



Expert meeting on
**“Biodiversity monitoring and reporting according to EU Habitats Directive
in the Baltic States – methodological aspects”**

May 25-26, 2005, Laagri, Estonia

REPORT

Opening and introduction *By Ms. Daina Indriksone, BEF*

Ms. Indriksone introduced the goals and activities of the Phare CBC project “Implementation of the biodiversity monitoring requirements in accordance with the EU Birds and Habitats Directives through facilitating cooperation and stakeholders networking in the Baltic States”, in the frame of which the current meeting was carried out. She pointed out that this is already the third project event after the project kick-off meeting and large international workshop. Two more specialized expert meetings and a round-up meeting will still follow. The project outcomes will be summarized in a publication.

Ms. Indriksone reviewed shortly the outcomes of the previous events as well as introduced the goals, discussion topics and agenda of the current meeting.

SESSION I Overview on current situation regarding biodiversity monitoring in the Baltic States from perspective of approved reporting format by the EC

Monitoring, surveillance and reporting requirements deriving from the Habitats Directive

By Mr. Thomas Ellmauer, Federal Environment Agency, Austria

Mr. Ellmauer introduced the legal obligations deriving from Art. 11 and Art. 17 of the Habitats Directive as well as the reporting requirements to the European Commission.

He informed that Art. 11 of the Habitats Directive requires surveillance of natural habitats (Annex I) and species of wild fauna and flora of Community interest (Annexes II, IV and V) on the entire territory of the Member State. According to Art. 17, every six years the Member States have to report to the European Commission on conservation measures referred to in Art. 6(1), on impact of those measures on the conservation status of Annex I habitat types and Annex II species, as well as on main results of the surveillance.

The first report was delivered by the “old” Member States in 2001. The second report has to be delivered by the end of 2007 and shall cover the time period from 2001 to 2006. It will be the first assessment of the conservation status and will set the baseline (reference values) for the next report. In the third report for 2007-2013 (submission deadline in 2014) Member States have to report already on first monitoring results according to Art. 11 (best expert judgement will not be accepted anymore by the EC).

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Mr. Ellmauer also introduced the reporting format that was approved by the Commission on 20th of April 2005 and can be found on the CIRCA web page: <http://forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc/env/monnat/home>.

He pointed out that some issues like defining favourable reference values and typical species as well as developing further guidance on how to work with evaluation matrices and reporting formats are still under discussion. The Commission also plans to revitalise the biogeographic process to discuss transboundary issues, to check the quality of data and to correct/fine-tune the results of the EU analysis of the Member States' reports.

Discussion

- It was emphasized that Member States should not expect any comprehensive guidelines on reporting from the Commission but start doing it! Problems and open questions should be solved during the process.
- Little scientific basis for preparation of this report was deemed to be problematic. But it can be challenged with reliable scientific data for 2014 report.
- The reporting cycle according to the Birds Directive is three years. However, the Commission does not support harmonising the procedure with reporting according to the Habitats Directive. It would require changing the Birds Directive, which in turn would open the possibility to change also other aspects of the Directive. Still the discussions on Habitats Directive's reporting will be considered while developing reporting format for the Birds Directive (it can be that conservation status assessment will be obligatory for birds as well), however development of reporting format cannot be expected in near future.

Review from responsible authorities on the current situation in the Baltic States from perspective of the EC reporting format

Estonia by Mr. Hanno Zingel, *Estonian Environment Information Centre*

Mr. Zingel briefly informed about the current biodiversity monitoring system in Estonia, being used since 1998. It has 39 subprogrammes, including 10 bird monitoring programmes and 10 habitat monitoring programmes (mainly seminatural habitats). The step for plant community monitoring is five years and every year 24-25 sites are monitored. The budget allocated for biodiversity monitoring is ca. 1,8 Million EEK (ca. 115 000 EUR) yearly. In Estonia there are ca. 60 habitats and ca. 100 species of the Habitats Directive that need to be monitored. Mr. Zingel stated that current monitoring covers mainly rare and semi-natural habitats, so some rearrangements are needed concerning habitat monitoring. This year (2005) will be mostly developing and testing of methodology. It can be expected that in 2006 it will work in the field, too. Ministry of the Environment is responsible for implementation of the Habitats Directive including reporting to the Commission but for implementation of monitoring programmes different (scientific) institutions/NGOs/experts are subcontracted. EC reporting formats will be filled-in by officials and experts.

