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Assessment for Protected
Areas in**

- ◆ UK
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WELCOME

This is the fifth newsletter of the Nature-GIS project dedicated to the National Context Assessment for Protected Areas, in which the partners have described the context about protected areas for their own country.

This number is dedicated to five Countries:

- } UK
- } Hungary
- } Czech Republic
- } Cyprus
- } Portugal.

Suggestions and comments are warmly accepted at
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The Nature-GIS partnership



I. UK National Context Assessment for Protected Areas

Description of the national system of Protected Areas

United Kingdom, including England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, presents a quite variegated scenarios with different typologies of protected areas, instituted on the base of national and international legislation, and many stakeholders charged of different competencies in the different regions.

On the base on the national laws it's possible to define the following kinds of protected areas:

↳ National Parks (NPs): their aim is to preserve and enhance the most beautiful, dramatic and spectacular expanses of countryside, while promoting public enjoyment of them, and having regard for the social and economic well-being of those living within them. In England and Wales they were statutorily designated by the NPs Commission and confirmed by the Government between 1951 and 1957, and one area with similar status in East Anglia was established in 1989. The Countryside Commission in England and the Countryside Council for Wales advise government on NPs, each of which is administered by a Park Authority.

↳ National Nature Reserves (NNRs): these areas contain examples of some of the most important natural and semi-natural ecosystems in UK. They are managed to conserve their habitats, providing special opportunities for scientific study of the habitats, communities and species represented within them. Wherever possible, access by the public is encouraged. Most are owned and managed by the country nature conservation agencies, although increasingly land owned and managed by other bodies is being designated as NNRs.

↳ Marine Nature Reserves (MNRs): these areas conserve marine flora and fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest, while providing opportunities for study of the marine systems. Their designation involves consultation with numerous statutory and voluntary bodies and interest groups and consequently only three have so far been established in the UK.

↳ Sites of Special Scientific Interest – SSSIs (in England, Scotland and Wales) and Areas of Special Scientific Interest - ASSIs (in Northern Ireland): these designations are the main site protection measures in the UK. All Biosphere Reserves, Biogenetic Reserves, Special Protection Areas, Ramsar sites, Areas of Special Protection, (Candidate) Special Areas of Conservation and National Nature Reserves have first to be notified as SSSIs/ASSIs. The notification process involves considering the site

against a published set of quality and rarity criteria, followed by consultations with the owners and occupiers of the land, the local authority and the appropriate Secretary of State. Around 8% of the total land area of Britain is designated as SSSIs.

↳ Local Nature Reserves – LNRs - (in England, Scotland and Wales) and Local Authority Nature Reserves (in Northern Ireland): a local authority can declare a site in which it has a legal interest as a LNR under section 21 of the National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act 1949, for the same purposes as NNRs, but because of the local rather than the national interest of the site and its wildlife. Under this Act local authorities have the power to issue bylaws to protect their LNRs.

↳ Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), in England and Wales: their primary purpose is to conserve natural beauty, but account is taken of the need to safeguard agriculture, forestry and other rural industries, and the economic and social needs of local communities. AONBs are statutorily designated by the Countryside Commission in England and the Countryside Council for Wales in Wales, under the National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act 1949. In Northern Ireland they are statutorily designated by the Department of the Environment under the Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 and its amendments. AONBs are not designated in Scotland.

↳ National Scenic Areas - NSAs (Scotland only): NSAs are statutorily designated by Scottish Natural Heritage as the best of Scotland's landscapes, deserving special protection in the nation's interest. NSAs replace two earlier categories of sites of importance for scenic interest that mirrored the National Park and AONB designations in England and Wales. Special development control measures for the 40 National Scenic Areas in Scotland were introduced by the Scottish Development Department in 1980.

↳ Country Parks: they are statutorily declared and managed by local authorities. They are primarily intended for recreation and leisure opportunities close to population centres and do not necessarily have any nature conservation interest. Nevertheless, many are in areas of semi-natural habitat and so form a valuable network of locations at which informal recreation and the natural environment co-exist.

