



PUN2000

**AFTER LIFE
CONSERVATION PLAN**



Natura 2000 Management Programme for Slovenia 2014 - 2020
SI Natura 2000 Management
(LIFE11/NAT/SI/880)



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LIST OF ACRONYMS USED

ARSO	Slovenian Environment Agency
ARRS	Slovenian Research Agency
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
EU	European Union
FAS	Farming Advisory Service
FFP	fish–farming plan
FMP	forestry management plan
FMU	forestry management unit
FECM	forestry-environment-climate measures (within rural development)
GERK	graphical agricultural unit of agricultural holding
HT	habitat type
IzVRS	Institute for Water of the Republic of Slovenia
PI	public institute
CP	conservation plan
CPR	conservation plan for restoration
LP	landscape park
KGZS	Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia
AEP	agri-environment measures (within rural development)
AEC	agri-environment-climate payments (within rural development)
LIFE+	Financial instrument of the European Union for the environment and nature
LIFE+ (the 2007–13 period)	
LIFE	Financial instrument of the European Union for the environment and nature LIFE (periods outside the 2007–13 period)
LUO	
MKGP	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food
MOP	Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning
Natura sites	special protected areas (Natura sites) in possible special areas of conservation (potential Natura sites)
PAF	prioritised action framework referred to in Article 8 of the Habitats Directive
Management Programme Natura 2000	Natura 2000 management programme (2015–2020)
SPA	special protection areas based on the Birds Directive
SAC	special areas of conservation based on the Habitats Directive
WMP	River basin management plan for the Danube Basin and the Adriatic Sea Basin 2009–2015
WWF	World Fund for Nature
ZGS	Slovenia Forest Service
ZON	Nature Conservation Act
ZRSVN	Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation
ZVKDS	Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia
ZVPJ	Cave Protection Act
ZZRS	Fisheries Research Institute

1 HISTORY OF THE PROJECT AND CURRENT SITUATION

History of Natura 2000 network and its management in Slovenia

Slovenia has designated 286 Natura 2000 sites in 2004 for 276 species (required by both the Wild Birds and Habitats Directives) and habitat types of European conservation interest. In 2013 the Natura 2000 network has been extended to conserve 292 species and habitat types. It includes 353 sites, 323 designated on basis of the Habitats Directive and 31 based on the Wild Birds Directive. The network covers 37% of Republic of Slovenia (including sea under Slovenian jurisdiction).

Forests cover 71% of Slovenia's Natura 2000 network, a figure which is around 15% higher than the European average and generally highlights their good condition. In spite of this, some forest types, particularly the lowland floodplain forest, have been considerably grubbed in the past and their condition, therefore, is unfavourable. 20 percent of the network are in-use agricultural areas, the most important among them being the extensive meadows. In many areas their condition is good compared to other EU members. However, the pressures threatening their exceptional status are great; they are manifested in a natural way in overgrowth due to the cessation of farming and/or intensification of their use. Caves play an extremely important role in the Natura 2000 network, as they include most of endemic cave species, and are subject to conservation in more than 70 areas. Continental waters represent just over 1% of the total area of the network, but their importance to the condition of the network is nevertheless vital. A large part of Slovenian waters do not show an outstanding state of conservation. Furthermore, human dwellings are important for the reproduction, staging and hibernation of certain species; hence built-up areas are essential within the Natura network as well. This particularly concerns bird (e.g. white stork, Eurasian scops owl) and mammal (e.g. bat) species.

Management of such an extensive network is a huge challenge, and can be done only with substantial support from most important sectors. Therefore, Slovenia manages its Natura 2000 network by integration in other policies, benefiting from policies with traditionally strong management planning (e.g. forestry). To achieve this, an approach was necessary, where the network as a whole has been looked at, and objectives and measures defined for the whole network. In 2007 Slovenia has already adopted a Natura 2000 Management programme for the period 2007-13. This programme included:

- nature protection measures;
- measures of modified use of natural resources serving to achieve conservation objectives;
- measures of modified agricultural practice serving to achieve conservation objectives;
- measures of water management serving to achieve conservation objectives;
- other measures, should they prove necessary for the creation of a favourable status of plant and animal species and habitat types (investments, research, monitoring).

