

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FINANCING MEASURES FOR Natura 2000 SITES FOR THE PERIOD 2014–2020

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

ARSO	Slovenian Environment Agency
ARRS	Slovenian Research Agency
CF	Cohesion Fund
CPVO	Comprehensive environmental impact assessment
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EEA	European Economic Area
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
ETC	European Territorial Cooperation
EU	European Union
FECS	Forest-environmental and climate services
FFFRS	National Farmland and Forest Fund
GERK	Graphical unit of use of agricultural lands
GGN	Forest management plan
GGE	Forest management unit
GOPS	Forestry environmental climate services (in the frame of rural development)
IzVRS	Institute for Water of the Republic of Slovenia
KGZS	Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia
KOPOP	Agri-environment and climate payments (in the frame of rural development)
KS	EU Kohesian fund
LAG	Local action group
LIFE+	EU's financial instrument supporting environmental, nature conservation and climate action projects LIFE+
MIZŠ	Ministry of Education, Science and Sport
MKO	Ministry for Agriculture and the Environment
NUV	Water management plan for the water areas of Danube and Adriatic Sea (for the period 2009-2015)
PAF	Priority Action Framework (Article 8 in Habitats directive)
SPA	Special protected areas (based on Wild Birds Directive)
SAC	Special areas of conservation (based on Habitats Directive)
PUN2k	Natura 2000 site management plan 2007-2013
PUN 2000	Natura 2000 site management plan 2014-2020
RDP	Rural Development Programme
RGN	Fishing territory plan
SKP	Common Agricultural Policy
WFD	Water Framework Directive
WWF	World Fund for Nature
ZGS	Slovenia Forest Service
ZON	Nature Conservation Act
ZRSVN	Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation
ZVPJ	Cave protection Act
ZZRS	Fisheries Research Institute of Slovenia

1 INTRODUCTION

Recommendations for financing measures for Natura 2000 sites are one of the steps of the LIFE project "SI Natura 2000 management", leading to the preparation and adoption of the Natura 2000 site management programme for Slovenia for the period 2014-20 (PUN 2000). Before the preparation of this document, analysis of current financing measures under the Operational programme - Programme management of Natura 2000 sites were prepared. Document describes funding possibilities for each type of nature conservation measures. The Draft PUN 2000 will include descriptions of financing the nature conservation measures from this document. Types of nature conservation measures (for which funding is stated in these recommendations) are selected on the basis of the Operational programme - Natura 2000 site management programme for 2007-13, analyzes, which were prepared under PUN 2000 project, and the Draft of the objectives and measures of the future PUN 2000 (Campaign C.2).

Part of this document, which is about funding possibilities from EU funds, is based on the EU legislation, which determine the rules for funding in the financial perspective 2014-2020. Rules for funding are primarily determined by the acts of the Common Strategic Framework 2014-20, for which the basis is EU framework legislation. There are five big Funds, from which funding is possible:

- Agricultural ([European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development](#))
- Cohesion ([Cohesion Fund](#))
- Regional development ([European Fund for Regional Development](#))
- Social ([European Social Fund](#))
- Fisheries ([European Maritime and Fisheries Fund](#))

The Delegated and Implementing Acts of the EU then determine detailed rules. During the writing of this document, the main Regulation for Maritime and Fisheries has not yet been adopted, as well as many Delegated and Implementing Acts. Therefore, the recommendations in this document are based on the last drafts, which were available to us.

These recommendations present funding possibilities for the Natura 2000 measures eligible according to these last draft EU rules for funding. Recommendations have been prepared to the different level of detail, according to known level of detail of the implementation at EU level.

Framework legislation determines the set of eligible measures, which the state can finance from the particular fund. The state then decides for which groups of measures it will enable the implementation. National operational programmes have to be adopted before the Natura 2000 measures can be financed. EU Regulations determine for all Member States the same set of measures, which can be implemented within the above-mentioned EU funds. Each Member State then decides for which measures it will enable the implementation, and includes them in operational programmes for drawing EU funds. In Slovenia three operational programmes for drawing EU funds in the field of Natura 2000 management are crucial:

- Rural Development Programme (for funds from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development – part, which is not connected to direct payments);
- Operational programme for the implementation of European cohesion policy 2014-2020 (for funds from Cohesion Fund, European Fund for Regional Development, and European Social Fund);
- Operational programme for the implementation of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (for funds from European Maritime and Fisheries Fund).

Centralized funding mechanisms, where the European Commission directly organizes and selects projects (LIFE, Horizon 2020) were also examined. In the new financial perspective, financial mechanism LIFE introduces also more comprehensive projects (e. g. LIFE integrated projects). These are based on the national programming documents. For Natura 2000 this document is the Natura 2000 Management Programme for Slovenia for the period 2014-2020, one of the final results of this project.

Detailed rules for drawing EU funds (including ways of implementation of funding, important for Natura 2000 measures) are for a particular Fund usually determined by Delegated and Implementing Acts. In the areas, where such Acts are not yet adopted and where funding possibilities will differ from the current, also the way of the final funding can change. Such changes will be included in the second draft of PUN 2000.

Recommendations in this document are based also on the experience of implementation and funding of the measures from the Operational programme - Natura 2000 site management programme for 2007-2013.

The rules for funding from EU funds for financial perspective 2014-2020 are not completely the same, as those for financial perspective 2007-2013. Differences can have an impact on the financing of the Natura 2000 conservation measures. In the process of adopting the acts of the EU Common Strategic Framework 2014-20 we already followed proposed changes in the acts and compared them with previous.

1.1 Legal framework for financing the measures for achieving objectives in Natura 2000 sites

The obligation to protect special protected areas (SPAs) derives from Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (OJ No. 206 of 22 June 1992, p. 7, with amendments; hereinafter: **Habitats Directive**) in connection with Council Directive 79/409/EEC of 2 April 1979 on the conservation of wild birds (OJ No. 103 of 25 April 1979, p. 1, with amendments; hereinafter: **Birds Directive**).

The Decree on Special Protection Areas (Natura 2000 sites) (Official Gazette RS, Nos. 49/04, 110/04, 59/07, 43/08, 8/12, 33/13, 35/13, 39/13 in 3/14) designates SPAs (Natura 2000 sites), conservation objectives of these areas and conservation guidelines for the conservation or

achievement of a favourable conservation status of habitat types, plant or animal species of the EU's interest or their habitats. It determines also other codes of conduct for the conservation of these areas. The decree also designates potential sites of Community interest and the method of their conservation.

Procedures in relation to Natura 2000 are determined by the **Nature Conservation Act** (Official Gazette RS, No. 96/04 – official consolidated version and 61/06 - ZDru-1, 8/10 - ZSKZ-B and 46/14; hereinafter: **ZON**). ZON defines Natura 2000 sites as ecologically important areas relevant for the maintenance or attainment of a favourable conservation status for birds (SPA) and other plant or animal species, their habitats and habitat types (SAC) on the territory of the EU. Due to a different designation procedure, SPAs are already determined as Natura 2000 sites in the Government decree. Until the European Commission adopts a decision on which SAC would form the European ecological network in an individual biogeographical region, under national legislation SACs are defined solely as potential SCI, or potential Natura sites. Those areas have to be defined as SACs no later than 6 years after Commission adopts a decision. Paragraph 1 of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive determines that the Member States must define necessary conservation measures for SACs. When needed, those measures involve management plans prepared especially for such areas or measures integrated into other development plans, and appropriate statutory, administrative or contractual measures, which correspond to the ecological requirements of the natural habitat types in Annex I and species in Annex II in such areas. Republic of Slovenia determined SACs with the Decree in January 2012¹. This Decree sets out, that for the conservation of SACs detailed conservation measures and objectives (which are defined in the Operational programme – Natura 2000 site management programme: 2007-2013) will be used until the adoption of new management program (in accordance with the amended Article 13 of the Decree). New Natura 2000 site management programme (2014-2020) will succeed the above-mentioned Operational programme and will therefore become the act, which determines necessary conservation measures.

European Commission in 2011 adopted the *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020*. The Council of the European Union confirmed the objectives from this Communication and (in connection with it) took additional Decisions. This Operational programme (2014-2020) also relies on the said Communication and Council Decisions.

The protection of SPA and potential areas of conservation involves preservation of favourable conservation status of plant and animal species, their habitats and habitat types. It is provided with measures for achieving conservation objectives (hereinafter conservation measures). Conservation measures are measures in accordance with ZON and measures in accordance with other regulations, which can contribute to the conservation of Natura 2000 sites. Within also fit several forms of conservation based on contracts (e.g. according to the regulations on agriculture) and plans of sustainable management or management of natural resources. Conservation measures are defined taking into account the characteristics of the Natura site, including the

¹ Decree amending the Decree on special protection areas (Natura 2000 areas) (Official Gazette RS, No. 8/12)

socio-demographic, economic and cultural features, the actual situation in the ecosystem, and the existing and expected endangering factors.

Measures for conservation of Natura 2000 sites are (in accordance with ZON):

1. nature conservation measures;
2. measures of modified use of natural resources serving to attain conservation objectives;
3. measures of modified agricultural practice serving to attain conservation objectives;
4. measures of water management serving to attain conservation objectives; and
5. other measures, should they prove necessary for the creation of a favourable conservation status of plant and animal species and habitat types.

1.2 Natura 2000 sites, objectives and measures for their achieving

Slovenia is one of the richest countries in terms of biodiversity – a fact supported by numerous national and international studies. The extremely high share of territory included in the Natura 2000 network manifests this diversity. Slovenia's Natura 2000 network consists of 354 sites, covered mainly by forests (71%). As regards non-forest areas in the Natura 2000 network, around 20 percent are classified as utilised agricultural areas, the most important among them being the extensive meadows. Continental waters represent just over 1% of the total area of the network, but their importance to the condition of the network is nevertheless vital (important for numerous Natura species and habitat types). Caves play an extremely important role in the Natura 2000 network, as they are subject to conservation in more than 70 areas. Furthermore, human dwellings are important for the reproduction, staging and hibernation of certain species; hence built-up areas are essential within the Natura network as well. This particularly concerns bird (e.g. white stork, Eurasian scops owl) and mammal (e.g. bat) species.

