result of the lack of clarity in the financial schemes it is unclear how and if the money reaches the site level. For example, the UK has moved from compensation payments to incentives

Process and organisation

- Often measures or plans are discussed with representatives or 'organization' and not with the owners themselves – although

- the organizations have no direct connection to the sites
- Lack of information/communication between government bodies and stakeholders. As a result information is not shared between the stakeholders and the government
- Lack of transparency/misuse of legislation.
- Sometimes the only information the national or EU recognizes is that which is officially submitted by agencies or governments. Information from stakeholders (on costs for instance) is seen as biased and not used.
- Overall top-down approach towards implementation of policy and management.
- National stakeholders feel that requirements on the national level differ between member states – translation / approach is determined on the national level resulting to different management requirements which are sometimes unnecessary and not based on ecological requirements but administrative or 'tradition'.
- Hierarchical organisation structure and decision making process
- Lack of statutory nature agency
- Translation into management of unnecessary requirements which are not stemming from the legislation itself or the need to undertake certain management measures for the species and habitats
- Organisational bias
- The N2000 legislation (for instance significant effect or favourable conservation status) leaves much room for interpretation – expert A says ... and expert B says... This makes it difficult to know exactly what is allowed and what not.

Q2: what are the success factors for solving conflict situations (at site level)?

History and time

- Allow for sufficient time to complete the process
- How to deal with the legacy of designation?
 1. Sometimes it is wise to change staff – if trust is lost new staff might be a solution
 2. Change the process – not top-down anymore but participatory
 3. Acknowledge 'failures' in the past
 4. Rebuilt relationships through socializing

People and perceptions

- Creating local identity and pride.
- Peer pressure (especially valuable in relation to common land/the sea). In some best cases it works if the other stakeholders from the same sector (from other areas) convince their peers.
- Avoid that people feel marginalized – often parties feel powerless – make sure they feel their opinion matters and that they are owners of the solutions proposed

Means and resources

- Ensure sufficient resources (time, money and people).
- Think about and ensure resources prior to management planning

Process and organisation

Adequate and efficient organisation

- A statutory body can play an essential role in providing information as well as building necessary public support. It is good to consider the need for such statutory nature agency in the country.
- Contact person for questions (for Natura 2000 process, usually within the statutory nature agency or some other relevant body if they do not exist). This person should be an effective communicator.
- Simplify all procedures as much as possible to reduce bureaucracy
- Integrate existing plans and processes (as far as possible, do not reinvent the wheel).
- Clearly agreed objectives at Member State level: Goals and measures

Transparency and communication

- General communication must be efficient, effective and fully understood by all stakeholders.
- Be honest about acknowledging the dis-benefits of Natura 2000 designation.
- The effectiveness in communicating the benefits of Natura 2000 designation.
- Transparent process and communication
- Acknowledge past mistakes.
- Transparent management planning.
- Clearly agreed site objectives.

- Make sure that before starting a designation there is clarity on the consequences for existing and future land use
- Ensure scientific and local knowledge which is considered as independent by all parties
- Provide examples of past success and failure

Conflict management and resolution

- Effective mediation and dialogue including management of expectations
- Clearly agreed site objectives are needed (amongst all involved parties)
- If two groups are fighting solve the conflicts bilaterally and do not involve all other parties
- Ensure effective mediation & dialogue – use if needed an independent facilitator or mediator – preferably someone local

(People) Stakeholder involvement

- Stakeholder involvement in design and planning
- Utilisation of local knowledge
- Respecting rights and opinions; stakeholders matter, their opinion counts.
- Stakeholder involvement (factors that are important to include/think about in relation to process):
- Organise more than one meeting.
- Make sure to also meet stakeholders informally
- Plan an excursion to the site.
 1. Organise exchanges of stakeholders between different Natura 2000 sites to learn from one another.
 2. Make stakeholders shared problem-owners.
 3. Get people talking together in a safe environment; Respect everybody's rights and opinions
 4. The process manager should ideally be local (expertise may be from further afield).
 5. Do not undertake only plenary sessions: make sure to include working groups, etc.
 6. Give feedback to the stakeholders on project progress.
- Creating positive links with the Natura 2000 area for instance by generating a feeling of local identity and pride in a N2000 site
- Acknowledge that it is a dynamic long-term process pursuing a common goal together.

Issues - both groups and plenary session

During the group work and the various plenary sessions, the groups and individuals and the invited speakers/experts raised a number of issues related to the management and designation process of Natura 2000 sites. These were noted down on a separate flipchart whilst the discussion went on, as follows:

- “You are not alone in your conflict”: knowing this can reduce conflict and help finding solutions!
- Management plans often suffer conflict (?) in the definition of common objectives and targets; the establishment of shared vision/views is extremely helpful in avoiding this conflict.
- Exchanges in which arguments based on human emotions are set against arguments based on science often do not work!
- Knowledge imbalance: science versus local knowledge.(same as bullet 10?)
- There is no funding available to exchange experience; and this process is in any case harder for farmers who often live and work in relative isolation from their peers. Establish peer group support by setting up farmers groups and providing the money them to meet and exchange experience, best practice, etc.
- Best practice should be generated, identified and communicated.
- Capacity building is required.
- Putting yourselves in the position of the other person /group your are talking with.
- Farmers only “do it once”; whilst officials may repeat the management for Natura 2000/management planning process over and over again (and hopefully get better and more experienced at it) farmers only do it once so do not have the benefit of experience and knowledge.
- There is a great imbalance in the way that the process is science driven, as opposed to utilising local experience. This is perceived to be an extremely one-way process that results in feelings, expressed strongly during the workshop, such as: “humiliation, powerlessness, frustration, anger”.
- Rewards for farmers are too hard to achieve. The requirement is compliance with the basic minimum standard, anything less than this is punished. Even the language: e.g. “compensation for loss” sounds negative. There is little or no thanks for compliance or exceeding minimum standards. Find ways for rewarding farmers (e.g. tax breaks, etc?).
- For many farmers Natura 2000 management feels too much like gardening!
- Provide sufficient resource for the nature conservation agency so they can adequately do their job and ensure participation.
- Take these results to the Commission!
- Use this project to establish and promote best practice.

Results of the group work

A number of important general points emerged from the debate and discussion and were presented in the feedback session at the end of the day:

- There was a basic feeling that the process of site designation and management for Natura 2000 is top-down. It is driven by “scientific objectivity” and legislation both of which are contrary to social processes, human aspects and emotions.
- Local knowledge is largely ignored and it was felt that there is a lack of trust for local knowledge from scientists.
- There is an imbalance in the knowledge exchange; whilst scientists can easily absorb local knowledge and scientific knowledge is extremely hard to understand and inaccessible to farmers.
- The imbalance between scientific objectivity/legislation and social processes; such that site designation and management is driven by science, legislation and bureaucracy at the expense of including human aspects and social processes, can be seen to drive a significant proportion of the conflict underlying Natura 2000 designation.
- This imbalance in the Natura 2000 designation and management process, which is based on power, the use of impenetrable jargon and scientific knowledge, creates a dependency on the part of farmers and land managers. They have to do as they're told and they cannot argue with that because they are excluded from the argument because of the language and knowledge it is based on!
- This dependency creates frustration, anger and is the basis for much of the conflict in association with the Natura 2000 process.
- When a management plan is followed, the success is not always obvious (indeed, things can go wrong); however, the blame for this is rarely laid at the door of the scientists and consultants who write the management plans, it is usually attributed to the farmers themselves who have simply been following instructions!

Wrap up

The chair, Dr. Leon Braat thanked participants for their attendance and active input. The report of the workshop would be sent around to all participants. The points raised in the workshop would also be incorporated in the report of task 1 on multiple use issues and conflicts experienced. Furthermore the participants would be informed on the dates and venues of the regional workshops and be consulted / asked to provide input on people to invite from their respective networks.

4.3 Central and Eastern European Workshop Szentendre (Hungary), 9 December 2009

Morning session

Keynote speech 1:

Use & management of Natura 2000 sites: the Hungarian Government's point of view

By András Schmidt, Office for Nature Conservation, Ministry of Environment and Water

The first keynote speaker of the programme was Mr. Andras Schmidt, who presented the government's point of view on the use and management of Natura 2000 sites in Hungary. In his presentation Mr. Schmidt, focused on the process of designation of the sites with some illustrations from Hungarian experience. During designation process, initial problems were occurred mainly due to the lack of time, capacity with an addition of weak communication and public involvement in the process. In Hungary, designation was made through the Government Decree in October 2004 (Figure 1) while the Ministerial communication on land parcels was in 2005. The land parcels were later issued in a Ministerial decree in December 2006. Therefore, 21% of the country is Natura 2000, designated for:

- 78 Annex I bird species
- 13 migratory birds
- 46 (20*) habitat types
- 105 (7*) priority animal species
- 36 (7*) plant species

As a results of the designation of the sites, 90% of the Hungarian sites contain *habitats and/or *species and 41% had previous protection status.

