European Environment Agency
European Topic Centre on
Biological Diversity

NEWSLETTER

September 2022

Consolida regalis, Wilde ridderspoor, Saxifraga-Jasenka Topic

Edito

The French National History Museum (MNHN) was honoured, almost 27 years ago, to be nominated to lead the Consortium of the European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity (ETC/BD). The mid-1990s were rich in initiatives aimed at setting and putting in motion the concrete international protection of species and habitats. In Europe this was translated into the Habitats Directive in 1994, which completed the Birds Directive dating from 1979, to constitute what is referred to as "European Nature Directives".

It was already understood then that the challenges were great, that such purposes should be tackled as collectively as possible, and that it was high time to establish efficient teams and tools to engage and monitor the implementation of these Directives. Even though the challenges are even greater now for the preservation of biodiversity, the work accomplished to monitor and report the efforts in Europe is remarkable and serves as a commendable example of international cooperation.

The Museum, along with the consortium partners from all over Europe, has been active all these years, in contributing to the structuring, revising and analysing of the Directives implementation reporting. Supported by the French Ministry of Environment, it has developed an international dedicated team to undertake this. Numerous colleagues have contributed during their career to this initiative, both within the Museum and in the consortium partners' institutions. For some, it represents a greater part of their professional lives, for others their participation in the ETC/BD project was shorter, but nonetheless valuable.

The Museum has led the ETC/BD core team and the Consortium in partnership with the European Environment Agency through support to three reporting rounds to implement the Nature Directives, and has been preparing the fourth since 2019. As we look back on the progress made at the European level to accompany the structuring of the reporting process for biodiversity, and involving so many expert contributors, we can be proud of this accomplishment.

As the ETC renewal is dependent on a call for proposals, 2022 will be the last year for the Museum and its associated partners in the Consortium to lead this important task in serving the European Biodiversity Strategy. We now pass this responsibility on to a new Consortium and wish them the best for the coming years.

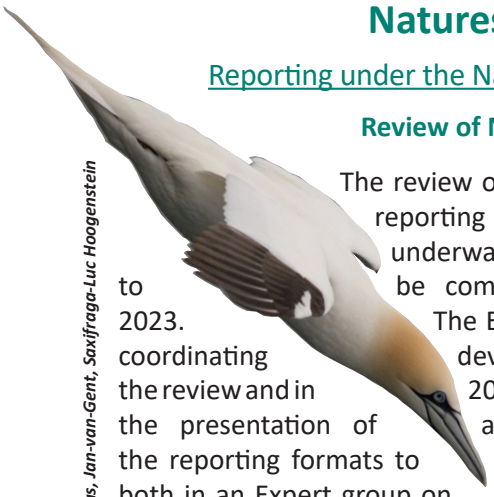
On the Museum side, it will remain committed to building knowledge and support policy for the conservation of biodiversity from local level to European and international partnerships.

Bruno David, President, Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle (MNHN)

Natures Directives

Reporting under the Nature Directives

Review of Nature reporting



Morus bassanus, Jan-van-Gent, Saxifraga-Luc Hoogenstein

The review of the 2013-2018 reporting process is still underway and expected to be completed in early 2023. The ETC/BD has been coordinating developments in the review and in 2022 this includes the presentation of a final draft of the reporting formats to Member States both in an Expert group on Reporting on March 25th, Habitats Committee on April 5th and in an ad-hoc Expert Group June 22nd. The Nature Reporting guidelines for both Articles 12 and 17 underwent a first round of consultation with Member States for Part A field by field guidance. Part B the concepts and definitions will be progressed with throughout the summer and presented to Member States in the autumn EGR. With regards to Article 12 reporting, while improvements have been made to the reporting on wintering species, no changes in reporting for passage species will be implemented for 2019-2024 reporting. ETC/BD experts have compiled a concept note looking at different options for reporting on Annex I and II passage species for the 2025 reporting period, on which Member States were consulted in March 25th EGR. This work will continue to evolve in time for the next reporting period.

Both 2021 and 2022 have seen an additional Expert Group on Reporting meeting with Member States in June, in order to devote more time to improving reporting and discussing proposed changes to reporting such as the change to reporting population in individuals.