General conservation objectives determined by the Decree on special protection areas (Natura 2000 sites) are in force in Natura 2000 sites and are unified for the whole site. There are also detailed conservation objectives, which are generally bond to each species or habitat type in each Natura 2000 site. They are determined in the Operational programme – Natura 2000 site management programme (2007 – 2013) and are in force until the adoption of new operational programme². According to the condition in the nature, detailed conservation objectives define either existing condition should be maintained, restored, improved or additional research should be made (all with the purpose of maintaining the favourable conservation status of species and habitat types). Detailed conservation objectives are determined on the basis of reference values of favourable conservation status.

To achieve a favourable conservation status of species or habitat type reference values of key requirements of the favourable conservation status have to be fulfilled. Reference values

² transitional provision of Decree amending the Decree on special protection areas (Natura 2000 sites) (Official Gazette RS, No. [8/12](#))

determine the population size, size of the habitat or habitat type, and (for each species or habitat type) the specific structures, use of habitat or processes needed for maintaining favourable conservation status for species or habitat type.

Conservation measures are the way of achieving detailed conservation objectives. Public services and individuals, particularly landowners, perform conservation measures. These recommendations treat financing of both of them. Actions of individuals are determined by the sectoral legislation, which in the key areas (forest, fish and wildlife) contains sectoral plans for the use of natural resources. Favourable conservation status of species and habitat types in Natura 2000 sites can be maintained through sectoral planning and resource management, and through the appropriate spatial planning. On the agricultural areas (there is no sectoral planning) the acting of farmers can be directed through financial instruments of the Common Agricultural Policy, especially rural development.

In the cases in which sectoral plans exist, conservation measures in the Natura 2000 site management programme can be written more detailed and targeted. In such cases, the contents of nature conservation are implemented through the nature conservation guidelines and opinions. Nature conservation guidelines can precisely define a detailed conservation policy for achieving detailed conservation objectives (or implementation of nature conservation measures).

In the cases where there is no nature conservation guidelines or in the cases where it is important to have sectoral measures included at the highest level of planning, implementation of the nature conservation contents is done through the cooperation in the preparation of operational programs.

All sectoral measures are more successful, when their implementation is focused on achieving priority objectives and where synergistic effects can be achieved. The analysis of the implementation of Operational programme - Natura 2000 site management programme (2007-2013) showed that implementation of measures was not focused on the achieving of priority objectives. One of the main reasons was, that inside the financial instruments (e.g. centralized funding mechanisms) there was a weak connection between the content of the tender / criteria for selection of the project / share of co-funding of projects and content / criteria / co-funding rate set out in the Operational programme. In the financial instruments where selected content is based on the interests of the applicant, there often was no connection between the content of the application and the content provided in the Operational programme. Therefore, it is important to target the contents connected to Natura 2000 (in such programmes) to the priority species and/or habitat types and sites. It is also important to support the focus of the projects on the achievement of the concrete priority objectives and search for synergistic effects among sectors in the priority areas.

Natura 2000 management programme (besides the measures directly shaping living environments – forestry, agriculture, fisheries, water management) also covers other measures, which are not directly connected to the formation of living environment. Financing of such measures is also covered by this recommendations.

An extensive, relatively well-preserved nature with many interesting species and habitats allows experiencing and learning about plant and animal species, and natural processes. There is a great development opportunity for Slovenia in experiencing of such features with touristic offer and in connection to better food and lifestyle. This document therefore also discusses the possibilities for co-funding the investments and services connected to sustainable development of tourism, which is connected to biodiversity marketing at or near the Natura sites.

2 PLANNED NATURE CONSERVATION MEASURES

There are according to the Nature Conservation Law several nature conservation measures for achieving conservation objectives:

- establishment of new protected areas;
- adoption of management plans for protected areas and partially their implementation in practice;
- giving concessions for allowed use of caves;
- preparation and signing contracts about protection or guardianship;
- adoption of other regulations (restriction of sightseeing and visiting and restriction of the acts that present threat to protected animal species).

Several activities perform in the way of accepting the regulations, giving consents and permissions. Activities are accompanied with administrative costs of existing public administration. In these recommendations, financing of such measures is not specifically examined.

Many Natura 2000 areas are defined for species, which are bond to the underground caves, respectively to the underground caves habitat type. Underground caves protection is covered by **Cave Protection Act** (Uradni list RS, št.2/04 and 61/06-ZDru-1). Underground caves are also valuable natural features of national significance and owned by the state. Usually there is no need to intervene in caves with any proactive measures in order to maintain them in favourable conservation status. Suitable infrastructure regulation measures or visitor restrictions may be needed in cases where cave-visiting infrastructure already exists. Both of above mentioned segments are included in these recommendations.

2.1 Protected areas

Legal acts of establishment of protected areas determine the functioning of protected areas, determine nature conservation measures and give authorization for operation of public services. Operation of public services is generally financed from national budget, partially also from selling goods and services and from EU / international projects. Together with national budget funds also additional funds are needed, to supplement the minimal extent of the regular task performance of public service.

Nature Conservation Act (ZON) and other related conservation acts foresee management plan adoption. Management plan can bring limitations that are more detailed. It also determines public service task extent in detail, the way of performing these tasks, the extent of funds needed for performing tasks and financial resources. ZON and other related conservation acts also define contractual protection and stewardship as a public service.

For achieving Natura 2000 objectives, also protecting new areas can be important. Preparation and adoption of conservation act is state- or municipal administration's duty and is therefore financed from national or municipal budget. Greater success of protection is achieved by

appropriate preparatory activities. These activities can also be financed from other financial resources.

Important funding resources are Territorial Cooperation of European Regional Development Fund, LIFE, potentially also European Regional Development Fund within the Operational programme for the implementation of European cohesion policy 2014-2020. A comprehensive project has to be prepared in each of these cases.

2.1.1 Management plans of the existing protected areas

Management plan is an important fundamental document for effective management and successful achievement of conservation objectives. It is composed of two key substantive parts – evaluation of the present state of the protected area and determination of objectives and measures for their achievement. Good evaluation of the present state is crucial for a good determination of objectives and measures. Additional funds allow evaluation of the present state and assistance at determination of objectives and measures. According to our estimation and experience from abroad, it is reasonable to have external support for such tasks. Some protected area manager's financial condition allows them to pay for such external support. It is recommended to assure these funds in the national budget also for other protected area managers. Based on existing experience of preparation of management plans the amount of funds should be defined following the cost estimation of external performer.

International funds can also be acquired for the evaluation of the present state and determination of objectives. Funds can be acquired for topics connected to the detailed study of the specific species, group of species or habitat types. Preparation of the project is needed in such cases. Project can contain activities, which are important for the evaluation of the present state and determination of improvement measures. For Natura 2000 species and habitat types, which have priority status in the areas (indicator, umbrella or charismatic species), managers should try to obtain project funds and in this way indirectly contribute to preparation of good quality protected area management plans.

Possible EU financial resources can be found within the Territorial Cooperation of European Regional Development Fund (especially cross-border cooperation, but transnational cooperation is also important). Funding is possible in the case, in which enough funds are assured within the Operational program for the implementation of European cohesion policy 2014-2020 for so-called green infrastructure for achieving Natura 2000 objectives (funding mainly from European Regional Development Fund). An important resource are definitely also LIFE funds.

For matters that contribute to the preparation of quality management plans there is a possibility to devote an important part of donor financial mechanisms (Swiss financial contribution, Norway Grants, EEA Grants), in agreement with the donor countries. Donor countries are generally supportive towards these matters. As a country with extremely high proportion of Natura 2000 area, Slovenia shall also strive to achieve these results, if they are to be achieved with the help of donor countries support.

In cooperation with Western Balkan countries, Slovenia becomes entitled to some funds, which for Slovenia alone are not accessible (for example within the CBD LifeWeb Initiative or Mava Foundation). It is important that applicants at least partially try to use participations in such projects (managers of protected areas, Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation - hereinafter: ZRSVN, responsible ministry) also for contents, which contribute to the preparation of quality management plans.

2.1.2 Establishment of new protected areas

Establishment of new protected areas is normally financed from budgetary resources. If project funds are obtained, actions of the establishment of a new protected area may be more successful. With the help of such funds it is possible to involve local residents and key stakeholders into the establishment of new protected area more actively. Project funds are equal to those from the previous chapter.

2.1.3 Contractual protection and stewardship in protected areas

For contractual protection and stewardship, it is essential to provide funds. In addition to ensuring budgetary and project funds (EU and other sources), it would be welcome if managers and ZRSVN would try to obtain sponsorships or donor funds for this purpose. For this purpose it would also be reasonable to spend part of their revenue from sales of goods and services within the contractor's public service and commercial activities. This is the activity of nature conservation with very concrete results out in the field, which can be relatively well promoted.

On the ground, which is state owned; inside protected areas an agreement between National Farmland and Forest Fund (FFFRS) and the ministry responsible for nature conservation can be made. Such agreement would provide adjusted agricultural practices inside the protected areas.

2.2 Contractual protection and stewardship

2.2.1 Funding possibilities for contractual protection and stewardship outside protected areas

General

In Slovenia, contractual protection has several legal bases. Nature Conservation Act (ZON) determines that the protection of Natura 2000 sites is provided by measures of protection of valuable natural features and one of such measures is contract for protection. According to these provisions, contract for protection is an agreement with the owner of the land within Natura 2000 sites, which are the habitat for Natura species or belong to Natura habitat types. Contract in accordance with the ZON particularly specifies:

- omission or activities of the owner with which the purpose of protection of valuable natural feature can be achieved, and
- amount of funds for omissions or activities of the owner from the previous bullet.

ZON introduced this instrument in 1999, but in the period from 2005 funds for its implementation have never been provided by the responsible ministry, neither by its administrative bodies. At the current fiscal situation in the country it will be difficult to provide funds from this source.

