# Financing Natura 2000

IT-Tool











nature







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Patrick Murphy

As the European network of protected sites – Natura 2000 – moves progressively towards completion, attention now turns towards the management of the Natura sites and the financing of the management measures.

The management of Natura sites give rise to significant costs which, in principle, should be covered by national budgets. However, the Habitats Directive Article 8 also provides for the possibility of Community co-financing in some cases.

In July 2004, the Commission adopted a Communication on the Financing of Natura 2000¹ in which it was proposed that Community co-funding should come from existing Community funding instruments rather than from funds dedicated specifically to Natura 2000. The Commission has, accordingly, integrated the funding needs for the Natura 2000 network into the regulations for the relevant funding instruments (Rural Development Programmes, Structural Funds Cohesion Fund) for the period 2007-2013.

While the funding instruments include provisions for funding Natura 2000, it is for each individual Member State to decide how it will allocate monies to different priorities. Therefore, while the opportunity for funding exists it is for the Member States to turn this into a reality.

To support the implementation of the co-financing opportunities for Natura 2000 in Member States the Commission has funded the production of a Guidance Handbook on how to use Community funds for Natura 2000 in the period 2007-2013. The Handbook is available in 22 languages<sup>2</sup>.

The Commission wishes to provide further advice and support to Member States on how best to access and use EU funding mechanism for financing the management of the Natura 2000 network. The next phase in our awareness raising strategy is to link the use of the Guidance Handbook on financing Natura 2000 with the elaboration of management plans. We intend to do this by developing an IT-tool to apply the ideas developed in the Guidance Handbook directly to management planning for Natura 2000 sites. The IT-tool is planned to create/outline "co-financing plans" for individual Natura 2000 sites.

The elaboration of the Guidance Handbook together with an IT-tool for easy access to the relevant information is one further step in the strategy of the Commission to support the implementation of Natura 2000 in Member States. Natura 2000 is the cornerstone of the Community efforts to the goal of halting the decline of biodiversity by 2010.

Patrick Murphy

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> COM (2004)431 final of 15.07.2004

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/financing/index\_en.htm

# How can Natura 2000 be financed?



After the process of site-designation the question of how to finance activities and measures in Natura 2000 sites becomes more and more important.

Site management activities can include a wide variety of measures, from construction of visitor infrastructure, to staff training, to practical species management. All these activities usually cost a lot of money.

In its communication on the financing of Natura 2000 network to the Council and the European Parliament, the European Commission proposed that future co-financing should be accommodated within the existing financial instruments. This policy will ensure that the management of Natura 2000 sites is part of the wider land management policies of the EU. Because of this decision, nature conservation authorities, landowners, landusers, NGOs and everyone else who is directly or indirectly involved in the management of a Natura 2000 site, should be well informed about all financial instruments that are relevant for Natura 2000.

People who work in nature conservation are sometimes not used to dealing with complex, multiple financing instruments. Sometimes it is difficult to get a clear overview of their possibilities. The IT tool described in this brochure may be able to help you with your main financing questions.



"We know what to do in our Natura 2000 site. But we have no idea how to finance these activities."

# The most important financial instruments for Natura 2000

- The Structural Funds (European Social Funds, ESF; European Regional Development Fund, ERDF)
- The Cohesion Fund
- The Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)
- The European Fishery Fund (EFF)
- The Financial Instrument for the Environment (LIFE+)
- The 7<sup>th</sup> Research Framework Programme