The analysis of the measures implemented and objectives achieved of the Natura 2000 Management programme 2007-13 show a substantial increase in activities, and showed that the integration approach is the right one. As Slovenia has a large proportion of its territory under the Natura 2000 network, targets, set in 2007 were high.

In management of forested Natura 2000 areas nature conservation guidelines were prepared and implemented in all forestry management plans. At the implementation level there is certain shortage of results. In agriculture, the agro-environmental measures were achieved on 80% of the surface, however they were fully achieved on 11% of Natura 2000 sites. Investments and services of national importance for Natura 2000 to be implemented and financed from the intended financial sources, have not reached the set target (by 2012, 26 Natura 2000 projects compared to the target indicator 100 projects). However, other financial sources have been used in a number of cases to implement services of national importance. Monitoring the status of species and habitats was, carried out more extensively than before, however on a smaller scale than planned.

During the preparation of the Natura 2000 Management Programme (2015 – 2020); PUN 2000 further in the text; there were many efforts put in proposing conservation objectives and measures based on extensive expert knowledge and latest available data on conservation status of Natura 2000 species and habitat types, as well as implementation of measures. Therefore, project partners having data and knowledge on their conservation status were involved in preparation of these objectives (ZRSVN, ZGS and ZZRS), as well as numerous Slovenian experts for species and habitat types. Further, there was a lot of work invested in preparation of measures that have a potential to conserve or improve conservation status of species and habitat types and can be implemented. Special attention has been given to weaknesses in implementation, recognised in the analyses and summarised above. In this process there was a big contribution of all project partners (additionally to before listed KGZS and IzVRS), and on protected areas also from protected area managers. These proposals were debated with key stakeholders on many workshops and additionally improved.

Frame for this project

SI Natura 2000 management is a LIFE+ Nature project aimed at fulfilment of obligations deriving from Article 8 (1) and 8 (2) of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EC), including Prioritised Action Framework (PAF). Main objective of the project was to prepare the Natura 2000 Management Programme for Slovenia for the period 2014-2020 (PUN 2000 further in the text), which was then adopted by the Slovenian Government.

Further project objectives were:

- integrate measures/solutions from the PUN 2000 into operational programmes for drawing EU funds (agricultural, structural and cohesion, fisheries, LIFE+);
- finalise and update Prioritised Action Framework as required by the Art. 8 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EC);

- analyse the implementation of measures and achievements of the objectives from the Natura 2000 Management Programme 2007-2013 and to use these results in preparation of the PUN 2000;
- communicate measures for Natura 2000 to different stakeholders and target groups and raise their awareness of Natura 2000 as well as increase awareness of general public on importance of Natura 2000;
- identify the opportunities of Natura 2000 sites for local and/or regional development, jobs and economic growth;
- adopt an act (PUN 2000) harmonized with all competent sectors to properly manage the Natura 2000 sites in the country in the period 2014-20;
- through direct involvement of main stakeholders contribute to understanding that Natura 2000 is also a good opportunity for sustainable development.

Project achieved all the project objectives.

Situation after the end of the project

After the end of the project, the implementation of activities is continuing with implementation of measures from PUN 2000. In its preparation public services have participated (project partners) which will implement it, and they did define measures according to their best influences so, that they will have the intended effects and will be implementable. Many participants in the process of their final adoption helped in their improvement and ability to implement them (including protected area managers, nature conservation NGOs and local communities).