Agri-environmental measures have equal elements as contractual protection and are likewise paid out of public funds (85% EU). Very similar or identical contents are also determined in contracts that are the measures under other regulations, in particular contracts for the implementation of agri-environmental measures.

EU legislation also provides funding of forest-environmental measures and fisheries-environmental measures. In practice during the last 7 years the use of habitat areas (through the contracts, which determine omission or required activities) was implemented almost exclusively through the measures under other regulations (mainly agri-environmental measures).

It is therefore important to distinguish between such measures and contract for protection. One way to distinct them are areas, which demand implementation of certain measures of use and are not specified as the areas entitled to e.g. agri-environmental measures. Second way are omissions or required activities, which for the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites exceed omissions or required activities from e.g. agri-environmental measures.

EU financial resources

In the new financial perspective are (according to the provisions of adopted EU regulations for drawing on EU funds) the pillar for assuring preserved biodiversity diverse agri-environmental measures, forest-environmental measures and fisheries-environmental measures. More about this is written in the chapters on forestry, agriculture and fisheries.

Possibilities for funding contractual measures not eligible for funding from agri-environmental, forest-environmental and fisheries-environmental measures also exist within the application and implementation of the relevant LIFE project. Based on the experience of previous LIFE and LIFE + projects, which included the contractual protection, this funding possibility is very limited for several reasons. One is that the financing of contractual protection may be just one of the activities in the project, which must comprehensively address the problem with particular species or habitat type. This requires highly trained operators. Therefore, LIFE projects generally focus on smaller areas and contractual protection is implemented on a small scale. Long-term continuation of the measure implementation is therefore doubtful after the completion of the project. Nevertheless, there are examples of LIFE projects where the payment of certain activities and omissions transferred to the agri-environmental measures after the completion of the project.

Similar to the LIFE mechanism, there is a possibility of funding such measures from the European Regional Development Fund, with more or less the same restrictions as LIFE mechanism has them.

Other financial resources

Slovenia is also eligible for donor funding of certain highly developed countries (Swiss financial contribution, Norway Grants, EEA Grants), so there is an option of funding such measures (similar to the LIFE mechanism) in the context of the application and implementation of the projects. Restrictions here are more or less the same as already described above.

2.2.2 Stewardship of underground caves

Caves important for the conservation of Natura sites and with a need to establish the stewardship or give a concession for the cave appearing, are defined as closed caves or caves with controlled access. Together there are 199 such caves. Out of these, there are around 80 caves physically closed with doors, and around 20 caves regulated as caves for tourist visiting by Cave Protection Act.

The use of caves is guided and restricted in a way, that there are no changes of the ecosystem characteristics of cave environment, and no effect on the biodiversity of the cave. There are two aspects, which we need to consider here. First is the technical aspect, which involves renovation or establishment and maintenance of the cave infrastructure, which are adjusted to the cave environment. The second is the functional aspect and includes the regime of the visit (which parts of the cave are visited, how, when and in what numbers) and other uses of the cave environment. Basis for appropriate use of the cave environment are good expert knowledge of cave environments, monitoring of the conservation status and changes, impact analysis and rapid response to any negative impact on the cave environment. Following these directions, we provide keeping favourable conservation status of the sites. Implementation of monitoring and research is of the crucial importance here. Planning of the cave arrangement is implemented within regular tasks of public services. Funding for such tasks is guaranteed from the budget.

EU financial resources

EU financial resources are needed especially for arrangement of the cave infrastructure (renovation / establishment and maintenance), which is adjusted to specific cave environment and presents minimal influence on the cave environment. Important resources are Territorial Cooperation of European Fund for Regional Development and potentially also European Fund for Regional Development with Operational programme for the implementation of European cohesion policy 2014 -2020.

Other financial resources

Possible financial resources are financial mechanisms - Swiss financial contribution, Norway Grants, EEA Grants and other financial resources e.g. resources available within the cooperation with the Western Balkan countries. Donations also present possible funding source.

2.3 Other measures for nature conservation

These measures include signs in the field, restrictions of viewing and visiting, restrictions of the acts that present a threat to protected animal species and inspection. The measure of markings in the nature was rarely used in the past and it is expected that it will be likewise rarely used in the future. Funding can therefore derive from the national budget, EU project activities or from other financial resources. The measures of restrictions of viewing and visiting, restrictions of the acts that present a threat to protected animal species and inspection are the content of the regulation and are therefore part of the regular work of the state administration.

Actively managed protected areas and ZRSVN (in the frame of nature conservation activities) have the possibility for implementation of some specific nature conservation measures for providing favourable conservation status of the Natura species (e.g. bat colonies protection) and are in some cases already implemented. Implementation is part of the public service tasks and is therefore funded from this address.

Implementation of measures with LEADER programme

In the protected areas, it is possible to run LEADER programme, which is an excellent instrument for achieving nature conservation objectives. It includes an expert skills acquisition, animation of the areas for the establishment of the public-private partnerships, their guiding, etc., but they have to be included in the local development strategy of the local action group (LAG). There are already some positive experiences with current implementation (Natura 2000 in the valley of Branica, Penovje - disappearing pearl of Natura 2000, etc.).

2.3.1 Inspection

Nature conservation inspection includes monitoring and supervision of the implementation of nature conservation legislation (especially the ZON, its implementing regulations and regulations on the establishment of protected areas). It also includes warning and imposing penalties for violations. Supervisors are warning particularly on violations caused by harmful forms of visiting and recreation (e.g. parking, camping, driving in nature), more rarely on violations caused by illegal economic activities. Funding for nature conservation inspection is assured from the national budget through the staff salaries, material costs of the staff and potential investments (e.g. vehicles) of the employed environmental supervisors. For implementation and key improvements on the system of environmental supervision, it is possible to obtain the LIFE funds. From EU programs aimed at young people, it is possible to finance the training of potential or future supervisors (so-called young supervisors, so far within e.g. Youth in Action programme). In the period of 2014-2020 funding of such activities will be enabled within the programme Erasmus+³. This programme also enables adult education, as it supports active citizenship, which also includes the voluntary environmental supervision.

³ More about the programme on: http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/index_en.htm.

3 FORESTRY

3.1 Introduction

Management of Natura 2000 sites in the forestry sector implements through the forest management plans. These are planning the implementation of measures for adapted use of natural resources. Forest management plans for forest management units should include concrete directions and measures, which are given in the nature conservation guidelines. With concrete inclusion of directions and measures, forest management plans become plans necessary for management of Natura 2000 sites.

Forest management planning and preparation of the nature conservation guidelines (for all forests, regardless of the ownership) is funded from the national budget.

Funding of measures, which are necessary for conservation of biodiversity and are planned within forest management plans, is defined in sectoral legislation:

- a) Rules on financing and co-financing the forest investments regulate the financing of measures in the forests from the national budget (including the measures, which are intended for biodiversity conservation),
- b) Act on Forests foresees a co-financing of forest-environmental measures and Natura 2000 measures within the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the national budget (Article 48).

The following describes funding possibilities from these two groups of financial resources, and then funding possibilities classified by types of measures for achieving the conservation objectives in Natura 2000 sites.

3.2 Possible financial resources

Funding of measures for biodiversity conservation in forestry from national budget is implemented in a very small extent⁴. Determination of the amount of national funds that are granted only to the target measures for the qualifying species and habitat types (for which the conservation status is getting worse) is foreseen. This applies in the case of non-inclusion of forest-environment-climate measures into the Slovenian Rural Development Programme.

The key strategic documents for forestry are the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 and the EU Forest Strategy. Funds and financial mechanisms of the EU, which are intended to be used for biodiversity conservation within Natura 2000 network, are the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, LIFE, European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund.

⁴ Reference to the analysis - Forestry

3.2.1 EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020

The EU Biodiversity Strategy deals with the increase of forestry contribution to biodiversity conservation, reduction of the pressure of forestry on the biodiversity and ensuring the sustainability of forestry. It also deals with the integration and implementation of measures aimed at biodiversity (maintenance of an optimal level of deadwood, conservation of the areas, which are not managed and specific measures for preserving favourable conservation status of qualifying forest species and forest habitat types). For funding strategy predicts integration of other funds, including the EU policy for rural development.

3.2.2 EU Forest Strategy

EU Forest Strategy refers to the EU Biodiversity Strategy. It contributes to the balancing of different forest functions and ensuring of the key ecosystem services. It also treats implementation of the measures for biodiversity, where it prescribes guidelines on how to improve the effects of forestry measures within the rural development policy. By funding the measures, it is necessary to achieve measurable improvement of the conservation status of species and habitats that are related to forestry and to ensure ecosystem services (with integrated measures). In this area guidance for the Natura 2000 network and forests is expected.

At the EU level, forestry sector is significantly financed by EU funds. The analysis made in the context of the preparation of the EU Forestry Strategy states that the majority of forestry measures aimed at biodiversity (90%) are funded within the Rural Development Regulation. For the next financial period (2014-2020) is for forestry measures provided 5.4 billion € from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. The European Commission points out that establishment of agroforestry systems, forest-environment payments and measures for Natura 2000 is still lagging behind the expectations.

3.2.3 European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)

Decree deals with forestry as with a component of rural development. Therefore it provides support for sustainable and climate-friendly use of land for development of forest areas and sustainable management of forests. Decree also defines forest-environmental measures, with which it is possible to fund commitments, which exceed by national legislation defined standards. Payments are intended for forest owners, who perform environmentally friendly or climate-friendly services with the acceptance of commitments for increasing of biodiversity, preserving high-value forest ecosystems, improving their potential for climate change mitigation / adaptation, reinforcing the protective function of forests (soil erosion, water conservation, natural disasters). Expert study (FECS) within the project action A.2⁵ predicted two forest-environmental climate measures, namely ecocells with no action planned and ecocells with planned actions. At the beginning of the implementation of Slovenian Rural Development Programme for 2015 – 2020 no introduction of FECS measures is foreseen. Funding of measures (ecocells with no action planned and ecocells with planned actions in accordance with the FECS study) is provided from the national budget.