Data Quality factsheets

An exercise on data quality has been undertaken to identify gaps in reporting data for groups of species and habitats, as well as a coherence check between the Nature Directive reporting and data submitted under the Natura 2000 database. The aim is to identify the groups of habitats and species with data quality issues in order to improve monitoring and ensure a complete dataset for the current reporting period. Data quality issues can include where specific fields in the Article 12 and 17 formats are incorrectly completed, gaps in data entry for critical feeds or a lack of coherence with the latest Natura 2000 database. A series of dashboards have been made available to Member States to peruse and data quality factsheets summarising the main points of these dashboards will be made available after summer.

The dashboards can be viewed here.

Emerald and Bern Convention

1st Emerald seminar for Iceland

Iceland ratified the Bern Convention in 1993 and it has now designated its first Emerald sites (ASCIs, Area of Special Conservation Interest) to build a network of sites aim to protect the habitats and species occurring in the country and included in the Resolutions 4 and 6 of this Convention. These designated sites are located in the centre and North-East of the country and are already object of national designation:

Guðlaugstungur - Álfgeirstungur: among largest and most diverse palsa mires in Iceland. Globally important breeding and feeding site for Anser brachyrhynchus.

Mývatn-Laxá: diverse freshwater and wetland habitat system in a volcanically active zone. Site of global importance for waterbirds. Most important site in Iceland for Bucephala islandica, Podiceps auratus, also very important site for Aythya marila, Histrionicus and Gavia immer.

Vatnajökulsþjóðgarður: largest protected area in Iceland characterised by unique glacial and volcanic features, includes the largest ice cap in Europe. Very important site for geothermal alpine habitat types. Largest breeding colony of Branta leucopsis in Iceland. Important breeding and moulting site for Anser brachyrhynchus. It is also an important breeding site for the harbor seal.

Þjórsárver: highland wetland area with high plant diversity. Among the largest palsa mires in Iceland. Important breeding site for Anser brachyrhynchus.

Vestmannsvatn: lake site, important for birds.

25 features were included in the standard data forms of these five ASCIs, distributed as 17 habitats, 7 bird species and 1 non-avian species.

In the context of the framework contract signed between the European Environmental Agency and the Council of Europe, and being Iceland an EIONET country, the European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity has evaluated these 25 features in the five ASCI and proposed some additional habitats and species included in the resolutions and potentially present in the country.

A biogeographical seminar was organised in order to discuss the evaluated features among the evaluators (ETC/BD), the Icelandic government, independent experts and NGO to agree on the final conclusions. The objectives were to evaluate the sufficiency of the current 5 sites with respect to the habitats and species included in the proposed Emerald sites and in addition, to add other species and habitats potentially present in the country but not included already in the proposed sites. As a result, the first Reference List for Iceland has been compiled.

Since Iceland has only one biogeographical region (Arctic), there is a unique Artic Reference List, which includes habitat types, plant species, bird species and non-avian species.

The seminar resulted in a well prepared and fruitful discussion among participants, mainly due to the fine-scale information system on biodiversity held by the Icelandic government and its commitment to progress with this process.

Conclusions from the seminar will be soon available at the Bern Convention site.

SEBI indicators

Some indicators from the SEBI set were updated in 2022, according to the new EEA template for all the 122 indicators that are maintained by the Agency and in the light of very recent available data. As such, SEBI 007 (Nationally designated terrestrial protected areas in Europe) was updated according to the consolidated Nationally designated areas dataflow (CDDA), and made available online in May 2022. The main change is that, at the national level, the indicator now only shows the share of Protected land between Natura 2000 and other national designations, without mentioning any overlapping status that is only linked to the way national authorities have integrated Natura 2000 sites in their legislation and how they have reported them. SEBI 008 (Natura 2000 sites designated under the EU Habitats & Birds Directives) is now also available online, and shows the most recent statistics on the Natura 2000 network following the withdrawal of the UK in 2020. SEBI 017 and 018 (Forest growing stock & Forest deadwood) are just about to be published, and are now based on statistics showing harmonized data for the year 2015. The next one on the list is SEBI 001 (Abundance and distribution of selected species in Europe), as new bird species data are now available for the years 2018-2019 based on monitoring information, and for the first time including Croatia (PanEuropean Common Bird Monitoring Scheme).

