

# Financing for Nature and Biodiversity

*Translation of relevant sections of a German NGO position paper on the full implementation of the EU Nature Directives published on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2016<sup>1</sup>*

[...] The signing organisations ask the national and Länder governments to adopt a package of measures for the accelerated and complete implementation of the EU Nature Directives in Germany. In this context the organisations welcome the “Naturschutzoffensive 2020<sup>2</sup>” of the Federal Minister of Environment, but ask for an urgent definition of precise actions and a swift implementation of measures related to the EU Nature Directives.

The organisations ask the European Commission to decide, without further delay, on safeguarding the EU Nature Directives in their current form and to adopt additional, accompanying measures to support Member States’ efforts for implementation. [...]

## 7. Financing strategies and the establishment of an EU Nature Fund

- **LÄNDER:** Development of Länder specific but nationally coordinated financing strategies for the implementation of Natura 2000 and the achievement of Favourable Conservation Status, at least for species and habitats of EU concern. These strategies should be developed jointly with conservation NGOs and other stakeholders, and they should contain clear, Länder specific information about prioritised financing needs and gaps for Natura 2000.
- **EU:** A new set up for EU financing of nature conservation at the latest from 2021. The current “integrated approach” expecting Member States to provide necessary funding through various EU funds has failed. The European Commission expected that only up to 20% of Natura 2000 costs were met from the EU budget in the period 2007-2013<sup>3</sup>. There is no reason to believe that there is an improvement of this situation in the current funding period. Therefore in the future, the EU should establish a separate budget line dedicated exclusively on nature conservation. The preferred solution for this is a standalone EU nature fund, of an appropriate size, meeting the following criteria:
  - i. **Objective:** financial support of Member States, inter alia to comply with its obligations under the EU Nature Directives as well as nature conservation measures under global and EU biodiversity strategies. In addition such nature conservation measures should be financed that serve the implementation of other ecosystem related EU Directives, measures or programmes, such as in the area of the Water Framework Directive, marine protection, ecosystem based adaptation to climate change and green infrastructure.
  - ii. **Budget:** based on best available cost estimates of EU and Member States for the implementation of Natura 2000 and other measures required to meet the above named objectives, and based on an average share of EU funding of these costs of 75%. Preliminarily, the signing organisations assume a required budget of the fund of approximately 12-15 bn EUR annually for the entire EU.
  - iii. **Eligible measures:** in particular management planning, purchase of land and of user rights, habitat creation and restoration measures, long term management of habitat types in open areas and in forests, species action programmes, care taking of sites, creation and maintenance of related institutions (e.g. Biological Stations of Land Care Associations), green infrastructure also outside of protected areas, possibly also measures for the prevention and containment of invasive non-native species, measures against arson and illegal logging etc.

<sup>1</sup> The original paper can be found at <https://www.nabu.de/imperia/md/content/nabude/europa/160914-verbaende-forderung-eu-naturschutzrichtlinien.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.bmub.bund.de/service/publikationen/downloads/details/artikel/naturschutz-offensive-2020/>

<sup>3</sup> European Commission (2011): Commission Staff working Paper - Financing Natura 2000. Investing in Natura 2000: Delivering benefits for nature and people. [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/financing/docs/financing\\_natura2000.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/financing/docs/financing_natura2000.pdf)

- iv. **Set up of the fund:** in the form of Operational Programmes (OPs) at Federal and Länder level, developed at all levels under the lead of environment and nature conservation authorities and in dialogue with all relevant stakeholders, including nature conservation NGOs and land users. A prerequisite for the approval of the OPs by DG Environment of the European Commission must be coherence with relevant financing strategies that demonstrate prioritised financing needs for Natura 2000 and other instruments.
- v. **Recipients:** Everybody who is able and willing to implement eligible measures. These are most of all land users (e.g. farmers, forest owners, fishermen), public authorities and conservation NGOs, but also business, municipalities, foundations and other service providers. Next to an attractive level of funding it is essential that application and reporting procedures of funding will be significantly easier for distributing authorities and recipients, as currently the case in the “integrated approach”.

Independently from the establishment of an EU nature fund it must be ensured that financing needs of Natura 2000 are met as quickly as possible by strengthening all suitable financing instruments.

## 8. Direct funding for priority projects: LIFE and TEN-G

- **EU:** Significant strengthening of the European Commission’s LIFE programme already from 2018 as part of a revision of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020. The LIFE budget for nature conservation measures should be increased from currently approx. 150 million EUR to one billion EUR annually. At the same time the EU co-financing rate should be increased to 75% for all projects, and administrative requirements should be eased significantly for application and implementation of projects. Also after 2021 LIFE should stay a targeted funding programme of the European Commission, to support priority and innovative projects in an EU wide competition, thus complementing an EU nature fund.
- **EU and Federal Government:** Establishment of a European “Green Infrastructure” network to secure and restore important ecosystem services. The EU budget as well as the German Federal Programme for Biological Diversity should co-finance projects for the establishment of priority corridors (Trans-European Network for Green Infrastructure, TEN-G) at a large scale.

## 9. Stopping subsidies and incentives with harmful effects to nature and the wider environment

- **Länder, Federal Government, EU:** No further undermining of nature conservation objectives with tax payers’ money. All financing instruments have to be brought in line with the principle of “public money (only) for public goods and services”. This goes in particular for the policy areas of agriculture, fisheries, regional and infrastructure development and energy. [...]

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