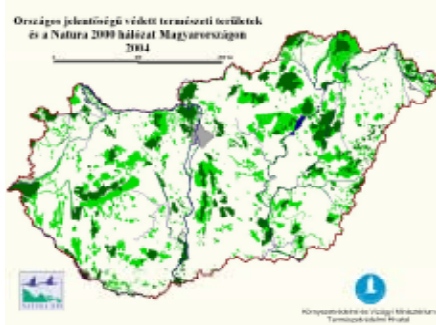


Figure 1 - Natura 2000 network in Hungary (2004)

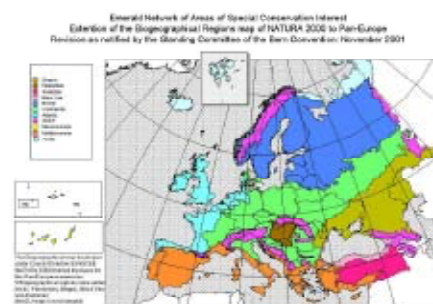


Figure 2 - Emerald network of areas of Special Conservation Interest (SCI) (2001)

Commission reviewed the designation process in Hungary in September 2005 and the country performance was found relatively good, but deficiencies were still identified, such as the need for data amendment; insufficient minor, insufficient moderate, scientific Reserve, infringement procedure for insufficient SPA network. Therefore the new designations (extensions and new sites) were prepared by late 2009 and are expected to be approved in 2010. Conflicts during the process and in relation to the activities are summarized in the following table:

Conflicts during designation process	Solutions	Special problems in Hungary – land registration
<p>COM vs HU:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • short timeframe • extensions demanded (based on NGO and „expert” opinion) <p>Severe national conflicts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - agricultural, - forestry, - water management, - mining, - transport - industrial - defence lobbies 	<p>COM vs HU:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • threat to stop structural funds led to urged designation in 2004 • new designations prepared in 2009 <p>Nationally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exemptions in Gov’t Decree on Natura 2000 (Art. 6) (defence, water: later deleted due to infringement procedures) • a few cheeseholes (e.g. some active mines) 	<p>Many of the major difficulties derive back to land registration problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HU network: 450 000 parcels • constantly changing database (like „radioactive decay”) • need of regular update (expensive and time-consuming) • often does not follow natural or even artificial formations • Ministry of Agriculture maintains it and is the only legally acceptable land registration system, but agri-environmental payments follow another system! <p>Partial solution (planned): maps also published in ministerial decree along with land reg. numbers</p>

Conflicts during the management of Natura 2000 - In relation to the timescale and intensity of activities are summarized in the following table:

Agriculture mostly annual activities in Natura 2000, ranging from desired to highly destructive	Forestry long-lasting production systems	Businesses, developments
<p>Desired: e.g. low-intensity grazing, inland fishponds (desiccation ponds of sugar beet factories!)</p> <p>Solution: incentives (e.g. 38 €/ha for grasslands since 2008)</p> <p>“Harmonisable”: e.g. hay production, extensive arable crops (alfalfa, rape, cereals such as wheat), extensive fruit production, reed harvesting, etc.</p> <p>Solution: regulations including incentives and prohibitions</p> <p>Conflicting: intensive arable crops and fruit production, invasive crop species (e.g. biofuel grasses)</p> <p>Solution: no incentives and/or prohibition</p>	<p>Desired: e.g. „Pro Silva” management, permanent forest cover – relatively rare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Traditional” forest management in Hungary is often conflicting: - large-scale clearcuts (5 ha, often practically merging) - widespread use of non-native species (Robinia, Pinus, poplar hybrids) and cultivars - afforestation of sand plains and dolomitic rocks <p>Partial solution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - forest-environmental incentives (first launched late 2009) - legislative changes (necessity of appropriate assessment recognised) - adaptation of forestry plans to Natura 2000 requirements 	<p>New developments (constructions, etc.) are relatively „simple”: EU and HU legislation provide proper frame for appropriate assessment, BUT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Authorities are still too often UNAWARE of Natura 2000 or the need of AA, and Developers & planners often only face Natura 2000 AFTER planning <p>Solution: continue efforts of communication; good example: NABUCCO gas pipeline?</p> <p>Problem area: long-lasting permitting procedures, such as in road construction and mining (right to mining research – expectations and investments)</p>

Mr. Schmidt concluded his presentation with a success story. The example is from the Defence Ministry that initially opposed the

site designation but constructive approach was taken through a LIFE project for harmonised management of a military area already designated as a Natura 2000 site +extension. It was made possible to jointly develop management plans in military areas and a LIFE+ project on a planned Natura 2000 site, which proposed over 18 000 hectares of military areas for Natura designation to the Government in 2009. The solution was conceptual change and integration of nature conservation into defence policy, i.e. “protection of country and nature”. Through the experiences following recommendations were made:

- Correct transposition of EU law (exemptions to be avoided, use of maps along with land parcel numbers where relevant)
- Effective communication and guidance to all relevant authorities
- Regular communication with stakeholders
- Compensations for restrictions incurring profit loss in regular management
- Incentives to favourable management activities
- Model projects (e.g. LIFE and Structural Funds), preferably jointly with stakeholders, and management plans prepared with public involvement
- In summary, sufficient time and financial sources should be devoted to Natura 2000.

Keynote speech 2:

Natura 2000 conflict management an NGO viewpoint

By Attila Králl, Natura 2000 Coordinator, Birdlife Hungary

The secondary keynote speaker, Mr. Attila Králl from Birdlife Hungary, gave a viewpoint of an NGO that actively involved in implementation process of Natura 2000 management. Mr Králl started his presentation with a short overview of the organization. Birdlife Hungary with around 10,000 members, focuses on conservation in practice; PR for birds and their conservation; environmental education; and policy work through BL on an EU level. Birdlife Hungary's role in Natura 2000 is related to 1) IBA identification; 2) proposals for SPAs in Hungary; 3) creation of civil working group together with WWF, CEEweb, FoE HU, MME; 4) multi-stakeholder process in Natura 2000 advisory Board of MoEW; and 5) maintenance of Natura 2000 planning process.

Mr. Králl emphasized the idea of Natura 2000 demonstrates an EU-level try, a working ecological network with legal, financial, political background/support on (almost) continent-level:

- Re-positioning conservation – change in theory and in practice: from isolation to integration
- Let's have conservation aspects 'fertilize' all land-use, planning, management, etc.
- Let's have local people interested and involved into local planning, and make conservation incorporable into decision-making processes (... into sectoral policies; spatial-planning, etc.)
- Let's make conservation participatory

The idea and the concept is promising but there are still problems in the process of implementation. The mentioned problems summarized in the following table:

Communication	Legal mechanism	Financing	Flexibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of concept and planning in communication (message, tailor-made tools...) • poor/improper accessibility of information • should be linked to everyday problems – like climate change issue • in fact: Natura 2000 is a product to be sold... • real threat: Natura 2000 will turn back to be a pure conservationist's stake 	<p>Natura 2000 legal framework is almost complete BUT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of harmony with other relevant legislation • especially in the application of law (it's partly communication problem...) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natura 2000 dedicated budget vs. incorporated budget? • 'Direct extra financing' is one of the best arguments! • Banking problems – can make a net loss... • Financing can turn neglect/negative attitude into acceptance and positive attitude – on the short term... • Social, economic values to show - TEEB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Static solutions for a changing and largely unknown/unpredictable system – it seems necessary • "How much is enough for you, Green fellows?" – FRV/FCS • Do not make our task harder – the Annexes should rather be tools than goals

Mr. Králl, then, made a short analysis of the situation in Hungary. Natura 2000 network is almost complete, however, the general knowledge among public is poor. Legal framework is almost perfect; however, the user guides and trouble-shooting guides are partly missing. Even if the management pushes through, he thinks that it will not meet it's original goals. The challenge is to turn the overall neglect and rejection into a positive attitude.

He presented a case study in Zemplén-region of Hungary. The region is one of the most disadvantaged regions in Hungary with an area around 200.000 hectares, almost 100% Natura 2000 (SPA, SCI) and with dense Natura 2000 forests (having financial and legal problems). It is relatively easy to manipulate local people in this region.

Solutions can be:

- conflict mapping on local/regional level – suggestions to solutions
- real stakeholder involvement – roundtables, thematic forums
- build on locally active, positive energies – vineyards in Tokaj-region
- build on local patriotism
- Form a regional 'Natura 2000 advisory board'

He pointed out the Natura 2000 as a 'new hope' to the current nature conservation problems:

- Facts and figures – fill in communication gaps
- Who are responsible for management?
- Natura 2000 gains, losses, opportunities
- Where can the money come from?
- Public participation

He also pointed out that possible mistakes could be the back to 'conservation', i.e. data collection, etc. EU inclination in Natura 2000 is mainly: a) 2010 assessment/evaluation and post 2010 planning; b) revision/merging of directives; c) weakening conservation standards. He commented that the concept of Natura 2000 should not be lost because of improper implementation. He finalized his presentation with the quote from Confucius:

"When the goal cannot be reached, don't adjust your goal, adjust your steps".

Afternoon session

The workshop was facilitated with the questions:

- What are the main causes of conflict?
- What are the critical success factors to resolve conflicts?

Process: participants were divided into pairs/threes and asked to list what they believed to be the main causes of conflict in relation to the management of Natura 2000. They were then requested to feed back to the plenary and the reasons they gave were listed on flip charts. The reasons are listed below grouped under a number of broad headings/themes under which discussion took place about what are the critical success factors to resolve conflicts; the outcomes of that discussion are given underneath the main themes.

Topic: Stakeholders

What are the main causes of conflict?

1. Lack of trust in relationship between stakeholders.
2. Lack of involvement of stakeholders (at all levels).
3. Lack of communication and coordination between Brussels/ Ministries of Environment (or similar) at national level/ stakeholders.
4. Designation of Natura 2000 sites that are also of interest to other large groups of people.
5. Poor integration of nature conservation into other sectors due to short-sighted thinking.
6. Prevailing stereotypes results in adversarial relationships; stakeholders/ ministries/ CSO's - between and within.
7. Lack of transparency in whole planning process.

What are the critical success factors to resolve conflicts?

- The landowner is not the problem. He/she is the solution!
- The process of Natura 2000 management must be credible; it needs the involvement of the ministry.
- Officials must be seen to be taking the process seriously.
- It should be recognized that hunting (for example) is an acceptable activity in many Natura 2000 sites (an advantage they often have over national parks where hunting is banned); where hunting can be seen to be beneficial for wildlife (e.g. great bustard) this can help the process of stakeholder involvement.
- There is a clear issue around the lack of involvement of local politicians; if there is no role for stakeholders/ politicians in the designation process this spoils the management process and reduces the willingness of key stakeholders to participate. This has to do with credibility. 'It is a waste of time if officials do not participate'. (Note: it can be difficult to organize involvement of government officials in local processes- lack of time and staff).

- Long-term investment in personal relationships/ listening/ dialogue/ democratic attitude/ understand the position of others in the process. Understand that conflict resolution is based on establishing dialogue and then good relationships with key stakeholders.
- Personal contact with landowners and managers is vital.
- The management of Natura 2000 is a long-term process; it requires (potentially) years of investment (both time and resources).
- Invest in mediation/ facilitation by an independent and trusted third party.
- Full and early involvement of stakeholders in the process and planning. This can help to increase transparency of process, ownership and involvement.
- Stakeholder involvement requires a range of skills and experience (e.g. interpersonal skills, public participation and facilitation, communication and conflict management, etc); these skills are absent in many of the staff who are expected to communicate on a regular basis with key actors and stakeholders.
- The role of NGOs and landowner organisations is crucial in making more effective contact/ providing a link with real stakeholders (e.g. farmers, foresters, etc). They should therefore be the partners of choice for state institutes and ministries in promoting Natura 2000 and working with key stakeholders (in the right cultural circumstances).
- People need to feel proud to be in a Natura 2000 site. This is partly a communication issue and relates to the role of innovation in delivery of the process (see the relevant sections below).
- There needs to be a better empathy amongst officials for the needs of stakeholders and less stereotyping.
- 95% is not enough for nature conservationist! Nature conservation experts should seek to develop more realistic aspirations in relation to Natura 2000.