⁵ The study of placement of Forest-environmental and climate services (FECS) measures for the period 2014-2020, Project Action A.2

3.2.4 LIFE Programme

LIFE Programme also enables funding of measures for biodiversity in the forests. LIFE Programme supports nature conservation, adaptation to climate change and the need for information. Within the framework of the LIFE mechanism can be funded measures, that cannot be funded through other appropriate (EU or other) financial resources. In the forestry sector, measures, which represent above-standard of management and are not eligible for funding through the European Agricultural Fund, can be funded through LIFE mechanism. The problem of LIFE mechanism is that mechanism supports especially projects, which develop examples of good practice, demonstrate examples of good practice from abroad, but does not allow system solutions for funding the measures, which are necessary for forest biodiversity conservation.

3.2.5 European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund

Funding of the measures for forest biodiversity through the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund is (according to the guidelines of the European Commission) possible in the form of funding of investment in green infrastructure establishment / revitalization. That in particular means investments in establishment / revitalization of forest corridors along watercourses, mountain ridges and forest wetlands as natural retention areas for climate change mitigation. Funding possibilities for measures in the natural retention forest areas through Cohesion Fund are within non-construction interventions for mitigating climate change impacts – flood protection, which are provided by the Operational programme for the implementation of cohesion policy 2014-2020. Regional Development Fund within the Operational programme for the implementation of cohesion policy 2014-2020 provides the implementation of projects for improvement of the qualifying species habitats and habitat types, including forest habitats / habitat types. Preferably in forest habitat types that are in unfavourable conservation status or those, for which the status is unknown.

3.2.6 Other possible financial resources

Other possible financial resources may include those, which are already described under other financial resources in chapter Contractual protection and stewardship.

Business & Biodiversity mechanism did not take off in Slovenia or it does exist in such a small extent, that it is not worth mentioning.

Payment for ecosystem services has not yet developed in Slovenia, although it represents a potential opportunity for funding of measures for the biodiversity conservation.

3.3 Types of planned necessary measures and their funding possibilities

In the forestry area next types of measures for achieving objectives for Natura 2000 sites are foreseen:

3.3.1 Ecocells, forest reserves

- Ecocells with no action planned
- Ecocells with planned actions

Rules on financing and co-financing the forest investments foresee funding of the measure Preservation and care for biotope, important for conservation of endangered species (refuges/shelters). It is possible to co-fund tree felling, where that is necessary for biotope maintenance (8 €/m³), silviculture works, which are necessary for biotope maintenance (90%) and leaving biotope to develop naturally (100% value of the possible tree harvest on the refuge/shelter for the current year - 20,00 €/m³ for wood on a tree stump). Rules on forest protection define the term biocell. Instructions for implementation of works are prescribed by forest management planning for the implementation of measures, which are within forest management plan sample for forest management unit allowed as the measures no. 651, 652 and 653. Measures directly contribute to biodiversity conservation.

3.3.2 Adaptive management in protective forests

In accordance with Rules on financing and co-financing the forest investments is from national budget funded implementation of planned works in protective forests and forests in torrential areas. In protective forests especially measures for enhancing the protective function of forests are foreseen (measure 854 – making of anti-erosion wooden barriers, measure 855 - anti-erosion protection, measure 856 - felling heavy trees in protective forests, measure 857 - cutting to pieces and anchoring trees in protective forests, measure 585 - withdrawal of fallen trees from torrent areas), which mostly make no direct contribution to the biodiversity conservation.

3.3.3 Balanced ratio of developmental phases

For this measure no funding is needed, because this is part of the close-to-nature principle of forest management in Slovenia. Rules on forest protection dictate conservation and restoration of balanced ratio between forest developmental phases and balanced diameter structure. Funding of the measures for forest regeneration is also partially connected to this measure (point no. 5 – Natural tree species composition).

3.3.4 Leaving dead wood, habitat trees

Co-financing of the measure of planned leaving of dead wood in the forest is defined (by Rules on financing and co-financing the forest investments) as leaving:

- standing dead and dying trees (where biodiversity forest function has 1. degree of importance, compensation in the amount of 90% of the base is foreseen, where biodiversity forest function has 2. degree of importance, compensation in the amount of 70% of the base is foreseen),
- already lying trees (at least 50% of the wood still has to be usable), compensation in the amount of 50% of the value of standing trees.

Within the measure of leaving dead wood biomass can be paid up to 10 m³/ha of deliberately left trees (recognized value of the wood on a tree stump is 25,00 €/m³). Sample of forest management plan for forest management unit allows planning of such measures (measure no. 670 – leaving standing biomass, measure no. 671 - leaving lying biomass). Measures directly contribute to biodiversity conservation.

3.3.5 Natural tree species composition

Co-financing of the measures for soil preparation and natural regeneration of stands is foreseen. Regulations define the measures for soil or stand preparation for natural regeneration. For that,

funding is possible, according to importance of the forest function – 50% and 40% of labour costs (recognized labour cost is 250 €/ha). Co-funded are also silviculture works (herb removal, tending of seedlings, tending of saplings, tending of pole-stage forest), with which close-to-nature tree species composition is maintained. In the case, in which natural forest regeneration is impossible, artificial forest regeneration can be funded, but the tree species composition must be natural. Measure indirectly contributes to biodiversity conservation, furthermore it directly contributes to the conservation / restoration of the natural tree species composition of minority forest habitat types (3.3.6).

3.3.6 Measures for regeneration of forest habitat types

Measure is intended for protecting forest saplings against game browsing and other negative influences. This can be done by collective (fencing) or individual protection (tubes, coatings). Problem of regeneration of key tree species shows in particular in minority habitat types (maple forests, oak forests, ash forests), in which large or even complete failure of some key tree species (maple, oak, ash) can be observed. For the purpose of conservation or improvement of conservation status of the forest habitat types, it is necessary to implement the appropriate measures to protect the seedlings against browsing (mostly with setting up and renovation of regeneration fences) and development of comprehensive measures for successful regeneration. Measures for successful regeneration are in most cases in synergy with the actions of other sectors (rising groundwater, managing retention areas in the floodplain forests, reducing the intake of the pesticides and other). Measure directly contributes to biodiversity conservation.

3.3.7 Conservation of wetlands and other water areas

Rules on financing and co-financing the forest investments for active maintenance of water areas foresee the measure for maintenance of water resources (measure 616). For this measure co-financing of 90% of labour costs and all needed material is foreseen. The stimulation is intended for making and maintaining of water bodies in forest environment. The measure is planned especially for karst terrain, where there is a lack of water resources. In the practice, measure is intended especially for wildlife management. For wetlands conservation, there are no special measures foreseen, however forest wetlands have in many cases status of ecocell with no action planned (see point 1). Measure indirectly contributes to biodiversity conservation.

3.3.8 Conservation of shrub and herb vegetation

Rules on financing and co-financing the forest investments also define the funding of shrubland, riparian zones, hedges, windbreaks and forest edge maintenance. 80-90% of labour costs and all material costs are co-funded.

This measure is intended for improving nutrition and living conditions for wild animals in the forest. Measure is mainly planned according to the needs of game, use of the measure for improvement of qualifying species habitat is rare. Measure indirectly contributes to biodiversity conservation.

3.3.9 Conservation of mosaic landscape and corridors

Forest islands, corridors and riparian zones in intensive agriculture landscape have 1. degree of importance for biodiversity function (in most cases also other forest functions) or are specified as

protective forests (in exceptional cases as forest reserves) by Regulation on protective forests and forests with a special purpose. This restricts the uncontrolled shrinkage of forest islands for agricultural purposes. No other measures are planned within forest management. These landscape elements are in the forestry protected through the consent system of the competent public forest service or with implementing regulations. Measure indirectly contributes to biodiversity conservation.

3.3.10 Conservation of plant species sites

In most cases felling and skidding of wood on the sites of qualifying species is adapted. On the plant species sites it is also possible to plan the ecocell measures (see point 1), according to the needs of the plants. However there is no particular financial measure for plant species sites conservation.

3.3.11 Establishment of quiet zones and refuges

There is no funding foreseen for establishment of quiet zones. Time restrictions are not defined in the Rules on financing and co-financing the forest investments. Restriction for itself demands restrictions on felling and skidding in particular part of the year, but financial consequences of such a measure are difficult to calculate / prove. Measure directly contributes to biodiversity conservation.

3.3.12 Specific way of forest management

Specific way of forest management can be defined with 1. degree importance of biodiversity function and with combination of other measures, which are specified in Rules on financing and co-financing the forest investments (see other points).

3.3.13 Close-to-nature forest management

Close-to-nature forest management is required by the Act on Forests and it presents the standard of forest management in Slovenia. In this group measures are included, which do not exceed the limits of national legislation in the field of forestry. There is no need for obtaining additional funds for these measures.

4 MEASURES OF ADAPTED AGRICULTURAL PRACTICE

4.1 Introduction

Key types of nature conservation measures, which derive from the C.2 action draft (preparation of conservation objectives and measures for PUN 2000) are:

- conservation of extensive meadows, including the dates and methods of mowing
- maintenance of meadow orchards
- maintenance of landscape structural elements (hedgerows)
- coexistence with large carnivores
- assuring cultivation of less productive grassland (particularly connected to mountain pastures, humpy and steep meadows)

Different types of effects are achieved through the programme. Knowledge transfer, LEADER and cooperation are also important.

4.2 Types of planned necessary measures and their funding possibilities

4.2.1 Pillar I. – direct funding

One of the main novelties introduced by the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy for the period from 2015 to 2020 is the green component, meaning that 30% of the national envelope for direct payments are allocated to the agricultural practices, which are beneficial for the climate and the environment. These agricultural practices are: »Diversification of agricultural crops«, »Permanent grassland« and »Area with ecological importance«.