Forest deadwood, an essential omponent of forest ecosystems (SEBI 018)

All harmonised and updated indicators are available online: https://biodiversity.europa.eu/track/streamlined-european-biodiversity-indicators

Ecosystem Assessments

Ecosystem monitoring and assessments

New cooperation-based biodiversity governance framework

The EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 announced that an enhanced cooperation-based biodiversity governance framework should be put in place, to steer the implementation of biodiversity commitments and support administrative capacity building, transparency, stakeholder dialogue and participatory governance at different levels. As such, the new EU Biodiversity Platform (EUBP) has been set up in April 2022 (1st meeting on 26-27 April), bringing together the European Commission, Member States' representatives and the European Environment Agency (EEA), as well as various stakeholders and other entities. The members of the EUBP are meant to provide advice to the Commission on the development and implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and related initiatives, and to foster an exchange of views and coordinate issues related to the implementation of the Nature Directives (Birds Directive and Habitats Directive).

In addition, the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 also announced that the Commission, in cooperation with Member States, should develop methods, criteria and standards to describe the essential features of biodiversity (services, values, sustainable management and use, including measuring the ecological footprint through life-cycle approaches and natural capital accounting). A dedicated expert group of the "EU Biodiversity Platform" called **"sub-group on Monitoring and Assessment for Biodiversity"** was therefore put in place in May 2022 (first meeting on May 17th), bringing together the Commission, the European Environment Agency (EEA), Member States' authorities, stakeholders and experts on knowledge-related topics. The purpose of this sub-group is to support the implementation and monitoring of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030 and structured along two main work streams:

- Develop and implement of a **"policy monitoring and review mechanism for the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030"**, including a clear set of agreed indicators, regularly updated and upgraded;
- Develop and apply an **"EU methodology to map, assess and achieve good condition of ecosystems"**, so they can deliver higher levels of benefits such as climate regulation, water regulation, soil health, pollination and disaster prevention and protection.

This sub-group comes in a new landscape of knowledge sharing and co-construction processes for providing policy relevant information on biodiversity monitoring and assessment, as are the 2 new **EIONET Groups on Biodiversity and Ecosystems** of the EEA, and the ***"Ad hoc group***

on biodiversity monitoring" put in place by the Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD). Those different expert groups are working under the umbrella of two major H2020 Projects that are Biodiversa + (Plan and support research and innovation on biodiversity) and EuropaBON (design an EU-wide framework for monitoring biodiversity and ecosystem services).

Support to the European Commission restoration agenda

The Proposal of the EU Commission for a Nature Restoration Law was finally published on June 22nd. This proposal, a key element of the EU Biodiversity Strategy, is the first continent-wide and comprehensive law of its kind, calling for binding targets to restore degraded ecosystems in the EU. This future EU Regulation should combine an overarching restoration objective, for the long-term recovery of nature in the EU's land and sea areas, with binding restoration targets for specific habitats and species related to wetlands, forests, grasslands, rivers and lakes, heaths & scrubs, rocky habitats and dunes, as well as to oceans, agroecosystems and urban areas, but also specifically to pollinating species. These measures should cover at least 20 % of the EU's land and sea areas by 2030, and ultimately all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050.

EU countries are expected to submit National Restoration Plans (NRPs) to the Commission within two years of the Regulation coming into force, showing how they will deliver on the targets. Those NRPs should cover different fields of action, like the quantification of the areas to be restored by ecosystem types and the description of the restoration measures to achieve those targets, but also an estimation of financing needs and timing for the implementation of such measures, as well as a description of the process for monitoring and assessing their effectiveness. But Member-States should also detail additional fields like the specification of restoration measures to be put in place within the Natura 2000 network, the estimate of restored "free-flowing" length of rivers based on detailed inventories of barriers and removal strategies, as well as how their Restoration Plans are relevant regarding climate change scenarios and how they will contribute to minimise climate change impacts on nature, prevent natural disasters and support adaptation.