Topic: Communication and Education

What are the main causes of conflict?

1. Lack of knowledge and education at the local level (leads to misunderstanding/ lack of knowledge results in anger/ lack of understanding and experience of democracy can make people suspicious of participative processes.
2. Specifically in relation to democracy people just don't know how to work with/or against processes, legislation, etc and this generates anger and frustration.
3. Lack of understanding that we need to live in a healthy environment.

What are the critical success factors to resolve conflicts?

- Communication planning should be a basic requirement of implementing the management process.
- Biologists don't want to communicate; there should be communication courses/ training courses provided by, for instance, universities for both undergraduates and graduated experts.
- The message that is given to stakeholders is extremely important: e.g. "better with nature than without".
- The problem of communication fatigue needs to be solved. Too much/ too confusing information switches people off.
- Stakeholders need to be touched at an emotional level (e.g. UNESCO world Heritage sites are apparently much easier for people to relate to than Natura 2000). (World heritage sites makes make people proud).
- Example from the US: in 'selling' the concept of nature parks: attach a species to a habitat, to make people connect more (The EC should consider if they want this kind of advertising)
- Communicate advantages of living in, or close to Natura 2000. (Example of raised housing prices close to nature areas).
- Scientists don't know how to speak! They don't know how to speak in a language that fits with landowners and other stakeholders./ Too technocratic. (Which is linked directly to the point about training in necessary skills, covered in the stakeholder table above).
- Start teaching the younger generations. First grade school children are taught about Natura 2000 in Romania. Exemplifying the idea of reaching out to people at an age when they are likely to be more flexible and accepting of new ideas and concepts.
- Communication should be open to all topics.

Topic: Ecological Data and Information

What are the main causes of conflict?

1. Natura 2000 would be less restrictive with more exact data and knowledge.
2. Lack of common country policy for the development of Natura 2000; lack of database means "protect everything just in case".
3. Lack of biological facts to say if protection is successful or not; linked to other uses (e.g. quality of measures Czech Republic is generally poor).
4. Lack of comprehensive and agreed management plan/ lack of specific objectives.
5. Lack of a biological argument for designation.
6. Applying the precautionary principle because of a lack of information (seen as a 1970s paradigm).

What are the critical success factors to resolve conflicts?

- If more scientific and management data and knowledge was available about the Natura 2000 designations, then it would be less necessary to rely on a precautionary approach to their management because the location of particular sensitive species and/or habitats might be known. Specific management measures could be targeted at these sensitive species and habitats, perhaps allowing a more pragmatic approach to be taken in other areas as that would encourage a positive attitude from land managers and owners.
- Such information would assist in the framing of specific objectives within management plans; these objectives can provide a level of clarity in relation to the debate about future management with stakeholders (owners and occupiers), thereby reducing conflict and perhaps contributing to increasing levels of trust.
- At a national level the lack of biological facts is perceived to have resulted in blanket protection of areas and the inclusion of land with a relatively low ecological value simply because the detail was not available to the officials carrying out the designation. Better biological data and information should therefore be made available, perhaps through the initiation of survey and recording, prior to designation.
- The availability of data in relation to the success of protection and management measures would help to justify decisions and would support dialogue with stakeholders, potentially reducing conflict.
- Without a strong biological argument that is based on data and information scientists and officials are reluctant to talk about why the site is important and has been made Natura 2000, are restricted in what they could say about suitable management, and are therefore reluctant to communicate because they cannot tell the stakeholder why actions have been taken that may potentially disadvantage them; (note links to communications issues).
- Make more use of local knowledge.

Topic: Cultural

What are the main causes of conflict?

1. Region specific social circumstances which can destroy habitats (e.g. stealing timber to generate income).
2. Communist history of CEE countries may be a challenge due to people's way of thinking.
3. Ownership status of the land; legal challenge etc, who owns what?

What are the critical success factors to resolve conflicts?

- Many of the points made here link directly to the issue of communication and education.
- Increased economic prosperity at national and individual level is likely to reduce the impact of certain socio-economic related impacts on the natural environment.
- It will take time for the culture of democracy to permeate all levels of society in certain CEE countries.
- Land ownership issues will also take some time to resolve, during which it may be difficult to implement effective management of Natura 2000 sites. Such issues should be understood by officials at national and European level.

Topic: Institutional

What are the main causes of conflict?

1. Lack of capacity to communicate: time and skills.
2. Lack of co-operation between DG Environment and DG Agriculture.
3. Power games; power relations in the European Union are not fair or balanced.
4. Lack of permanent strategy and long-term planning for nature conservation/ predictability of policy making.
5. The management of (e.g.) regional areas in some countries has to proceed through a complicated and elaborate process that is delineated by a number of layers, for example: Federal, State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, EU. As a result of this complication there is a lack of focus on point of the problem.
6. Designation is finished; in next 10 years need an instrument to change the designation (e.g. in Austria 70% of the population of one Annex 2 species lies outside any protected areas; the boundaries really need to be changed in order to encompass the majority of the range of the species).
7. Low staff capacities to deal with problems.

What are the critical success factors to resolve conflicts?

- The process of Natura 2000 management should be adequately resourced at an institutional level. This should include providing adequate time, staff resources, financial resources and training in the skills necessary for working with a range of stakeholders (e.g. interpersonal, communication, etc).
- There is a perception of a lack of co-operation/ communication between DG Environment and DG Agriculture. It was felt that it even by delegates representing their countries at a self national level that this lack of communication and cooperation is hampering the process of delivering management, in particular in relation to the targeting of agri-environment schemes.
- One solution to the complication caused by various layers of bureaucracy would be to cut out the middle layers and allow

regions/ Federal layers to communicate directly to DG Environment.

- Lack of coordination with in the governments. DG Environment has a 'contact' in a country who has all the files, but in general it is not the person who knows all about the local stakeholder processes.
- There should be a better system for regional collaboration/ co-operation.
- There was a strong perception that certain countries have a greater balance of power in the European Union when it comes to the allocation of agri-environment funding, the designation of Natura 2000, etc. Thus countries (such as Hungary, Romania, etc) are disadvantaged in relation to their neighbours (e.g. Austria, Germany). They get more Natura 2000 and less agri-environment; even leading to the idea that other countries "want to stop them from farming" in favour of their own agricultural economies. More transparency is therefore required in relation to these kinds of issues.
- Nature conservation needs spatial management plans.

Topic: Compensation

What are the main causes of conflict?

1. Natura 2000 is of European Community/ local community interest; but implementation needs 'sacrifice' by landowners and managers for which they should be compensated; the sacrifice should therefore be "shared".
2. Natura 2000 is stable but payments are not.

What are the critical success factors to resolve conflicts?

- There was a general feeling that the compensation measures that are available for farmers and land managers are often inadequate or difficult to access. This situation needs to be countered by ensuring (perhaps as part of planning the designation and subsequent management of Natura 2000) that sufficient funds will be available to carry out the required management and/ or to provide adequate compensation for changes to management or losses forgone.
- In the context of Natura 2000 management staff can talk about restrictions but are often not able to talk about compensation (e.g. Hungary). Compensation schemes are not ready in Hungary (only for grassland it is ready; the other sectors not until 2013). If there is no continuity you cannot negotiate.
- In Austria the availability of funding for grassland management only until 2013 is seen as problematic; however farmers are convinced by the argument of "better in than out" and the likelihood that at least some further funding will be available in future years.

Topic: Innovation

What are the main causes of conflict?

1. Not searching for/ innovating alternative solutions.

What are the critical success factors to resolve conflicts?

- In terms of possible innovation/ alternative solutions, the general feeling was expressed that the business opportunities associated with Natura 2000 designations are rarely if ever utilised as a means of reducing the potential for conflict. Thus a number of points, elaborated on below, were made in relation to: e.g. tourism, house prices, hunting and branding.
- Tourism was perceived to be an inclusive sector that can allow people to understand the economic and wider benefits of the area they live and work in; if it has tourism value there can be many other spin-off benefits for a range of stakeholders. The example of the USA was cited; here iconic species (with emotional value) are attached to a habitat thereby providing more easily promoted subject material.
- In Lithuania the tour guides are familiar with, know and like national parks but do not have an awareness of Natura 2000 (which are often within all or part of national park boundaries).
- Communicate advantages: In Austria it has been shown that the housing market is stronger near to Natura 2000. (Note: this advantage applies to house owners, not landowners)
- In the Czech Republic Natura 2000 has been linked to a regional and now cross regional branding scheme. This builds on local pride. (However, it should be noted that the understanding of the delegates was that Natura 2000 in itself cannot be a brand).
- The question was asked as to "whether the commission wants Natura 2000 as a brand"?
- Life project (Lithuania). National park got stakeholders around the table; people were frustrated that being in the Park gave them no benefit. the group very quickly realised that there were no products/ services for tourists within the national park. Suddenly everybody had something to talk about/ collaborate over. Conflict went down straight away. Having a list of practical/ achievable things to do brought everyone together. Everybody can see the benefit Simple language was used throughout and facilitation was provided by trustable individuals with no interest in the outcome. The key lesson was that it is not possible to run projects which the locals do not need.). (This proces was facilitated by an independent NGO).
- The price for leasing hunting rights within Natura 2000 (in Austria) can be up to €10,000 per year; this is a much greater

reward than tourism and is favoured by local communities. The reason for this being that tourism disrupts local communities where as hunting is a specific activity and allows villages/ local communities to get on with their business in very much the same way as they have done in the past.

- “Pro” arguments should be innovative and look at, e.g.: the increased price of housing in Natura 2000; the greater certainty of agri-environment funding for land management within Natura 2000 compared to outside; increased hunting prices; etc.
- Developing the market for compensation measures; e.g. in relation to wind farms, roads, etc.

Learning points

Again in their pairs/threes, the participants were asked to list learning points and feedback to the plenary where they were listed on the flip chart. They are set out below:

Learning point

1. Need to communicate about the process and nature conservation; must allocate the resources to that.
2. Elaboration of compensation schemes that can be flexibly adjusted to specific sites.
3. Opportunity: learning and social learning at different social levels.
4. Participatory processes only work if decision-makers are committed and take part; (if these conditions are not met then top-down is better).
5. We must not forget to talk to people about legislative instruments (not to animals!).
6. Communication with the public; not just general public but students and scientists. Good and bad examples should be collected and presented.
7. We have to involve scientists, and work to summarise arguments to protect our wildlife.