»Diversification of agricultural crops« would have to fulfil agricultural economies, which have 10-30 hectares or above 30 hectares of arable land. First of them will have to cultivate 2 different crops on their arable land and second would have to cultivate 3 different crops. They will have to take into consideration that prevalent crop can cover only up to 75% or (in the case of 3 different crops) that 2 main crops together do not exceed 95%. In Slovenia are around 3000 agricultural economies, which have more than 10 hectares of arable land. This together represents 81.000 hectares, or 48% of all arable land.

The most important part of payments in terms of Natura sites conservation represents »Permanent grassland«. Ensuring its extent in 95% will be monitored at the national level. Grassland area, which lies within the Natura 2000 sites in sensitive areas (species-rich grasslands with poor conservation status), which are according to Article 45 from Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing rules for direct payments to farmers under support schemes within the framework of the common agricultural policy (1307/2013) defined by state, should not be changed or ploughed. Slovenia has prepared a proposal, which currently contains a list of 24 sensitive areas in which the inclusion of such grassland is foreseen.

Agricultural economies with more than 15 hectares of arable land will have to assure »Areas with ecological importance«. In the year of 2015 they will have to assure 5% of such area and from 2017 onwards 7%. There is also a list of ecological focus areas, which can be selected by the state.

Areas planted with nitrogen-fixing crops and catch crops can also be counted within. In Slovenia are 1668 agricultural economies which have more than 15 hectares of arable land.

Only those agricultural economies, which achieve particular size, are obligated to implement the green component, others obtain payments anyway. Payment can be calculated as a lump sum or as a proportional value of payment entitlements. This means that the agricultural economy, which would have a higher value of payment entitlements, receives higher green payment.

Implementation of the green component is obligatory. In the case of implementation failure, a reduction in direct payments and penalties follow.

4.2.2 Pillar II. - Rural Development Programme

Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development on support for rural development (no. 1305/2013) obligates Member States to devote at least 30% of the total contribution from the EAFRD (for Rural Development Programme) for the purpose of climate change mitigation / adaptation and for other environmental issues. These dedicated funds should be carried out through agri-environment-climate payments and payments for organic farming, also through payments for the areas facing natural or other specific restrictions, payments for forestry, payments for Natura 2000 area and through support for investments, related to the environment.

Agri-environment and climate payments (KOPOP) (Article 28)

Within KOPOP measure, implementation of those requirements will be stimulated, which reduce potentially negative agricultural influences on the environment, preserve natural resources, biodiversity and traditional cultural landscape and contribute to the conservation of protected areas.

The requirements relating to the use of fertilizers and plant protection products, crop rotation, cultivation and care of crops, different ways and dates of mowing / pasture, mountain pasture, breeding of indigenous breeds of domestic animals, cultivation of indigenous and traditional varieties of crops and coexistence with predators and game, will contribute to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and conservation of the agricultural landscape. Some of these requirements will be (in order to maintain and enhance biodiversity) focused only to the areas, where favourable conservation status of the Natura habitat types or animal and plant species is not yet achieved.

Support under the KOPOP measure shall be allocated for the implementation of above standard sustainable agricultural practices, which reflect the multifunctionality of agricultural production. This is reflected in the public function of preserving the environment and biodiversity and maintaining landscape, having regard to the ecological, social and spatial aspects of the rural areas. Socially important services, which are not directly commercially measurable, are payable. Support funds are paid per hectare of cultivated agricultural land, or in some cases to LSU and are intended to cover the cost of additional labour input due to environmental and landscape requirements.

Joining the KOPOP measure is voluntary, but beneficiaries must commit themselves to implement this measure throughout the duration of the obligation and in accordance with all obligatory conditions and requirements.

Payments for requirement implementation are allocated to the beneficiaries on the national level, with an exception of some additional requirements, which are bonded to the specific areas (e.g. areas of humpy meadows, ecologically important areas, central areas of birds occurring on humid extensive grassland, central area of brown bear occurrence, etc.). Payments are paid as support for the current year.

KOPOP measure is implemented throughout the entire programme period. Obligation for implementing the measure lasts for five years, with the possibility of renewal.

KOPOP measure is chosen as a tool for achieving Natura 2000 objectives on agricultural land. Therefore good quality preparation of the requirements and allowed combining or excluding of various requirements on agricultural land are of crucial importance for success of KOPOP measure in terms of Natura 2000.

Natura 2000 payments (art.30)

Payments in the frame of Natura 2000 sites can be approved to the beneficiaries annually per hectare of agricultural land or per hectare of forest, to cover the additional costs and income foregone, which are the consequence of limitations in these particular areas due to the implementation of the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive.

When calculating the support within this measure, Member States count out the amount, needed for prevention of double funding of practices, listed in the Article 43 of Regulation (EU) No. 1307/2013.

Support is approved for the farmers, private forest owners and associations of private forest owners. In appropriately justified cases, support can also be approved to other land managers.

Support to farmers, connected to the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive, is allocated only in connection to the limitations due to the requirements, which exceed good agricultural and environmental status (Article 94 and Annex II to Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy (no. 1306/2013)), also criteria and minimum activities, determined in accordance with paragraphs (c)(ii) and (c)(iii) of Article 4(1) of the Regulation (EU) No. 1307/2013.

At the beginning of the implementation of the Rural Development Programme in Slovenia for 2015-2020, introduction of Natura 2000 payments is not foreseen.

Implementation of measures with LEADER Programme (art. 42 - 44)

Experiences from the last few years show that also LEADER Programme with »bottom-up« approach can be an excellent instrument for achieving nature conservation objectives. LEADER supports: expert skills acquisition and animation of the areas for establishment of public-private partnerships, their management, creation and implementation of the local development strategies and cooperation with the local action groups (LAGs).

Therefore, in the future part of the activities, which contribute to achieving of the Natura 2000 sites objectives, have to be planned (and funds assured) also with this programme.

Implementation of the knowledge transfer measure (art. 14)

Support under this measure covers the activities of professional (vocational) training and expert skills acquisition, demonstration activities and informing measures. Activities of professional training and expert skills acquisition can include training courses, workshops and instruction. Support can be approved to a subject, which assures training or implements other activities of knowledge transfer and informing. Among the elective contents, which are prepared in the context of Knowledge transfer measure – Training programme 2014 – 2020, are also contents from the area of environment / nature conservation and improvement of the environmental performance in Natura 2000 area.

Implementation of the counselling measures (art. 15)

Measure of counselling is inter alia intended also for advisory services, which advise farmers and other land managers about the agricultural practices, which favourably affect the climate and the environment, as it is determined in the Direct payments regulation (for the green component). State has designated sensitive areas, where change or ploughing of the grassland is not allowed. Therefore the implementation of advising can help farmers to more easily adapt to the resulting situation on the farm, in the way that economic efficiency of farming would not be reduced.

Nature conservation plan for farms

In knowledge transfer and advising, special care is intended for farmers, when entering suitable KOPOP programmes and implementing nature conservation contents. The emphasis is on the achieving of favourable conservation status for species and habitat types (achieving Natura 2000 objectives) and also on the adapting of farming technologies on particular farms.

According to the need for greater involvement of farmers in KOPOP (especially into fulfillment of the requirements with nature conservation content) and greater awareness about the effects on the nature and the society, some sort of nature conservation plan for farms (in Natura 2000 sites and where achieving a favourable situation is particularly important) would have to be prepared. This measure can be funded from RDP.

Effects of other measures

When planning agriculture land management inside Natura 2000 sites, paying attention to the measures, which are bonded to the increase of the competitiveness in agriculture (e.g. farm investments, land consolidation, irrigation systems,...) is needed. All planned measures inside the protected areas (Natura 2000 and other protected areas) have to be planned in the way, which is not in contrast with conservation objectives of the area (assuring the favourable conservation status of species and habitats). Otherwise, the effects of planned measures (in the context of agri-environmental and climate measures, Natura 2000 payments and other similar) will be significantly lower or there will not be any effect at all.

Implementation of the measure of cooperation (art. 35)

Measure of cooperation is measure, which will run through the cooperation of different actors and in the form of implementation of development projects, where natural and legal persons will cooperate as partners. The measure supports diverse forms of cooperation, with which will actors in rural areas be enabled to more easily overcome the economic, environmental and other limitations which they face due to fragmentation and incoherence. The focus of the measure is mainly on the integration of generators and users of knowledge, and the transfer of knowledge into practice. Innovations and other novelties will here have the most important role.

5 FISHERIES

5.1 Introduction

Natura 2000 measures, which are bonded to fisheries, are generally implemented through fisheries management. Implementation of measures for adapted natural resource use is planned with fishing district plans and with fishing territory plans. These plans have to contain concrete directions and measures from PUN 2000, which are stated in the nature conservation guidelines. With concrete consideration of directions and determination of measures, become fisheries management plans direct starting-point for maintaining Natura 2000 sites. Their preparation and preparation of nature protection guidelines for all waters under fisheries management (regardless of the manager – the state or angling club) are funded from the national budget.

5.2 Types of planned necessary measures and their funding possibilities

Types of planned nature conservation measures in PUN 2000 are:

- prohibition of fish stocking or permission only of fish stocking of species, which are non-herbivorous,
- strengthening of the inspection control of Danube salmon fishing,
- establishment of the quiet zone on Ledava lake,
- implementation of extensive aquaculture,
- alternately cleaning the pond (not more than 30% of the pond surface in one year),
- promotion of discharging the ponds on at least every 2 years, in the period between July 1 and November 1.

Mentioned nature conservation measures are, according to the past experience, based on the existing public administration costs (strengthening of the inspection control, establishment of the quiet zone) or the funding is not needed (prohibition of fish stocking). In some cases nature conservation measures are implemented in the areas, which are not managed by the angling clubs or Fisheries Research Institute of Slovenia (Rače ponds and Štatenberšček pond). Managers of these ponds are in the process of acquiring water rights. In these cases it will be necessary to achieve the integration of nature conservation measures into the water rights (for use of water for the cultivation of freshwater organisms). Then the implementation of nature conservation measures should be part of the terms for water use. This would mean that the costs of protective measures shall be borne by water rights holder, which carries out the cultivation of freshwater organisms.