Public services (project partners) represent the backbone of programme implementation, adopted by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia by a Conclusion and thus representing a part of the legal system. PUN 2000 is obligatory for public services in a way laid down in this governmental conclusion. PUN 2000 measures are a starting point for preparation and adoption of yearly programmes of work of these public services. Where the measures are part of legally defined procedures (e.g. nature conservation guidelines to forest management plans, fisheries management plans, hunting management plans of spatial development acts), public services have to include them in these procedures. Measures, foreseen for implementation as a part of a project, they shall include in preparation of project applications.

Tasks to implement measures from draft PUN 2000 were included in programmes of work for the year 2015 already before the end of the LIFE+ project Natura SI 2000 Management. These were tasks, defined in PUN 2000 as regular tasks, financed from the state budget, and they were then adopted by responsible Council of a public body of ZRSVN, ZZRS, Triglav national park, Regional park Škocjanske jame, Landscape parks Goričko, Kozjanski, Kolpa, Ljubljansko barje, Strunjan, Sečoveljske soline and Škocjanski zatok Nature Reserve.

2 AFTER LIFE OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the After LIFE Conservation Plan is good implementation of the Natura 2000 Management Programme (2015 to 2020). The core of it is implementation of its measures. The programme defines two ways of this implementation.

One way is inclusion of implementation of these measures in the yearly programmes of work of public services, responsible for their implementation. These are public services, which were partners in this project, and protected area administrations. The process of inclusion of implementation of Natura 2000 Management Programme measures into programmes of work has started already in 2014 (based on proposal of Natura 2000 Management Programme) therefore measures are already in 2015 yearly programmes of the above listed institutions. Decision of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia no. 00719-6/2015/13 requests responsible bodies (responsible ministries and governing bodies of public institutes) to continue this process every year and should assure assignment of enough staff working hours for implementing the measures.

Where measures are part of legally defined procedures (e.g. nature conservation guidelines to forestry, hunting or fisheries management plans, spatial plans) they will be implemented whenever a process of adoption of a forestry management or a spatial plan starts. Start of a process of adoption of forestry, hunting and fisheries management plan is defined in advance, and is given in Annexes to the PUN 2000. ZRSVN will issue a nature conservation guideline to each individual act. Organisations responsible for their preparation and adoption (ZGS for FMP and HMP, ZZRS for FMP) will assure appropriate incorporation in the plan. Measures included in sectoral management plans for forestry, hunting and fishing are obligatory also for private landowners or right-holders. Many measures were debated already at workshops in the frame of this project, but measures from the PUN 2000 described in detail into nature conservation guidelines will be presented by ZRSVN in detail on workshops. Process of inclusion of PUN 2000 measures in the River basin management plan runs in the same manner as just described, but in this case it is only one procedure of adoption (RBMP is valid until 2021). Public service, preparing the proposal of RBMP is IzVRS.

Starting date of preparation and adoption of spatial plan is not defined in advance. Therefore, where the process will start the measures will be implemented.

In agriculture most of PUN 2000 measures relate to farmers entering Agri-Environment-Climate operations (AEC operations) in the frame of Agri-Environment-Climate payments from Rural Development Programme for period 2014 – 2020 (RDP). These payments are given to farmers voluntarily agreeing to implement PUN 2000 measure (these are

equivalent to conditions of implementing AEC operations) for 5 years. Natura 2000 dedicated AEC operations were debated many times in processes of preparation of PUN 2000 and RDP 2014-2020. They were prepared in a way that assures measures are appropriate from the nature conservation view and at the same time implementable. Farming Advisory Service, working within the KGZS, plays an important role in steering and advising farmers to take most appropriate AEC operations. Among their tasks is stimulation of farmers on Natura 2000 sites to enter for them most appropriate Natura 2000 dedicated AEC operations. Target values for these operations at each relevant Natura 2000 sites are defined in PUN 2000 and with this target values for necessary funds in the frame of RDP and workload of FAS. To foster good implementation of measures in agriculture, ZRSVN will organize yearly seminars about management of Natura 2000 for advisers of the Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry working with farmers. They will then together stimulate farmers for implementation of management measures on regular and obligatory seminars for them.

