

## **Restoration in the context of the EU Biodiversity Strategy**

- 1) Target 2 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy reads as follows:  
*By 2020, ecosystems and their services are maintained and enhanced by establishing green infrastructure and restoring at least 15% of degraded ecosystems.*
- 2) Action 6a of the EU Biodiversity Strategy reads as follows:  
*By 2014, Member States, with the assistance of the Commission, will develop a strategic framework to set priorities for ecosystem restoration at sub-national, national and EU level.*
- 3) The Commission working together with Member States and stakeholders and supported by a contractor, has produced technical documentation and guidance concerning the nature of the 15% target and the development of prioritisation frameworks at national and sub-national levels. The technical documentation can be found at the following link:  
<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/pdf/2020/RPF.pdf>  
The guidance sent to Member States is annexed to the present note.
- 4) A Commission financed study has also provided information concerning the possible costs associated with the 15% restoration target:  
<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/pdf/2020/Fin%20Target%202.pdf>
- 5) It is not clear to what extent the Member States have taken steps to develop such prioritisation frameworks and what actions are being taken to promote the restoration agenda at national and sub-national levels. Some indication of the efforts being taken at a national level can be seen in the reporting by Member States in the framework of the CBD. An overview of these responses in relation to the 6 operational targets and 20 associated actions under the EU Biodiversity Strategy can be found as part of the documentation supporting agenda item 8 on the Mid-Term Review of the EU Biodiversity Strategy.

- 6) Target 1 of the Biodiversity strategy foresees improvements to the conservation status of the species and habitats covered by the birds and habitats Directives. These improvements will contribute to the 15% restoration target. The Commission is carrying out a study on this issue.
- 7) Improvements to freshwater and marine ecosystems arising from the implementation of the Water Framework Directive and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive will also contribute to the 15% target. A reduction of some of the horizontal pressures linked to environmental degradation such as atmospheric pollution, atmospheric deposition and nitrogen and phosphorous burdens will also contribute to achieving the target.
- 8) Re-cycling of land already transformed into artificial surfaces will reduce the pressure for land-take of new, green field sites for new developments.
- 9) Restoration of degraded natural ecosystems can also contribute to the no net loss initiative and be applied in the context of offsetting, within the wider scope of a mitigation hierarchy.
- 10) Restoration of ecosystems and their associated ecosystem services can generate significant economic and social benefits.
- 11) Restoration efforts will contribute to jobs and growth and to the Europe 2020 agenda.
- 12) Restoration actions have consistently been part of the LIFE and LIFE+ programmes.
- 13) A dedicated call on restoration is foreseen under Horizon 2020, work-plan 2015.  
[http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2014\\_2015/main/h2020-wp1415-climate\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2014_2015/main/h2020-wp1415-climate_en.pdf)
- 14) The EU policy on regional development has consistently supported restoration actions particularly in the framework of the INTER-REG programmes. Some of the Operational Programmes submitted by Regions and Member States in the context of the new cohesion policy highlight in particular the need for re-cycling/restoring derelict, disused, degraded and contaminated land as a means to reduce pressure on green-field sites. The forthcoming Court of Auditors special report on financing nature and biodiversity from the ERDF will offer additional observations and recommendations regarding better use of ERDF financing for the benefit of nature and biodiversity, in particular a recommendation that the Commission should support Member States in setting biodiversity restoration priorities in operational programmes.

- 15) There are further opportunities to fund Green Infrastructure and restoration priorities through the Rural Development and EMFF Operational Programmes.
- 16) The Natural Capital Financial Facility, to be established by end 2014, will also help supporting investments related to Green Infrastructure and restoration from the public and private sector, and demonstrate their capacity to provide biodiversity and climate adaptation benefits, whilst providing revenues.
- 17) A strategic approach to restoration will be difficult to sustain in the medium/long-term in the absence of reliable, robust and consistent data concerning land-use, ecosystem condition and ecosystem services. This issue is very much linked to the MAES initiative under Action 5 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy.
- 18) The capacities and interest of business and the professional and academic communities will be an important determinant in promoting the restoration agenda.

**19) Outline of the discussion in the CGBN meeting on 25-26/9:**

The majority of Member States that contributed to the discussion indicated that they had not developed Restoration Prioritization Frameworks (RPFs) as foreseen under Action 6a of the Biodiversity Strategy; restoration work was being carried out at individual sites including Natura 2000 sites but in general there was no national strategy. FIN, UK and Austria did have national restoration strategies linked to the Aichi targets and the EU biodiversity strategy. Several Member States indicated that in this period of financial constraints it was extremely difficult to secure financing for restoration activities.