EU financial resources

In the last EU financial perspective (2007 – 2013) Natura 2000 nature conservation measures, which were not bonded to fisheries, were not funded from EU funds. One of the reasons was that angling clubs, which are in most cases the carriers of measure implementation, were not eligible

for drawing on funds through the European Fisheries Fund. According to the current programming of funds in this program, the situation remains the same for the next period (2014 - 2020). In the case that this changes, it would be possible to count on better implementation of the planned measures. In the cases relating to the conservation of Natura species and habitat types, angling clubs continue to remain eligible for LIFE funding.

At the time of writing of these recommendations, the Cover Regulation of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) has not yet been available in final form. The implementing acts at EU level were also not ready and adopted yet, therefore it cannot yet be predicted, how accurately the implementation of EMFF measures in 2014-2020 will be. Therefore, below are only listed those types of measures that are potentially linked to the implementation of PUN 2000 and would be funded by the EMFF for the period 2014-2020:

- Partnerships between scientists and fishermen⁶

Funding of networking and implementation of partnership activities between scientists and fishermen is enabled. Projects have to be pointed in direction of improvement of fishermen competitiveness. Exchange of good practices (of cooperation between scientists and fishermen) with other countries is included here.

- Conservation and restoration of marine biodiversity and ecosystems in the context of sustainable fishing activities⁷

Within this measure are also foreseen: preparation, design, monitoring and updating of conservation and management plans for activities, connected to fisheries (within Natura 2000 sites), management, restoration and monitoring of Natura 2000 sites and environmental awareness among fishermen, regarding the protection and restoration of marine biodiversity.

- Innovations connected to conservation of marine biological resources

EMFF covers the possibility of co-financing the investments, aimed at development and introduction of new technical or organisational knowledge, which can reduce the impact of fishing activities on the environment and contributes to more sustainable use of marine biological resources. The involvement of Slovenian fishing vessels or fishermen in pilot project is important (no more than 5% of the fleet or 5% of the gross tonnage of the fleet).

In the period of 2014 – 2020 several new funding possibilities for potential nature conservation measures are opening up. Because in Slovenia commercial fishing only exists at sea, measures tied to the fishing can only be financed at sea. Other problem is that angling clubs as important carriers of fisheries management are not eligible for EU funds from EMFF.

Types of measures, which are potentially bonded to PUN 2000 implementation in the area of aquaculture (mostly for companies, which deal with aquaculture) and could be funded from EMFF in the period of 2014 – 2020:

⁶ Fishermen means those, who are engaged in commercial fishing, which in Slovenia does not exist in fresh waters. Therefore, this measure applies only to marine fisheries.

⁷ In this case, most of the activities are also focused on commercial fishing, which does not exist in Slovenian fresh waters (only marine). When the European Commission will set out the eligible activities, it will be necessary to check if at least some activities can be implemented on fresh waters.

- »Innovations« measure is intended for development of technical innovations, among others to minimize the impact on the environment
- »Productive investments in aquaculture« measure is intended for modernization and construction of new aquaculture units and also to reduce negative / increase positive impacts on the environment
- »New forms of income and added value« measure is intended also for environmental services of aquaculture and for educational activities in the area of aquaculture
- »Promotion of human capital and networking« measure
- »The transition to the system for environmental management and assessment and organic aquaculture« measure
- »Aquaculture, which provides environmental services« measure enables Natura 2000 payments for actors in aquaculture
- »Increasing the potential of aquaculture structures« measure

In order to contribute to aquaculture structure and infrastructure development, EMFF can support identification and mapping of most suitable areas for aquaculture development and consideration of spatial planning procedures, where appropriate.

6 MEASURES OF WATER MANAGEMENT

6.1 Introduction

With the adoption of the EU Water Framework Directive, sectoral planning of water management became approaching to comprehensive planning with the involvement of all factors of water environment and public participation. With economic principles of »polluter pays« and »full recovery of costs« the reimbursement of costs for water use is introduced, which encourages the users to efficient use of water. In 2011 (on the basis of WFD) first Water management plan, which brings new ecosystem approach to water management, was adopted. Therefore it is (besides of achieving good chemical condition of water) the basic objective for water management achieving of good ecological status and water potential. With the ecological objective, water management came close to Natura 2000 objectives, since conservation of the structure and functions of the water ecosystems significantly contributes to Natura species and habitat types conservation.

6.2 Types of planned necessary measures and their funding possibilities

6.2.1. Water management measures

In PUN 2000 similar measures as in the previous programme are predicted. In some areas they are more precisely defined in relation to the needs of individual species and habitats:

- Conservation or improvement of the structure of the bottom and banks of watercourses
- Conservation or improvement of the river dynamics, including the flood regime and the ground water level
- Maintenance of dikes and channels in a way that allows the survival of Natura species and maintains the structure and function of riparian habitat types
- Cleaning the oxbows and backwaters
- Cleaning the watercourses
- Achieving the appropriate level of nitrate

National financial resources

Most of the activities mentioned above are implemented within the tasks of mandatory public water management service (funds for their activities are assured from the Fund for Waters). Its tasks are stated in the Waters Act⁸. Operation of this service is also regulated by the Decree on the manner of performing mandatory public utility service in the field of water management and on

⁸ In accordance with the Waters Act, the functions of this public service are:

- zagotavljanje vodovarstvenega nadzora.
- operation and maintenance of water infrastructure, designed to maintain and regulate water resources,
- operation, maintenance and monitoring of the condition of water infrastructure, designed for protection against water damages,
- implementation of the emergency measures during the elevated threat level of water damage,
- maintenance of water and waterside land,
- providing the water protection surveillance.

concessions to these public utility services (O.G. RS, št. 109/2010, 98/2011 and 102/2012) and by the Rules on the types and scope of tasks of mandatory state public utility services in the field of water management (O.G. RS, št. 57/2006). Funds for operation of this service are provided from the Fund for Waters⁹.

In the case, where in Natura sites actions in accordance with the Programs for elimination of consequences of natural disasters are implemented, funds from integral budget are provided.

In the case, where in Natura sites investment measures to reduce flood risk are implemented, funds from the Fund for Waters are provided.

EU financial resources

In the EU financial perspective for 2014 – 2020 investments in the establishment of green infrastructure will be supported, preferably in synergy with flood prevention measures and measures for improving the hydromorphological status of water¹⁰. If necessary, EU financial perspective will also support the purchase of important properties for the purpose of conservation and restoration of ecosystems that provide key ecosystem services (as part of comprehensive measures in Natura 2000 sites), where it will be shown to be relevant and reasonable.

- Renovation of watercourses¹¹: Water management measures could implement within renovation of watercourses, which are intended for reducing the hydromorphological impacts in the **CF** and **ERDF**. In the context of the ERDF it is possible to also draw funds from the European Territorial Cooperation¹². The funds may also be gathered from the LIFE programme, for projects that are clearly intended for improving or ensuring favourable conservation status of species and habitat types.
- Measures for reducing flood risk in **CF** and **ERDF**¹³: Natura 2000 measures must be an integral part of the implementation of measures for reducing flood risk, where Natura sites

⁹ Budget item of the Water Fund is managed by the ministry responsible for the environment (currently the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment).

¹⁰ Hydromorphological status is determined by the hydrological regime (quantity and dynamics of water flow, connection to groundwater bodies), continuity of flow and morphological conditions (changing river depth and width, structure and substrate of the river bed, the structure of the riparian zone).

Hydromorphological impact means: barriers, dams, canals, maintenance / dredging / disposal of material, maritime routes, leveling / consolidation of riverbeds, land drainage, reduction / land-use conversion of water land, disruption in river continuum and sediment transport, changes in the profile of rivers, disconnections of lakes or wetlands, reduction / loss of flood plains, low / reduced flow rates, mechanical damages of animal / plant species, artificial flow regimes, changes in the level of groundwater, soil erosion / siltation et al.

¹¹ Draft of the Operational programme for the implementation of European cohesion policy 2014 -2020 (Priority axis: Better environmental and biodiversity status; Specific objective 3: Achieving good chemical and ecological status of water and good environmental status of the marine environment and Specific objective 4: Conservation and restoration of biodiversity and soil and the promotion of ecosystem services, including NATURA 2000 and green infrastructures) and Draft of the Partnership Agreement (Thematic objective 6: environmental conservation and promotion of efficient and sustainable use of resources).

¹² Slovenia will in the programming period 2014-2020 participate in thirteen European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) programmes:

- in the four cross-border: Slovenia-Italy, Slovenia-Hungary, Slovenia-Croatia, Slovenia-Austria;
- five transnational: Alpine area, Central Europe, Adriatic-Ionian, Mediterranean and Danube region;
- four interregional: INTERREG VC, INTERACT, ESPON in URBACT (projects from the environmental area belong mostly in INTERREG VC).

¹³ Draft of the Operational programme for the implementation of European cohesion policy 2014 -2020 (Priority axis: Adaptation to climate change; Specific objective: Support to investments for adaptation to climate change) and Draft

are located in the management areas. Foreseen measures for reducing the flood risk also include non-construction measures, such as Identification of the key retention areas of high water, as well as their appropriate arrangements for more controlled high water retention on the occurrence of major flood events. Synergies for the establishment of a favourable conservation status of wetlands, wet meadows and other relevant species and habitats in these areas will be sought.

6.2.2. Providing the longitudinal connectivity of watercourses¹⁴

National financial resources

Existing barrier structures on watercourses are considered to be the objects of water infrastructure, managed by state and the objects of specific use, managed by water rights holders. Therefore funding is expected to be from private and public funds.

In the frame of public funds, the funds can be provided from the Water Fund.

For new barrier structures investor has to assure the passage for aquatic organisms (according to the Freshwater Fishery Act¹⁵).