Another way is implementation of Natura 2000 Management Programme measures in projects. Especially public services are expected to initiate project preparation and lead it towards project application, subject to available funds for staff and project's co-funding, and the project implementation. Priority Natura projects, adopted in Annex 6.4 »Priority Natura projects« as a part of the PUN 2000 are in the first place eligible for financing under OP for the Implementation of the European Cohesion Policy in the period 2014-2020 – priority axis “Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure”. They are starting point also for preparation of integrated LIFE Nature projects and community led local development (CLLD) for nature conservation. In preparation of these projects, those public services will actively invite other key stakeholder to cooperate. In years 2014 and 2015 public services have already taken some of these measures to prepare project applications developed to a stage where they can be consulted and approximated with other potential partners and applied with them to donor funds (financial mechanism EEA) and to call for co-financing of LIFE Nature projects in the year 2015.

Yearly overview of PUN 2000 measures and work of public services implemented will be done by regular yearly meetings of seminars. They will also be used to exchange experiences and good practices.

3 PROSPECTS FOR FINANCING

PUN 2000 lays down detailed conservation objectives and measures to achieve them. Government of the Republic of Slovenia has adopted this programme, and the Government Decision (no.) assigns responsible ministries and public services, defined in the PUN 2000 as implementers of each particular measures, to implement these measures. Measures, defined in Annex 6.1. "Objectives and measures" have sources of financing listed:

- Regular work in the frame of budgetary sources (financing of public services and/or system measures), or
- Project financing.

Financing of public service

Responsible ministries assure basic financing of public service and/or implementation of public tasks in nature conservation, forestry, fisheries, hunting and water management. Financing from the state budget at the moment covers mainly costs of work force and basic costs of material and service of public institutes. There was a reduction of budgets for these institutions for about 20% in the last four years, because of consolidation of public financing. This was reaction to recession in the country and decrease of GDP. Amount of tasks for implementation of PUN 2000 measures will correspond to their importance and in the next years, it will follow trends of financial situation of public finances.

Implementation of PUN 2000 measures is one of priority tasks, therefore it is expected that implementation of these measures will have more attention in preparation and adoption of yearly work plans of public institutes.

Priority projects

Priority projects to achieve objectives of the PUN 2000, financed from OP for the Implementation of the European Cohesion Policy in the period 2014-2020, and basis for LIFE projects, especially integrated and Community Lead Local Development for nature conservation (CLLD nature conservation) are listed in the Annex 6.4. "Priority projects" of this programme. Funds for their financing is available in the OP for the Implementation of the European Cohesion Policy in the period 2014-2020, priority axes "Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure" and "Investing in the water sector to meet the requirements of the Union's environmental acquis and to address needs, identified by the Member States, for investment that goes beyond those requirements". It is expected that potential applicants for LIFE integrated projects as

well as other types of LIFE projects (LIFE Nature and LIFE Communication) will respect the frame and the list of projects from Annex 6.4 in preparation of their projects.

Forestry

When adopting the Rural Development Plan for period 2014-2020 forest-environment-climate measures were not included in this programme. Therefore, the responsible ministry prepared an action plan of financing forest Natura 2000 measures from national funds. Planned is allocation of funds, given only for target measures of Natura 2000 species whose conservation status is deteriorating.

Agriculture

Financial stimulations to implement PUN 2000 agricultural measures are mainly within agri-environment-climate payments from the Rural Development Programme of the Republic of Slovenia for the 2014–2020 period (hereinafter referred to as 'RDP'). Agricultural PUN 2000 measures are overwhelmingly equivalent to agri-environment-climate payments for agri-environment-climate operations and requirements. This is especially true for targeted Natura 2000 agri-environment-climate operations and requirements within the RDP. Source of their financing is therefore the RDP 2014-2020. RDP has also other measures supporting achievement of conservation measures from PUN 2000, especially Cooperation, CLLD, Knowledge transfer and Advisory services.

