

Editorial

On 11 and 12 February 2009 the 'Knowledge for Ecological Networks' project held a European stakeholder workshop in the Netherlands. This project studies the role of stakeholders in ecological network implementation. The workshop was considered a great success. For a full report see page 2.

We report on two new ECNC projects in this *ECNC Update*. The first concerns the promotion of biodiversity and sustainability among rural municipalities and their local communities in the Western Balkans. The second is the establishment of the 'European Learning Network on Functional Agrobiodiversity', which will facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experience to help optimize agrobiodiversity benefits and promote sustainable agriculture.

At the end of 2008, the Swedish Species Information Centre became the 50th member of the ECNC Network. We are very pleased that this milestone was reached during ECNC's 15th anniversary year.

Over the past year we have been redesigning the ECNC website. The new site was officially launched at the end of January. We hope that you will find it attractive and user-friendly. Visit us at www.ecnc.org.

On behalf of the Editorial Team
Glynis van Uden

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Businesses set good examples for each other

17 December 2008, Tilburg, the Netherlands

At the request of the Province of Noord-Brabant, on 17 December 2008 ECNC organized the seminar 'Business and Biodiversity in Noord-Brabant'. Selected businesses in Noord-Brabant, considered leaders in biodiversity, were invited to the seminar to identify the opportunities, possibilities and challenges that will crystallize the link between business and biodiversity. In his welcome speech, Regional Minister for Ecology Mr Onno Hoes said that the Province has great ambitions with respect to increasing biodiversity.

The six presentations gave the 22 participants a good overview of the possibilities for biodiversity conservation in Noord-Brabant. Good Company showed that ecosystem services are indispensable for people and business; Alterra considers large companies such as DuPont and Dow to be models; every year PricewaterhouseCoopers studies sustainability and biodiversity among 200 businesses in the

Netherlands; Brabant Water has calculated its carbon footprint; ZLTO (Agricultural and Horticultural Association) treats biodiversity as an input; Van Helvoirt Groenprojecten emphasizes the expansion of green and blue spaces in favour of biodiversity.

The discussions focused on governmental regulations concerning biodiversity and how the government can stimulate businesses to integrate biodiversity and business management. Biodiversity must become an integral part of socially responsible enterprise.

The business sector representatives were asked to consider signing the Countdown 2010 Declaration, to underline the importance that businesses attach to biodiversity.

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Nature and Society

Stakeholders matter in implementing ecological networks! But how to get them involved?

How do you convince stakeholders to contribute to the practical implementation of ecological networks? This was the central question of the KEN (Knowledge for Ecological Networks) Workshop, organized by ECNC on 11 and 12 February 2009 in Vught, the Netherlands. An international group of 35 practitioners from the conservation field was invited to discuss the complex issue of ecological networks implementation in Europe. The participants agreed that there is wide consensus at political level that ecological networks are an important feature of contemporary conservation of habitats and species. It was also found that these

areas contribute to society in a great many ways by the ecosystem goods and services they provide.

However, in spite of the achievements in planning those networks, their practical implementation often lags behind schedule. Underlying reasons for the slow progress were analysed, and solutions from theory and practice were discussed. It was found that identifying the key stakeholders, those who can influence the process in a positive and decisive way, was an essential first step in each implementation effort. By focusing the time and effort to be invested in building trust with the smal-

lest possible number of the most influential stakeholders was seen as a realistic and efficient way to proceed. Other groups of less influential stakeholders should, however, be kept informed of the process and given the chance to voice their ideas and opinions at key moments in the process through consultation and the provision of public information. Creating alliances with influential and respected organizations could help in creating political support for ecological networks at the local level. Communication and information are crucial to all these approaches, and appropriate techniques should therefore be developed.



The KEN workshop participants.
(Photo: Aysegul Cil)

The workshop was introduced by a series of short presentations that set the scene for the later discussions, making sure that there was a common understanding among the participants about the basic ecological principles and policy framework regarding ecological networks and their implementation.

The results of the workshop were practised during a field visit to the Green Delta (Groene Delta), an ecological network project involving a wide range of stakeholders in the metropolitan area of Den Bosch. The excursion was followed by a debate with the representatives of five local stakeholder groups: the State Forest Agency (that

kindly organized the excursion), the Association for Nature Conservation (Natuurmonumenten), the Water Board of Aa en Maas, the Municipality of Den Bosch, and the Agricultural and Horticultural Association (ZLTO). Among other things, the Dutch 'polder model', which is a traditional method for bringing people together to agree actions and responsibilities in relation to water management but which now has wider applications within the country, was seen as a success factor in bringing together the different stakeholders and achieving consensus through discussions and debate.

