



SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT LIFE+ NATURA 2000: CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH BIODIVERSITY

Project objectives:

The main aim of the project is to improve the awareness of the Natura 2000 network in Spain and that this contributes to appreciation and thus, its conservation. Various actions, directed at different target audiences, have been designed to achieve this objective. In this way it is hoped to:

- 1) Improve the awareness of the Natura 2000 network amongst society in general
- 2) Improve the appreciation of the Natura 2000 network amongst interested sectors
- 3) Provide training for key actors in the conservation of the Natura 2000 network in the legal obligations which derive from the Birds Directive and Habitats Directive.

The intention is to further up a step in the valuation of Natura 2000 in Spain. A more positive perception of this European network can foster a new relationship of the general citizenship with Natura 2000. A better understanding of its values and opportunities can help to ensure a more comprehensive, integrated and multifunctional use of the territory. Finally, a better public support could also promote a better reorientation of the existing regional funds to better protect this fundamental network. Taking into account that Spain has near to 30% of its territory under Natura 2000, this accounts for 14.782.211 ha., meaning 15,5% of the Natura 2000 network in Europe. Any effort to improve the acceptance and valorization of Natura 2000 in Spain has a significant effect in the protection of Europe's biodiversity. But the project has even a wider perspective, aiming at the replication of this project in other European countries and the establishment of a Natura 2000 day with the support of Birdlife International.

In terms of citizenship, the campaign is very ambitious and wants to reach, at least, a target of over 8,000,000 people having heard of Natura 2000. To this end, the project intends to send clear and positive messages about the Natura 2000 network, based on simple concepts. SEO/BirdLife wishes to say:

- "Connect with the Natura 2000 network" to the Spanish citizen
- "Taste the Natura 2000 network" to the consumer
- "Play with the Natura 2000 network" to young people
- "Travel through the Natura 2000 network" to the television viewer and internet user
- "Know your Natura 2000 Network" to interested sectors (arable and livestock farmers, hunting and shooting interests, fishermen, technicians, associations, etc.)
- "Defend the Natura 2000 network" to the public officials involved in the justice system, in the autonomous communities, in local government, etc.

All of this will be communicated through the media, in television programmes, on the radio, on supermarket shelves, in the social networks, when interacting with public authorities or when a court sentence is issued, just to mention some of the major vehicles to be used.

Specific surveys will measure the impact of this campaign to determine its effectiveness. The most valuable and effective initiatives will be specifically disseminated as best practices in the awareness raising on Natura 2000.

At the end of the day, the main aim of the project is to make a difference in the perception of Natura 2000 by the European population. The discovery, appreciation and appropriation of Natura 2000 by the citizenship, especially in Spain, can change the status of these areas bringing a sense of ownership and pride. The project should be a catalyst of a new relationship with the Natura 2000 network, helping in this way to a smoother and more effective implementation of Habitat and Bird Directives and ensuring a better understanding and protection of biodiversity as a whole.

Actions and means involved:

This will be the most ambitious communication project carried out in Spain about the Natura 2000 network. The actions of the project are indicated in brackets in the following paragraphs.

The actions aimed at society in general include a daily programme on television and radio during more than a year (C1), media coverage through one of the world's largest news agencies, 'EFE' (C6) or a major promotion campaign in a large supermarket chain with millions of customers (C4). The project also includes young people, and new technologies and games about the Natura 2000 network will be created in social networking sites (C3), digital educational packs will be available for schoolchildren at primary and secondary level (C3) and internet users will be offered the chance to take a virtual trip through the Natura 2000 network (C1); all news items will be displayed in the internet through the project's own website (F1) and in Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Tuenti (F2).

This project is mindful of the fact that Natura 2000 is a European network and that in all European Union Member States there are similar problems, but also opportunities. For that reason, a large part of the material produced during the project will be translated into various other EU languages and will be transmitted through the network of organizations which belong to BirdLife International (B3, C2, D1, F3). This international component will be made even stronger through encouraging the celebration of a 'European Natura 2000 Network Day' perhaps on the 2nd April when the Birds Directive, precursor of the Natura 2000 network, was published.

Interested parties, mainly from the primary sectors, have on many occasions false impressions which lie behind their rejection of the Natura 2000 network. For this reason, this project will bring together the advantages and opportunities which the Natura 2000 network involves, as well as positive experiences which already exist, and falsely-held myths about negative aspects will be confronted (B2). An information campaign to deliver these messages will be developed as part of the project (C5). There will be a free phone line at the public's disposal to solve any doubt on Natura 2000 (C7).

There is also a training action directed at key actors for the conservation of the Natura 2000 network (D1), mainly public officials involved in law and order, local authorities and environmental impact assessment, with the aim of ensuring that they have available the best tools for protecting the Natura 2000 network. In this action it is also intended to provide specialist environment journalists with useful tools designed to achieve an exponential response to the project's messages.