Almost all habitat types were inventoried while filling-in Standard Data Forms. The problem is, how to maintain this situation. Mr. Zingel emphasized the important role of local spots (protected areas) in future monitoring and the need to develop well-organised data flows. He also pointed out the need for cooperation between countries to understand the situation of habitats and species in the Baltics and in the whole boreal region.

Lithuania by Mr. Džiugas Anuškevičius, *Ministry of Environment, Lithuania*

Mr. Anuškevičius informed that Lithuania has developed a new monitoring programme for 2005-2010 taking into account the requirements of all relevant conventions and EU directives

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having the aim to halt the biodiversity decline by 2010. So far this system is still only on paper. Mr. Anuškevičius pointed out the lack of specialists and funding as well as missing of methodology and monitoring outside of Natura 2000 sites as the main problems. In this year only 300 000 LTL (ca. 86 900 EUR) were allocated for monitoring but several millions would be needed in practice. The situation regarding data is also not very good. For forest habitats there are data in forestry databases but they are not available for nature conservation. Despite of that completing the 2007 report should be manageable for Lithuania because in case of lack of data best expert judgment can be used. Lithuanian Ministry of Environment is responsible for reporting, data collection, subcontracting concerning Natura 2000 monitoring but reporting forms will be filled-in by experts.

For financing monitoring Lithuania plans to use (is using?) Structural Funds (for purchasing monitoring equipment, training specialists, development of methodology). Also LIFE+ might be used for financing monitoring in future but this fund will be probably more for scientific, innovative projects.

Latvia by Ms. Marina Šestakova, *Latvian Environment, Geology and Meteorology Agency*

Ms. Šestakova described the biodiversity monitoring part of the Latvian National Environmental Monitoring Programme, being used since 2003. She informed that there are 16 biodiversity monitoring sub-programmes, nine of which are currently being carried out. Each sub-programme has a separate action plan. Every year detailed monitoring plans are designed by the Latvian Environment, Geological and Meteorological Agency (LEGMA) according to the respective action plan. LEGMA also leads and controls the monitoring process and analyses the results received from different subcontracted institutions and experts.

Ms. Šestakova stated that although a lot of protected areas and Natura 2000 sites are covered by current monitoring, many improvements are still necessary; new areas, habitats and species have to be included in the monitoring programme.

This year a new Latvian National Environmental Monitoring Programme is being developed by the “Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Environment” Ltd.

Ms. Šestakova pointed out some disadvantages of the existing monitoring system. There is no format for data gathering set according to the Habitats Directive’s requirements. The current data forms are quite complicate as the current monitoring system takes into account not only the EU requirements but also requirements of other international conventions. The problem is that 7 of 16 sub-programmes are not functioning. Data from previous monitoring activities are owned by different institutions and are not always available.

Last year ca. 50 000 EUR were spent for biodiversity monitoring in Latvia. It is still not clear who will be responsible for submitting the report to the European Commission in 2007.

Review of monitoring programmes in Latvia

By Ms. Līga Blanka, "Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Environment", Ltd., Latvia

Ms. Blanka introduced the planned activities and expected results of the review of the Latvian National Environmental Monitoring Programme, which is implemented by the "Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Environment" Ltd. (ELLE) during May-November 2005.

She informed that currently the relevant legislation (national, EU legal acts, international conventions) is being analyzed (result - by the end of June 2005); then by mid-August the compliance of existing monitoring programmes (2000-2004) with the requirements of legal acts will be assessed. Finally proposals for elaboration of a new monitoring structure and proposals for a reporting structure for each monitoring sub-programme will be developed. The final report should be ready by mid-November 2005. The outputs will be discussed by the Supervisory board consisting of the Latvian Environment, Geological and Meteorological Agency, Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection Board. In September-October 2005 a big seminar for wider stakeholder circle will be organized to introduce and discuss the new monitoring programme.

For the biodiversity monitoring part the main goal is to adapt it according to the requirements of the Habitats Directive. One of the challenging tasks is also to regulate data flow to the Agency and to optimize monitoring costs. ELLE is not doing all the work itself but subcontracts experts for making analyses. Optimization of monitoring costs means mainly looking what the Agency can do itself to minimize subcontracting. The whole biodiversity monitoring will be subcontracted (tendered) but in bigger blocks. Some parts that do not belong under Ministry of Environment (e.g. terrestrial forest monitoring) will be excluded from the new environmental monitoring system.