In this context, the ETC/BD is compiling regular Restoration digests on Ecosystem restoration, covering ongoing activities related to ecosystem restoration, relevant NGO position papers and scientific proposals for restoration targets, grey literature or corporate papers or ongoing discussions on global restoration targets. A second edition of the ETC/BD digest series has just been issued (available on the ETC/BD Library within the EIONET Forum), giving a brief overview of existing laws, strategies and tools which refer to ecosystem restoration, within national or regional authorities and aligned to the different fields to be addressed by the future NRPs detailed above. This digest also contains an in-depth analysis on the current status of national river restoration activities across the EU, provided by ETC/ICM, as well as various examples from countries and regions outside the EU. In addition to this Digest, ETC/BD and ETC/ICM are also starting to draft the actual format of the NRPs, first by reorganising and detailing the different elements that should be requested to Member-States, and also inspired by the formats of other existing reporting flows (Nature Directives & Natura 2000).

Supporting implementation of the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030

In May 2020, the European Commission adopted a new EU Biodiversity Strategy setting out a comprehensive package of actions and commitments to redouble Europe's efforts to protect and restore biodiversity by 2030.

The first pillar of the Biodiversity Strategy deals with the protection of nature in the EU.

Île de la Possession (Crozet archipelago) - National Nature Reserve of the French Southern lands © B. Huet

Pillar I: Protecting Nature in the EU - key commitments by 2030:

1. Legally protect a minimum of 30 % of the EU's land area and 30 % of the EU's sea area and integrate ecological corridors, as part of a true Trans-European Nature Network.
2. Strictly protect at least a third of the EU's protected areas, including all remaining EU primary and old-growth forests.
3. Effectively manage all protected areas, defining clear conservation objectives and measures, and monitoring them appropriately.

Under its second pillar, 'Restoring nature in the EU', the strategy lays out a plan of actions to restore the EU biodiversity, including among others specific actions targeting habitats and species protected under EU nature legislation. The strategy calls Member States to ensure that protected habitats and species show no deterioration in conservation trends and status; and that at least 30 % reach favourable conservation status or at least show a positive trend.

Following the publication of the relevant Commission Guidance in 2021, Member States shall submit their national pledges related to both protecting nature and improving conservation status and trends by the end of 2022. Thereafter, the Member States' pledges will be reviewed in the biogeographical seminars to be organised by the Commission during the first half of 2023.

The ETC/BD currently supports the preparation of Reportnet 3.0 for the pledges reporting. This includes a reporting template, which will be used by the Member States to submit their pledges and related guidelines. The reporting will open in November and by the end of the year the ETC/BD will develop a first set of dashboards to visualise the results. In addition, ETC/BD supports the preparation of methodological documents contributing to planned review of the pledges in the biogeographical seminars.

Circular Economy and Biodiversity

One of the new topics addressed by the ETC/BD in 2022 is the link between Biodiversity and Circular Economy, in line with the increasingly and unavoidable need for transdisciplinary in addressing the biodiversity crisis. A Circular economy is defined as an economic system that is regenerative by design, and aims to keep products, components and materials at their highest quality and value at all times. It is a system that also minimises the use of materials and energy while reducing environmental pressures linked to resource extraction, emissions and waste, and decouples economic activities from resource use and waste generation. The EU's transition to a circular economy is supported by the new Circular economy action plan (CEAP), which will certainly have multiple benefits for biodiversity. Thus, those benefits still need to be better documented and understood, as well as the limitations of the Circular economy principles to address only by themselves the biodiversity crisis.

The ETC/BD is therefore involved in a task led by the new ETC on Circular Economy, in the form of a report documenting the synergies and trade-offs between Circular economy and biodiversity conservation and restoration. Based on a reminder of the main drivers of Biodiversity loss in the EU and its consequences on ecosystem functioning and the delivery of ecosystem services, the report focuses on how current production and consumption patterns of EU citizens actually impact biodiversity in Europe and worldwide, concerning especially the Food system, Fashion and Infrastructure development (transportation and housing). The report then explores how Circular economy can contribute to reducing those pressures, which are the potential limitations or trade-offs between Circular economy and biodiversity conservation strategies, and how Circular economy can play a part in actively enhancing biodiversity in Europe together with other EU policies (Nature Restoration Law, Farm to Fork Strategy, Zero Pollution Action Plan, EU taxonomy for sustainable activities, etc.). A first draft of the report was provided to the EEA in June, and the final version should be reviewed and discussed during an expert workshop organised in October 2022.