Messages for the future

Also in pairs/threes, listing their messages are the future, groups fed back to the plenary with comments captured on the flip chart.

Message

1. Turn Natura 2000 into a brand.
2. There should be deliberately managed legitimacy and trust relations.
3. The whole public policy process should be integrated horizontally as well as multilevel.
4. Use Natura 2000 to make us more proud to be a European!
5. Real examples of good and bad, but over simply, unnecessary.
6. Can we expect some help from Europe in protecting our national parks?

4.4 Southern European Workshop, Barcelona, 3 March 2010

Morning session

Keynote speech 1:

Natura 2000 in the spatial planning process of Barcelona Province

By Carles Castell Puig Head of Land Planning and Analysis Office, Natural Areas Department, Provincial Government of Barcelona.

The first keynote speaker of the programme was Mr Carles Castell Puig, Head of Land Planning and Analysis Office, Natural Areas Department, Provincial Government of Barcelona.

Barcelona province is a region where the designation and management of protected areas (including Natura 2000) is bound to lead to many different types of conflict because of the high population density (urbanisation, tourism) and intense economic activities (agriculture, fisheries, industrialisation, transport etc). Barcelona is the second largest city in Spain with a population density of ~1,500 inhabitants per square kilometre.

In making a spatial plan for the province many (often mutually conflicting) interests need to be accommodated. Abandoning the more traditional approach of designating conservation areas based on exclusively ecological considerations, this process adopted a more inclusive and integrated (holistic) approach towards spatial planning of the province of Barcelona. Ecosystem services were integrated into this territorial analysis. It resulted in the S_I_T_x_e_I_I (Territorial Information System for the open areas of the Province of Barcelona).

Spatially explicit assessments of relevant parameters were carried out using a GIS (such as hydro geological risks, habitat, fauna, flora, connectivity, ecosystem integrity and socioeconomic values). Based on this basic map analysis, the spatial plan was carried

out following for the following criteria:

- Efficient use of land
- Nodes and centres
- Mixed and well-balanced texture
- Network-based planning
- Public transport

The analysis of the physical characteristics of the province was focused on the identification of open areas, settlements and urban systems and mobility infrastructures according to the predetermined set of rules and guidelines. The basic maps were further submitted to an in-depth geographical analysis and combined to generate new derived maps answering some specific planning questions and issues.

In a first stage, the possible sources of conflict were identified by superposition of different base maps: the open areas proposal and the urban system proposal. This map ("Interaction open areas/urban and infrastructure systems: critical points") overlay produced areas where conflict was to be expected. In a second stage, conflicts likely to arise in the participation process were identified: areas where different types of contradicting land use were planned. Finally critical points in the ecological network were identified.

The presentation showed how a good knowledge base can be of great value in assisting informed decision making regarding the planning of land use and management in and around protected areas including N2000.

Keynote speech 2:

Conflict management in the Natura 2000 areas owned and managed by the Obra social Caixa Catalunya

By Miquel Rafa, Director of the Area territory i paisatge of the Obra Social Caixa Catalunya

Miquel Rafa, Director of the Area territory i paisatge of the Obra Social Caixa Catalunya presented an analysis of the experiences that the Obra Social Caixa Catalunya had experienced in the conservation areas it owns, manages and supports. He pointed out that the organization has three different hats:

1. landowner – social owner (no need to make profit from the land, but manage the land)
2. land stewardship
3. land users

Obra Social Caixa Catalunya produces the management plans for lands and mainly purchases timber rights in certain areas, which covers the 4.75 % of the Catalunya region. Most of the land owned by this organization is 99.7% is in the N2K areas. General points made during the presentation:

1. Conflicts belong to the phase of designation process: learn from it, but no insist it is past.. here in Catalunya
2. Special case: conflicts of the use of the areas very clear focus in this region.. large irrigation schemes in land and this scheme collapsed and overlapped with the sites; due to the designation process is over, but the dealing with results is an issue. Good thing is that dealing with the management systems, to what extend to use the agricultural activity
3. Conflicts vs wildlife.. emotional values..

He emphasized that N2K not connected to the issues and problems and so conflicts, but it provides more room for opportunities.

Afternoon session

The workshop was facilitated with the questions:

- What are the main causes of conflict?
- What are the critical success factors to resolve conflicts?

Process: participants were divided into pairs/threes and asked to list what they believed to be the main causes of conflict in relation to the management of Natura 2000. They were then requested to feed back to the plenary and the reasons they gave were listed on flip charts. In this section the original results of the facilitated section are presented in 'bold and italic' (this is a verbatim rendering of the input from the participants). Each item is followed by a short summary of the discussion based on the discussion notes. Although the list of problems is longer than the list of solutions, the problems do give clear indications of where the solutions

lie.

Problems

The first part of the facilitated workshop focused on assessing the problems associated with the management of Natura 2000 areas and sites, as these problems are often the underlying causes for conflicts that can arise between the various stakeholders.

1. lack of sectoral coherence / communication

The fact that biodiversity/conservation (a.o. through the Natura 2000 network) is not yet integrated and reflected across all policy sectors leads to conflicting messages regarding management of protected areas and actions.

2. lack of awareness by society that costs of nature conservation have to be borne by all

Society at large is affected by the deterioration of nature and its services. Conserving nature and the wide benefits it gives to society at large is therefore a responsibility of all citizens and actors, not only of the land owners and users. Society should therefore morally and financially contribute to the efforts made by the land owners and users who effectively act as custodians of a common good.

3. corruption / favoritism

Human and societal ills such as corruption, nepotism or favoritism are not absent from the designation and management of Natura 2000 areas. If the process is perceived by the public as being corrupt, as in every sector, it creates frustration and anger.

4. lack of clarity

The process of designation and management of Natura 2000 areas touches upon many of policy areas and levels of decision making that are often not coordinated. Often, it is therefore not clear what is expected by the land owner or manager in the new situation.

5. no clear objectives

The absence of clearly defined, agreed and communicated objectives, makes it difficult for land users and managers to adapt their use of the Natura 2000 area to the new regulations.

6. multiple procedures to get to one point

This point reflected the previous in that agreeing on clear objectives gives the land manager more freedom to develop or adopt new management options.

7. insufficient scientific explanation and support ("strive towards" "doesn't have to be €s")

Stakeholders had the distinct feeling that the scientific basis for the designation and management plan of Natura 2000 sites was insufficiently made clear to them (if at all it existed in all cases). This also supports the two previous observations in that given little information about the exact (scientific or objective) targets, land managers could not design new management practices to reach these goals.

8. too many designations

Many Natura 2000 areas also fall under other conservation and management schemes (such as regional or national protected landscape or reserve, Man and Biosphere reserve, UNESCO World Heritage Site etc) often with conflicting or contradicting objectives and regulations.

9. lack of intersectoral consistency

Rules and regulations that apply to the wider field of land use are affected by developments and decision in different sectors and policy fields.

10. Natura 2000 is too difficult

At the site level, the rules to apply for funding and regulations about management are too complicated. Even if land users are of good will to participate in the management of a Natura 2000 site, the complicated and lengthy procedures to get the funding or compensation often put them off.

11. bureaucracy is a major threat

In the same line, the general bureaucracy at all levels threatens the effectiveness of the implementation of Natura 2000 management plans.

12. lack of governance model

It was reported that in Spain there is no governance model for Natura 2000 in place that oversees Natura 2000 management by a representative group with a formal consultation and public involvement.

13. lack of rural development model

Natura 2000 is not sufficiently integrated in an overall vision for rural development, also taking into account the threats and especially the opportunities existing in the surrounding landscape.

14. lack of participation

Stakeholders are not always very active in the participation process leading to the development of a management plan. Even if there is an opportunity for participation, it is the responsibility of the site manager or site management group to find ways (within what is reasonable) to encourage the best possible participation of at least the key stakeholders. Otherwise implementing the management decisions might backfire at a later stage.

15. unrealistic time frames

The process of adapting a livelihood to the new conditions imposed by the Natura 2000 designation and management, requires psychological and practical adaptations on the part of the directly affected. Such a process requires time which is often not granted in the tight planning carried out by technocrats with little feeling with the field.

16. future conflict: enforcement and penalties

It was also commented that there still is relatively little conflict in many areas designated as Natura 2000 because regulations are not yet strictly enforced and violations are not yet penalized. Once enforcement, control and penalization will be more intense, this will lead to more conflicts.

17. impossibilities for market adaptation (or opportunity)

Natura 2000 restrictions make it difficult for various types of business (mainly in the agri sector) to compete, to adapt to changing markets and to invest in innovation.

18. inadequate compensation systems

When they exist the compensation schemes are not always adequate, and do not compensate all losses incurred by the newly imposed management practices.

19. budget didn't catch up with N2K

The objectives and targets set by the European Commission regarding the ambitious (but largely successful) Natura 2000 Network have not been accompanied by a matching budget for their implementation. The responsibility of financing the Natura 2000 network has largely been left to the Member States who often do not have the budget for this. Therefore finding funding requires a number of different financial tools to be identified and combined. This makes it more difficult for many land owners and users to get access these funds.

20. conflicting interests: e.g. conservation versus tourism

Conserving the natural assets of Natura 2000 is the foundation for many forms of tourism and recreation. Conversely, tourism and recreation generate local income that can partly be reinvested. Although tourism and conservation can benefit from each other, if not properly regulated they can result in conflict.

21. unregulated recreational use

Although tourism and recreation use of Natura 2000 areas can benefit the local economies in terms of use of services (such as hotels, restaurants and travel agencies), if not controlled properly, large visitor flows can have a negative impact on the biodiversity of these sites, thereby deteriorating the resource they precisely depend on.

22. conflicting interests between sectors

Different sectors (agriculture, hunting, tourism and recreation, water management etc) need Natura 2000 areas for their business.

23. N2K impacts on competition and "strangles agriculture"

Agricultural land users of Natura 2000 areas find that their position on the market is undermined by the restrictions imposed by Natura 2000 regulations. Some would ideally want to continue their business without having to rely on payments from agri-environmental schemes.

24. farmers are not gardeners

Agricultural Natura 2000 land managers felt that they should be treated as full participants (entrepreneurs) in the economic life of

a region. One of the possible products of their activities can be managing biodiversity, but their main business is agriculture. They must be given sufficient freedom to develop innovative forms of land use that maintain their agricultural livelihoods while conserving biodiversity and not be limited by 'gardening' rules.