During the KEN final project team meeting, held in Bern, Switzerland, in December 2008, Dr Rosemarie Siebert presented the draft stakeholder report, which was a key document in the stakeholder workshop. The report identifies and analyses stakeholders implementing ecological networks as derived from the case studies for Germany, the UK, Croatia, Estonia and Switzerland. The meeting further focused on the project's main deliverables and the outcomes of the country reports.



The KEN project team meeting.
(Photo: Aysegul Cil)

The KEN project is funded by the Research Programme of the Netherlands Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality.

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Boosting local biodiversity action in Western Balkans

On 19 and 20 January 2009 ECNC together with REC-Regional Environmental Center kicked off a large international project for promoting biodiversity and sustainability among rural municipalities and their local communities in the Western Balkans.

The project, which focuses on small municipalities in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo/a (UNSCR 1244), aims to assist in reducing the downward spiral of poverty, biodiversity loss and environmental degradation by increasing local participation and awareness of local authorities and their citizens.

Countries of South-East Europe (SEE) have seen a decline in biodiversity and development indicators in the last decade. Local action for biodiversity is essential for ensuring better conservation status for biodiversity and maintaining ecosystem services. Local sustainable development initiatives do exist in SEE, but not in great numbers.

Partner municipalities to this project will be offered support in developing and implementing local biodiversity action plans (LBAPs) while involving local stakeholder groups such as farmers, foresters and hunters, providing expertise, organizing targeted

trainings, and promoting socio-economic benefits of biodiversity for local practical actions.

This three-year project is financially supported by the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, whose development policy prioritizes support to the stability of the Western Balkan region. The project will help to achieve this priority by integrating biodiversity and ecosystem services considerations into local and regional cooperation initiatives.

For more information: Aysegul Cil, Programme Manager – Nature and Society (cil@ecnc.org)



The project team during kick-off in Budapest.
(Photo: ECNC)

Business and Biodiversity

New project 'European Learning Network on Functional Agrobiodiversity' approved

In January 2009 ECNC, in cooperation with DIVERSITAS agroBIODIVERSITY International Project Office (AB-IPO), started work on a new project to create the 'European Learning Network on Functional Agrobiodiversity'.

The realization that agriculture has to become more sustainable is incorpora-

ted in policy instruments from national to global level. Knowledge is being increasingly accumulated on how biodiversity can be mobilized to make agriculture sustainable. Throughout Europe, farmers, researchers, policy-makers and other stakeholders are implementing various forms of agrobiodiversity. At present, this practical

experience is extremely fragmented and barely accessible. The new project 'European Learning Network on Functional Agrobiodiversity' aims to change this.

The Network will provide a platform and facility for exchange of knowledge and practical experiences between EU Member States, across country and language borders, between farmers, policymakers, scientists, businesses and NGOs, to enable fast and effective implementation of best practices to help optimize agrobiodiversity benefits and promote sustainable agriculture. A Europe-wide register of agrobiodiversity projects, contacts database and collection of practical examples will be established, together with an up-to-date website which can be used by stakeholders and the secretariat of the

Network (hosted by ECNC) to communicate. The knowledge will be set down in a handbook that will help the stakeholders to strengthen the role of functional agrobiodiversity in their operations. A European meeting will be organized that will bring together representatives of the various target groups from several countries to exchange experience.

The project is funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM) and will run until the end of 2009. The further support of European policymakers and funders will also be sought during the project in order to expand the Network in the long term.

For more information: Veronika Mikos, Project Manager; mikos@ecnc.org

ECNC involved in setting up a biodiversity finance work stream

Since January 2009, ECNC, together with IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands, is participating in a project led by Nyenrode Business University to set up an international biodiversity finance work stream.

The rationale behind this work is that payments for biodiversity and ecosystem services (PES) – the creation of markets and mechanisms – are an important priority in the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the EU Biodiversity Action Plan. It is also a priority of the Dutch Policy Programme on Biodiversity (BB) 2008–2011. To implement these policies, the Netherlands Government is seeking collaboration with civil society – private sector and NGOs – and intends to establish a working group consisting of, among others, pension funds and banks, with the objective of defining concrete steps and proposals for (private) investments in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

The organization of an international conference in the second half of 2009 in the Netherlands, bringing together the main players in the field, will be a crucial element of the work stream.

The recently published *Building Biodiversity Business*, a joint IUCN–Shell International Ltd initiative, will form an important basis for the conference. The initiative urgently calls for the development of a portfolio of concrete business opportunities, to be translated into robust financial products. Another recommendation is the establishment of a Biodiversity Business Facility, integrating three key functions: policy advice, technical assistance and finance. In such a facility, public agencies, non-profit organizations and commercial service providers will join forces.