Discussion

- It was mentioned that monitoring costs should be ca. 10 % of all management costs of protected areas/Natura 2000 sites.
- Latvian grassland expert stated that there is enough data for 2007 report (from grassland mapping) but not for the next report because already two years grassland monitoring has not been carried out in Latvia.
- The Baltic countries have not tried to fill in EC reporting format yet.
- Austria has tried to fill in EC reporting format but in general the situation concerning biodiversity monitoring is not much more advanced than in the Baltic States. Data are split up in many authorities that are not willing to provide these data to the Federal Environment Agency. Mr. Ellmauer recommended Baltic States to start with getting an actual overview about habitats and species and their ecological needs, defining features, and further based on that to look for gaps, select indicators and develop monitoring systems.

SESSION II Assessment of the conservation status of habitats

Assessment of the conservation status – an indicator approach

By Mr. Thomas Ellmauer, Federal Environment Agency, Austria

In his presentation Mr. Ellmauer described the criteria that a good monitoring system should fulfil, introduced parameters of the conservation status (according to the EC evaluation matrix) and explained how to choose measurable indicators for assessing those parameters and conservation status of different habitat types.

Mr. Ellmauer defined **monitoring** as a regular or irregular surveillance carried out in order to ascertain the extent of compliance with a predetermined standard or the degree of deviation from an expected norm. According to Art. 11 of the Habitats Directive the predetermined standard is favourable conservation status (FCS).

The appropriate monitoring has to cover the whole variability and range of a habitat or species. The intensity of recording has to be in line with the probability of adverse impacts or threats and the results have to be aggregated and evaluated at various spatial scales. The monitoring system has to determine the sampling design, refer to a baseline for a starting point as well as identify indicators to be recorded (FCS indicators, early warning indicators) and also it has to achieve the needed confidence with the lowest effort. As example, Mr. Ellmauer mentioned the Swedish monitoring system that allows telling with 95% confidence that a change of 30% has occurred.

For **assessment of the conservation status** of habitats or species, the main features – **parameters** – that determine the conservation status, have to be selected. The parameters can be qualitative (e.g. structure and function, future prospects) or quantitative (range, area) and they have to be recorded on different levels (for example structure and function on locality level; range and area on a Member State level and future prospects on both levels).

For assessing the status of these parameters and for reducing the complexity of data, **measurable indicators** have to be defined. Indicators must be crucial for the conservation status of the respective habitat or species, sensitive for influences or change, easily recordable and recorded stably over time.

Mr. Ellmauer presented several practical examples on indicators characterizing different parameters of different habitats and how they can be measured. For example, indicators of **natural range** (spatial limits where the habitat or species occurs) are the distribution and pattern of the habitat type. To measure the **area** (amount of the surface covered by the habitat type) inventories can be used in case of not very widely distributed habitat types. The area of widely distributed or large habitat types can be estimated with the help of statistical calculation, remote sensing or expert judgement.

Structure and function is a very complex parameter and several indicators have to be measured to characterize it. For example, according to the Austrian proposed system for assessment of structure and function of active raised bogs, hydrology (water level, amplitude), negative indicator species and negative impacts (trampling, peat cutting, afforestation) should be evaluated. For seminatural dry grasslands the indicators are area size, species composition (typical species), vegetation structure (grass/herb/clover/scrubs proportion) and negative indicator species. Actually there are more features characterizing structure and function of a habitat but Austria has tried to incorporate as many as possible features in one indicator to make the monitoring simpler.

One of the criteria for the conservation status assessment of a habitat type is the conservation status of **typical species**. Typical species could be characteristic species in sense of phytosociological system, species indicating good quality of the habitat and/or abundant/dominant species, but this issue still needs to be clarified.

Other parameters that still need further clarification are **future prospects** and **reference values** (favourable reference range and favourable reference area).

Mr. Ellmauer concluded that for conservation status assessment of habitats the distribution data and good knowledge about the features of habitat types is needed. Indicators for structure and function as well as methodology for area assessment and indications for the reference

values should be developed. He also emphasized that this system, being developed by Austrian experts is based on German experience (www.bfn.de), and is just a proposal - its reliability is not tested in practice. It should be published soon on the home page of Austrian Federal Environment Agency (<http://www.umweltbundesamt.at/>).