↳ Limestone Parks: Limestone pavements are identified as a priority habitat under the EC Habitats & Species Directive. Limestone Pavement Orders, created by the relevant local government authority, afford statutory protection for limestone pavements after notification of its

importance by English Nature and the Countryside Commission.

On the base on the international laws and Conventions it's actually possible to describe the following kinds of protected areas:

‖ Special Protection Areas (SPAs): SPAs are designed by the UK government on the advice of the statutory conservation agencies, on the base of the 1979 EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds. This designation is implemented through the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981; all SPAs have first to be notified as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

‖ (Candidate) Special Areas of Conservation (SACs): the designation of SACs is one of the main mechanisms by which the EC Habitats & Species Directive is implemented. In the UK, the Directive is implemented through the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (DoE 1994); all SACs have first to be notified as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

‖ Areas of Special Protection (AoSPs): the (AoSP) designation replaces Bird Sanctuary Orders under the 1954 to 1967 Protection of Birds Acts, which were repealed and amended under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981. Designation makes it unlawful to damage or destroy either the birds for which the area is identified or their nests. In some cases this involves prohibiting or restricting access to the site.

‖ Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs): EC authorisation for ESAs is derived from Article 19 of Council Regulation (EEC) No. 797/85 - National Aid in Environmentally Sensitive Areas. ESAs are statutory areas in which the Government seeks to encourage environmentally sensitive farming practices, prevent damage that might result from certain types of agricultural intensification, and restore traditional landscapes;

‖ Ramsar sites: these are statutory areas designated by the UK government on the advice of the conservation agencies under the Ramsar Convention in order to identify wetlands of international importance and to promote their conservation. All Ramsar sites have first to be designated as SSSI;

‖ Biogenetic Reserves: it's an European network of reserves established to conserve representative examples of European flora, fauna and natural areas. All sites in the UK are existing Sites of SSSI, and most are also NNR.

‖ Biosphere Reserves: these areas represent globally significant examples of biomes for both terrestrial and coastal environments. They were devised by UNESCO under Project No. 8 of their Man and the Biosphere (MAB) ecological program. Biosphere Reserves are not always statutory protected areas, all British sites are also NNRs.

‖ World Heritage Sites: these are areas of global natural and/or cultural significance, nominated by the state within which they are situated and considered by a World Heritage Committee. World Heritage Sites must have strict legal protection and any management of the site must ensure that this continues.



Networks and Stakeholders

◆ National Network of protected areas

National Biodiversity Network (NBN): the NBN is a way of sharing wildlife information in the UK and is building tools to make this information available in a digitised and exchangeable form. The development of the Network has been facilitated by the NBN Trust, an organisation made up of various founder partners from a number of statutory and non governmental agencies and organisations.

UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP): it is an outcome of the issues raised by the 1992 Earth Summit. A report, 'Biodiversity: the UK Action Plan' was launched in 1994. The report identified 59 activities for conservation work over the next 20 years. It also established fundamental principles for future biodiversity conservation in the UK. The UK Biodiversity Steering Group was created, and in 1995 it published 'Biodiversity: UK Steering Group Report Meeting the Rio Challenge'. The report contains plans to conserve 116 species and 14 habitats. There are 436 biodiversity action plans, 391 species action plans and 45 habitat action plans. Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) are also being implemented by local authorities throughout the UK.

Association of National Parks Authorities (ANPA): it provides a focus for collaborative working and corporate activity and the sharing of best practice across the Parks. ANPA also attempts to increase public understanding of the National Parks and to promote them as models for sustainable development.

Council for National Parks (CNP): the CNP is the only national, voluntary sector organisation dedicated to National Parks. CNP is an umbrella of 47 environmental and amenity groups.