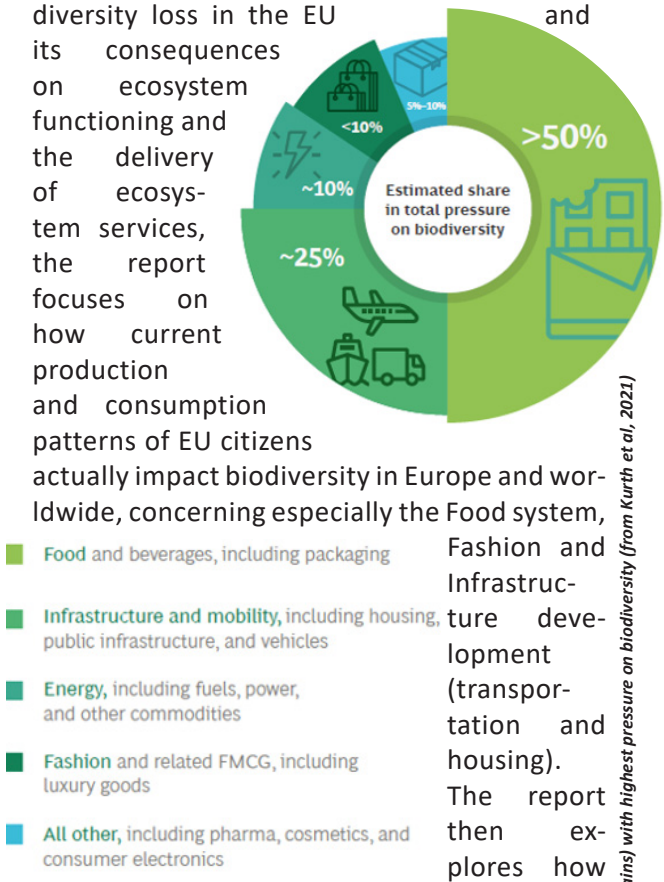


Figure 4: Value chains (or Consumption domains) with highest pressure on biodiversity (from Kurth et al, 2021)

EUNIS habitats development

Inland waters habitat group revision

The revision of the inland waters habitat group is at a final stage. It has been a tricky process for this group as the system to discriminate habitats at levels 3 and 4 differs to the terrestrial system, and more aligned with the marine system. At level 3, the discriminating factors are geology and altitude, with catchment area as an additional one for running waters. The is largely based on the Broad Type system derived from national types under the Water Framework Directive (Lyche-Solheim et al. 2019). At level 4, area and depth are used to distinguish habitat types for standing waters and flow for running waters. Questions around the inclusion of habitats types under the EUNIS definition of 'inland waters' habitat have been frequently discussed throughout the revision. An example of this is with floodplain habitats. While an integral part of the running waters ecosystem, by the EUNIS habitat definition, these habitats are better described as habitat complexes, and are therefore placed in the habitat complex group with a crosslink between floodplain types (from Globvenik et al, 2021) and associated running water habitat types at level 3.

This is the second-last habitat group to be finalised in the EUNIS habitat revision project which has been underway since 2012. The next step is to complete crosswalks to other habitat typologies (Red List of habitats, Broad Types, IUCN, CLC, Corine Landcover) and finalise the inland waters group allows for outstanding issues to be addressed with the appropriate placement of habitats in other connected groups (e.g. sparsely vegetated, wetland habitat) as well as complete the development of final group: habitat complexes. The consortium partners involved for the terrestrial revision in 2022 are WENR and MNHN, for updated to the marine habitat group classification SLU and for the inland waters revision MNHN, WENR in collaboration with ETC/ICM.

Other EUNIS updates

Updated information has been made available for the published terrestrial and marine habitat groups. A complete set of revised terrestrial habitats (coastal, grassland, forest, heathland, sparsely vegetated and vegetated man-made) are available with crosslinks to the former EUNIS. Additionally, separate files with crosslinks to Habitats Directive Annex I habitats and the Red List of habitats have been published.

An update to the 2019 published revised EUNIS marine habitats (concerning mostly the Atlantic regional sea) was published in March, Crosslinks to Annex I habitat types and the Red List of habitats have also been made available.