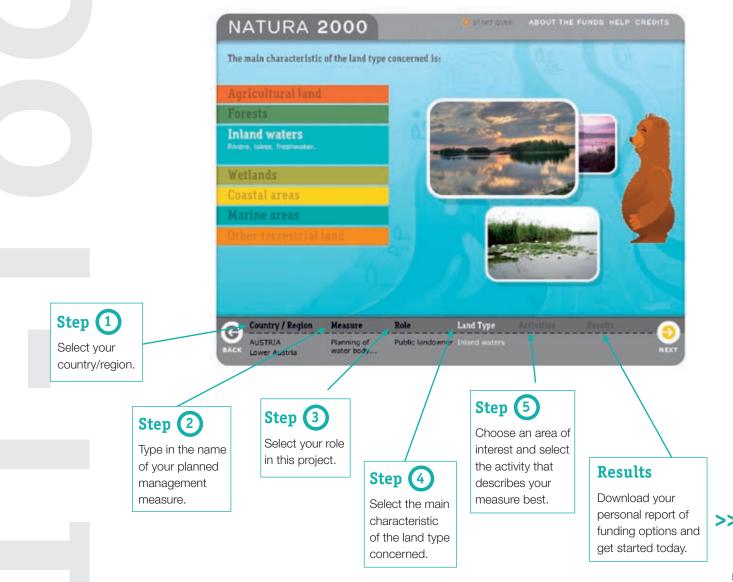
## Welcome to our IT Tool



A new IT tool can help you find out quickly and easily which European-level funds may be relevant to your specific management activities. If you have a specific measure in mind for your Natura 2000 site, you only need five steps to get results with the IT tool.

So, come up with an idea for a nature project. The tool is accessible via the website of DG Environment <a href="http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/nature/o00/financing/index\_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/nature/o00/financing/index\_en.htm</a> or directly via

http://financing-natura2000.moccu.com Answer the questions provided and follow the instructions. It's easy. A bear will help you if you run into problems. The connection between management activities and funding opportunities is demonstrated clearly, concisely, and enjoyably. The IT tool generates a customized list of funding opportunities for each user. You receive results that depend on the selections you make, and may apply to your specific situation.

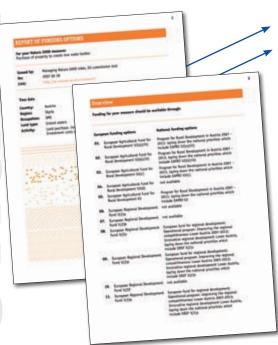


# How to work with the personal report



The report shows financing instruments that may be appropriate for the activity you selected. Make a short analysis of the report and discuss it with your colleagues.

The result of your query in the IT tool is a personal report, **which summarizes, for the measure you have selected all theoretical** financial instruments on EU-level. This report could be used to investigate funding possibilities for Natura 2000 at EU level, including options that may not be immediately obvious and help you understand the new Regulations at an operational level.



## Read the report Work with the report

- Compare the result with the current situation of financial instruments in your country (Note: It would be a great help to all concerned if the IT tool could be adapted to your national level. See pages 7 – 12)
- Decide which programme fits best to your measure.
- If it's possible, and if it makes sense to, adapt the activity to fit better with the existing funding options.
- Get in contact with the relevant authority and apply for funding for your project.

#### **Limitations of the IT tool**

- The results don't mean that the funding is necessarily available for your project. Only the possibilities that we know about (on the EU level or national level) are shown.
- 2. Don't expect details of your funding possibilities. You have to contact the organisations themselves and clarify the next steps for the application.
- 3. The IT tool works with the most important financial instruments, but there may be additional ones too.



Discuss the personal report with your colleagues or the responsible authorities managing the funds, come to conclusions, cooperate with responsible experts of the competent ministry.

## **Next Step: National Level**

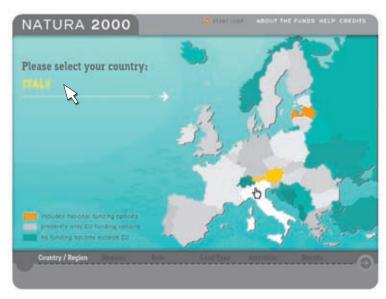


It's easy to adapt the IT tool from the EU level to a national level, i.e., to the level of the financing instruments in your country.

The IT tool could also be very useful for elaborating precise co-financing plans for Natura 2000 sites, to prepare a financial plan for a specific project in a Natura 2000 site, or to start a fruitful discussion between competent authorities and stakeholders about the funding system in your country. But this is only possible when specific national or regional funding conditions are included in the database. Currently this tool has a pilot character and data is only available on EU level for most of the EU countries. We have tested the tool in three countries based on concrete measures from management plans of Natura 2000 sites. These

countries are Latvia, Austria and Italy.
Choosing one of these countries you will find out which of the EU funding opportunities is implemented in the national and regional programmes.