The Wildlife Trusts: it lobbies for better protection of the UK's natural. It is a network of 47 local Wildlife Trusts working together to protect wildlife in towns and the countryside. The Wildlife Trusts care for over 2,560 nature reserves and count more than 413,000 members.

The Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT): it's a leading wildlife conservation organisation, and is the only voluntary body about Scottish natural environment and its wildlife. SWT, with over 20,000 members, is responsible for over 120 wildlife reserves all over Scotland. SWT works as a part of a network of Wildlife Trusts throughout the UK. Within Scotland, SWT also works in partnership with a range of organisations including Scottish Natural Heritage, the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, and in particular over 30 other environmental NGO, which together comprise Scottish Environment LINK

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB): is the Europe's largest wildlife conservation charity with more than a million members. The RSPB has over 150 nature reserves throughout the UK, covering more than 240,000 acres.

The National Trust: it cares for over 248,000 hectares (612,000 acres) of beautiful countryside in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, plus almost 600 miles of coastline and more than 200 buildings and gardens of outstanding interest and importance.

The National Trust for Scotland: it was established in 1939 and it's a registered charity and not a government body working to protect and promote the Scotland's architectural heritage, scenic and historic treasures.

- ◆ [International Networks involving UK protected areas](#)

Nature 2000: in application of the directive 92/43/CEE "Habitats".

- ◆ [Principals public stakeholders](#)

Joint Nature Conservation Committee: is the forum through which the three country nature conservation agencies - the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW), English Nature and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) - deliver their statutory responsibilities for UK as a whole and internationally. The special functions are principally: to advise ministers on the development of policies for, or affecting, nature conservation in UK and internationally; to provide advice and knowledge to anyone on nature conservation issues affecting Great Britain and internationally; to establish common standards throughout UK for the monitoring of nature

conservation and for research into nature conservation; and to commission or support research which the Committee deems relevant to the special functions.

English Nature: is the statutory service responsible for looking after England's country's biodiversity and its geological and geomorphological interest. Created by Parliament in 1991 and funded by the Government, English Nature works with and through other people and organisations, in partnerships.

Countryside Council for Wales: CCW is the Government's statutory adviser on sustaining natural beauty, wildlife in Wales and its inshore waters. It was created by Parliament in 1991 as the national wildlife conservation authority in Wales, and has programmes of work to protect landscapes, conserve habitats and wildlife, foster environmentally sustainable land use, improve access for public enjoyment of the countryside and promote its understanding. To achieve these ends CCW works in close partnership with a wide range of organisations and individuals, including central government and its agencies, local authorities, voluntary organisations and local farmers and land owners.

Scottish Natural Heritage: SNH is a government-funded body established by Parliament in 1992 by the merger of the Nature Conservancy Council for Scotland and the Countryside Commission for Scotland. SNH is responsible to the Secretary of State for Scotland. Its task is to secure the conservation and enhancement of Scotland's unique and precious natural heritage. SNH advises the Scottish Office on policies and promotes projects that aim to improve the natural heritage and support its sustainable use.

Environment and Heritage Service (EHS): it was launched as an agency of the Department of the Environment (Northern Ireland) in 1996. One of its priorities is to give high-quality advice within the Government on all environmental issues. EHS and the Department for Agriculture for Northern Ireland (DANI) share a joint responsibility to maintain biodiversity and the rural environment throughout the province. EHS is the regulatory authority for the prevention of pollution of air, land and water in Northern Ireland and has statutory responsibility for the protection of historic buildings and monuments, and for the conservation of wildlife and natural habitats.

Countryside Agency: it develops countryside policies for England and promotes them with local authorities, public agencies, farmers and landowners, conservation organisations, voluntary bodies and members of the public. It works closely with English Nature and voluntary groups and it promotes sustainable use of countryside amenities such as footpaths and bridleways and encourages greater understanding of the countryside through interpretation.