25. politicians say N2K for everybody

Politicians often forget, when talking to the public at large, that there is a lack of balance between those individuals and sectors that bear the costs of adapting to the rules imposed by Natura 2000 and the wider population that benefits from the services and goods of those well managed Natura 2000 areas.

26. imposing urban values on N2K management

Management plan criteria and site objectives are developed by an urban elite with another perception of rural life than the Natura 2000 local stakeholders. Therefore the plans do not always fit well into the socio-cultural setting of a particular region, which undermines their acceptance by the owners, users and managers of the land.

27. land abandonment related to N2K / generations (and opposite)

The land use and management restrictions imposed by Natura 2000 decrease the economic opportunities for farmers and in many cases lead to land abandonment. As land abandonment is one of the key processes that threatens the rich biodiversity related to Europe's multifunctional and extensively managed landscapes, this is a serious matter, as Natura 2000 could in this sense undermine its own objective of safeguarding Europe's biodiversity.

28. land ownership distribution differs

Approaches to the development and implementation of Natura 2000 management practices differ across Europe but also inside large country such as Spain where land tenure patterns vary widely between the regions.

29. N2K less benefit to invest in more technology

As a result of restrictions imposed by Natura 2000 on the management and production options for farmers and other users, income decreases with a resulting smaller margin to invest in innovation and technology. Therefore users (such as farmers) within Natura 2000 have fewer opportunities to invest in those technologies that limit their impacts on the area (e.g. precision farming limiting the use of pesticides). This is a conundrum.

30. pressure on officers: opportunities are lost

The administrators that have to organize the process of Natura 2000 designation and the management plans are often over-worked because of the complexity of their tasks and as a result in many cases they tend to do the minimum required. This means that they are not open to look for innovative opportunities and win win situations for the people affected by Natura 2000. Many opportunities thus go lost.

31. political instability

An unstable political situation generates uncertainty among the Natura 2000 stakeholders.

32. restrictions without alternatives / solutions

Whether based on reality or not, land owners and users often perceive the designation of Natura 2000 areas and the corresponding introduction of imposed management practices as limitations to their use of the land.

33. lack of a culture of dialogue

In some countries and regions, there is no well developed culture of dialogue as exists in other regions and countries of Europe. People may have a respect for the law and administration and are not used to challenge proposal or decisions, and not know how to go about it, or even not know about their rights to participate in environmental law and decision making.

34. don't tell me what to do

Local inhabitants have a long standing relation with the lands that are designated as Natura 2000, and often traditional uses that go back generations. They do not understand the sudden changes in land use and management imposed by people and organizations having no direct knowledge of their areas.

35. 17 regions -> inconsistencies

Within Spain the implementation and management of Natura 2000 is to a large extent organized at the level of autonomous regions. There is little central coordination and therefore inconsistencies in the approaches across the country.

36. lack of pilot management plan

Agencies and people responsible for drawing up the management plans for Natura 2000 areas in Spain report a lack of support and material to help them develop these plans. What is missing more particularly are pilots of successful management plans that can be used as templates for the development of specific plans.

37. “token” participation

It is very frustrating for stakeholders who often care very much for their land when they realize that the participation process in which they were involved was no more than an administrative (or legal) formality, and that no real consideration was given to their views and concerns. If people perceive the participation or consultation as such, this will alienate them from the process and drive them against it.

38. failure to find synergies with LA 21

The Local Agenda 21 (<http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/agenda21/>) specifically integrates biodiversity as one of the cross cutting themes in policy and implementation of sustainable action at the local level. This framework is insufficiently applied as a context for the integration of Natura 2000 objectives.

39. lack of trust in officials (especially politicians)

Lack of trust can arise from several factors. In the case of Natura 2000 management it is very much related to the long term commitment and the investments that land owners and users are required to make as opposed to the short term objectives of elected politicians.

40. we are right, they are wrong

There is a lack of willingness among many stakeholder groups (including the nature conservation sector) to acknowledge the point of view of the competing parties. This dogmatism about one's points of view leads to tension and blocks constructive dialogue to reach a consensual solution.

41. conflicting interests within conservation community

Conservation of habitats and species often leads to conflicts when management for the conservation of one target species or habitat is incompatible with the conservation of other species (groups) or habitats (sometimes under a different management framework). This sends a bad message to the outside world.

42. not defining benefits

The lack of communication of the direct and wider benefits of Natura 2000 for the local economy and well being leads to a general perception that Natura 2000 is only about imposing restrictions.

43. feeling of losing property rights

Land owners have long been able to manage their land as they liked before the designation of Natura 2000 confronted them with restrictions imposed by the management plan. The more traditional forms of land use have often been in place for generations.

44. N2K for always, financial compensation is not

Land owners are requested to make long term commitments and investments. Sometimes it requires a total rethinking of their business to change the way they are using the area. Such important changes require a long term investment plan, while the compensation for the losses incurred by the new management are only temporary. This introduces an important element of risk, that feeds unsympathetic feelings towards Natura 2000.

45. scientific arrogance

Scientists and naturalists often have a fundamentalist view on nature conservation. They base their management recommendations solely on scientific or conservation considerations without incorporating social and cultural aspects. Moreover, often the scientific underpinning is communicated in a scientific and jargon way that alienates the other stakeholders from the process.

Solutions

1. economic model in N2K should be self sustainable (SPAs and SCIs)

Some land users do not like to depend on compensations or agri-environmental payments, either because they do not want to depend on institutions out of pride or out of a feeling of not having their future in their own hands.

2. more nature conservation awareness in society

More education about the direct and indirect benefits of biodiversity and ecosystem services to society will lead to more support for conservation policies such as Natura 2000. This is a long term process, but essential, especially because the importance nature

conservation will only increase with increasing pressures associated with population and economic development.

3. greening policies across sectors

Integrating conservation objectives across policy areas is needed to be able to tackle pressures on biodiversity more effectively and make the benefits of biodiversity more evident for the different sectors.

4. limit regulation to the basics (too many levels)

Setting clear and limited rules for the use and management of Natura 2000 areas and letting the users operate within these limits and find out innovative approaches will increase the sense of ownership. It will allow people to feel more positively linked to N2K and encourage them to find new and innovative business opportunities within the new clearly defined objectives.

5. leave specifics to management plan

Within a limited framework of rules and regulations that indicate the strict limits within which to operate, land users can develop their new ways of using the land.

6. have approved management plan in place

Prepare a management plan with representatives of all user groups and have it approved by them is an essential starting point. For it to be approved, adopted and implemented the key stakeholders need to develop a sense of ownership and not feel alienated. The management plan should be agreed upon by the stakeholders and officially approved after consultation to be legitimate and adopted by those most concerned.

7. pursue win / win situations / solutions (e.g. new economic opportunities), trade offs

Be creative and look for opportunities. There is an important role for the Commission and its national and regional Natura 2000 representatives to communicate clearly about Natura 2000. Not only concentrate on the limitations and the constraints, but present the opportunities for sustainable use and development within and around the Natura 2000 areas. Pilot projects, case studies can be very useful to show that economic activity is possible and that not all habitats and species are protected, but only those specific to the area and conservation objective. In general much more is possible than thought by the stakeholders. Sharing of examples of innovative best practices in and around Natura 2000 sites can greatly help.

8. bottom-up approach

Adopt an inclusive approach and try to encourage local citizens and users to see Natura 2000 as a challenge and an opportunity they can benefit from. Inspire citizens and organisations to work together with (local) authorities to find solutions that benefit conservation of the natural resource and local sustainable development. Issues and challenges should as far as possible be identified and dealt with at the local (grass root) level. This makes ownership of the process more easy and enables tailored solutions to specific situations. Higher administrative levels should make sure they offer the resources and guidance if needed, but should leave the process ownership to the grassroots level.

9. transparency

A clear communication about the objectives, limits and opportunities of Natura 2000 is essential, and a transparent process leading to agreements made within these communicated limits are essential for the inhabitants and users of Natura 2000 areas to feel responsible, proud of being part of Natura 2000 and to support the process.

10. create a movement of supporters for N2K

Despite communication efforts by the EC and the Member States, Natura 2000 is still relatively little known, and mostly within the small community of conservationists or those directly concerned (the stakeholders). A better communication of the conservation objectives but especially the other benefits to society (in terms of direct and indirect ecosystem services and goods) of a well managed and protected areas network will increase support for the Natura 2000. This process could be encouraged by creating a network of Natura 2000 supporters (like associations such as Natuurmonumenten, the National Trust, Natuurpunt). Special Natura 2000 activities (guided excursions, fairs, markets, events etc) could be organized through this (new or existing) association to bring the average European citizen closer to the reality of Natura 2000 and experience its benefits directly. Alternatively existing activities and events in and around Natura 2000 could be communicated in a way that associates them with Natura 2000.

11. horizontal initiatives

Natura 2000 should be embedded in other regional processes and be used to develop fruitful synergies with other sectors operating at local / regional level.

12. exploit N2K initiatives in terms of local production

Natura 2000 is a potential driver for local sustainable development. Existing successful examples should be shared.

13. creating SMART objectives and assigning clear roles

Clarity is what most stakeholders want: Few management regulations, but clear objectives that are simple / specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound (SMART). This allows them to have a more proactive and creative role in finding the best local solutions to meet the agreed (nature conservation) objectives.

14. spatial planning as a key to integration

As Natura 2000 is mainly about using the land for nature conservation purposes, but that this land also serves other land bound interests, there is a clear spatial component to the issue of Natura 2000 management. Spatial planning can and should play a key role in finding options and solutions that meet the various interests.

15. improve skills development (the whole range)

Education and training are essential to make sure that managers and staff are adequately equipped with the required skills for the complex task of managing a Natura 2000 site (or a protected area). In a Western democratic setting typically requires a jack of all trades who needs skills in project management, negotiation, participation, facilitation etc. but also a good understanding of societal, economic and ecological systems and processes. Also the land users (farmers, tour operators, water managers etc) need to be well trained to be able to integrate the Natura 2000 conservation objectives in their day to day work.

16. providing professional development opportunities

People will start supporting Natura 2000 if they see that on the whole it brings them more benefits than problems. Professional development opportunities associated with Natura 2000 can contribute to this. Professional development of Natura 2000 managers, staff and land users is also needed to respond to the challenges of a more inclusive and comprehensive approach to the development of Natura 2000 management plans. New skills are needed for various areas including public participation, project management, monitoring etc.

17. bottom up approach in the process

Involving the local stakeholders and encouraging the emergence of a local grassroots initiative concerned with the management of the Natura 2000 site is a good way to create ownership and local acceptance or endorsement of the designation.