Discussion

- Principally Member States should estimate the natural range in their own territory but in marginal cases cooperation between countries is recommended. The topic of actual and potential natural range was discussed also in the EC Working Groups. If the actual natural range is not favourable then the potential range could be considered as favourable. Might be that there will be still some guidelines from the EC on delimitation of natural range.
- Reference values are used for evaluation matrix of conservation status but thresholds for indicators of structure and function Austrian experts have developed themselves and these are not obligatory for conservation status assessment in the country.
- It was concluded that none of the Baltic countries has suitable monitoring/indicator system for conservation status assessment of habitat types.

SESSION III Experience exchange on data collection methods

Combining indicator species and remote sensing for monitoring of habitats in the Nigula Nature Reserve

By Mr. Agu Leivits, Nigula Nature Reserve, Estonia

Mr. Leivits introduced possibilities of using remote sensing method and indicator species in habitat monitoring based on practical experience of the Nigula NR. Remote sensing means collecting information from a distance and the most common techniques for that are aerial photography and satellite imagery. He also outlined that he would define the term “surveillance” as a trend analyse, measuring the change, but “monitoring” as collection and analyse of repeated observations or measurements to evaluate changes in condition and progress toward meeting management objectives.

Mr. Leivits gave a brief overview on habitat and bird conservation priorities of Nigula pSCI and North-Livonia SPA in order to explain the chosen monitoring approach. As SPA and pSCI are partly overlapping then focus on habitats as well as species is needed and Coarse-Filter (protect ecosystems as integrities) as well as Fine-Filter (provide suitable habitat for individual species or guilds) approach are both important.

Mr. Leivits emphasized the importance of monitoring of boundaries of large natural habitats because there the habitats with active management need are located (lag-zones of bogs, semi-natural meadows etc.). As the Nigula NR is having long-term data about breeding birds (first census 1952, yearly censuses since 1968), they tried to describe changes in mire habitat with the help of remote sensing and combine this information with the available bird data (Aaviksoo, K., Leivits, A., 2001; *for methodology, please see seminar handouts*). To investigate the relationships between mire habitat and bird abundance, the structure and dynamics of mire surface and the number of bird species were studied. The oldest material was interpreted from aerial photos of Nigula (1950). In addition, Landsat images were used for recent land cover classification (2000). As the result of superimposing the two-date maps a transition areas matrix was created, which visualized the changed areas on map. Transition probability matrix was used for future predictions – 2050. As the result a decrease of open

mire and grasslands and an increase of wooded mire and forest can be seen. Also the bird trends show a decrease of open landscape birds and increase of dendrophilous species. Mr. Leivits stated that satellite remote sensing is a good tool for habitat mapping and monitoring in combination with other tools and information (aerial photos, cadastral maps, GIS, field work). For example fen and transitional mire can be distinguished on satellite image. One method is also kite aerial photography (see <http://www.geospectra.net/kite/estonia/color/color.htm>), which should be probably a good tool for monitoring of coastal meadows. On national scale Corine Landcover can be used but on site level more detailed interpretation and using a good soil mask is necessary. Remote sensing can be also used for estimating the areas of clear cuts and peat extraction sites or abandonment of agricultural lands.

Mr. Leivits also presented some examples of using remote sensing in habitat mapping in Latvia Kemeru bog (http://prinsengineering.com/kerimu_bog_habitats.htm) and in Lithuania (<http://prinsengineering.com/n2000.htm>). Satellite data are even used for assessing species' distribution (http://prinsengineering.com/LAT_modeling_e.htm).

Finally, Mr. Leivits presented some examples of using specialized bird species as indicators in habitat monitoring. He defined indicator species as "surrogates" of ecosystem health describing structure and function of habitat.

Discussion

- Latvia and Lithuania also participate in the Corine Landcover project. In Lithuania it was used to classify all territory to find Natura 2000 habitats. The method has been quite good on national scale but not on smaller scale because the resolution of satellite images is not sufficiently high and it is also quite expensive method.
- It was mentioned that now already technology with resolution of 1 m is available but this is very expensive method.
- Austria has also used the Corine Landcover in mapping of Natura 2000 sites, especially in pre-selecting of sites and choosing areas for fieldwork. High-resolution ortho-photographs can be used for mapping borders of habitat types. Remote sensing is a complementary tool that should be used in a way that the costs are spared. It is useful as monitoring warning system and it suits more for open habitats; forest habitats are difficult to distinguish applying this method.