Other environmental statutory agencies not under the jurisdiction of the JNCC include:

Environment Agency: the Agency helps to achieve the aims of the UK BAP by protecting and enhancing wildlife.

Centre for Fisheries, Environment and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS): CEFAS is an agency of the UK's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and is a scientific research and advisory centre for fisheries management and environmental protection. They provide contract research, consultancy, advice and training in fisheries science and management, marine environmental protection, aquaculture and fish and shellfish disease and hygiene to a large number of public and private sector clients around the world.

Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA): SEPA is an organisation which is responsible for the protection of the environment

in Scotland. SEPA is tasked with the protection of land, air and water.

Commercial aspects

◆ Principal economic incomes for the different protected areas

National Parks are run by the National Park Authorities (NPAs). Funds for the NPAs are provided directly by central government (75%) and via the local authorities in the Park area (25%). LIFE-Nature provides funding for actions aimed at the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. In practice it must contribute to the implementation of the "Birds" (79/409/EEC) and "Habitats" (92/43/EEC) EC Directives and in particular to the establishment of the European network Natura 2000.

II. Hungarian National Context Assessment for Protected Areas

Description of the national system of Protected Areas

In Hungary 9,7 % of the national areas is covered by protected areas. 12 Inspectorates for Environmental Protection and 10 National Park Directorates control these areas under the supervision of the Ministry of Environment and Water. These organisations work together with the local municipalities and the civil controlled organisations. The categories of the protected areas are:

- } National Park;
- } Landscape Protection Area;
- } Nature Reserve;
- } Nature Protected Relief.

Since 1996 there has been a National Nature Protection Base Plan. The content of the National Nature Protection Base Plan is ruled by the Act LIII of 1996 on Nature Protection. The task of this Plan is based on the Act, the National Nature Conservation Conception, the National Biodiversity Conservation Strategy, valid international agreements and professional programs of international organisations (e.g. UNEP, IUCN). This plan is not substitute for but completes the Law.

◆ Possible future development or extension of the protected areas system

Hungary as a candidate country to the EU has to realize its own nature protection tasks in a wide-range international co-operation. To develop of EU compatible nature protection system is required the

identification of Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs). The ESA is the newly accepted and financed form of the harmonisation between the agraria and nature conservation. The aim of the formation of these areas is the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainability of extensive agricultural production. The 'green corridors' network connects the different protected areas and helps the migration of the populations on the unprotected areas.

The procedure of protected areas declaration should be accelerated to maintain that the coverage of the protected areas reach 12 %.

Networks and Stakeholders

◆ Principals public stakeholders

- The Ministry of Environment and Water and its regional bodies
- The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and its regional bodies
- National and Regional Inspectorates for Environment and Nature Conservation
- National Park Directorates: actually there are 10 National Park Directorates coordinated by the Ministry of Environment and Water;
- National and Regional Water Management Directorates
- National Institute for Environmental Management
- National Meteorological Organisation
- Other non-profit organisations

Commercial aspects

◆ Principal economic incomes for the different protected areas

The financial background of the network of the protected areas is maintained by different sources. The main financial support comes from the state budget. Another important source is the so called 'KAC' (and partly the 'VICE') tenders giving subsidy

for different topics in the 'KAC' system. The own income of the Natural Parks is the third part of this support system. This amount is available only for nature conservation management. The EU also supports the nature conservation efforts.

III. Czech National Context Assessment for Protected Areas

Description of the national system of Protected Areas

Specific legislation about protected areas is quite recent in Czech Republic, and the principals laws are:

- Law 114/1992 on nature and landscape protection
- Laws declaring National parks.