18. solutions do not necessarily fit all situations

Although a lot can be learned from lessons of successful (and innovative) management approaches, each situation is specific and needs its own customized approach to the development of the management plans. Physical, economical but certainly also cultural and historical differences all influence the final outline of a management option.

19. benefits should go to the owners / managers

Owners, users and managers of Natura 2000 serve a public good, either directly, by helping preserving selected species and habitats in a favorable state of conservation and indirectly through maintaining the ecosystem services and goods (such as water purification, flood control, pollinators etc) such preserved areas bestow on society. Therefore the managers, users and owners expect some kind of return for this custodianship.

20. participative approach with adaptive and flexible management

A management plan for Natura 2000 areas should be the result of a participative approach and a dynamic adaptive process, in which new (scientific) findings or external developments (such as climate change, or invasive species) can lead to a change in management approach. The management plan is not written in stone.

21. ensure you have a good knowledge baseline (regarding biodiversity)

Measuring and assessing progress and effectiveness of Natura 2000 conservation and management measures and monitoring is only possible if a good information baseline exists. Measuring and documenting progress is also essential in order to be able to celebrate success, an important moment in a participative process.

22. beneficiary must pay (e.g. through CAP)

Natura 2000 area land owners and managers have the custody over public goods of great importance which benefit the whole of society. Society must therefore pay or compensate for these direct and indirect services which often go unaccounted for.

23. develop public private partnerships re: N2K

Cooperation and inclusive processes involving the public and private sectors can create mutually beneficial cooperation approaches, also in the sustainable development and management in and around Natura 2000 sites.

Recommendations / Messages

1. Make the locals feel proud of the areas they live and work in. Don't punish them and give them flexible management plans
Taking into account the personal dimension of those directly affected by the Natura 2000 designation and corresponding management objectives is very important to achieve a good acceptance of the scheme. Communication of the benefits and the uniqueness of the N2K site and the reasons for its selection to be part of the EU wide network should be made in such a way that the local stakeholders feel pride to be associated to it. Set clear objectives and flexible management plans.
2. Listen to Commissioner Potocnik
The messages regarding nature and biodiversity of the new Commissioner as he took office were very encouraging. He showed an ambitious vision regarding the role of biodiversity and Natura 2000 in the EU.
3. Promote the value of the environment in terms of money
Making the economic benefits of nature conservation evident in monetary terms might be a way to increase its acceptance among sectors that are primarily driven by economic gains.
4. Get assertive and promote N2K. See the opportunities, fund pilot projects, bring to the attention of wider audiences and tell the positive story; identify good governance models, realize benefits of exchanges of information (through networks)
A more general call to a proactive approach on all fronts to promote Natura 2000.
5. Focus on clear objectives at site level. Promote adaptive management. Leave responsibility to the locals and create conditions for this to occur
An often repeated request on the part of land owners and users is to agree on clear site objectives related to the habitats and species, and to allow more flexibility in how these objectives are to be reached.
6. Define environment as a planning and policy framework (for other sectors)
Nature, biodiversity and landscape are the natural framework or context of spatial planning. As such they provide the most logical baseline to plan the countryside. Natural landscape functions and features should guide the process of spatial planning.
7. Give us guidelines, handbooks
Although there is a strong request for more flexibility in the management practices and for clearer objectives, there is also an urgent need for guidance at site level, to translate agreed objectives to practical management options.
8. Define exactly the limits of impacts of each activity in N2K guarantee the economic viability for the affected (without compensation of possible)
Another call for more clarity this not so much focusing on the objectives, but on the tolerable limits to impacts of activities in Natura 2000 areas, and for more freedom for the owners/users to pursue their and related activities without depending on compensation or other financial means.

4.5 Northwest European Workshop, Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, Brussels, 17 March 2010

Morning session

Keynote speech 1:

Conflict management in the Natura 2000 network: The French way to involve the stakeholders

By Lucille Rambaud, Head of the Unit Natura 2000 Network, French Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable development and the Sea

main points of the implementation process:

1. Transparency and dialogue at different levels: national, regional and local
2. Incentive or voluntary-based approach
3. Integration of Natura 2000 in economic sector and into sectoral policies

There are two levels of governance in relation to Natura 2000 management and practice, which are National and Local committees, include all stakeholders: experts, landowners, farmers, forest managers, NGOs, users, public local elected representatives, sectoral administrations.

The National committee discusses the national network, approves and disseminates information about implementing tools (methodological guide, training programme..), where the Local steering committee (COPIL) plays a role as a main body for concertation

Importance of the COPIL are:

- Appointed by the State , and chaired by the local authority since July 2006 (before by the State)
- Includes all related actors, such as local authorities, experts, landowners farmers, foresters, associations, users, so on.
- Takes part in the drafting of the DOCOB and its implementation

Local setting for each site, as a part of contractual site management includes:

- A local Steering Committee;
- A management plan : « document d'objectifs » (DOCOB);
- The technical operator;
- Natura 2000 charter and contracts based on the DOCOB, signed between the State representative and local stakeholders;
- 30% Of the technical operators are local authorities.

As for the management plan, there is document to reach an objective, which defines the site management policy and a territorial understanding (cross-sectors). A local and common construction but the DOCOB has to be approved by the local state representative. The content of this document:

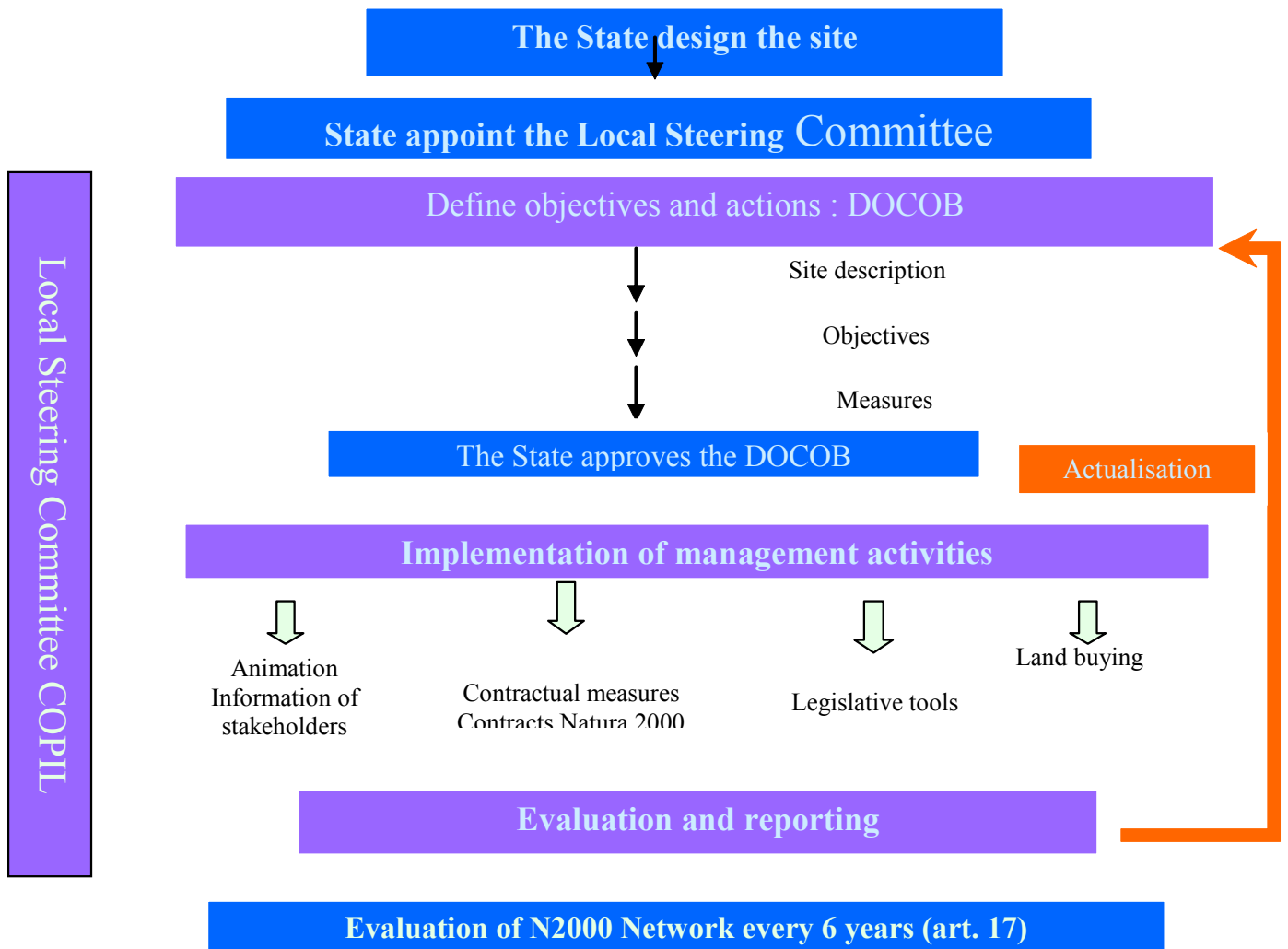
- Site description: ecological, economical and social
- Sustainable objectives including conservation objectives and targets
- Identification of usual good practices
- Natura 2000 charter
- Contract-based conservation measures
- Administrative and statutory measures
- Funding
- Monitoring

In conclusion of the presentation, the process was outlined in the following diagram. Ms. Rambaud finalized her presentation with the detailed explanation of the support and tools which were provided during the process of management and implementation. The public support tools are:

- A national guide for the development of the DOCOB
- National fund for natural area management created in 1999
- «Habitat files» for each habitat and species
- Scientific knowledge
- Management recommendations
- A national training plan, a communication strategy (Local, national)
- A Natura 2000 website



Caceres, Spain, Saxifraga-Jan van der Straaten



Keynote speech 2:

Use & Management of Natura 2000 - the NGO's point of view: Hoge Kempen National Park, an interesting case?
By Ignace Schops, Director, Regionaal Landschap Kempen en Maasland (Belgium)