Monitoring of plant communities in Estonia during 10 years

Key note by Ms. Elle Roosaluuste and Ms. Anneli Palo, presented by Ms. Elle Roosaluuste, University of Tartu

Ms. Roosaluuste gave an overview on methodology used in Estonia for monitoring of plant communities since 1994.

She informed that the monitoring in today's form started in 1994. In 1 ha monitoring sites 10-20 plots (1 m²) were randomly chosen. The following parameters were registered: total cover, species list, abundance of species (in a scale 1-5) as well as the name of the community and description of biotope (soil, human impact, biotic factors – birds).

Since 1998 more precise methodology is used: 20 (1 m²) plots are chosen in 50x50 m monitoring area and every plot is divided into 4 sub-plots and the abovementioned parameters are registered in every sub-plot. Additionally, the photos of monitoring area must be taken. The methodology is a bit different for different habitats; for example for coastal habitats the transect method is used.

For comparison between different years the following parameters are used:

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- total number of species,
- maximum number of species on one plot,
- mean number of species on one plot,
- standard deviation of mean number,
- number of indicator species (special list),
- diversity index (Simpson),
- ratio of indicator species (%),
- ratio of annual and perennial species.

The following communities are monitored: alvars (20 stations), heath grasslands (10 stations), wooded meadows (20 stations), coastal grasslands (20 stations), floodplain grasslands (10 stations), raised bogs (15 stations), fens (10 stations), forests (20 stations) – altogether 43 Natura 2000 habitat types are monitored.

Ms. Roosaluuste presented the results of monitoring in different sites during 1999-2004 that indicate the changes in those areas quite well. However, she admitted that such detailed methods are not possible to use for conservation status assessment on a country level. The proposal of Estonian experts is still not to stop the current monitoring but to decrease the number of monitoring areas and add monitoring on a wider scale.

Questions and answers

- For conservation status assessment **thresholds** should be defined that enable to say if the target has been reached or not. For the current Estonian methodology such thresholds have not been worked out so far.
- One monitoring site can be “managed” by an expert in one very hard working day (usually 4 sites every year are monitored). It depends also on habitat type: alvars and wooded meadows take more time.
- Sub-plots are needed for calculation of Simpson index (80 small quadrates give better results than 20 big ones). For location of plots GPS is used.
- In Estonia monitoring of plant communities for already 10 years has been carried out by mostly the same people but if it changes, the subjectivity might become a problem.

Grassland monitoring in Latvia

Key note by Ms. Solvita Rūsiņa, University of Latvia

Ms. Rūsiņa introduced the methodology of grassland monitoring used in two projects and the national grassland monitoring in Latvia.

She informed that the state monitoring programme on agricultural and grassland habitats and species has not been carried out during last two years, so currently monitoring of grassland habitats is done only within the frame of some LIFE-Nature projects.

In 2000-2001 a project on “Monitoring of management and regeneration of calcareous grasslands in the Abava Valley” was carried out within the frame of Eurograsslands’ project supported by the Netherlands. 2 sites with several plant communities were monitored, using a transect with 10 to 20 permanent plots (1 x 1 m) in each plant community. Parameters measured were numbers of species and community dynamics (change of dominant, protected and indicator species).

The other project introduced by Ms. Rūsiņa was the LIFE-Nature project “Protection and management of the Northern Gauja Valley 2003 – 2007”. As this project is dealing (among others) with restoration and management of grasslands, consequently monitoring of effects of

the management actions is needed. As the territory is both, grazed and mown, it was not possible to analyse the effects of grazing and mowing separately. Therefore, the priority of the monitoring activities was to see how plant communities and their dynamic stages change across the landscape profile after the reintroduction of management, as well as to follow the changes of α -diversity both inside plant communities and among them. In total, 16 permanent plots (5 x 5 m nested plots with the smallest nest of 25 x 25 cm, see illustration 1) for species counts are laid down in typical parts of dominant grassland plant communities in the area.

Starting with the smallest nest all plant species are counted and in each following nest species not present in previous nests are recorded.

Finally, the cover of each species (in %) is estimated visually for the whole 5 x 5 m plot.

Belt transect (~570 m long and 10 m wide) was laid down almost across the whole fenced territory in order to be perpendicular to gradient of the main abiotic factor – moisture, and in such a way to include all most widespread grassland plant communities.