For three Natura 2000 sites (Italy, Austria, Latvia) the IT tool provides details of national funding options. The database developed for this purpose can be applied in a systematic way to all Member States.



So the next step should be adding the specific funding situation in your country to the IT tool's existing data base. As you can use the structure of the existing data base, you just have to add specific information and data relevant to your country. Even national funding sources without EU cofinancing can be integrated into the national data base.

### What would be the next steps, if you want to adapt this IT tool to your national level?

- 1. Inform the responsible authorities about your idea to create a IT tool on national level based on the European IT Tool. Find partners for this work.
- 2. Look together at all 25 tables of activities mentioned in the original "Financing Natura 2000-Guidance Handbook"<sup>1</sup>, and analyse which activities are implemented in the national programmes and whether or not they have a budget line. A short guideline for this step helps you to analyse programmes of your country.
- 3. For each measure, identify what might be the responsible institution, where you have to apply, and describe most important notes to the programme.
- 4. Gather a full documentation how national data was included for the pilot sites and learn what is required for national data input from the project team. Contact: Peter Torkler, WWF; torkler@wwf.de

Have a look at three examples, where the database was adapted on national level



Financing Natura 2000 Handbook: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/financing/index\_en.htm

## Cecina River

The "Cecina river from Berignone to Ponteginori" Natura 2000 site encompasses the valley of the Cecina river, in Tuscany (Central Italy). The typical Mediterranean river Cecina, presents a diversified bed due to the different geological formations met: in the first reach, characterized by rocks with ophiolite surfacing the river is embanked in the shores, then, just next to loamy eugenic deposits, it takes a meandering flow. Here, the river is characterized by a wide stony ground, with very diverse on bank vegetation and by the presence of gravely alluvial terraces, with garigues and shrubs. It has a marked torrential regime. Several Habitats Directive species are present.



#### The three most important targets for measures in the site



#### **CECINA RIVER AREA**

The scarce level of water quality is due to the contribution of tributary rivers with sewage from industrial activities (chemical and mining industries leaving chlorides and boric products, other than mercury), farming and houses.

One of the main problems of the basin is the hydraulics management: there are several and relevant water drawings from the river bed and beneath the river bed causing frequent cases of downflow deficit that are affecting negatively the habitat and hygrophilous species (riparian formations, wetlands and temporary ponds with amphibian species such as *Emys orbicularis*, *Bufo viridis*, *Triturus carnifex*). Past extractive activities are the main causes of erosive phenomena of the shores, of the lack of balance of the river bed and have heavily affected the capacity of the recharge of alluvial aquifers.



#### STONY RIVER BED AND ALLUVIAL RIVER TERRACING

The large river bed hosts plant communities with a discontinuous cover of poplars, arboreal willow groves, garigues and annual herbaceous formations. On the river alluvial terraces are placed wide garigues mainly with *Helichrysum italicum*, some times mixed to re-colonization shrubs, more and more extended for the increasing distance from the aquifer; on the banks *Euphorbia spinosa* is placed with the presence of ophiolitic formation. They are threatened by the drainage interventions for agriculture reclaimed land, coniferous thick reforestations, presence of dumps with a high concentration of heavy metals such as mercury. Moreover, the reduction of grazing land, the circulation of off-road vehicles and the presence of areas for dog training are all factors of disturbance for species of relevance such as *Burhinus oedicnemus* and *Lanius collurio*.



#### FOREST, CULTIVATED FIELDS AND GRAZING LANDS

On the surrounding hills there are sclerophyllous forest mixed to deciduous on the hillside facing south and thermophilous oak forest with a great presence of *Quercus cerris*. On the slope in erosion phases of degradation can be observed strewn shrubby formations with *Spartium junceum*. The majority of the agricultural areas within the site are characterized by the presence of irrigous field crops, with linear relict elements (hedges) of high naturalistic interest, above all for some animal species (*Circus pygargus, Lanius minor, Lanius senator*). In other areas there are intensive cultivation, often extended till the medium water river bed to the detriment of the original on bank formations, that constitute the agricultural landscape of the floodplain.