Protection of nature in Czech republic is divided into 'Especially protected areas' which include the following categories:

- } National parks: actually there are 4 parks covering together about 2% of the state area;
- } Protected landscape areas (representing the 13% of the state area);
- } National Natural Reserves, over 100 mostly represented by important small protected area constituted by wide areas with ecosystems;
- } Natural Reserves, several hundreds reserves with the main goal to protect local important ecosystems;
- } National Natural Relics, over 100, smaller than National Natural Reserve (not as large to be an ecosystem),
- } Natural Relics, several hundreds, local analogy to National Natural Relic;

and the 'Other protected areas' including:

- } Memorial trees, for significant trees and their groups;
- } Natural parks, for protection of landscape with decisive concentrated aesthetic and natural

values not involved in especially protected areas.

◆ Possible future development or extension of the protected areas system

Actually the institution of 3 new protected landscape areas is previewed.

Networks and Stakeholders

◆ Principals public stakeholders

Each National Parks and Protected landscape areas have their own administration.

There is a central body for administration of protected landscape areas ("Administration of Landscape protected areas of CR"). Its aim is to secure effective management of the nature and landscape in 23 Protected Landscape Areas. In each area nature and landscape conservation is safeguarded by local authorities charged with state administration as well as assessment work. The head office in Prague takes care of coordination, gives guidelines, and enables and finances its functioning.

There is also "Agency for Nature Conservation and Landscape Protection of the Czech Republic", which is a technical organization of the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic. Its mission is to provide technical support to the state administration through the entire spectrum of nature conservation and landscape protection on the whole territory of the Czech Republic.

All these bodies belong to the Ministry of Environment of CR.

IV. Cyprus National Context Assessment for Protected Areas

Description of the national system of Protected Areas

The more updated information about protected areas distribution in the Cyprus territory are given by the Department of Forests.

Protected areas system is constituted by:

- } Natural parks, 9 parks that amount to a total of about 10,800 hectares;

} Nature Reserves: 7 reserves that amount to a total of about 4,800 hectares;

} National and private forests amount to an area of 391,507 hectares out of a total 925,100 area of the Cyprus Island.

◆ International Networks involving Cyprus protected areas

Nature 2000: thirty-eight (38) sites were preliminary selected and proposed for addition to the European

Network of Special Areas of Conservation to participate to the Natura2000 Network.



Networks and Stakeholders

- ◆ Relevant public stakeholders related to protected areas

Actually there isn't a single national organisation about protected areas: the protected areas issue is handled by many departments under the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment and the Ministry of Interior Affairs. The main agencies responsible for the management of protected areas are the Department of Forests and the Fisheries Department. Other agencies that are

involved in protected areas and are closely interacting with the above are the Environmental Services and the Game Fund Service under the Ministry of Interior Affairs. These national agencies determine the protected areas that concern them and are responsible for their protection.

There is a plan of uniting all the national agencies and departments charged of protected areas and environment under one Ministry of Environment, also in order to avoid the conflicts between different branches. This plan only exists on the discussion table and the possible implementation is not expected in the early future.

- ◆ Environmental associations and their role in the management of protected areas

All the environmental associations are not directly related to the national protected areas and haven't authority or decision-making privileges in any issues. These volunteer organisations to inform the public through many events trying to sensitise the national agencies and the public about nature protection.

Commercial aspects

- ◆ Principal economic incomes for the different protected areas

The principals resources for the different protected areas are solely relying on State Funding.

V. Portuguese National Context Assessment for Protected Areas

Description of the national system of Protected Areas

Currently, protected areas cover 7.2% of the Portuguese country. Proposed NATURA 2000 sites will increase this area to 21% of country.

Portuguese protected areas are formally managed by ICN (Institute for the Conservation of Nature).

Policy framework and enabling legislation in place for the establishment and designation of national and local interest protected areas is given through Law-Decree n. 19/93, of 23 January, (related to the National Network of Protected Areas). Policy framework and legislation for Natura 2000 network areas (of European interest), is given through Law-Decree n. 140/99, of 24 April. The Azores Autonomous Region has already adapted these legislation to its territory.

