

Summary of Umbrella document

The Operational programme - Natura 2000 management programme for the period from 2007 to 2013 (Operational programme) set conservation objectives for each species and habitat type in Natura 2000 sites, and conservation measures and guidelines to meet these objectives. Conservation measures are grouped into sets according to activities.

This umbrella document analyses in greater detail the implementing of:

- Nature conservation measures;
- Other measures in the field of sustainable development, focused on the direct benefits of natural 2000 sites for the local population;
- Research and development of technologies and
- Monitoring.

This document does not include the summary analysis, conclusions and recommendations for the sectors for which within the project separate analysis were prepared (forestry, agriculture, water management and fisheries).

Nature conservation measures

➤ Management plans for protected areas

The preparation and adoption of management plans for protected areas are delayed due to the substantive complexity and scope of tasks deriving from many sectoral competences and dimensions of park areas, and due to the lack of staff capacity in public institutions and at the ministry. Tasks, necessary for the preparation of management plans, should be divided between managers of protected areas, Institute of the RS for Nature Conservation and suitably qualified external contractors; the ministry is to prepare methodologically harmonised guidelines with indicators for monitoring of management effectiveness and management efficiency.

➤ Establishment of new protected areas

The set aim – 22% proportion of protected areas (the current state is around 13%) – due to limited staff and financial resources will not be achieved. Priority should be to end the already initiated proceedings of protected area establishment, and only then, given the human resource capacity and budget security, a programme for establishing new protected areas is to be prepared. Along this, to achieve conservation objectives of protected areas sustainable development it is necessary to network stakeholders and policies, which have at the state and local level direct or indirect benefit from protecting an area, including the pooling of public funds from different sectors (tourism, regional development, and agriculture).

➤ Contractual protection and custodianship

This mechanism, which comprises of a group of measures related to caves and other measures, has in this period not yet operated effectively. Among other measures, only a minor part of the planned 60 specific measures of contractual protection or custodianship for preserving species and habitat types - primarily due to non-provision of funds – was implemented. Among the cave measures, under the Cave Protection Act limited use was foreseen for 33 planned caves of awarding custodianship or concession. But these were not formally awarded due to the inadequately defined boundary between the instruments of 'custodianship' and 'concession', and indirectly in connection with the concession, due to unsettled property relations on the cave infrastructure between the current rights holders of the use of caves and the state. Custodian duties in the context of implementing specific cave protection tasks were partly carried out. In the coming period it is necessary to formally and

clearly delimit instruments of 'custodianship' and 'concession' and regulate property relations on the cave infrastructure.

- Measures of sustainable development, focused on the direct benefits of Natura 2000 for the local population

Natura 2000 sites with its features offer a variety of development opportunities, particularly for tourism and related activities. Natura 2000 sites can with proper development policy bring benefits to the local population. The Operational programme included a list of 23 investments and services of national importance related to the park infrastructure for tourism development in protected areas. To finance projects within regional councils competence a further 52 project proposals were provided to be funded from the European Regional Development Fund. The total indicative allocation of financial means under this fund within sets 51 Promotion of biodiversity and nature protection (including Natura 2000) and 56 Protection and development of natural heritage amounted to € 57.3 million. Investments and services of national importance were from the intended financial source implemented to a lesser extent, as funding for these projects was not a high enough priority. Also, investments and services from project proposals to be funded from the regional development programs were implemented in a smaller part, namely 19 Natura 2000 projects (the target indicator 100 projects by 2012). The main reasons were different municipal priorities and tenders that did not have clearly distinct resources by content.

- Integration of research activities, set by the Operational programme, into the financing of research programs and projects

This was carried out in the least extent. The Operational programme provided sets of research activities in the field of basic and applied sciences that are necessary to improve knowledge of the ecology of plant and animal species and habitat types; the government resolution on the adoption of the Operational programme determined that these sets should be appropriately included in the co-financing of research programs and projects. In the future especially integration of relevant content into the regular research programs of research institutions should be increased.

- Monitoring the status of species and habitats

Monitoring the status of species and habitats was carried out on a smaller scale than planned. The Operational programme outlined the necessary monitoring to define the conservation status of species and habitats at national level. Up to 2010 the scope of this monitoring expanded and approached the defined, but afterward decreased due to lack of financial backing. In the future it would be necessary to provide stable funding for long-term monitoring of the target species and habitat types according to standard protocols.