#### What has to be done

The measures addressed for the protection of fluvial ecosystem are aimed at preserving and increasing the high level of biodiversity present in the site by reducing the human impacts and threats, containing the fast processes of vegetation dynamic (shrubs resettlement of former grazing lands, closing of guariges) and protecting the typical agricultural landscape. The management of the Natura 2000 site includes the following measures:

#### Cecina river area

- 1. measures for pollution restoration from punctual sources (industries, houses) and diffused (agriculture)
- 2. measures for readdressing the water balance (collection and potable use)
- measures for water resources check up/control quality-quantitative monitoring network of water for surveys, operational and control purposes
- 4. measures for management of water resources
- 5. monitoring and management of the river habitats and of the populations of fish and amphibians.

#### Stony beds and fluvial terracing

1. Monitoring and protection of important nesting species (Burhinus oedicnemus and Lanius collurio)

#### **National funding options**



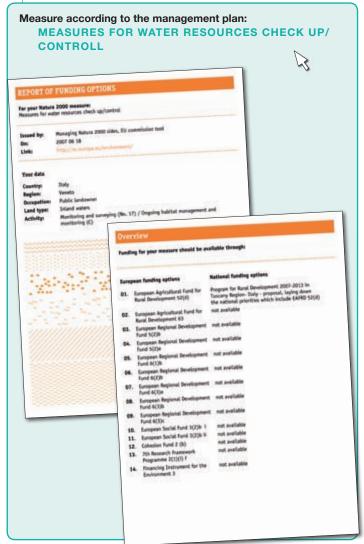




- preservation of the mosaic composed of river shore vegetation, garigues and scrubs
- 3. renovation of bank formations where necessary
- contracting measures for the recovery of grazing land and for clearing of scrubs interventions
- 5. elimination of nucleus of *Pinus pinea* on fluvial terracing with guariges and shrubs
- 6. restoration and land reclamation of industrial sites and deposits of polluting material
- 7. protection of the ophiolite stations
- 8. prohibition of circulation to vehicles on river bed and re-naturalization of the existing paths and dirt-road

#### Cultivated woods and grazing lands

- 1. contracting measures for the termination of agricultural practices in overflowing areas
- restoration/renovation of linear elements typical of the agricultural riverside landscape



### Wachau

The Wachau-Jauerling Natura 2000 site encompasses the river valley of the Danube in the southern zone of the Bohemian Massiv, a mountainous region in Lower Austria.

The Danube riverbed is accompanied by cliffs and valleys which strongly structure the landscape, and influence other characteristics of the Wachau Valley. The climate of the region is shaped by the overlapping of the rougher climate of the high altitude areas with the dry, warm influence of the Pannonian Plains. The climatic and geological characteristics of the landscape result in an exceptionally high diversity of fauna and flora. Several Habitats and Birds Directive species are present.



#### The three most important targets for measures in the site



#### **DANUBE RIVER AREA**

As the last free-flowing section of the Danube above Vienna, this area offers a suitable habitat for various endangered fish species included in the Habitats Directive, including Hucho hucho, Aspius aspius, Rutilus pigus, Zingel streber, Zingel zingel and Leuciscus souffia.

Today, however, the Danube lacks key structures that it had before, such as gravel banks. Building activities along the shore have cut off wet meadows and distributaries from the main river. These wet meadows increasingly dry out, as they seldom flood anymore.

Therefore it is necessary to recreate such habitat structures along the Danube and to reconnect side arms with the main river.



#### **WOODED SLOPES**

The high altitude areas and steep slopes of the valleys of the Wachau are, to a great extent, forested. Especially on the steeper slopes along the Danube, vast areas of semi-natural, pristine forests are widespread. Old forests rich in deadwood provide nationally important habitats for several beetle species, like Cerambyx cerdo, which cannot exist outside such forests. The deciduous and mixed forests of the area are preferred by the Great mouse-eared bat as hunting territory, and that species has internationally important breeding sites in this area. The woods are endangered by a continuous transformation from the original state into spruce and Douglas fir forests. To counteract this trend, the most important forest areas should be declared "semi-natural segments".



