



Natura 2000 network and its unexpected side benefits

Experience from the Czech Republic

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Historical introduction

1. 5. 2004: CZ entering the EU

December 2004: CZ presents its Natura 2000 proposal to the EC

What happened before?

Beginnings

1838: first two protected areas at today's CZ territory established (Austrian empire)

1918: independent Czechoslovakia – 14 protected areas

1945: ~100 protected areas

2003: 2170 protected areas, large-scale 28,
small-scale 2142



- *hundreds of protected species*
- *Nature Conservation Agency (about 500 staff) functioning (management of protected areas + technical support for the Ministry of Environment)*

EU requirements: how to approach them?

1998: start of preparatory works: new legislation + need for data according to the directives

1999: historical meeting of representatives of the Ministry and the Agency

Two options put on the table:

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**disadvantage – huge amount of work requiring huge resources
– people, methodology, and big money**

**advantage – avoiding problems in the future but above all,
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Decision taken: option 2 – “blood and tears”

What does the Habitats Directive demand?

Annex III:

A. Criterii de evaluare a siturilor pentru un anumit tip de habitat natural din anexa I

(a) Gradul de reprezentativitate al sitului pentru respectivul habitat.

(b) Raportul dintre suprafața sitului acoperită de tipul respectiv de habitat natural și suprafața totală de pe teritoriul național acoperită de respectivul habitat natural.

B. Criterii de evaluare a siturilor pentru o anumită specie din anexa II

(a) Raportul dintre dimensiunea și densitatea populației din respectiva specie prezentă în sit și ale populației prezente pe teritoriul național.

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Logical conclusion: in order to know what % of a habitat type or a species is in each site → one must know 100 % first

Therefore, country-wide habitat mapping and species data gathering is necessary

Unprecedented action: field data gathering (2000-2005)

550 habitat mappers working in the field

About one hundred of zoologists engaged

Czech Ornithological Society contracted to deliver proposal of SPAs for birds

Nature Conservation Agency processed the data and made pSCI proposal

Political approval – a risky story...

September 2004: Government suspended the approval procedure – refusal from some Ministries: “site proposal intentionally “blown up”, no need for so many sites”

Main counter-argument: “each site underpinned by expert data from the field, no desktop work, all done precisely as required by the EU directives”

...with a good end

22. 12. 2004 - a victory: complete proposal of future Natura 2000 approved by the Government

41 SPAs + 863 pSCIs

2005-2006 biogeographical seminars – EC requested to amend the list of pSCIs

Amendments prepared, complete national list accepted by Brussels

As of today, 42 SPA + 1111 SAC

Ownership issue – and data issue

Entire Natura 2000 proposal prepared by Czech experts for Czech money according to Czech methodologies

Reason for support of Natura 2000 by the academia community until today: they knew the data were reliable (no desktop but field work)

Today, Natura 2000 is perceived as a part of Czech nature conservation : „our Natura“

But what to do with the data?

1990-2001: two attempts to establish an official “Information system of nature conservation” (ISOP) at the Nature Conservation Agency

Both failed due to unclear assignment and lack of unity among conservationists. Money wasted...

*2000: Natura 2000 obligation – big opportunity **to get data on nature from the entire CZ territory***

Type of data and structure clear from the EU directives

Third attempt 2001

Decision: to establish ISOP as an open modular system, with modules following EU requirements + “national” modules

New modules can be added in the future

Basis of ISOP – database of records on habitat types + species (NDOP) linked with a map server

All data obtained during Natura 2000 preparation stored in that database

At the beginning...

2001-2005: only data gathered during Natura 2000 preparation stored in NDOP

Huge amount of qualitatively new data for the whole country

It enabled to create scientifically underpinned Natura 2000 proposal easily defendable in Brussels

*But no other data arriving: **no interest of scientists to share their data for free***

...but the right policy bears fruit

Data on nature becomes outdated very quickly – constant need for “fresh” data

How to “lure” scientists to share their data for free?

A system of agreements on mutual data sharing introduced: who shares is/her data for free, s/he gets an access to the whole database for free either

...but the right policy bears fruit

Within a few years – NDOP became highly respected source of data on nature

Data provided + widely used by academia, authors of management plans for Natura/protected areas, EIA/SEA reports

NDOP recognized even by Supreme Administrative Court as a “reliable source of data on nature” which cannot be challenged

As of today, more than 44 million of entries – and new ones arrive every day

Lessons learned

- *Natura 2000 requires data from the whole territory of country*
- *The character of this data excludes a mere desktop survey*
- *Field work is a must*
- *Dedicated nature conservation institution is a must, too*
- *Data acquired “because of Brussels” will serve many “national” purposes – not Brussels!*
- *Ownership of future Natura 2000 is an issue of paramount importance: it should be established by Moldovans for Moldova, not by foreign experts for Brussels*



Vă mulțumesc pentru atenție!