For more information, please clic here.

News from EIONET

EEA strategy and Eionet modernisation - the new Eionet Groups

The European Environment Information and Observation Network (Eionet) is a network constituted by the European Environment Agency (EEA) and its 38 member and cooperating countries. Together with National Focal Points (NFPs) in the countries, the EEA is responsible for developing Eionet and coordinating its activities to gather and develop data, knowledge, and advice to policy makers about Europe's environment.

To answer the Strategic Objectives of the EEA-Eionet Strategy for 2021-2030, and in particular "OS3 Building stronger networks and partnerships" : "Strengthen our network through more active engagement at the country level and work with other leading organisations in order to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and expertise", a modernisation of its functioning is ongoing. New priorities were set: to increase the capacities on solutions towards sustainability, as well as new working methods, encouraging flexibility, responsiveness, joint learning, innovation, co-creation... This modernisation targets at developing a more joint/co-led network community aiming to ensure greater and clearer value for the countries.

The new structure of the Eionet was endorsed by the EEA's Management Board in December 2021, with 13 Eionet Groups. In the area of Biodiversity and Ecosystem, it is now operating with two new Eionet Groups on Biodiversity and Ecosystems: **Eionet Group Integration of knowledge for Policies** and **Eionet Group Cumulative pressures and solutions** and 4 thematic groups: Biodiversity monitoring, Water, Marine and Forest ecosystems.

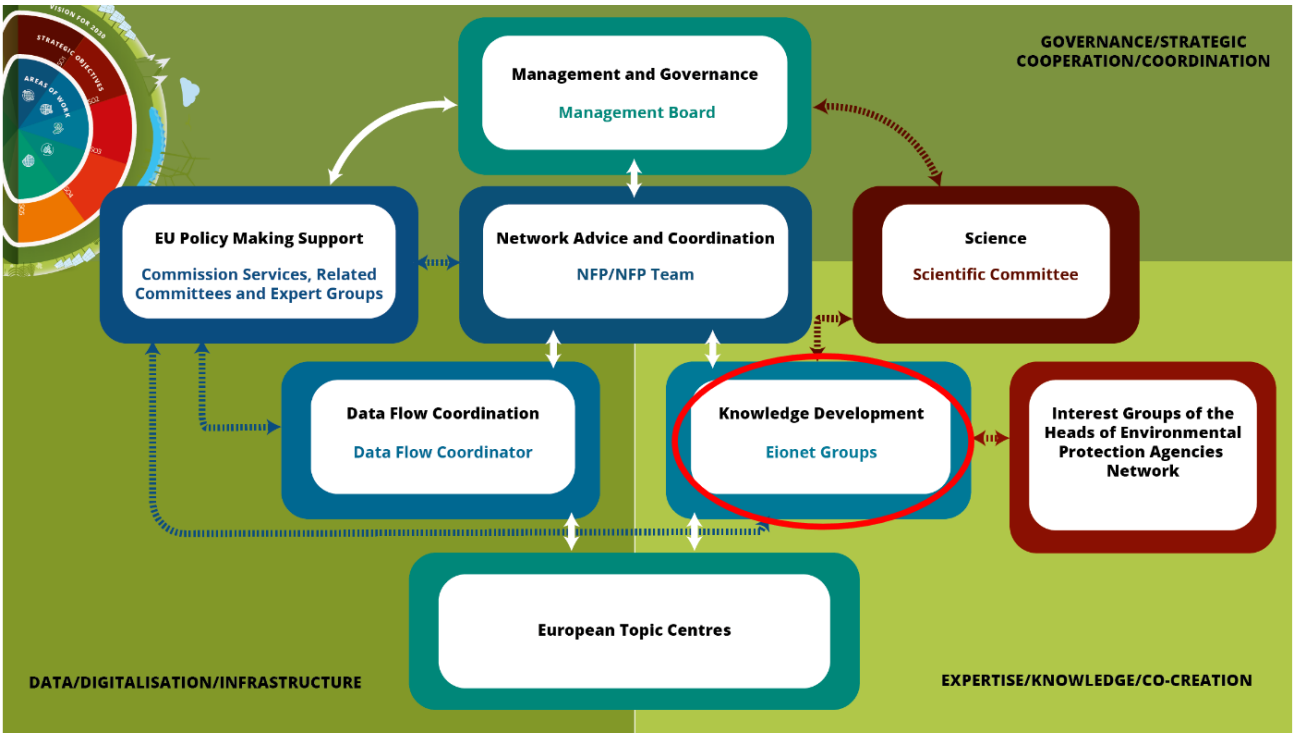
Member States received the profiles of the Eionet Groups in November 2021 to guide them on the nomination of at least one representative to each Eionet Group and Thematic Group, to allow the groups to be functional from the 1st January 2022.