#### **VINEYARDS AND DRY GRASSLAND**

Since ancient times, the steep slopes of the valleys have been used for viticulture. The terrace systems and the stone walls bestow a unique character on the Wachau landscape. The main ecological base of this mountain wine growing area is determined by the interconnection of the current viniculture areas with dry, warm, open habitats like abandoned wine terraces, meadows, dry grasslands, rocky leas and woody veldts. The habitats designated under the Habitats Directive represent to a great extent the significant variety of the area. The dry grasslands were used as pastures starting in the Middle Ages. Today they are no longer in use, and they are endangered by scrub encroachment. To ensure a Favourable Conservation Status of the dry grasslands, continued use as pasture is highly important for these areas.

#### What has to be done

The land near the river in the Wachau is outstandingly beautiful due to the remains of alluvial forests, dry meadows, woods close to nature, and a mosaic of vineyards and orchards.

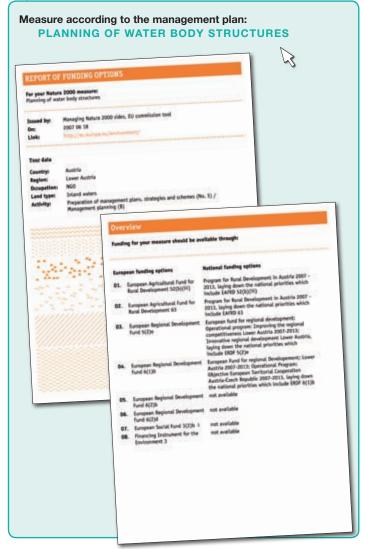
To maintain this landscape, which offers habitats for many rare animal and plant species, protection measures need to be implemented. The management of the Wachau Natura 2000 site includes the following measures:

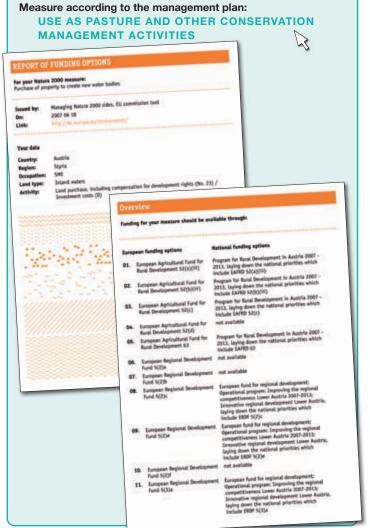


- Danube river area
- Planning of water body structures
- Building of flat gravel structures
- Purchase of property to create new water bodies
- · Re-opening of existing distributaries
- Implementation of ecological supervision of the building activities
- · Monitoring of fish in various sectors of the river
- Wooded slopes
- Purchase of semi-natural forest areas (compensation or purchase)
- Transformation of the tree population
- Realisation of maintenance measures
- · Vineyards and dry grassland
- Development of a management concept for the dry grassland
- Purchase of selected dry grassland

- Clearing of scrubs
- Use as pasture and other conservation management activities
- Monitoring of the vegetation of the dry grassland
- Restoration and repair of the stone walls as habitat and to protect the wine terraces
- Other measures
- Establishment of a nature conservation coordination centre for the administration of the site
- Publishing of a book about the landscape and the natural value of the Wachau
- Publishing of information folders
- Development of an exhibition
- Signposting

#### **National funding options**





From the management plan for this area "Wachau" concrete measures where integrated into the database of this tool.

## Sita and Pededze Floodplain

The Sita and Pededze Floodplain Natura 2000 site (area code 5320) covers an area of 870 ha.

The nature reserve was established to preserve floodplain meadows with oxbows and woodland meadows with oak trees along meandering Pededze and Sita rivers. This is one of the few remaining examples of such habitats in Latvia. Three globally threatened bird species occur here, the site represents one of five best nesting grounds for the Great Snipe in Latvia, and it hosts large population of Corncrake. The Pededze River valley as a whole area hosts the biggest population of the Hermit Beetle in Latvia. The hydrological regime of the site and subsequently the continuity of its nature values were negatively affected by digging the Sita River bed and amelioration within and around the site in the mid and late 20th century.