In order to assess the impact of all of these actions, surveys will be carried out (E1) which will allow the effectiveness of the measures to be evaluated and in this way strengthen those which are most effective both in Spain and in other EU countries.

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Expected results (outputs and quantified achievements):

The expected outcomes of the project in relation to the level of awareness of Natura 2000 are:

1.- Increase knowledge of the Spanish society regarding Natura 2000 network. In this sense, it is intended:

a.- Ensure that at least 25% of the citizenship, between 15 and 65, have heard of the Natura 2000 network. This represents over 8 million of the Spanish population. Currently only 14.5% of the Spaniards in this age know this network.

b.- Ensure that at least 5% of the citizenship, between 15 and 65, express to have "sufficient knowledge" of the Natura 2000 network (1.6 million). Currently only 1.5% of the citizenship in this age group say, they have that degree of knowledge of the network.

2.- Increase knowledge of local government technicians. Throughout the project is to at least double the number of local authority technicians who will have information on Natura 2000 and are aware of what these protected areas represent and mean. The project will focus on local government municipalities included in the Natura 2000 network.

3.- Increased training of relevant technicians in assessing the environmental impact of projects. The aim is to prevent deterioration of the Natura 2000 network. For this, the project provides that all technicians receive and know the guidelines on evaluation of projects and plans in Natura 2000 network, which will be developed during the project implementation (200-250 people). Also during the project, the degree of satisfaction of these technicians about this tool that provides the project will be assessed.

4.- Increased training of environmental journalists to report any news in relation to the Natura 2000 network. The project aims to make environmental journalists have greater knowledge about the values and constraints that have this network of protected areas. This information will enable them to better interpret the news related to the Natura 2000 network and transmit to the public, as appropriate, its severity, or not, clearer and closer. After the project, it is expected that more than half of environmental journalists have contacted consider that they have better information about Natura 2000, before the start of the project (approximately 100 journalists).

5.- Increased training of judges, prosecutors and environmental lawyers. The project will provide tools to facilitate and enhance the interpretation of existing legislation on the protection of Natura 2000, by judges, prosecutors and environmental lawyers. In this case it is difficult to measure the impact of the project in the sector, given its characteristics. However, it can be measured retrospectively through an analysis of judgments once the project has ended.

6.- Increase awareness and appreciation of the Natura 2000 network, among farmers and fishermen. The project's goal is to double the degree of knowledge in these two sectors to project completion.

Undoubtedly, a better understanding of the Natura 2000 network, which aims the project, will entail a greater sensitivity and appreciation for the sites of the network, which will affect, in turn, a better conservation status of the Natura 2000 network, due to:

- More and better understanding of some of the limitations of use that sites could have in the Natura 2000 network.
- Increased knowledge of benefits and opportunities offered by these protected areas, as a great counterpart to certain limitations.
- More effective environmental impact assessments, which will affect its preservation against future threats.
- Increased number of statements to better understanding and implementing the legal provisions relating to the conservation of the Natura 2000 network.
- Greater degree of appreciation of Natura 2000 by the Spanish citizenship. This is part of the Natural Heritage of the Spanish that we should keep, and which generates wealth in goods and services and, most importantly, ensures our future quality of life.

In addition to these general findings related to improving public awareness of the objectives, different actions will be obtained concrete results among those that consider the following as the most relevant:

- A television programme consisting of between 265 and 365 'minireports' which will be emitted daily and which will be complemented by short slots on the radio and an interactive webpage, rich in content which will allow the user to better know the areas concerned or later actually visit them.
- A publication 'Views from the Natura 2000 Network' with the collected opinions of local people and the comments and stories of the virtual travellers.
- The celebration of a 'European Natura 2000 Network Day' in at least 3-5 countries with the medium-term objective of celebrating it much more widely.
- A publication in Spanish and English of case law concerning the Natura 2000 network, of great use throughout the European Union.
- Wide press and media coverage of everything that concerns the Natura 2000 network.
- An interactive game about the Natura 2000 network for the social networks, like 'FarmVille' in Facebook.
- An online educational pack about the Natura 2000 network for secondary school pupils.
- Obtain a promotional space for Natura 2000 network in a supermarket chain.
- Greater knowledge amongst fishermen of the Natura 2000 network which must be designated in the sea, thanks to 30 participatory workshops.

- A communication campaign carried out by one of the largest press agencies in the world, the EFE Agency, composed of 84 sectoral or thematic news items, information adapted to a multimedia format, inclusion of all the videos developed in the project within the general programming of the EFE TV Channel, 36 interviews and/or long format news items and 12 shorter radio items.
- A high-quality legal publication for lawyers, barristers, and judges.

