



The Implementation of the Natura 2000, Habitats Directive 92/43/ECC and Birds Directive 79/409/ECC

Preparation for an ex-post territorial impact assessment

Publication

[Report](#)

Citation

Ecologic Institute and UCL Centre for Law and the Environment (2015): The Implementation of the Natura 2000, Habitats Directive 92/43/ECC and Birds Directive 79/409/ECC (Preparation for an ex-post territorial impact assessment).

This study collects and analyses the information from the 28 Member States and their regions and cities on the implementation of the EU Birds and Habitats Directive and management of Natura 2000. Desk-based research including a review of case law were employed to gather information on and analyse the Directives. The study is available for download.

The main task of the analysis included:

- current state of play (e.g. implementation and infringement overview, degree of flexibility in selecting Natura 2000 sites, opinions about the Directives, and stakeholder positions towards the REFIT process);
- dominant economic, environmental and social benefits and disadvantages; and
- implementation challenges and funding opportunities for local and regional governments.

The study revealed that while the costs from the implementation of the Habitats and Birds Directives are greatly outweighed by the environmental and socio-economic benefits provided, implementation is hampered in many cases and local and regional authorities continue to face various challenges. The main barriers raised include stakeholder conflicts in the designation of Natura 2000 sites, infringement cases (predominantly in southern Member States), limited or underqualified personnel, and lacking strategic approaches of regional authorities to successfully apply for the different funding programmes and improve the overall investment rate to manage designated sites.

On the basis of this analysis, the study developed a questionnaire to be used by the Committee of the Regions for follow-up interviews and targeted consultations to obtain more in-depth information about the experiences of local and regional actors. The CoR also utilized a list of suggested regions emerging from the study as input to the organization of an expert workshop to gather additional insights regarding the effects of the Directives across Member State regions.

Language

English

Authorship

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Funding

European Union, [Committee of the Regions](#) (CoR), International

Year

2015

Dimension

92 S.

ISBN

978-92-895-0812-4

DOI

[10.2863/16342](#)

Project

[Implementation of Natura 2000 and the Habitats and Birds Directives](#)

Project ID

[2612-05](#)

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Flexibility within the relevant Articles

Implementation Actions Brought by the Commission

Keywords

[Biodiversity](#)

[EU](#)

[Evaluation](#)

biodiversity, Natura 2000, Birds Directive, Habitats Directive, Territorial Impact Assessment, regional policy, local and regional authorities, infringement, Committee of the Regions, European Union, EU 28 Member States

Europe

desk research, desk-based research, review of case law; survey development

Source URL: <https://www.ecologic.eu/12587>