#### The three most important targets for measures in the site

#### **GRASSLAND HABITATS**

Habitats: 6530\* Fennoscandian woodland meadows, 6450 Northern Boreal alluvial meadows, 6270\* Fennoscandian species-rich dry to mesic grasslands, 6510 lowland hay meadows. Most meadows with high biological value are overgrowing, since the management of these meadows was stopped at the end of 20th centrury. Another reason for loss of semi-natural meadows is drainage of wet meadows. Plant community composition and breeding and feeding conditions of birds have changed – wet meadows have been replaced by crop fields or cultivated meadows. Therefore, large meadow areas have lost their biological value – due to overgrowing, drainage or cultivation. Therefore, habitat restoration and management measures are required for meadows with high biological value.



#### GLOBALLY THREATENED MEADOW BIRDS

Species: The Corncrake *Crex crex (ca 70 pairs)* and the Great Snipe *Gallinago media*. The floodplain meadows are important breeding habitat for Corncrake and the Great Snipe. Today meadows are not managed and therefore affected by overgrowing. To ensure a conservation of the Corncrake and the Great Snipe, continued mowing or use of grasslands as pastures and restoration of hydrological regime is required. The involvement of land owners is crucial aspect to safeguard management of wet meadows and conservation of breeding habitat for birds.



#### **INVERTEBRATE SPECIES**

Species: Hermit Beetle *Osmoderma eremita*. Each tree has its own maximum age and Hermit Beetle micro-populations die together with the old trees they inhabit. In many cases, due to overgrowing of Fennoscandian woodland meadows, old oaks become unsuitable habitat for Hermit Beetle, because species require sun exposed oaks. As there are no suitable habitats (old trees with hollows) in the near surroundings (due to habitat fragmentation), number of micro-populations will become extinct within the next 20-50 years. The main goal is to ensure the continued existence of the known populations of the Hermit Beetle and to manage habitats to favor the increase of populations. To keep habitat in suitable conditions the individually growing oak trees should be cleared of bushes and small trees.

#### What has to be done

The floodplain meadows, woodland meadows with large oak trees and meandering Pededze and Sita rivers make unique land-scape. In order to maintain biological value of the site, providing habitats for threatened bird species, restoration and management of habitats and hydrological regime of rivers should be done. The management of the Sita and Pededze Floodplain Natura 2000 site includes the following measures:



#### **Grassland habitats**

- Mowing or grazing of meadows
- Bush cutting
- · Elimination of roots of bushes
- Initial mowing
- Controlled burning

#### Globally treated meadow birds

- · Construction of dams or fill up of ditches
- Plan for restoration of "old watercourse" of the Sita river
- · Counting of nesting birds

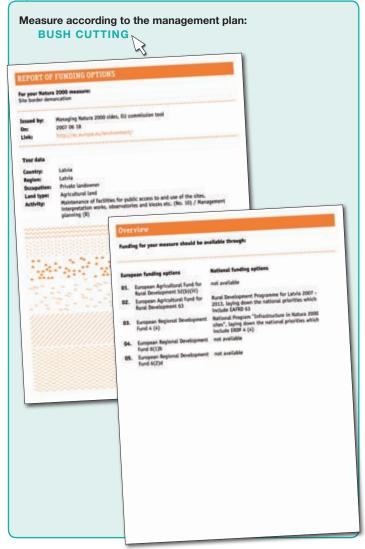
#### Hermit beetle

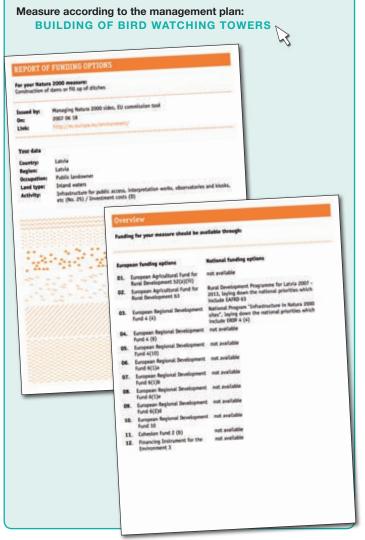
- Restoration of wooded meadows and removing bushes around the oaks
- Re-naturalization of forest stands

#### Other measures

- Site border demarcation
- Building of bird watching towers
- Establishment of information boards
- Construction and management of camp sites
- Monitoring of the effectiveness of site management measures

#### **National funding options**





European Commission

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