Monitoring and research

Conservation measures in Appendix 6.5 "Monitoring and research" include the topics of research required for more efficient attainment of conservation objectives, and better implementation of measures and Natura management. The basic source of financing is the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (Horizon 2020). This is a centralised mechanism which includes exact definition of biodiversity and has the possibility to be financed from two societal challenges: Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry, Marine, Maritime and Inland Water Research and the Bioeconomy (Societal Challenge 2); Climate Action, Environment, Resource Efficiency and Raw Materials (Societal Challenge 5). For this source of financing, applicants apply their research projects directly to the European Commission to tender topics published in accordance with the action programme. Therefore, Appendix 6.5 "Monitoring and research" should be understood in relation to such a source of financing as a proposal to research organisations whose content users need. Research topics, useful for conservation of Natura 2000 species and habitat types will be supported also with funds of Target research projects (TRP). The ministry responsible for nature conservation has limited funds on their budget posts for ordering special studies and minor research. Monitoring is financed from national funds of ministry, responsible for nature conservation. Where data from the particular monitoring are needed also for indicators of Ops for drawing EU funds, they can be financed from technical assistance of these funds.

Other

To a certain extent, communication and publicity activities are part of regular work of the MOP, all public institutions and public service providers that operate in the field of nature conservation. To this extent, these activities are financed from the budget of the Republic of Slovenia within the scope of the public service financing.

Each year, the Government Communication Office supports information–communication and education projects of non-governmental organisations through a public tender, which address predetermined topics, including the promotion of Natura 2000. There is also a possibility to include the topics of Natura 2000 in communication activities related to the affairs of the EU.

In the 2014–2020 period, project financing from the LIFE financial mechanism is also possible. The set of environmental management and information, including the field of nature and Natura 2000 conservation, is intended for the aforementioned financing. Funds will be allocated to raise awareness, and to promote communication, information, knowledge exchange regarding successful solutions, expansion of practice and approaches, and training.

To help in seeking of co-financing for Natura 2000 projects and PUN 2000 measures among above listed sources of funding a Webguide on funding sources and an IT tool has been prepared and is available on the webpage <http://natura2000.serv.si/>. Ministry will this update this guide with actual tenders, forms and other documents and in this way contribute to better use of existing Natura 2000 project funding.

4 INDICATORS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATURA 2000 MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME (2015 – 2020)

PUN 2000 has set indicators for implementation of measures and achievement of conservation objectives. These indicators are simply a large number of measurable measures and conservation objectives. For this After Life plan, there are main groups of indicators listed below. Groups of indicators are different from sector to sector. Therefore, they are grouped by sector.

Sector	Joint inidicator	Target value
Nature conservation	Yearly programmes include tasks for implementation of PUN 2000 measures	9 each year
	Applied projects with topics from Annex 6.4	5
Forestry	Number of Nature Conservation Guidelines issued to Forest Management Plans	163
	Number of FMPs with measures from Nature Conservation Guidelines	145
Fisheries	Number of Nature Conservation Guidelines issued to Fisheries Management Plans	64
Hunting	Number of Nature Conservation Guidelines issued to 10-year Hunting Management Plans	15
Agriculture	Extent of area, included in targeted agri-environment-climate operations on targeted surfaces	19.819 ha
	Percentage of Natura sites with 80% inclusion of targeted agri-environment-climate operations on targeted surfaces	90%
Water management	Number of Nature Conservation Guidelines issued to River Basin Management Plan	1

Data for values of indicators are derived from data public services prepare for other reports. Therefore, cost of their preparation shall be minimal. Preparation of these data will be done yearly, followed by yearly overview of PUN 2000 measures and work of public services implemented, done on regular yearly meetings of seminars.



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ZAVOD REPUBLIKE SLOVENIJE
ZA VARSTVO NARAVE