Law-Decree n. 19/93 establishes the following seven types of protected areas:

- } National Parks;
- } Natural Parks;
- } Natural Reserves;
- } Integral Reserves;

- } Protected Landscape (regional or local protected areas) and Natural Monument;
- } classified sites;
- } private protected areas ("sites of biological interest").

Actually the national network of protected areas includes 44 protected areas: one National Park, twelve Natural Parks, nine Natural Reserves, seven (regional/local) Protected Landscape Areas, ten Classified Sites and five Natural Monuments.

In the Autonomous Region of Madeira there are four Natural Reserves and the Madeira Natural Park, which embraces around two thirds of the island. In the Autonomous Region of Azores there are 32 protected areas (including several marine reserves), comprising eleven Natural reserves, five Protected Landscape Areas and sixteen Partial Natural Woodland Reserves throughout the various islands which make up the archipelago.

Natural Reserves and Integral Reserves are those with the highest conservation status. Although

national legislation includes the possibility to create local protected areas managed by the local councils there was, up to now, no protected areas created under this classification.

More recently new type was considered (Law-Decree n. 227/98): marine protected areas, designated as “marine parks” or “marine reserves”.

The general framework regarding management objectives and types of protected areas of national interest follow the one established by IUCN.

Areas important at the European Union level and included in Natura 2000 network also have specific management objectives and regimes, established through the policy and legal instruments.

Areas classified under international agreements as:

- Ramsar Convention,
- UNESCO Man and Biosphere, and
- Council of Europe Biogenetic Reserves

are regulated through its specific regimes and always overlap with national protected areas, whose management plans must ensure the achievement of those international compromises.

In order to ensure an ecological spatial continuum, it is also established a national ecological “reserve”, that regulates the land use of particularly sensitive areas defined according biophysical criteria.

Networks and Stakeholders

- ◆ International Networks involving Portuguese protected areas

Nature 2000: This network incorporates both Special Protection Areas (SPA), designated for the conservation of bird species of European interest, and Special Areas for Conservation Zones (SAC), designated for the conservation of habitats, and non-bird fauna and flora species of European interest, according to specific biogeographical regions .

So far Portugal has classified 29 SPA on the mainland, 4 in the Autonomous Region of Madeira and 15 in the Autonomous Region of the Azores.

- ◆ International Networks involving Portuguese protected areas

European Network of Bio-genetic Reserves: which is composed of a group of areas intended to “ensure the biological balance and consequently the conservation, potential, genetic diversity and representative nature of the various

types of habitats, biocoenoses and ecosystems”. This international instrument was created by the Council of Europe in 1976 via Council of Ministers Resolution (76)17; there are ten areas in Portugal designated as Bio-genetic Reserves;

The Council of Europe Diploma areas

Biosphere Reserves: created under the terms of the UNESCO “Man and Biosphere” Programme;

Ramsar sites: there are currently ten areas that have been designated as Ramsar sites by the Portuguese Government.

- ◆ Principals public stakeholders

In Portugal mainland the establishment and management of protected areas (of national interest) is a competency of the Institute for Nature Conservation (ICN). Protected areas of regional/local interest are established under proposal of, and managed by local authorities (municipalities), with the participation of ICN national authority. The establishment of local protected areas may also be proposed by private bodies that become responsible for their management.

In the Autonomous Region of Madeira the establishment and management of Protected Areas (of national interest) is a competency of several entities within the Regional Secretary for Environment and Natural Resources (Regional Directorate for Environment, Regional Directorate for Forests, Parque Natural da Madeira). Local interest areas may also involve local authorities.

In the Autonomous Region of Azores the establishment and management of protected areas (of national interest) is a competency of the Regional Secretary for Environment (Regional Directorate for Environment) in close co-operation with Regional Directorate for Forestry Resources. Local interest areas may also involve local authorities.

Commercial aspects

- ◆ Principal economic incomes for the different protected areas

A part from national funds, economic resources has been received through European Union programmes to the establishment and management of protected areas, namely LIFE instrument, Structural Funds and Cohesion Funds.