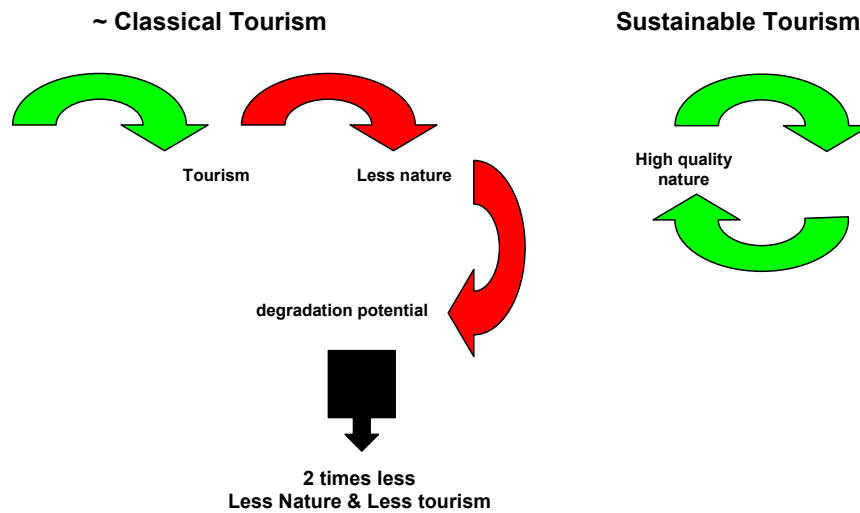
Mr Schops started his presentation with a brief introduction to the Regionaal Landschap Kempen en Maasland. It is an NGO founded in 1990 by the coalmining company and Natuurpunt. This organization includes all target groups and it is based on a coalition of:

- Flemish government – Agency for Nature & Forestry
- Municipalities
- Province of Limburg
- Nature conservation organisations
- Tourism organisations
- Farmers
- Hunters
- Entrepreneurs

Main objectives of the organization are:

1. Biodiversity – raising awareness – coalition & involvement all target groups
 - Working on the intersection of nature conservation, biodiversity and sustainable tourism
2. Connectivity
 - Connect nature to nature – connect people to nature – connect business and biodiversity - connect policy with practice
3. Sustainable & innovative & integrated
 - Sustainable projects
 - Integrated, overall plan - Bottom up approach
 - New ways of financing biodiversity
 - International cooperation

He presented the promotion of their ideas in the following diagram:



From the above mentioned objectives and the perspective of the organization, Mr. Schops explained how the national park was established and managed so far successfully. The case study area is a former coalmining area located in Vlaanderen region with an area of 75,000 ha with 300,000 inhabitants.

The Hoge Kempen National Park: Working “together” on biodiversity & Raising awareness for a sustainable world

During the years of 1997 and 2001, promotion and lobbying activities for the protection of the biodiversity values of the area were carried out. After having agreed on a coalition of the willing a Master Plan was developed. Based on this plan, Flemish Government in 2002 with a budget of 28,000 Euro was assigned to establish a national park with a condition of match funding for 1 euro for 1 euro.

The idea was protecting nature and biodiversity with the overall plan, connectivity, and involvement of all target groups by NIMBY (not in my back yard) to PIMBY (put in my back yard).

Points towards successful implementation were explained in four ways:

1. Connection nature to nature (reconnection model was introduced)
2. Space for nature: Destinations or activities who are not compatible with the destination ‘nature territory’; to adapt to a nature region; for every scenario an “exit scenario” is being introduced; objective was in the long run (20 years) the total surface within the perimeter of public property is conserved by the Flemish government
3. Ecological impulse (Habitat and Bird Directives; important biodiversity areas)
4. Welcoming people (engaging people into business)

Regionaal Landschap Kempen en Maasland



Location of the national park
(5.700 ha spread over six municipalities)



Research on economic benefits 2005-2007 à for and after opening National Park

- Increase (double) – amount of visitors
 - ~ 700.000 in 2007
- Increase 10% in overnight stays in municipalities of the National Park (153.000 à 187.000)
 - 2.5 times more than rest of region/Flanders/Belgium
- Arrivals tourists: increase 22% (460.000 à 510.000)
- Economic benefits: ~ 20.000.000 euro/year
- Employment: ~ 400 (direct & indirect)

Lessons learned from the experience were summarised by Mr. Schops as a conclusion of his presentation:

- Biodiversity – intrinsic values = basis
- Biodiversity – high added economic value
- Overall plan: from idea to realisation – Umbrella model – bottom up approach
- Integral approach à thematic & policy integration – all target groups involved
 - On the intersection of biodiversity, sustainable tourism & society
- Relation Nature reserve >< landscape (impact zone)
 - Accessibility at the level of the landscape (lower pressure)
 - Visitor facilities “outside” of the national park/nature reserve
- Financial basis (!) – cf. bicycle network // National Park
- Unity in structure, policy, development & approach
- NGO – all target groups involved – integral approach
- Responsibility & Leadership & Quality control
 - Everybody responsible, nobody licensed to act

Afternoon session

Results of the 3 working groups

What are the main causes of conflict?

Resources competition / competition for resources

- economic development projects
- different objectives for the same area
- tenure conflicts (private estates)
- lack of cooperation environment – industry (e.g. river inside N2K). different countries not so strict. consistency absent
- public policy conflict (government level e.g. energy versus agriculture, nature vs biofuels etc)
- resource conflict in N2K sites: green energy production, water related issues
- Ignoring each others' interest

Process

- top down approach (designation and management)
- frustration among stakeholders – not being involved in beginning of process
- first phase of designation – late implementation / transposition of directives in national and regional laws.
- impossible to create same situation for animals / plants via compensation
- goals are not agreed from the start with the stakeholders
- enforcement problems – lack of action / control
- lack of proper assessment at correct stage (plans and project). Early dialogue not steadily initiated ‘unfairness in N2K system’
- no clear time frame – when do / when not see results (e.g. 2010)
- Natura 2000 very technical
- Top down approach
- Over-implementation of regulation
- N2000 is static (feature centered approach)
- lack of early and ongoing consultation

Information

- local people don't get right info, kept in ignorance (language is not in lay terms)
- lack of clarity in guidance. designation and now management (e.g. cutting / mowing grasslands). 4 indicators – French wild

flower meadows (the reward was based on the presence of the 4 indicators in the flower meadows without asking how they got there)

- Lack / too much clarity of requirements
- Lack of understanding
- lack of clarity about the process

Communication and awareness

- Also scientifically driven difficult language
- ignorance of N2K and what it is
- repetition of message that there is a HUGE problem (links to levels) see N2K as a solution
- insufficient information on potential impacts (projects and plans)
- Communication
- communication failure
- lack of awareness concerning public ownership (on the part of private owners)
- words and concepts from top to bottom. Adapt language to that of the local stakeholders
- lack of transparency
- many stakeholders (e.g. smallholders) require much investment in communication
- lack of awareness that all is/are interdependent
- lack of consultation between stakeholders

Regulations

- restrictions (new) for hunters in SPA (SCI) even outside NP

Human factors

- lack of trust between stakeholders
- lack of consideration of stakeholder knowledge and expertise (hunters, foresters etc), especially in the designation phase (use hunters for validation)
- distrust in information (e.g. numbers of birds)
- Creating division between stakeholders
- Pre-existing conflicts
- Negotiation = loosing
- Lack of creativity in reaching solutions
- fear of loosing money, power or territory
- representative organisations do not want to loose face regarding their constituencies
- lack of trust
- already existing problems
- human response to change

Social / cultural / historic factors

- history of conflict between stakeholders 'enhances the conflict' 'European version of the same story'
- ignoring local tensions and ignoring previous agreements, solutions

Interpretation / values

- assessment of plans and projects (who'se expert was right?)
- misunderstanding of objectives
- different visions of nature conservation
- Different values between stakeholders
- Misunderstanding of overall aim of Natura 2000
- Different paradigm

Financial / economic factors

- lack of financing for site management
- lack of compensation

Knowledge base

- gathering information for designation process. species -> post management
- quality of knowledge about species (e.g. western Denmark)
- no monitoring before designation of sites: lack of knowledge

- very mobile species (wolf, bear etc) also with migratory bird species

Education and training

- habitats regulations manual? (arguments over the interpretation)

Policy / politics

- politics!
- conflicting top down policies
- lack of courage from (national) governments

Governance / institution

- Relative lack of knowledge by regulators
- Lack of interaction between government levels

Time related

- Time-span between designation and achieving targets is too short
- Lack of time for implementing the process
- Decision timelines do not correspond

Rules and regulations

- Sustainability approach not sufficiently integrated
- Impact assessment
- Bureaucratic burden
- restrictions to farming (and land management in general)
- imbalance between imposed (legal) measures and voluntary action
- lack of strategic planning
- restrictions to the public interest

Physical natural constraints / limitations

- No win-win situation possible
- conflict between designation and existing environmental pressures

Critical success factors to resolve conflicts

Process

- better communication with local with all stakeholders
- clear timeframe for management planning
- clear goals
- early engagement of all stakeholders. Don't wait for technical knowledge
- transparency in the whole process – inclusion
- get actions in fairly early on
- agree on diagnosis / management plan. share monitoring results
- don't do nothing
- conservation status should drive the process
- use allies at the same level for stakeholders
- change management / open mind
- need national capacity / framework in place
- start implementing projects at an early stage
- flexibility in the process (in the means to realize the objective). clear objective to be stated at start
- have a clear and unequivocal process (transparency)
- well communicated public consultation
- vision to be developed with different stakeholders at various levels

Communication

- improvement of bottom up communication
- tell positive / success stories (other sites)
- information, exchange discussion and knowledge
- recognize good in ongoing activities

- educate and communicate
- achieve results and demonstrate them
- early communication: what / how to say
- access to information

Politics / policy

- political commitment at all levels (name and shame)

Knowledge base

- better clearer knowledge of species - linked to trust
- mix scientific and stakeholder knowledge
- sound / evidence based science and practical knowledge + techniques / technical knowledge should support the process
- ecosystem research -> translate to practice

Human / social factors

- give more responsibility to field actors (don't treat them like children)
- highlight local initiatives (don't let specialist guidelines kill them)
- split the scientific from the stakeholders ?
- aim for common ground
- joint solutions (win-win)
- leadership / belief / driver
- EU ombudsperson for Natura 2000
- no European Natura 2000 network organization
- goodwill to listen to the point of view of the other side
- willingness to trust
- willingness to compromise

Resources / Financial / economy

- socio economic integrated: TEEB, payment for ecosystem goods and services, compensation payments
- buy land
- resources (how much?)
- money link to CAP & WFD
- lots of money available
- firm and consistent government support

Interpretation / values

- N2K must be positively discriminated
- defining long term vision
- develop an appealing vision

