

Implementation of Target 2 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020

State of Play

Introduction

This document provides an update on progress in implementing Target 2 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 since the ND meeting of 24/25 April 2014. An update of the joint planning is attached (see Annex 1).

The main point of discussion under Target 2 for this meeting is foreseen to be the restoration agenda, which is the focus of a separate paper. This paper provides complementary information on other relevant actions under Target 2. The total output of the various work-streams under Target 2 is extensive and relevant documentation can be found on CIRCABC.

1. Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services (MAES)

The MAES WG will meet on 11th September 2014 to review the outcomes to be expected from Member States and EU by the end of 2014. Follow-up work from ongoing Pilots will be presented. Proposals for new Pilots will be discussed (e.g. Soil, Urban, Impact of Air Pollution). A MAES Forest Workshop is tentatively planned for 2 December in Brussels, with the support of the Standing Forestry Committee. A call for supporting the organisation of additional Hands On workshop, similar to the one organised in 2013 in ISPRA, has been launched on 1st August and Member States will be invited to take part in the coming months. The evaluation of the proposals for the 2013 call published¹ under Horizon 2020 has been completed and a project will be launched to support a coordination action to enhance the mapping ecosystems and their services.

On 22nd May, Commissioner Potocnik, in collaboration with Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn hosted a major conference on the mapping and assessment of ecosystems and ecosystem services to present the current state of outputs from MAES and to demonstrate their relevance for policy making. The Conference that was attended by more than 300 participants was very successful and conclusions were provided for information to the June Environment Council.

¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/topics/2053-sc5-10a-2014.html>

2. Green Infrastructure and Restoration Prioritisation Framework

Green Infrastructure

The Commission is moving forward to further implement the Strategy for the deployment of Green Infrastructure as foreseen in the GI Communication. Actions include publications aimed at awareness raising in relation to GI and the integration of GI perspectives into other policy areas, in particular through structural and cohesion funding, Rural Development Programs, and the establishment of the NCFE (a brochure will be distributed to CGBN members). Work is still ongoing on the integration of Green Infrastructure in OPs and RDPs. In addition to the continuation of work underway, CGBN members are invited to follow closely the operational programs of the EMFF currently under development, to see whether Green and Blue Infrastructure is adequately represented. Progress has also been made in relation to calls for proposals under Horizon 2020, the development of better data and information and the assessment of the opportunities for EU scale GI projects. A support contract on the implementation of GI is expected to start in October 2014.

The Working Group on GI Implementation and Restoration (GIIR) has met twice (on 24 March and on 23 June). The next meeting is provisionally planned for 19 November. The participation of MS delegates is low; BG, CY, EL, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PT, RO and SU have not nominated any members yet.

Restoration Prioritisation Framework

See separate document.

3. Biodiversity proofing and No Net Loss

Biodiversity Proofing follow-up contract and Workshop

Action 7a of the EU biodiversity Strategy concerns the development of a methodology for assessing the impacts of EU funded projects, plans and programmes on biodiversity.

The "Background Study towards biodiversity proofing of the EU budget", was published in early 2013. It examines the opportunities for "Biodiversity-proofing" the EU budget, which is defined in the study as a structured process of ensuring the effective application of tools to avoid or at least minimize harmful impacts of EU spending and to maximise the biodiversity benefits.

As follow-up to the above study, the Commission's recently published (August, 2014) "*Common Framework for Biodiversity proofing of the EU budget*" provides a practical Common Framework for Proofing the EU Budget including general and fund-specific guidelines to be used by national and regional authorities as well as by Commission services. The following guidance documents are available on the Europa ENV website²:

- [Common Framework for Biodiversity-Proofing of the EU Budget – General Guidance](#)

² <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/proofing.htm>

- [Proofing Guidance for the Cohesion Policy Funds](#)
- [Proofing Guidance for the Common Agricultural Policy funds \(EAGF and EAFRD\)](#)
- [Proofing Guidance for the Connecting Europe Facility \(TEN-E and TEN-T\)](#)
- [Proofing Guidance for the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund](#)

The common framework (general guidance) represents a standardised approach that can be applied to most EU funds by national and regional authorities in Member States. It does not apply to centralised and non-programmed funds (most notably Pillar 1 of the Common Agricultural Policy) since opportunities for proofing centrally managed non-programmed funds are very different to other funds. The general guidance document also includes a "Guidance on proofing the policy cycle" chapter, which targets the Commission services.