In general, the market for these financial products needs a push. Now is the time to intensify and extend

the dialogue to the international level, involving relevant governmental, financial sector and NGO representatives, to set up innovative financial facilities for valuing and marketing biodiversity and ecosystem services, and to establish the role each sector could play.

This project is sponsored by the Netherlands Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM) and co-sponsored by the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN).

For more information: Vineta Goba, Programme Manager – Business and Biodiversity; goba@ecnc.org

ECNC and FOEN meet with Nestlé *5 February 2009, Vevey, Switzerland*

As a part of the implementation of Phase 2 of the project 'Promoting the business case for biodiversity', on 5 February 2009 ECNC's Vineta Goba and Andrew Schrauwen attended a meeting organized by Nestlé at Nestlé Global Headquarters in Vevey, Switzerland.



Vineta Goba and Robert Lamb.
(Photo: Andrew Schrauwen)

The meeting was attended by representatives of both Nestlé Global and Nestlé Suisse. Mr Robert Lamb of the Swiss Federal Office of the Environment (FOEN), funder of the project 'Promoting the business case for biodiversity', also attended the meeting.

ECNC initiated contacts with Nestlé in mid-2008, and found a very high level of commitment and good response from Nestlé regarding involvement in the global biodiversity agenda. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss concrete actions to be implemented in the framework of the project throughout

2009. According to Nestlé representatives, wildlife is one of Nestlé's key environmental priorities, so it was beneficial to have this dialogue with input from both ECNC and FOEN.

During the meeting, Vineta Goba gave a presentation on the project 'Promoting the business case for biodiversity' and ECNC's other business and biodiversity activities, why business should care about biodiversity, what actions they can take and several good practice examples.

For more information: Vineta Goba, Programme Manager – Business and Biodiversity; goba@ecnc.org



Nestlé headquarters on the shores of Lake Geneva.
(Photo: Andrew Schrauwen)

State of European Nature and Biodiversity

Biodiversity monitoring in the Ukraine receives a positive impulse

27 January 2009, Kyiv, Ukraine

The final workshop of the ECNC project 'Supporting public involvement in building capacity for Ukrainian biodiversity monitoring' was held in Kyiv on 27 January 2009. The workshop brought together project partners, the funder and a range of stakeholders to discuss the project outcomes and future actions for a possible follow-up.

Monitoring biological diversity establishes the basis for nature conservation policies and assessment of the efficiency of nature conservation measures and for the sustainable use of natural resources. Loss of biodiversity is an urgent issue in Ukraine, one of the main threats being the destruction of natural habitats of plants and animals. Biodiversity monitoring in the country is in its primary stages of development; most of the surveys are of an occasional character and mainly conducted by a limited group of specialized scientists.

During the workshop, the representatives of the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Ukraine underlined that action should be taken soon. Focus should be placed on inventorying current monitoring methodologies and on the implementation of indicators that could be used as a communication tool for policymakers, involving local authorities and the general public in the process. They stressed that further action and cooperation are strongly needed.

The two-year project, funded by the Netherlands Government under its BBI-

Matra programme, sought to enhance Ukrainian capacity in developing biodiversity monitoring by increasing public involvement. The results of the project will be published in English and Ukrainian and will be available at the ECNC and the project websites (www.biomon.org).

ECNC's partners are the National Ecological Centre of Ukraine (NECU), the Institute of Zoology and the Institute of Botany of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. The project was implemented in close collaboration with the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Ukraine.

For more information, please contact the Project Coordinator, Amor Torre-Marin; torremarin@ecnc.org



ECNC's Senior Programme Manager Dr Lawrence Jones-Walters congratulates Dr Vasiliy Kostyushyn, NECU's project coordinator, on the valuable project results.

(Photo: ECNC)

BioScore delivers unique biodiversity impact assessment tool

The ECNC-led BioScore project, the first phase of which ended in January 2009, produced a user-friendly tool to query a unique database of species sensitivities to policy-induced environmental change. Such was the conclusion of the project partners who attended the final project meeting in Tilburg (the Netherlands) on 22 January 2009 to evaluate the work achieved and to discuss the future of the tool and database.



(Photo: T. van Iersel)

During the three years of the project, a database of European species and their sensitivities to changes in environmental variables (pressures) was developed by a consortium of nine expert institutions. The result is an exceptional tool linking changes in environmental variables such as water and soil eutrophication, habitat fragmentation and changes in land use, to species sensitivities. The database contains environmental sensitivity scores for a selection of over 1,000 European species of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, vascular plants, freshwater fish, benthic macroinvertebrates, butterflies and dragonflies.

