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## **Linking Biodiversity to National Economic and Social Priorities in the EU Member States**

### **Project**

### **Duration**

Dec 2015 - Dec 2017

There are many synergies between socio-economic priorities and biodiversity objectives, with varying degrees of evidence to support those connections. This project, led by IEEP, focuses on these synergies in the EU Member States and explores what the EU can do via its European Semester to raise awareness of the potential for biodiversity to help attain many national socio-economic priorities and therewith encourage due macro-economic policies. While previous analyses have provided rather general assessments of the economic and social benefits of biodiversity, this work will provide a more detailed and country specific analysis and identify synergies in each EU Member State as well as Member State specific data to feed into the European Semester process.

### **Background**

A number of studies and reports point to the substantial economic and social benefits of protecting and promoting biodiversity. They comprise inter alia contributions to the green economy, value of ecosystem services, opportunities for jobs and skills and benefits for public health and wellbeing. Conceptual arguments on the benefits of biodiversity, the need for the integration of biodiversity in various sectoral and other policies are (arguably) clear, and the associated evidence base is increasingly robust.

Nonetheless, there still appears to be a failure to recognise these benefits and integrate them adequately into mainstream thinking on economic and social policy. Even where integrated, there is a lack of implementation in practice on the ground, which is adversely affecting biodiversity. To address these challenges, more needs to be done to take account of biodiversity in economic and social policy decisions. At the same time, the multiple-benefits of investing into biodiversity and nature protection need to become policy-relevant in governance structure such as the European Semester.

The European Semester, while focusing on macro-economic stability and growth, offers an annual opportunity to encourage and support further action in this regard. Identifying Member States' own economic and social priorities, showing how biodiversity can contribute/support these objectives, and what can be done to realise such synergies will be a valuable addition to the further greening of the European Semester process.

## Objectives

The project will identify key areas for biodiversity's contribution to socio-economic priorities in the EU and its Member States, and analyse the identified key areas within socio-economic priorities, including evaluating economic and social benefits stemming from the synergies between biodiversity and socio-economic priorities. From the results, a final report will be compiled including 28 Member State profiles.

## Methodology

Several tasks will be involved in this study, including:

- Analyse relevant socio-economic priorities in the EU and its 28 Member States
- Identify synergies between the identified priorities and biodiversity conservation objectives in each Member State
- Evaluate economic and social benefits stemming from these synergies, including Member State specific examples and data
- Develop recommendations on how these synergies can be best exploited, with a view to maximize the benefits (economy, society and environment) and optimize the use of public resources through cost-effective policy approaches and solutions
- Gather data and generate recommendations to feed into the European Semester process, with a view to raise the profile of natural capital and its contribution towards Member States' macro-economic policies

## Tasks of Ecologic Institute

Ecologic's team will identify key areas for biodiversity contribution towards socio-economic priorities in five Member States (Germany, Austria, Lithuania, Slovenia, the Netherlands) and analyse identified key areas within these priorities, including evaluating economic and social benefits stemming from the synergies between biodiversity and socio-economic priorities. Ecologic Institute will also contribute to the organization of regional workshops and a synthesis meeting.

## Funding

European Commission, [Directorate-General Environment](#) (DG Environment), International

## Partner

[Institute for European Environmental Policy, London](#) (IEEP), United Kingdom  
[ICF International](#) (ICF UK), United Kingdom  
[Ecologic Institute](#), Germany  
[denkstatt](#), Austria  
[Natural Resources Institute Finland](#) (Luke), Finland

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