

LIFE Integrated Project

OPTIMIZING THE MANAGEMENT OF NATURA 2000 NETWORK IN LITHUANIA



NATURALIT

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Main statistics on Natura 2000 network in Lithuania

Context of Naturalit project implementation

- Protected areas ~ 18,5 % of the total state area
- Natura 2000 network – 711 sites - 15 % of the total state area (except marine territories)
- 83 % of Natura 2000 network overlaps with national protected areas network.



Main expected outcomes of Naturalit project

Natura 2000 network will be fully completed: knowledge gaps will be closed by completing necessary studies, new sites will be established , existing sites will be revised.

SMART conservation objectives for Natura 2000 will be agreed at national and site level and supported by defined favourable reference values.

Necessary conservation measures (incl. management plans or equivalent planning documents) **for all Natura 2000 sites will be in place.**

Natura 2000 conservation aspects will be fully involved into forest management planning as standard part of the process.

Rural Development Programme will involve necessary variety of specific biodiversity support measures and innovative agro-environmental schemes.

The multiple socio-economic benefits of Natura 2000 network will be assessed and taken into account in public administration decision making processes.

Appropriate level of Natura 2000 management capacities of competent authorities (incl. on systematic surveillance of conservation status of species and habitats) **will be assured.**

50 actions

10 years
(2018 - 2027)

11 partners



Beneficiaries

Coordinating beneficiary:

1. **Environmental Projects Management Agency** under Ministry of Environment of Republic of Lithuania (EPMA)

Associated beneficiaries:

2. **Ministry of Environment** of Republic of Lithuania (MoE)
3. **State Service for Protected Areas** under MoE (SSPA)
4. **Ministry of Agriculture** of the Republic of Lithuania (MoA)
5. **Aukštaitija National Park** and Labanoras Regional Park Administration (ANP)
6. **Dzūkija National Park** and Čepkeliai Strict Nature Reserve Administration (DNP)
7. **Žemaitija National Park** Administration (ZNP)
8. **NGO Baltic Environmental Forum** Lithuania (BEF-LT)
9. **Vytautas Magnus University Agriculture Academy** (Institute of Forest Biology and Silviculture) (VMU AA)
10. **State Forest Enterprise** (SFE)
11. **National Paying Agency** under the MoA (NPA)- till 31.12.2023



MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS



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Natura 2000 network

2018: Establishment of Methodical Analytical Centre / SSPA

I. EU pilot Inquiry 2015 –the insufficiency of the sites proposed under the HD (SCI)
(different level of insufficiencies for 17 types of habitats and for 22 species)



- ✓ 2018-2022: inventory of 33 unknown species (instead of planned 27)
- ✓ **April 2023: MoE informed EC about solved insufficiency**



II. EU pilot Inquiry 2016 – on establishment of the Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)
(insufficient protection - conservation objectives not set, management plans not prepared)



- ✓ 2021 - The appropriate form of Conservation objectives prepared and agreed with EC;
- ✓ 2023 - Favourable reference values - for all species (101) and habitats (54) of CI;
- ✓ Conservation objectives on site level:
 - 2024.05: approved for 358 out of 410 SCIs (33 - prepared& still waiting for appr.)
 - 2024.05: approved for 15 out of 85 SPA (65 - prepared& still waiting for appr.)
- ✓ National level conservation objectives for all species (101) and habitats (54) of CI- set in 2023.
- ✓ Management plans:
 - database (www.biomon.lt)/updated process / preparation and update of MP



Integration of the nature conservation measures into agriculture sector

- ✓ Contribution to the development of the national CAP strategic plan, improvement of related legal acts and effectiveness of administrative procedures for the new financial period.
- ✓ 2020-2023: testing of the first innovative result-based agri-environmental measure “Conservation of natural flowering meadows” / now under preparation for including into CAP;
- ✓ Promotion of extensive animal grazing for management of open habitats: 3 pilot territories prepared / herds purchased/ grazing started;
- ✓ 2 policy briefs prepared – for awareness raising and making the impact on decision makers - dedicated to:
 - grass shredding in natural meadows (2022);
 - wooded pastures and their importance to for plant and animal species, and their habitats (2023).



Integration of the nature conservation measures into forestry sector

- ✓ Recommendations on forest habitats (13) management – 2 editions: 2021 and 2023. Legalisation –slowly on the way / training on how to apply them - already started.
- ✓ Based on Recommendations - technological models for testing in the pilot territory prepared /planned conservations measures included into the forest management plan/ project experiments in forest habitats started.
- ✓ Legislative adjustments on the regulation on management rights of forest land, proposals on amendments of Forest Law and other legal acts were prepared (however...).



Other areas of impact

- ✓ Testing of innovative technologies for the wetlands restoration – Uzpelkiai telmological reserve restored;
- ✓ Development of full cycle biomass composting mechanism: 1 out of 2 composting sites - already under operation in ZNP;
- ✓ Development of innovative monitoring methods for „hard species“: woodpeckers, owls (programmed remote acoustic recorders), flycatchers (GIS habitat modelling), ground nesting and migrating birds (thermal vision cameras combined with drones).



Main challenges

Lack of political support for environmental objectives + increasing lobbying.

Deliberate efforts to compromise environmentalists and their work (through media, etc).

Agriculture sector: lack of effective cooperation between MoE and MoA (neglecting of biodiversity objectives from the side of MoA).

Complicated dialogue with the institutions of **forest management sector**. Conflict between „new“ and „traditional“ foresters.

Resistance from **private land owners** to the objective to increase the network of protected areas.

Lack of constant strong communication at national scale.



We seek to ensure the full protection of the NATURA 2000 network, the most valuable natural areas in the EU. Thus, we will preserve the ancient woods, wetlands, grasslands, other habitats and their naturalness, which has surrounded Lithuanian people from ancient times.



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