EU financial resources

In the new financial perspective funds will also be invested in the measures of improvement of the hydromorphological status of water (restoration of streams, including improvement of the longitudinal connectivity of aquatic organisms). Restoration of streams: This Natura 2000 measure can be implemented within the restoration of streams, which are intended for the reduction of the hydromorphological impacts from **CF** and **ERDF** funds.

Drawing on the funds is also possible within **LIFE** program, for projects that are clearly intended for improving or ensuring favourable conservation status of species and habitat types.

6.2.3. Prohibition of sand and gravel use

Prohibition of sand and gravel use is the subject of the regulatory framework and therefore does not demand new financial resources. Waters Act defines that the removal of debris is allowed only to the extent and in a manner in which it: does not change the natural processes significantly, does not upset the natural balance of aquatic and riparian ecosystems or it does not accelerate the damaging effects of water. For each use of debris, concessions must be obtained. The prohibition of sand and gravel use is therefore regulated with the terms of the concession for the use of debris or in some areas concessions are not granted at all.

of the Partnership Agreement (Thematic objective 5: Stimulation of climate change mitigation / prevention, adaptation to climate change and risk prevention and management)

¹⁴ Problem so predvsem prečne pregrade na vodotokih, ki preprečujejo gibanje živali gor in dolvodno na poti za hrano, na dristišča in v skrivališča. To lahko povzroči veliko zmanjšanje nekaterih populacij, lahko pa tudi lokalno izumrtje določenih vrst.

¹⁵ Partially this requirement is taken into account during the preparation of the project documentation in the processes of obtaining nature conservation consent or an expert opinion from Fisheries Research Institute of Slovenia. In the field numerous passages for aquatic organisms are recorded, among which, many of them are often dysfunctional as they were not designed professionally, or are managed inappropriately.

6.2.4. Remediation of pollution sources

Pressures from industrial sources

The measures for reducing pressures from industrial sources are funded by the owners of the industrial plants.

The obligation to take action derives from the regulations.

Remediation of degraded areas

The remediation is generally also funded by the owners, except in the case of subsidiary liability of the State, in which funds for the remediation of degraded areas are provided from the integral budget, according to the government decrees on measures in degraded areas. Measures in such areas can also be funded from the EU funds, in the frame of **CF** and **ERDF**¹⁶.

Urban pressures

According to the demands of the Urban Waste Water Directive, Slovenia must provide the adequate collection and treatment systems for urban waste-water with a total load of 2000 PE or more for all urban areas. Within these, it is necessary to ensure the 100% connection of the population. With the implementation of infrastructure projects in the period 2007 - 2013 should be assured, that the environmental infrastructure will be provided for just under the half of these urban areas. Other urban areas will be (within the implementation of investments of national importance and available CF and ERDF funds) addressed in the EU financial perspective 2014-20¹⁷. National resource for building and managing utility infrastructure are environmental taxes (in accordance with the Law on Environmental Protection), which are the income of the municipalities.

Pressures from agriculture

Measures aimed at reducing the pressures from agriculture are funded under the Rural Development Programme, especially in the context of agri-environmental measures; Priority Area 4B: improvements of water and land management, and contributions to fulfilment of the Water Framework Directive objectives¹⁸.

16 Draft of the Operational programme for the implementation of European cohesion policy 2014 -2020 (Priority axis: Improved environmental and biodiversity status; Specific objective 3: Achieving good chemical and ecological status of water and good environmental status of the marine environment) and
Draft of the Partnership Agreement (Thematic objective 6: environmental protection and promotion of the efficient and sustainable use of resources).

17 Draft of the Operational programme for the implementation of European cohesion policy 2014 -2020 (Priority axis: Improved environmental and biodiversity status; Specific objective: Reduction of the emissions in the water, originating from the discharge and treatment of waste-water).

¹⁸ In the draft of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 are the contents, related to the water status improvement, addressed in the next measures:

- Knowledge transfer (Article 15),
- Assistance when using counseling services (Article 16)
- Agri-environmental and agri-climate payments (Article 29)
- Organic farming (Article 30)
- Payments to the areas with natural or other special limitations (Article 32)
- Cooperation (Article 36)

6.2.5. Controlled increase in water flow

Conservation measure provides an increase of the water flow, passing by a HPP, which would reflect in the lower income of the concessionaire, because of the production decrease. It is necessary to define specific conditions in the concession contract (in accordance with Article 141 of the Waters Act), which have to be followed by the concessionaire. The basis for the change of the concession contract gives Article 142 of the Waters Act.

6.2.6. The activities linked to the measures on hydromelioration canals

- Cleaning of the melioration ditches
- Cleaning of the canals

National financial resources

Based on the Agricultural Land Act, a systemic financial resource for such activities is established. Agricultural Land Act states that the maintenance of hydromelioration systems is the responsibility of the owners of agricultural land. They pay a tax for management and maintenance of hydromelioration systems. Public institution Farmland and Forest Fund of the Republic of Slovenia then (together with the concessionaries) determines the extent of maintenance work. In the process of assessing the acceptability, such a scale and course of work is determined, which does not deteriorate the status of the Natura species and habitat types significantly.

6.2.7. Management of small impoundments

For the management of impoundments it is considered, that the objects of water infrastructure are managed by state and that objects of special use are managed by water rights holder. Therefore management costs are provided from private and public funds.

Basis for measures, related to the management of the impoundments of the specific use, are water permit or concession act and (in the case of a concession) concession contract. The holder of water right must have the rules of procedure for the operation and maintenance of water object or device. Exceptions are water objects or devices for water abstraction for their own drinking water supply. Arrangements for the appropriate management of small impoundments of specific use are therefore subjects of above mentioned acts.

Within Natura 2000 sites are some smaller impoundments (e.g. Podvinci, Velovlek), which are important as the key living space for Natura species, especially dragonflies and amphibians. Not maintaining these impoundments may lead to their loss and consequential loss of habitat. Their inappropriate management can also lead to the same consequences. Management of the impoundments, which are considered water infrastructure, is a task for the mandatory public utility service and is funded from the Water Fund.

6.2.8. Strengthening the inspection on the fertilization and use of plant protection products in coastal areas

In the context of the current budget and the Government's decisions, it would only be possible to strengthen the Inspection for Agriculture and the Environment through transfers from other departments (e.g. Customs Administration of the Republic of Slovenia) or within the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment. New employments are not possible.

Strengthening is also possible through the establishment of the Service for water protection control, in accordance with the Waters Act. Funds for the implementation of the tasks of such service are provided within the budget of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment (Waters fund, Slovenian Environment Agency).

7 DEVELOPMENT MEASURES FOR GREEN GROWTH

7.1 Introduction

Vast areas of the Natura 2000 with their features for Slovenia represent development opportunity for green growth. Numerous relatively well-preserved ecosystems enable experiencing and learning about the flora and fauna in the nature. Experiencing these features through an organized tourist offer, linked with higher quality diet and lifestyle, provides employment and creation of new income, especially in the segment of customers with a highly developed awareness of the importance of a healthy environment and the necessity of its conservation. This document therefore sets out the opportunities for co-financing of the investments and services from the segment of sustainable tourism development, which is associated with the marketing of biodiversity at Natura sites or next to them. Natura 2000 also provides some additional opportunities for the development of certain economic activities, which can contribute to job creation, impact on the socioeconomic status of municipalities and improve the socioeconomic situation in rural areas, especially in relation to agriculture (including supplementary activities), culture and small business.

7.2 Measures that exploit the potentials of Natura 2000, without endangering them and their funding possibilities

Measures for exploiting the potentials of Natura 2000, without endangering them, are possible especially in the following areas:

- Infrastructure for visiting protected areas and ensuring sustainable mobility (information centres, observatories, lookouts, markings, footpaths, natural and cultural routes, learning paths). Marketing biodiversity through tourism requires certain investments in tourism infrastructure and in infrastructure for the interpretation of nature or park infrastructure (e.g. learning and adventure paths, information centres). This infrastructure attracts visitors and tourists and helps them to experience the nature or to get in contact with animals and plants. Due to such experiences, an area may become a popular destination for visiting or a tourist destination. Thoughtfully planned park infrastructure also directs visitors to certain parts of nature (Natura sites), thereby helping "to concentrate" them on the points or the surrounding area of Natura sites, where it is possible to market the local products (agriculture, hospitality industry, souvenirs, services, etc.). At the same time, they should turn away from the sensitive areas of nature, where large numbers of visitors can be harmful for achieving the conservation objectives. It is important to keep visited parts of the nature in the condition, which positively affects the status of species and habitat types and provides quality contact with nature for the visitors.
- Cooperation with other sectors and municipalities in promotion of the practices that positively contribute to the achievement of the nature conservation objectives:
 - water management when restoring the green infrastructure, especially with the purpose of close-to-nature flood protection measures and when providing quality drinking water sources, together with the positive contribution to the achievement of the favourable conservation status of species and habitat types linked to the aquatic ecosystems;

- conservation of cultural heritage, especially searching for positive results for the area of nature and culture during the implementation of common projects (e.g. rather than building a new one, the information centre is placed in the object of cultural heritage, connecting the areas of nature and culture when building the infrastructure for visiting and interpretation, priority is to restore the cultural heritage that is directly relevant, e.g. as the habitat of the endangered species);
 - environmental conservation, especially in the area of waste-waters and waste treatment;
 - social areas (like e.g. use of the instrument of public services as help for the nature conservation activities in the field, and social entrepreneurship, which contributes to the nature conservation objectives in the protected area);
 - promotion of sustainable agricultural and forestry practices, which as much as possible directly affect the achievement / maintenance of the favourable conservation status of species and habitat types.
- o Development of the trademarks of protected areas as an important support to the providers of services, crops and products. Also for consumers as the information that the service, crop or product positively impacts the nature conservation objectives.

National financial resources

Those tasks also partially belong to the Public service for nature conservation, so they are funded from the national budget (when at least minimum budgetary resources are ensured). Within these funds the basic preparation of projects (of those above listed contents, which may be defined as nationally important) is enabled.

