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Identifying the Areas of Special Conservation Interest, forming the Emerald Network: process and state of play

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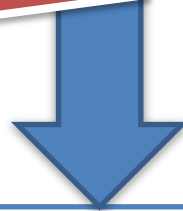


Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest

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Emerald Network



- Launched back in '89 – legal framework developed further in 25 years;
- Tool for the implementation of the [Bern Convention](#) (1979);
- Aims at conserving European wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats and promotes European co-operation in the field;
- Specific aim: to ensure the long term survival of lists of species and habitats in need of specific site conservation measures;
- Lists of targeted S&H drafted in the '90;

Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest

- Phase 1: identification of the areas suitable to ensure the long term survival of selected S&H
- Phase 2: Scientific independent evaluation of the sufficiency of these sites to achieve the Network objectives at biogeographical level
- Phase 3: national designation of the approved Emerald sites and planning and implementation of conservation objectives and management measures





Criteria for the evaluation of the Emerald site proposals



- Evaluation done at species by species/habitats by habitats basis;
- Looking if the proposed sites cover:
 - the distribution range/patterns of the S/H;
 - the ecological variation of the S/H;
 - the whole range of habitats needed for the life-cycle
 - the share of the national resource they cover



Lessons learned in the past 5 years

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- International legal framework = facilitates implementation
- International targets = speeds up the process
- Small countries = limited expertise
- Old or missing national inventories/data
- Necessary cooperation NGO sector/authorities at national level
- Link to international PA categories helpful
- Stressing national responsibilities in European biodiversity conservation



Added value/lessons learned from
the implementation process so far

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- Contributes to raise the number of nationally protected areas;
- Improved knowledge on biodiversity at national level;
- Supporting civic science and nature observation;
- Strengthened cooperation between national authorities, NGO sector and local stakeholders;
- Inter-ministerial cooperation;
- Update of the lists of targeted S&H