The **Eionet Group on Integration of knowledge for Policies** focus is on integration through enhanced data assessment, digitalisation, information systems and indicators covering biodiversity, land, marine and freshwater ecosystem states and impacts. The group will in particular support systemic and integrated approach of the EU, EEA, regional and global biodiversity strategy and sectors (forests, agriculture, fisheries) on balancing protection, restoration and maintenance of biodiversity and nature. The group will more specifically look at data acquisition beyond the environmental acquis.

The **Eionet Group on Integration of knowledge for Policies** inception meeting was held on 3rd June, to inform the group members on its objectives, define priorities for the work in the frame of the group, and possibly identify leaders for specific work subjects. The interactive nature of exchanges (i.e. polls, online board comple-

tion, voting) allowed the members to identify together different priorities for their common work agenda, for example the restoration of biodiversity and the translation of EU targets to Member States level was noted of importance in the discussions, along with other thematic areas (reporting, alignment on thematic).

Counting almost 100 designated members, the **Eionet Group on Cumulative pressures and solutions** inception meeting took place on 17th May. The objective of this first meeting was to inform on the new settings of work, welcome new members and share the EEA's planned activities to define priorities together. Several areas of work were considered by the members as priorities, concerning pressures, climate change, nature-based solutions and ecosystem accounting. These will be refined and developed in the coming exchanges with the Group.



The **Eionet Group on Cumulative pressures and solutions** will focus on:

- integration of natural ecosystems;
- focusing on drivers of biodiversity and ecosystems changes, cumulative/combined pressures;
- supporting implementation of actions, management measures and their evaluation i.e. Responses;
- co-creating of knowledge about drivers of environmental changes and enablers for solutions for healthy ecosystems;
- supporting transition to sustainable use and management of aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems with regards to climate change, socio-economic drivers and pollution.

A series of meetings in 2022 will serve to create a common understanding of the working methods for the coming years. The intention is to include the Group members in the planning phase to have them have a direct influence on the projects to come, and help ensure these directly add value to the national contexts.

News from our partners

MNHN

Manifestos

Initiated by the President of the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, Bruno David, the series "Muséum Manifestos" brings together natural history to shed light on contemporary issues.

As natural history makes it possible to cross the limits of time and space, to retrace and understand the history of the Earth and of life, to inventory biodiversity, to analyse the complexity of ecosystems, to understand the evolution of the living world and to define the place of Man on the planet, it is essential that it be at the heart of societal debates.

Muséum Manifestos,
Paris: Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle

- What future without nature?
- Migrations
- Humans and other animals
- Facing the limits
- A natural history of violence

WUR

NIVA project to help farmers' environmental performance

Wageningen University and Research leads a project on technological innovation for agricultural advancement, by developing digital technology that can make farmers' lives easier, and at the same time give a clearer picture of their environmental performance. It has been running since June 2019 and will continue until November 2022.

NIVA (New Vision on Integrated Monitoring and Application System) is trialing technology for making it easier to monitor the implementation of European agricultural policy. Ideally, it would make it quicker and more straightforward for farmers to obtain subsidies while public authorities would have a better picture of nature and environment on farmland. As farmers get subsidies for measures that improve the environment by submitting a plan at the start of the growing season to the national 'paying agency', NIVA could help as the technology allows checks to be carried out more efficiently. This tool raises interest in farmers as new EU agricultural policies are being formulated, both for the payments and for nature.

Read more about it here.

Publications

The ETC/BD and its predecessors have produced many reports over the past 25 years. A selection of these reports is now available on our website in the ETC/BD Technical papers and Working papers section.

