

The workshop was organized by the ENRD Contact Point and it was a joint initiative of DG AGRI and DG ENV. The workshop was a concrete follow up to the [Commission Action Plan for nature, people and the economy](#) and it aimed to mark a step further in the cooperation between a wide range of stakeholders, agricultural and environmental authorities, in the effort to increase synergies between the Natura Directives and their implementation and the Rural Development Policy.

In this context, the workshop explored how to:

- make an effective use of the support possibilities for Natura 2000 under the CAP;
- promote innovative approaches to supporting Natura 2000;
- enhance knowledge and improve the design and implementation of Natura related measures supported under Rural Development Programmes (RDPs).

### Event Information

**Title:** Natura 2000: making an effective use of the support possibilities under the Rural Development policy

**Date:** 28 September 2017

**Location:** Brussels, Belgium

**Organisers:** ENRD Contact Point

**Chair:** Humberto Delgado Rosa (Director, DG ENV) & Mario Milouchev (Director, DG AGRI)

**Participants:** 66 - including Managing Authorities, project managers, EU organisations' policy experts, European institutions, Local Authorities and advisory services.

**Outcomes:** A set of indications on how RDP measures can be more effectively used to further promote synergies between Rural Development policy and the Natura 2000 objectives and needs.

**Web page:** [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/enrd-workshop-natura-2000\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/enrd-workshop-natura-2000_en)

## The policy framework on supporting Natura 2000 areas

### The Birds and Habitats Directives and Nature Action Plan

*Jérémie Crespin, DG ENV*



The Natura 2000 network is today largely complete. However, most habitats and species associated with agricultural ecosystems in Europe are still in an unfavorable conservation status. This is mainly due to the limited financial resources available for Natura, to gaps in the practical implementation of the Nature Directives; and to the insufficient integration of nature objectives into other EU policies.

The Nature Action Plan for nature, people and the economy focuses on the most important issues affecting the Nature Directives implementation. Because of the important role of the Common Agricultural Policy, a specific action is dedicated to the EAFRD. RDPs could further support: measures dedicated to Natura 2000 including result based schemes, management plans; the coexistence of people with large carnivores; and forest measures for nature protection.

### The rural development toolbox available for Natura

*Krzysztof Sulima, DG AGRI*



Links between nature conservation, forestry and farming are very strong and this is reflected in the CAP architecture. The sustainable management of Natura 2000 sites is addressed by the CAP under Rural Development priority P4 – Ecosystems management and, specifically, by the Focus Areas (FA) 'Restoring, preserving and enhancing biodiversity' (FA4A).

The numerous categories of measures constitute the RDP toolbox for Natura such as: a) land management (including the specific Natura 2000 and Water Framework Directive measure, organic farming and agri-environment-climate measure); b) knowledge transfer and advisory; c) non-productive investments; d) co-operation; e) compensatory measures for areas with natural constraints; f) forest-related measures.

## Approaches taken to fund Natura 2000

### RDP support and Natura 2000 the Bavarian approach

[Wolfram G thler](#), Bavarian Ministry of Environment, Germany



The Agri-environment-climate Measure is the main tool used in Bavaria to support agricultural land in Natura 2000 areas. A modular system of payments has been developed in which about 50 different management practices can be combined to match the needs of each specific parcel. The maximum eligible payment amount to EUR 900 / ha.

This approach has proven very effective with high acceptance number of more than 18 000 farmers participating and an annual premium of EUR 41 million. Challenges include ensuring the simplicity of the measure without compromising controllability and verifiability.

### Natura 2000 under RDP 2014 – 2020 in Poland

[Anna Jobda](#), Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Poland



In Poland, the AEC Measure is made of 7 packages which include together 28 variants. In case of nature conservation schemes their implementation is customized to individual farm. Farms are supported by Agri-environmental advisors, ornithologists and botanists to develop a custom-made Agri-environmental plan, the ‘Habitats/birds statement and documentation. The Habitats/Birds documentation is used for monitoring the implementation of the AECM. The individualized approach at farm level ensures the achievement of the stated objectives of the measures. The drawback to this approach is the higher implementation costs both at administrative level and at the farm due to the documentation requirements.