The fund-specific guidance documents mainly focus on biodiversity proofing the project cycle, i.e. calls for proposals, project development and selection, project execution and project monitoring and evaluation. These guidance documents target national and regional authorities in Member States.

No Net Loss

The EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy foresees (Action 7b) that the Commission will propose an initiative on No Net Loss by 2015. Over the last two years the Commission have financed three study contracts that have been completed or contracted:

- [Policy Options for an EU No Net Loss](#) (IEEP and consortium), (Feb 2014)
- [Exploring potential demand for and supply of habitat banking in the EU and appropriate design elements for a habitat banking scheme](#) (ICH GHK, Bio Intelligence Service) (January 2013)
- Study on specific design elements of biodiversity offsets: Biodiversity metrics and mechanisms for long term conservation benefits (ICF GHK, IEEP) (on-going, to be finalised in autumn 2014)

Building on the "policy options" study, the Commission launched a public consultation in June that remained open until 17 October. This included a prolongation following a technical problem with the pdf file accompanying the questionnaire, which was discovered and solved in the first weeks of the consultation. The consultation asked interested citizens, public authorities, business and NGOs for their views on a future No Net Loss Initiative at EU level. Comments were welcome on how to develop the policy, how to ensure that impacts are avoided, minimised and compensated for; the scope and the scale of the initiative; which drivers of biodiversity loss and which economic sectors to include; how to tackle the challenges related to offsetting and the choice of policy instruments to use.

732 responses were registered before the consultation closed. The answers received were from all EU member states, except Croatia, Lithuania and Slovakia. The majority came from Germany and France. The responses from individuals were in majority, followed by NGOs and then companies and business associations. However, it is important to note that those answering as individuals often were associated with an interest group. For the group NGOs, the environmental NGOs were clearly in majority, though other civil society groups were also represented, such as local forestry and woodland interests or local community groups. In the business group, large companies and business associations dominated. Under the group "governments", there were national, regional and local respondents. 8 national governments sent in responses.

The Commission is now evaluating all the answers and will then publish the statistics and the analysis on its website. A stakeholder event to take stock of the consultation is planned for the first half of 2015.

A procurement procedure for a service contract to support the development of an Impact Assessment has been launched. The impact assessment work is expected to be finalised by mid-2015.

Annex 1: Target 2 Planning 2014-2015

	MAES	GI and RPR	NNL	Other related developments
3rd quarter 2014	8 th MAES WG 11/9 Expert workshop on Natural Capital Accounting 19/9	Papers on GI monitoring and GI/RPF glossary submitted to WG GIIR members		CGBN 25-26/9
4th quarter 2014	Final delivery MESEU contract Year 2 2 nd MESEU Hands On workshop (tbc) Final EU MAES report (biophysical mapping and assessment)	Restoration Prioritisation Framework Kick-off contract supporting GI implementation WG GIIR 19/11	End of public consultation on 17/10 Meeting of the Inter-service Group on Impact Assessment on 6/11	Nature Reporting Expert Group 14/10 Establish a dedicated Natural Capital Financing Facility (NCFE)
1st quarter 2015	9 th MAES WG 6/3	Review extent and quality of spatial and technical data available for decision-makers in relation to GI deployment.	2 nd Meeting of the Inter-service Group on Impact Assessment	EEA SoER 2015 CGBN 12-13/3
2nd quarter 2015		Study to assess potential of GI standards	Stakeholder event – taking stock of the public consultation	2007-2012 EU status assessment under HD/BD Greenweek on biodiversity and Natural Capital (tbc)
3rd quarter 2015	10 th MAES WG 17/9	Study to assess the opportunities for developing a TEN-G initiative, including an assessment of the costs and the economic, social and environmental benefits		EU Biodiversity Mid-Term Report
4th quarter 2015	Final products MESEU contract Year 3		Submission to Impact Assessment Board Inter-Service Consultation Adoption	