Regulations

- strict rules / firm objectives lead to innovative solutions

Do's and don'ts > DO's

Flexibility

- incorporate flexibility in the targets and processes
- be flexible
- be flexible when dealing with local initiatives
- be prepared to compromise
- allow time for ideas to take root
- support in a differentiated way
- take into account local, regional and national conditions and variation

Evaluate / adapt

- review resolution from time to time
- update guidelines and involve your public
- evaluate and monitor the effects of Natura 2000 in the EU every year

Communicate

- communicate to motivate people to get involved
- invest time and resources in communication and explanations
- communicate: always talk and get to know your stakeholders on N2K sites. Be honest and open
- acknowledge stakeholders may not like what in proposal... but be clear and consistent if you don't know, say so!
- speak the language of the concerned stakeholders
- be clear at the beginning of a process towards stakeholders what their role will be. For instance: advising or co-writing
- create useful relationships
- communication and dialogue from the first step (the beginning of the projects)
- get politicians at all levels on your side and keep them informed of developments if you don't tell them about the truth someone else will tell them otherwise
- good press coverage is essential, get your story across early and in a positive way
- have regular open meetings with concerned parties to discuss management issues
- clearly express objectives and explain why – fair play
- take the time to listen to stakeholders at the grass root level
- have a clear structured and open and transparent process that allows all parties to put their views across and be considered

Multi dimension

- think about using the system of eco-economic services
- remind that economic activities can be maintained if no impact on habitat and species
- energy, climate: ECO + H₂O + NO_x -> combined effect
- really talk with DG ARGRI and DG MARE. take biodiversity into account in common fisheries policy and common agricultural policy
- enough financial funds to achieve ecological targets and manage Natura 2000 sites

Share

- facilitate sharing experience
- facilitate learning from each other
- install an Natura 2000 task force that can help trouble shooters
- build and support (an) EU network(s) to share, exchange
- motivate land owners
- support exchanges of good practice outside of national borders: enlarge the scale
- establish an ombudsperson at EU level (and support such an initiative at Member State level)

Regulation

- have a pragmatic approach and not a juridical one
- meet the people in the field

Participation

- participation of all people who are involved (administration and stakeholders)
- ensure field officers speak the language of the local stakeholder and are able to fully empathize with their viewpoints
- to make adopt rule of mutual respect between stakeholders
- convince the land users
- include all sectors in spatial strategic planning – to mediate potential conflicts at an appropriate level

Economic benefits

- acquire a generous budget for management and ensure you distribute it equitably
- financial tools developed for focused measures that have a significant effect on biodiversity

Change

- understand the psychology of change management and me then in your approach
- to accompany a process of change with complexity
- more flexibility in the progress (abwägung) and confidence / trust

Management cycle / process

- have the same format and language for all management plans
- have sound and undisputed ecological facts and figures before a debate about measures
- invite local managers to see good practice in the field

- find the opinion leaders
- be flexible in the implementation in the field
- make the measures and time table subject of discussion to actors
- make a decision between fundamental ecological measures and other desirable ecological measures
- discuss in the field with the managers who are involved to identify integrated solutions

Do's and don'ts > DON'Ts

Monolithic

- don't try to think that there is only ONE solution
- don't keep the static approach -> leave door open for innovative solutions beneficial to ecosystems

Evaluation

- don't wait too long with the evaluation/ revision of the Habitats Directive

Communication and consultation

- don't regulate without consultation
- don't ignore the active communication
- do not use euro-jargon
- don't exclude landowners from a scheme

Regulation vs volunteer governance

- don't impose
- don't over regulate
- don't privilege the legislative tools faced to the contractual tools
- don't put additional regulations on the top of the habitat and birds directives
- don't make rules if not implementable and controllable

Support tools collective

- don't start new working groups where other working groups are already there (left hand right hand)
- don't underestimate the need to build a European network of N2K managers, sites and organizations. you need them

Action

- don't stop acting / trying
- don't be slow and late
- don't be afraid from conflicts. try to solve them

Process management

- ensure different stakeholders get conflicting information and make judgment on them. All should be treated equitably and consistently
- to consult the public concerned when all the rules are established
- only open dialogue at the stage you are forced to by the regulation process
- give too much to the stakeholders. Accept to negotiate everything and always
- invest energy in useless conflict (i.e. do not try to convince people that show no goodwill at all)
- top down orders
- consultation as an alibi process

Budgeting

- don't let short term money rule long term ambitions
- don't think that if you give money you'll make people adhere to Natura 2000

Conflict

- don't avoid conflict situations (by switching to another topic)
- don't try and subvert the process to your own ends
- don't change several times the way to implement the network
- don't talk only about the Natura 2000 site itself but also about the surroundings and the connectivity
- don't go along with measures aimed solely at symptoms but go for the sources
- don't avoid conflict but march towards it and try to see it as an opportunity for change

- don't make goals negotiable

Planning

- lack of courage of the local government to value problems between the administration of Natura 2000 and the inhabitants
- don't adopt a dogmatic purely top down approach to management issues
- don't lack of transparency

Trust

- don't promise what you cannot deliver, be conservative in what you say: better to deliver more than less than promised
- don't think you alone have the truth about biodiversity
- don't be evasive or lie! Trust is destroyed this way, even if it makes your life easier in the short term

Local information

- not only restrictions to inhabitants and tourists because of 'that means Natura 2000' (gezetse / verordnungen)
- lack of information to all people who live in Natura 2000 area

Messages and recommendations

Human / social

- show some understanding for the concerns of the people
- local actors must be awarded for what they're doing for society
- visit a Natura 2000 site and show what it does to people each month (9)

Process

- solve the conflicts now, don't leave them for the next guy
- keep the system as simple as possible: KISS (reduce bureaucracy)
- please involve the stakeholders
- enhance the bottom up voice
- make sure that the goals are / remain clear
- there is a need for a local site manager (a person) in charge of the site
- flexibility (act and adapt)
- invest in the process of Natura 2000
- see the opportunities protected areas create. It is a chance not a burden
- come up with a common (shared) vision for Natura 2000
- more open and flexible approach (11)
- adopt practical approach instead of legal (4)
- start dialogue process early
- be tougher on goals, softer on measures
- be balanced, transparent and flexible

Spatio temporal / physical

- give us more time (1)
- take national / site differences into account (1)
- give time to the process

Socio economic

- mention the economic loss caused biodiversity loss (7% GDP per annum according to TEEB) and importance of Natura 2000 to counteract biodiversity loss
- use the current crisis in economy and agriculture to reform the sector with a stronger focus on sustainability and conservation of our natural resources
- set up a Natura 2000 fund to finance good management
- social and economic benefits of Natura 2000 and its importance for quality of life
- social cost benefit analysis

(Financial) resources

- need a budget for Natura 2000 (8)
- more budget, more people
- EU should impose a certain percentage of the CAP to be reserved for Natura 2000

Policy / politics

- greening of politics -> nature conservation into other policies
- ask him (Commissioner Potocnik) to be an ambassador for Natura 2000
- integrate biodiversity into other policies (4)
- ensure cross-compliance with other regulations (3)

Governance /institutional

- close Strasbourg Parliament and spend money on Natura 2000 (7)
- increase EC capacity dealing with Natura 2000 (2)
- keep balance between EU obligations and national approach

Communication

- sell Natura as a brand / label (6)
- need new logo
- more exchanges of ideas and management processes

Stakeholders

- work with a great variety of partners and stakeholders

Approach

- be flexible in the interpretation of (EU) legislation

ANNEX 1: Workshop programme

All workshops were conducted according to the same programme structure. Here the programme of the first (European-wide) workshop (Brussels, 18 June 2009) is given as an example.

Morning session – setting the scene	
09:00 – 09:30	Registration and coffee
09:30 – 09:40	Welcome and opening Dr Leon Braat - ALTERRA
09:40 – 10:00	Introduction to the workshop and participants Ms Aysegul Cil – ECNC
10:00 - 10:20	Natura 2000 in Europe- challenges for implementation Mr Francois Kremer – European Commission, DG Environment
10:20 – 10:40	Introduction to the project “Dealing with conflicts in the implementation and management of the Natura 2000 network - best practices at the local / site level”. and first results” Ir Irene Bouwma – ALTERRA
10:40 – 11:00	Coffee break
11:00 – 11:30	Keynote presentation Mr Bernie Fleming - Natural England
11:30 – 12:00	Keynote presentation Mr Mark Thomasin-Foster - European Landowners Organisation
12:00 – 12:30	Questions and discussions – with moderation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on common themes • Set common issues and problems
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch
Afternoon session – Working groups Workshop facilitator: Dr Lawrence Jones-Walters – ECNC	
13:30 – 13:45	Introduction to the working groups
13:45 – 14:45	Working groups (with facilitation): Critical success factors in avoiding, managing and resolving conflict in N2K implementation.
14:45 – 15:00	Coffee break
15:00 – 16:00	Working groups (with facilitation): Key stakeholders and sectors: benefits and threats of N2K implementation. Learning points, solutions and recommendations.
16:00 – 16:45	Feedback from the 2 working groups Recommendations for the project and regional workshops – the way forward
16:45 – 17:00	Closing – recap of the day Dr Leon Braat - ALTERRA
17:00 – 17:30	Drinks and snacks

ANNEX 2: Workshop Participant Lists

Brussels, 18 June 2009	
Dr Rob van Apeldoorn Researcher - Alterra The Netherlands	Mr Benno Geerstma Policy Adviser - Natuurpunt Belgium
Mr Gabor von Bethlenfalvy Project Manager (Conservation) - Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU Belgium	Mr Dirk Hilbers Director - Crossbill Guides Foundation The Netherlands
Mr Richard Blackman Deputy Director - Europarc Belgium	Dr Lawrence Jones-Walters Senior Programme Manager - ECNC-European Centre for Nature Conservation The Netherlands
Ir Irene Bouwma Researcher - Alterra The Netherlands	Mr Jan Kappel Secretary General - European Anglers Alliance – EAA Belgium
Dr Leon Braat Senior Researcher International Nature Policy - Alterra The Netherlands	Mr François Kremer Nature and Biodiversity Unit - European Commission Belgium
Mr Emile Bruls Senior Project Leader - Kenniscentrum Recreatie The Netherlands	Ir Johan Lammerant Business Development Manager - Arcadis Belgium
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Mr Julio de la Cueva National Port Expert - European Commission Belgium	Mr Leonardo Mazza Consultant - BIO Intelligence Service France
Mr Bernie Fleming Senior Specialist - Natural England United Kingdom	Ms Bianca Nijhof Senior Adviseur Ecologie - Arcadis The Netherlands
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Budapest, 9 December 2009

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