The tool allows the envisaged users (policymakers) to run simple scenarios and view the results in terms of potential changes in biodiversity. It should raise awareness among policymakers about the impacts of their policies on Europe's biodiversity and allow them to adapt their policies so as to minimize the negative effects of proposed changes on Europe's biodiversity.

Also invited to this final meeting were representatives of the Norwegian Biodiversity Information Centre and the Swedish Species Information Centre (the latter recently joined the ECNC Network; see page 10 of this issue). Their presentations were used as contextual information for a more in-depth discussion about the future and follow-up of BioScore, to which all project partners were very much committed.

In the coming weeks the project report will be finalized and posted on the project website (www.bioscore.eu) together with the final version of the tool, which is available for downloading. Hard copies of the report will be available on request.

BioScore is co-funded by the European Commission Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development.

For further information: Ben Delbaere, BioScore Project Coordinator; delbaere@ecnc.org



First KYOTO workshop held

2 & 3 February 2009, Amsterdam, the Netherlands



KYOTO (Knowledge Yielding Ontologies for Transition-Based Organization) is one of the most challenging information technology-based projects in which ECNC is currently involved. KYOTO aims to develop a system based on sophisticated search technology to provide access to large quantities of data and information for both experts and the general public in relation to biodiversity and other environmental subject material. When realized, the system will result in a highly sophisticated search engine that has the capacity to learn from the user.

The system being developed within the KYOTO project will be tailor-made for the environmental domain. This means that the technical partners, who have the knowledge and experience to work with language tools and computer applications, work closely together with the end users of the system. Such close communication is key to achieving the best result from the project.

On 2 and 3 February a workshop was organized in Amsterdam, bringing together an international group from the environmental domain and the technical partners of the KYOTO project. The workshop aimed to start a discussion between the different participants and to provide the system developers with a view of the problems and wishes of the end users in regard

Final ALTER-Net Management Group meeting held

5 & 6 February 2009, Lancaster, UK

The ALTER-Net 'Network of Excellence' aims to create durable integration of biodiversity research capacity in Europe. ECNC has been involved in ALTER-Net from the start, and leads the work package to develop a science-policy interface to improve information exchange on biodiversity assessment.

to searching and finding data and information, and how the KYOTO system could be developed to help them do their work more efficiently.

During the first day the participants discussed and listed their problems, wishes and bottlenecks. The second day focused on the technological aspects and how they can help the environmental domain with its tasks.

The workshop succeeded in giving the developers an insight into what the KYOTO system should deliver for the environmental domain. Also, the environmental domain now has a clearer idea of the technology behind this kind of system. Now the knowledge gained is being used to start developing the first demo system and fine-tuning it to fit the end users' needs.

KYOTO is funded under the EU Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7).

For further information about the KYOTO project, contact: Dr Lawrence Jones-Walters, Senior Programme Manager – Biodiversity and Ecological Networks (joneswalters@ecnc.org) or Andrew Schrauwen, Senior Project Officer (schrauwen@ecnc.org)

The ALTER-Net management group met for the last time on 5 February 2009 in Lancaster. The meeting was hosted by the project coordinator at the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH). The focus of the



meeting was on the outcomes of the overall results of the ALTER-Net project and intensive discussions for the future work together with the committed project partner organizations under the new secretariat, the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research (NINA). It is important that ALTER-Net contributes to policymaking and management practices for the future of biodiversity and ecosystem services in Europe.

The meeting resulted in various concrete actions for beyond the project lifetime, to be presented to the ALTER-Net Council on 3 March 2009. The ALTER-Net project will close with a conference in Leipzig on 4-6 March

2009, which will address the challenges facing ecosystem services and biodiversity, and explore how interdisciplinary research can provide solutions to the continued loss of biodiversity and the sustainable delivery of ecosystem services.

ALTER-Net is funded under the Sixth EU Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development.

*For more information: Aysegül Cil, Programme Manager – Nature and Society; cil@ecnc.org
Further details of the ALTER-Net conference can be found on the ALTER-Net website: www.alter-net.info*

ECNC Organizationally

ECNC welcomes 50th Network partner

In December 2008 ECNC welcomed the 50th partner to join the ECNC Network: Swedish Species Information Centre. With the addition of this partner, we have added a new country to our Network, so now we have partners in 26 countries. We are very pleased that this 50th milestone was reached in ECNC's 15th anniversary year.

The Swedish Species Information Centre works for a rich plant and animal life in Sweden and internationally, and is a national centre for knowledge on species and habitats – a link between scientists, nature conservation and the public. Contact person: Johan Bodegård, Director of the SSIC.