### Hamster’s protection in Alsace: Use of AECM in a collective approach

[Anne Gautier](#), Departmental Directory of Territory, Alsace, France

The French approach to protect the Alsace Hamster is based on conciliating biodiversity and the economic activity of the area. The AECM is used collectively in order to improve the quality of the habitat, considering the annual relocation of the animals.

According to the scheme, the collective of farmers needs to grow at least 24% of favorable winter crops in order to ensure availability of food for the hamsters during the spring period. Key issues that required attention include the complexity of the legal framework; the time required to coordinate a wide range of stakeholders and authorities; and maintain the high level of motivation among farmers.



## Using Results Based Payment Schemes for Natura 2000

### Results-based agri-environment schemes

[Vujadin Kovacevic](#), DG ENV



DG ENV has developed a toolkit for designing and implementing results-based agri-environment payment schemes (RBAPS). It further collects available information, know-how and successful examples, all of which are shared through the dedicated [online platform](#). The RBAPS approach aims at rewarding farmers for the achievement of concrete improvements in farmland biodiversity conditions, measurable through robust result indicators. Pilot projects have been launched by DG ENV for the period 2014-2018 in four Member States (Ireland, Spain, Romania, England) to further explore practical aspects of the application of the RBAPS toolkit. The results will be made available on the [dedicated webpage](#). The development of the toolkit and the pilot projects have been funded by the European Parliament. The platform is meant to help anyone interested in implementing RBAPS by providing guidance for scheme design, implementation and monitoring.

### Results-based nature conservation plan in Austria

[Isabella Grandl](#), Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Env. and Water



The Result-based Nature Conservation Plan in Austria motivates farmers by engaging them in the achievement of specific objectives and specific, quantifiable results. The three-step selection process includes a visit to the farm with experts to determine and document the objectives and control criteria at parcel level; registration for participation and submission of the details; and receiving a personalized ‘logbook’.

Although the scheme is not suitable for all AECM topics and is mainly suitable for grassland and permanent meadows, it provides more visible results, more autonomy and flexibility, as well as verifiable control criteria not influenced by external factors.

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## Outcomes from parallel group discussions

### 1. Innovative approaches to supporting Natura 2000 - examples from LIFE

#### Introductory presentations

- LIFE project GESTIRE 2020, Nature Integrated Management to 2020 - [Mattia Bertocchi](#), *Regional Office for Agricultural and Forestry Services, Lombardy*
- Agri-environmental scheme for the Red-breasted Goose in Bulgaria - [Nikolai Petkov](#), *RSPB / SEO BirdLife Bulgaria*

#### Key messages

- The LIFE programme is a useful test-bed for scientists and land managers to work together on finding innovative solutions to Natura 2000 management. Importantly, the timescale of LIFE projects allows sufficient time to ‘get it right’.
- Transferring Natura 2000 support from LIFE to RDP is not a one-step process. Time is needed for phasing-in, negotiating the fit with RDP rules and transferring knowledge, skills and understanding of Natura 2000 management to RDP staff, advisers and other land managers not involved in the LIFE project.
- Result-based payment schemes for Natura 2000 could be trialed through LIFE or pilot RDP schemes.
- Successful innovative support means investing in advisors and facilitators to build and maintain trust and shared ‘ownership’ of Natura 2000 management between RDP authorities and Natura 2000 farmers/foresters.

### 2. Bringing Natura 2000 to the public

#### Introductory presentations

- Organic farming and wildlife conservation. Experience of Riet Vell - [Juan Carlos Cirera](#), *Riet Vell S.A.*
- Natura 2000 effective use of support possibilities under rural development policy - [Brendan Dunford](#), *Burren Programme*

#### Key messages

- Successful marketing of Natura 2000 products requires a good marketing plan developed by farmers and other partners, plus a clear brand image. Organic certification boosts consumer recognition, while RDP support can add economic security and conservation benefits.
- Low public awareness of Natura 2000 as a ‘brand’ makes it difficult to create a market for new products - a flagship species or NGO logo can help.
- Barriers to using the Natura 2000 logo for quality products include: lack of clarity on who is authorised to use it, and when; and a fear that intensive farmers not contributing to Natura 2000 conservation can also use the logo.
- Positive local perceptions of Natura 2000 are fostered by supporting conservation management, adding value to produce, involving the local community and celebrating cultural heritage.