The transect was divided into 5 m long segments. Several parameters were observed in each of the segments (114 in total).

Illustration 1: 5x5 m nested plot

Ms. Rūsiņa introduced also the methodology of the state monitoring of grassland habitats and species, elaborated by the Latvian Fund for Nature. 8 monitoring stations are established in order to cover all protected grassland types. There are 1-2 transects with 3 to 15 permanent plots (1 x 1 m) in each plant community. Registered parameters are number of species per plot, cover of each species in 3 grades, litter layer, cover of moss, herb, shrub layer as well as current management, type and number of grazing animals. In total there is ca. 200 plots and 15 plant communities.

Ms. Rūsiņa admitted that these data do not show status of protected plant communities on national level.

Questions and answers

- The knowledge about the present situation of Latvian grasslands is quite good thanks to grassland mapping project, so the 2007 report should be manageable.
- Threshold limits were set for grassland mapping (mainly for mesic grasslands): the grasslands that had at least 5 indicator species were mapped. Ms. Rūsiņa admitted that thresholds should be better elaborated.

Habitat monitoring methodology in Lithuania

Mr. Valerijus Rasomavičius informed that in Lithuania different methods are used for monitoring of different habitats but in general similar methodology is used as in Estonia and Latvia. In addition the diversity of plant communities, boundaries between communities and area occupied by the communities are measured.

The problems are also similar as in other Baltic countries: current monitoring does not give information about the overall conservation status of a habitat type.

Discussion on cooperation needs between countries concerning biodiversity monitoring

- There are already some good examples of Baltic cooperation like mapping of semi-natural meadows, forest mapping and key habitats project.
- The Baltic cooperation is usually based on joint projects financed by the EU or comes from personal interest of scientists to write joint articles etc.
- The Baltic States should cooperate regarding conservation status assessment of habitats and species and selection of typical species; similar indicators for monitoring management success could be elaborated and similar joint guidelines for monitoring. Also joint remote sensing trainings for Baltic experts should be organised because approaches are quite different at the moment.
- Austria and Germany are cooperating regarding monitoring methodology, and there are of course personal contacts between scientists. Discussion on expert level will probably increase in future.
- It was concluded that information and experience exchange is an important aspect of transboundary cooperation. Transboundary discussion between EU countries will be triggered by the biogeographic process.

Discussion on further steps in implementing the current Phare project

- Topics proposed for the next events:
 - Further information on development of monitoring methodology for conservation status assessment on a country level in the Baltic States.
 - Harmonisation of interpretation (and typical species) of different habitat types between Baltic countries. Defining favourable conservation status for different habitat types.
 - Monitoring of management, indicator species.
 - Filling in the reporting format (as a homework for discussion at the meeting) for the following habitat types:
 - For the **grasslands'** expert meeting:
 - 6210 Seminatural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*) (*important orchid sites) and
 - 6450 Northern boreal alluvial meadows.
 - For the **mares'** expert meeting:
 - *7110 Active raised bogs and
 - 7120 Degraded raised bogs still capable for natural regeneration.
- The publication should include:
 - Reflection on process filling in the EC reporting format;
 - Status quo on data and their availability;
 - Recommendations for authorities;
 - Definitions (FCS, reference values, natural range), to develop common understanding regarding key definitions;
 - Examples from other Member States (e.g. Nordic countries).

CONCLUSIONS

Reporting to EC:

- Specific roles and procedures filling-in reporting format are not yet clear;
- Experts deem that the report of 2007 could be manageable;
- 2007 report sets baseline (trends), but it can be challenged with reliable scientific data for the 2014 report;
- MS should not expect more detailed guidance from the EC on filling reporting format.

Biodiversity monitoring systems:

- Current monitoring efforts are too narrow (specific) – related to certain plots, but does not give an overview about status of habitats in the whole country;
- In the light of EU tendencies, BS plan to revise the existing systems (to make systems more pragmatic, able to deliver data for reporting needs), but it should not be a rushed decision;
- Monitoring system has to achieve the needed confidence with the lowest effort.

Methodology:

- Remote sensing – complementary method to be combined with others + expensive;
- Experts should develop easy assessment of FCS and provide guidelines, so site managers would be able to make judgement.

Transboundary cooperation:

- Joint trainings, projects e.g. on remote sensing could be organised;
- Joint guidelines for monitoring management actions could be developed.

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