For more information on SSIC, visit www.artdata.slu.se/english.

Staff news

On 1 January 2009 Andrew Schrauwen was promoted from Project Officer to Senior Project Officer.

ECNC launches new 'Beautiful Europe' website

On Thursday 29 January 2009 ECNC's new website 'For a Beautiful Europe' was officially presented and launched in the ECNC offices, in the presence of the Dutch celebrity Sandra Reemer.

ECNC's new homepage, with its slogan 'For a Beautiful Europe' and mission.



Not only the layout, but also the structure of the website has been changed completely. It incorporates aspects of the old website together with new insights. The new website is fresher, more user-friendly and transparent. ECNC's projects are better profiled, and there is more focus on its people. The site contains portals for the media and businesses.

The new layout takes account of the integration between ECNC and EUCC (The Coastal & Marine Union).

More functionalities and interactive media will be added in the future. Visitors' opinions are highly valued, so if you have any comments, please contact ECNC's Communication Officer, wijnja@ecnc.org.

New ECNC publications

The project 'Supporting public involvement in Ukrainian biodiversity monitoring' aims to enhance Ukrainian capacity in developing biodiversity monitoring by increasing public involvement. The main partners for the project are ECNC and the National Ecological Centre of Ukraine (NECU), with strong involvement of the Institute of Zoology and the Institute of Botany of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. The project has recently published its results in three documents.

Kostiushyn, V.A., T.L. Andrienko and V.P. Melnichuk (2008) *Overview of biodiversity monitoring programmes in Ukraine*. – ECNC–European Centre for Nature Conservation, Tilburg, the Netherlands and the National Ecological Centre of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine. (In Ukrainian and English.)

This publication is an overview of biodiversity monitoring programmes being carried out in Ukraine. Data for the

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ECNC Coastal and Marine is already being introduced on the new website.



publication were collected through a specially developed questionnaire, disseminated among research institutions, universities, protected areas (zapoved-nics, regional and national parks) and nongovernmental organizations.



Kostiushyn, V.A., S.I. Gubar and V.G. Domashlinets (2009) *Strategy for developing the monitoring of biodiversity in Ukraine*. – ECNC–European Centre for Nature Conservation, Tilburg, the Netherlands and the National Ecological Centre of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine. (In Ukrainian and English.)

This publication provides an analysis of the current status of biodiversity monitoring in Ukraine and a vision of a future national biomonitoring system, and

formulates aims, strategic objectives and actions for developing biodiversity monitoring in the country.



Kostiushyn, V.A., V.M. Grishchenko and O.V. Vasyluk (2009) *Pilot study of public involvement in the monitoring of biodiversity in Ukraine*. – ECNC–European Centre for Nature Conservation, Tilburg, the Netherlands and the National Ecological Centre of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine.

This report presents the results of a pilot study of the involvement of volunteers in monitoring biological diversity in Ukraine. Among the study's findings was that, despite the current low level of public activity in Ukraine, it is possible to use volunteers to collect valuable data on biodiversity. A Ukrainian version of this publication is also available.



New issues of *Journal for Nature Conservation*

Volume 16, issue 4 of the *Journal for Nature Conservation* (published by Elsevier in affiliation with ECNC) was published in December 2008; Volume 17, issue 1 was published in January 2009.

For further information, please consult:
[www.ecnc.org/publications/
journalfornatureconservation?PHPSESSID=11daf7d4e9d421e9fe55b5b4c1b3685f](http://www.ecnc.org/publications/journalfornatureconservation?PHPSESSID=11daf7d4e9d421e9fe55b5b4c1b3685f)

BioScore assesses impact on biodiversity

The BioScore project has produced a brochure that describes the tool developed to assist policymakers in assessing the possible impacts of European Community policy on biodiversity. The brochure can be downloaded from www.ecnc.org/ongoing-projects_39.html?action=detail&id=69



Mulder, I., L. Jones-Walters and L. van Santen (2008) Parallels between the financial and ongoing ecological crisis. *Business 2010* 3, 4: 12–13.

In this article, the current state of the financial system and actions required to save it provide a metaphor for the underlying causes behind the ongoing ecological crisis, and the actions required to halt further destruction. The article is available at www.cbd.int/business/newsletter.shtml.

ECNC Update Volume 16, No. 1

ISSN 1388-0039

ECNC Update is the newsletter of ECNC–European Centre for Nature Conservation • Editor: Glynis van Uden • *ECNC Update* is freely available from the ECNC website (www.ecnc.org). Readers are welcome to reproduce this *Update* in whole or in part providing reference is made to the source.

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