### 3. Coexistence with large carnivores

#### Introductory presentations

- EU Platform on co-existence of people and large carnivores - [Katrina Marsden](#), *Adelphi research institute*
- Wolf and rural development programme in Emilia Romagna region - [Maria Luisa Zanni](#), *Local Authority*

#### Key messages

- EAFRD opportunities for supporting coexistence are widespread, yet large scope remains to extend their use, both in terms of uptake and scope.
- EAFRD is mostly used for practical protection, but other key measures such as awareness-raising, monitoring or stakeholder cooperation remain underfunded.
- The EARFD is mainly used to support large one-off investments such as fencing. For smaller investments, the administrative burden of using EARFD is deemed too high.
- Three key, intertwined challenges are: increasing awareness of RDP opportunities; improving buy-in from farming communities; and reducing administrative barriers.
- The growing interest in results-based payments is relevant for co-existence, however currently there is very limited use of it. This could be a priority for future research.

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## Conclusions: supporting Natura 2000 objectives through the RDPs

- The **status of species and habitats** of EU importance associated with agriculture is continuing to decline and greater efforts are still needed to reverse this trend.
- Farmers as well as the broader society have **inadequate understanding** of the Natura 2000 network's great importance for biodiversity and socio-economic potentials such as on tourism, quality products, etc.
- Nature Directives have the full capacity to reverse the decline and enhance biodiversity, however this requires to substantially **improve implementation**.
- A wide range of **RD tools and instruments** are available by the current programmes which can be effectively used for nature conservation purposes.
- **Modifications to the ongoing rural developments programmes** is an opportunity to be exploited in order to focus more strongly on efforts to improving the environmental performance of agriculture and forestry.
- Rural development measures for **forestry** show low uptake in relation to Natura objectives compared to those on agricultural land.
- Using **voluntary AECM** for delivering nature conservation objectives seem to offer more flexibility and better scope for targeting compared to the RD Natura payments measure.
- Excessive **administrative burden** needs to be tackled through the further simplification of the CAP rules, including in rural development, without however compromising controllability and verifiability.
- **Result-based** type of commitments is a very advantageous approach when pursuing agri-environmental objectives, nevertheless there are some limitations as it cannot always fit to all environmental objectives.
- Feasibility of giving **incentives to farmers** for delivering nature conservation objectives above the minimum standards could be an option to further explore.
- The **LIFE programme** is a powerful tool for piloting and testing new approaches which can then be rolled-out on a larger scale using rural development support.
- **State Aid** can also be a means to support Natura 2000 areas and it would be worth exploring whether exception from EU rules in this case can be beneficial and possible.
- Good **cooperation and communication** among all involved stakeholders i.e. farmers, implementation bodies, environmental organisations are key to conserve biodiversity and habitats in good condition.

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### Visit DG AGRI and DG ENV web pages on Rural Development and Natura 2000:

[https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rural-development-2014-2020\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rural-development-2014-2020_en)

[https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rural-development-2014-2020/country-files\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rural-development-2014-2020/country-files_en)

[https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/rural-development-2014-2020/country-files/common/rdp-factsheet\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/rural-development-2014-2020/country-files/common/rdp-factsheet_en.pdf)

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/index_en.htm)

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2017:198:FIN>

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/rbaps/fiche/search/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/rbaps/fiche/search/index_en.htm)

<https://rbaps.eu/>

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### Visit the ENRD thematic page on Natura 2000:

[https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/enrd-workshop-natura-2000\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/enrd-workshop-natura-2000_en)