ETC/BD reports are also available on Zenodo, the open-access European repository, in a dedicated community curated by EEA: the European topic centre knowledge hub.

Ecological coherence: Transboundary forest corridors and planning - A case study for the TEN-N in Strasbourg area

For years it has been aimed to improve network coherence by establishing corridors connecting protected sites, but in practice this fell short in many countries, especially corridors beyond national borders. The Biodiversity Strategy 2030

reinforces the importance of spatial connectivity: European conservation policy requires more coherence between protected sites (including Natura 2000 areas), within countries and across Europe. The latter is difficult, seems to happen more occasionally, e.g. within transboundary LIFE projects.

To get a better understanding of what is fostering or hampering transboundary cooperation with regard to transboundary connectivity and network coherence, a study was done in the Strasbourg transboundary area (France and Germany). Aim of the study was to provide insights on connectivity, but also to have a better understanding of the specific problems that are encountered in transboundary conservation:


La Petite Pierre, Northern Vosges (Alsace, Fr) © Theo van der Sluis

• How do countries define ambition levels for ecological networks or TEN-N and Green Infrastructures;

• What hampers the development of TEN-N at administrative levels;

• How can cross-boundary networks be developed more effectively, in particular, what governance structures can stimulate transboundary cooperation;

• What are ecological requirements for trans-European forest nature networks.

It turns out that it is difficult to find up-to-date information on the internet i.e. between official documents, regional plans, GIS servers etc. It was therefore essential to meet local planners, officials, experts and get first-hand information (and documents) on the planning process. The interviews had a particular focus on the planning process, and how the governments at different levels cooperate in France (the Région Grand Est, and the regional offices, Parc naturel régional des Vosges du Nord) and in Germany (the Federal Authority (Bund), States (Länder), Districts (Kreise), association communities (Verbandsgemeinde) and Municipalities (Gemeinden)). There are Interesting solutions for international cooperation, in particular the Groß Region/Grande Région, the Oberrheinkonferenz/Conférence du Rhin Supérieur (or, in full: Expertenausschuss Ökologie und Naturschutz/Groupe d'experts Ecologie et Protection de la Nature), and the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine ICPR (Internationale Kommission zum Schutz des Rheins/Commission Internationale pour la Protection du Rhin). On top of that, there is the transboundary Man and Biosphere Reserve Biosphärenreservat Pfälzerwald-Nordvogesen and Parc naturel régional des Vosges du Nord.

The study shows that shared international institutions and governmental bodies are essential for transboundary cooperation. Political commitment, knowledgeable and experienced staff, as well as resources (incl. funding) are key! As long as experienced regional or national staff is lacking, or funding is too limited to effectively realise the protection of core areas or the realisation or restoration of corridors, the transboundary corridors are out of reach.

The technical report is available here.

Proposal to halve pesticide use by 2030

This June, in line with the proposal for a directive to set ambitious goals towards Nature Restoration, the European Commission also shared a proposal to reduce the use and risk of chemical pesticides by 50 % by 2030. While the Nature Restoration Law is the subject of a more detailed article in this Newsletter, it is nonetheless important to draw attention to this proposal on chemical pesticides. This proposal would also reinforce the commitment to halt biodiversity loss in Europe. In line with the European Green Deal and the Farm to Fork Strategy, the proposal transforms the existing Directive into a Regulation which will be directly applicable in all Member States.

The growing use of pesticides in quantity and variety, the build-up of residues, and issues with waters storage have raised citizens' concerns and they requested this to be addressed at European level. In this proposal, clear and binding rules are proposed, such as legally binding targets at EU and national level and a ban on all pesticides in sensitive areas such as urban green areas, including public parks or gardens, playgrounds, schools, recreation or sports grounds, public paths and protected areas in accordance with Natura 2000, and any ecologically sensitive area to be preserved for threatened pollinators.

Member States will have to submit to the Commission detailed annual progress reports. Additionally, key policies will support farmers and other users during the transition to more sustainable food production systems.

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_3746

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The current European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity (ETC/BD) is a partnership of 9 organisations led by the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle (MNHN) under a framework contract with the European Environment Agency (EEA) which runs from January 2019 until the end of 2021.

MNHN Ecologic ILE-SAS NATURALIS NCA-CR S4E SLU UBA WENR

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