EU and other financial resources

With the project funds from the EU and other resources, it is possible to develop all contents listed above. Important funding resources are the European Regional Development Fund, the Rural Development Programme, LIFE, the Cohesion Fund, the financial mechanisms - Norway Grants, EEA Grants, Swiss financial contribution and other.

8 RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT, AND MONITORING

8.1 Introduction

Success in defining and implementation nature conservation measures, planning and decision making, education and formation of public opinion – it all depends on understanding natural processes as well as accessibility, arrangement and reliability of the data on biological diversity. The Ministry of the Republic of Slovenia of Education, Science and Sport (MIZŠ) is responsible for the research policy. The Slovenian Research Agency (ARRS) is in charge of the implementation of the research programme. It is of critical importance that the two ministries (MKO and MIZŠ) bring together natural and social sciences. Science Division of the Science Directorate at MIZŠ is actively involved in guidance and implementation of the Horizon 2020 Programme and other European Initiative such as ERA-NET, INCO-NET and JPI (Joint European Programme Initiatives), but there is deficiency in cross-sectoral cooperation at the policy level and programme implementation. So far, the Ministry responsible for nature conservation has no significant influence on the research policy and there is weak cooperation between the two ministries. Although within the EPBRS platform, particularly the BIOSTRAT project, there have been several attempts to strengthen cooperation, yet they have never worked out in practice. However, better cooperation between MKO and MIZŠ, particularly the Research Directorate, could better incorporate biodiversity into the research strategy and its programmes at the national level and by doing that biodiversity would have a better position to be financed particularly from national sources.

8.2 Defining research needs and possibilities for their co-financing

EU financial resources

Promoted by MIZŠ, Horizon 2020 (Horizon 2020 - Participant Portal H2020 Online Manual¹⁹) is the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation that provides funding opportunities. It is a centralised programme. Biodiversity is explicitly included in two Social Challenges with the possibility of financial support. The first one on Food security, sustainable agriculture and forestry, marine and maritime and inland water research, and the Bioeconomy (Social Challenge 2²⁰); and the second one on Climate action, environment, resource efficiency and raw materials (Social Challenge 5²¹).

In the Work Programme 2014-15 on Climate action, environment, resource efficiency and raw materials, there is a section dedicated to Environmental protection, sustainably management of natural resources, water, biodiversity and ecosystems including activities particularly focusing on biodiversity and ecosystem services. In the Work Programme 2014-2020 on Food security, sustainable agriculture and forestry, marine and maritime and inland water research, and the Bioeconomy the importance of biodiversity conservation and healthy functioning ecosystems is incorporated in the sustainable use of natural resources.

¹⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/index_en.htm

²⁰ <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/food-security-sustainable-agriculture-and-forestry-marine-maritime-and-inland-water>

²¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/climate-action-environment-resource-efficiency-and-raw-materials>

Additionally, relevant research projects can also be implemented through the other financial mechanisms (such as CF, EAFRD, ERDF, EMFF).

National financial resources

Target research programmes (CRP) better involve individual ministries in proposing research activities. Ministries cooperate in confirmation procedures for research programme at ARRS, including the financial perspective. Therefore, it is more likely to achieve some research results applicable also for nature conservation. The Ministry responsible for nature conservation has limited resources to be used for specific studies and small research projects. Nevertheless, such results are applicable directly. Mapping habitat types is one of such projects.

8.3 Defining monitoring needs and possibilities for their co-financing

Establishment of monitoring for selected species and habitats, particularly those on the annexes of the Habitat and Bird Directives, can be provided from the EU funds and projects in the framework of ETC and LIFE. Taking into account certain restrictions, a long term planned monitoring can be financed in the framework of the technical support measures, the Rural Development Programme. The rest of it can be financed only from national resources, although the ministry responsible for nature conservation has in practice limited resources for the purpose.

8.4 Data bases and data accessibility

EU financial resources

There is a possibility to establish and make operational good databases and related special portals in the framework of preparation and implementation of a LIFE project or a project within the ETC programmes. Based on the experience of accomplished projects in the field the possibility for such a financial support has been restricted for several reasons. One of them being that financing of databases and spatial portals can be only an activity of a project with a comprehensive approach towards solving a problem of a particular species or habitat type which requires well trained actors. Therefore, projects are mostly focused on small areas with corresponding small databases. After the project has been accomplished there is a problem of subsequent financial support and consequently maintenance of the database.

National financial resources

In the past, national financial resources were occasionally provided for the establishment of good and operational databases and spatial portals. However, systematic financing that would enable continuous replenishment of databases, maintenance and operation has yet to be established.

Other financial resources

Slovenia is eligible for donation funds of some developed states (Swiss financial contribution, Norway Grants, EEA Grants). When applying for and implementing such projects there is a possibility to cover the establishment and maintenance costs of the database and spatial portals like for LIFE instrument, yet taking into account similar restrictions as they apply for LIFE mechanism.

9 INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION, PUBLIC AWARENESS

9.1 Introduction

Management of Natura 2000 sites is a challenging task. One of the reasons for that is, that many stakeholders are included inside (active or passive). Here we demonstrate an overview over the possible financial resources for information, communication and public awareness, and promotion of dialogue. We proceed from the past experience from Slovenia and EU²² in the last programme period. The involvement of stakeholders is discussed in other chapters.

9.2 Types of planned necessary measures and their funding possibilities

The measures of information, communication and awareness commonly interweave, so with the particular measure we can achieve objectives which are in different areas.

In the area of information and communication are especially measures for communication between project partners, with stakeholders and with general public. The tools are direct personal communication, printed material and electronic messages, websites, new public media, campaigns.

In the area of public awareness, measures are directed towards different segments of public (mostly young people, schoolchildren), stakeholders, also tourists / visitors, general public. The tools are mainly websites and new public media, printed material, exhibitions, infrastructure for visiting (nature trails, information centres), guided tours, lectures etc.

National financial resources

Communication and awareness-raising activities are – in a certain volume – part of the regular work of all public institutions and public service providers, which operate in the area of nature conservation. Above mentioned tasks are financed from the national budget (within the funding of public service).

The Government Communication Office each year supports information-communication and educational projects of NGOs, which are dealing with in advance determined topics. In the past such funds were already allocated for the Natura 2000 promotion (with the support of the ministry responsible for the nature).

The Government Communication Office ensures financial resources also for the communication activities, which are connected to the EU affairs. The Commission and the Government Communication Office (in the name of Slovenian government) signed a Delegation Agreement in

²² Torkler Peter et al.: *Financing Natura 2000 Guidance Handbook*, European Commission, 2007.

2007 for a period of four years (agreement about The Management Partnership). The partnership is aimed at adjusted communication about EU affairs between the Commission, European Parliament and Slovenian government. Representatives of all three institutions therefore every year prepare the annual communication program, which contain different activities for several target audiences (young people, experts, NGOs, citizens). This way they assure the opportunities for the presentation and discussion about different European topics, which address everyday life of the citizens. Evaluation was made, which found out that the programs involving all partners (and their experiences / ideas) are better than those, in which every institution would communicate separately. Every year they perform four to five such programs²³.

Possible financial resources are also donations and sponsorships of the companies. In the past such funds (for the area of nature conservation awareness) were donated by Petrol and Krka.

EU financial resources

Basic financial resource in this area is LIFE Programme. In the area of LIFE Nature and biodiversity, the activities of informing, communication and awareness²⁴ are also part of every project.

In the area of Environmental management and information²⁵, which includes also the area of nature conservation (also Natura 2000), the funds will be allocated to awareness raising, communication, information, sharing of knowledge about successful solutions, dissemination of practices and approaches, training.

EU Commission in its first LIFE Multiannual Work Programme²⁶ foresees funds for the national and transnational awareness campaigns, which purpose is to raise awareness of the public about Natura 2000. Campaigns should significantly raise the awareness and (if possible) also change the behaviour of target audience or specific social, administrative or economic sector.

Funds would also be allocated to campaigns for large carnivores, at the level of population of each species.

Funds for informing and awareness-raising about the EU Biodiversity Strategy are also foreseen. Awareness-raising should increase the understanding of EU citizens and key stakeholders (including decision makers, business sphere, and local administration) about the objectives of the EU Biodiversity Strategy.

Financing of campaigns for rising awareness about non-native invasive species is also foreseen. Campaigns will be focused on general public and key stakeholders (including decision makers, economy, local communities and state institutions).

Also the key stakeholders for the green infrastructure should be reached by the campaigns. Good practices should be promoted and preparation of technical and spatial data (for restoration of green infrastructure) improved.

²³ <http://www.evropa.gov.si/en/content/communicating-europe-in-slovenia/>

²⁴ Uredba XXXX, Člen 11, Posebni cilji za prednostno področje narava in biotska raznovrstnost.

²⁵ Uredba XXXX, Člen 12, Posebni cilji za prednostno področje narava in biotska raznovrstnost.

²⁶ *LIFE Multiannual Work Programme for 2014-2017* (February 2014)

Funds will also be allocated to the promotion of good practices and formation of networks of volunteers.

LIFE projects, which are intended for the conservation of species and habitats, generally cover also communication activities: preparation of information and promotion material, establishment of communication network, maintenance of website.

LIFE projects, which are intended for the conservation of species and habitats, often cover also awareness-raising activities: preparation of handbooks, seminars, workshops, preparation of materials for awareness-raising.

Informing, awareness-raising and promotion of nature are often involved in LEADER projects, funded from Rural Development Programme. Usually there is a connection with tourist promotion and regulation of local tourist infrastructure.

Education and training of young people will be funded from Erasmus+ programme²⁷. Programme enables also adult education. For receiving the funds from Erasmus+ programme for adult education can apply organisations from the field of adult education and also local and regional institutions, which are active in adult education.

Communication and promotion activities are generally included in the projects of transnational cooperation; some of them also involve awareness-raising activities.

Funds, which are contributed by European countries, which are not EU members (e.g. Swiss financial contribution, Norway Grants, EEA Grants) are also available.

²⁷ More about the Erasmus+ programme on: http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/index_en.htm

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