



# Financing Guidance Handbook Natura 2000

*EU funding opportunities  
in 2014-2020*

Environment

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# Financing Natura 2000 Guidance Handbook

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part **I**

## EU funding opportunities in 2014-2020



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Strengthening the uptake of EU funds for Natura 2000  
(ENV.B.3/SER/2012/002)

Prepared by:  
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**Context:**

The Handbook is one of three tasks of a project 'Strengthening the uptake of EU funds for Natura 2000' (ENV.B.3/SER/2012/0020) funded by the European Commission. The tasks include:

1. Financing Natura 2000 Handbook, a revision and update of the existing Handbook for the financial period 2007-2013;
2. Toolkit to assess the consistency of Prioritised Action Frameworks (PAFs) and the Operational Programmes; and
3. National seminars to discuss the 2014-2020 funding opportunities for Natura 2000.

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Part I of the Natura 2000 Guidance Handbook is supported by a stand-alone Part II. Part II "Analysis of Natura 2000 management measures eligible for financing in 2014-2020" consists of the following chapters:

Chapter 1: The use of EU funds for Natura 2000 management measures – detailed 'measure-by-measure' analysis (p. 1-119)

Chapter 2: Using EU funds for Natura 2000 in Member States in 2007-2013 – case studies (p. 121-148)

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## Foreword

The Natura 2000 network has been a tremendous success in conserving European biodiversity. With more than 27 000 sites, accounting for 18 percent of EU land territory and important part of marine area, Natura 2000 is the largest co-ordinated network of protected areas worldwide. The scientific evidence is unequivocal, the species and habitats protected within the network fare much better than the biodiversity outside. The network includes our best preserved forests, wetlands and grasslands, marine and coastal sites as well as the habitats of hundreds of threatened or vulnerable species. As such, not only does it save them for future generations, but it also protects our natural capital which underpins many sectors of economy and which is vital for our health and well-being.

To reap full benefits of Natura 2000, the network needs, however, important investments in management, conservation and restoration of sites. The costs of upkeep and ecological improvement of the network have been calculated at 5.8 billion euro per year. This seems to be a lot, but the benefits provided by Natura 2000, estimated at the order of 200 to 300 billion euro per year, far outweigh any costs. Investing in nature protection makes therefore strong economic sense.

Since the creation of the network the EU has contributed financially to its protection and management. Consecutive LIFE programmes have placed a high priority on Natura 2000. However, the strategic objective has been to mainstream the funding of Natura 2000 into the key sectoral funds and in this context important resources have been allocated from the main EU financing instruments such as rural development policy or regional, cohesion and marine funds. These financing instruments will be also available in the current multiannual financial framework of 2014-2020. This Handbook is aimed at helping potential beneficiaries, managing authorities and other stakeholders to identify possible sources of financing of the necessary protection measures; it also promotes examples of best practice and presents ideas for creative and innovative financing (e.g. through multi-purpose projects and synergies with other policies).

The first edition of this Handbook published seven years ago helped to bring progress regarding establishment of the Natura 2000 network, improving our knowledge of its value and management planning. Now, when the designation of the network on land has been almost finalised, the efforts will have to concentrate on the on-site conservation and restoration, raising awareness about the benefits of biodiversity and monitoring progress towards achieving the objectives of the EU Biodiversity Strategy. I am convinced that this new edition of the Handbook will greatly contribute to meeting these goals.

*Karl Falkenberg  
Director General  
DG Environment  
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## List of abbreviations and acronyms

AIS	Automatic identification systems
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CFP	Common Fisheries Policy
CLLD	Community led local development
CPR	Common Provisions Regulation
CSF	Common Strategic Framework
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EIB	European Investment Bank
EIP	European Innovation Partnership
EMAS	Eco-management and audit scheme
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ERS	Electronic recording and reporting systems
ESF	European Social Fund
ESI Funds	European Structural and Investment Funds
ETC	European Territorial Cooperation
EU	European Union
FLAGs	Fisheries Local Action Groups
FTE	Full time equivalent
GDP	Gross domestic product
GNI	Gross national income
IAS	Invasive alien species
ICT	Information and communication technologies
IMP	Integrated Maritime Policy
IPs	Integrated Projects
ITI	Integrated territorial investment
IUU fishing	Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
LAGs	Local action groups
LIFE	Programme for the Environment and Climate Action
MFF	EU multiannual financial framework
MPAs	Marine protected areas
MSFD	Marine Strategy Framework Directive
NCFF	Natural Capital Financing Facility
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
OPs	Operational programmes
PA	Partnership Agreement
PAF	Prioritised action frameworks
PES	Payments for ecosystem services
PPP	Purchasing power parities
R&D	Research and development
R&I	Research and innovation
RDP	Rural development programme
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
SAC	Special areas of conservation
SCI	Sites of Community importance
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SPA	Special protection areas
TEN-T	Trans-European Transport Network
VDS	Vessel detection systems
VMS	Vessel monitoring systems

# Chapter 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Natura 2000 network: introductory remarks

Natura 2000 is an EU-wide network of protected areas established pursuant to the Birds Directive<sup>1</sup> and the Habitats Directive<sup>2</sup>, collectively known as EU 'nature legislation'. At present the network includes approximately 27,200 sites covering slightly more than one million km<sup>2</sup> of EU land territory (18,2%) and important marine area (approx. 247,000 km<sup>2</sup>). The network consists of so called 'special protection areas' (SPA) designated to protect endangered bird species and 'sites of Community importance' (SCI) established for protection of habitat types and species listed in the Habitats Directive.

Both Directives provide a comprehensive legal framework for the protection of Europe's biodiversity through the establishment, management and monitoring of the Natura 2000 network. In order to meet their obligations Member States have to first designate a sufficient number of sites to form a coherent network on their territory and subsequently take the necessary conservation measures to ensure the long-term survival of protected habitats and species. In practice, a great variety of activities is necessary for the effective management of the network. These activities may include field studies and inventories to collect the necessary knowledge about the sites, development of management plans, habitat conservation and restoration, species monitoring etc.

Whilst a well-functioning Natura 2000 network provides a wide range of both environmental and socio-economic benefits, protection of the sites also incurs substantial costs which have to be borne by national or regional authorities, site managers, land owners and/or site users. The European Union (EU), while recognising the cross-border threats to biodiversity and transnational character of the benefits delivered by the European network of protected areas, has also provided possibilities for financial contributions to the protection and management of Natura 2000. Article 8 of the Habitats Directive specifically refers to EU co-financing for necessary conservation measures and requires adoption of prioritised action frameworks (PAF) to define the funding needs and priorities for Natura 2000 at a national or regional level and so facilitate their integration into different EU funding instruments.

This Guidance Handbook ('the Handbook') is aimed at analysing and describing opportunities for financing investments in Natura 2000 in the EU multiannual financial framework (MFF) 2014-2020. It also attempts to assess synergies and complementarities between investments in Natura 2000 and other EU strategic priorities. It explains opportunities for financing Natura 2000 in the next financing period from major EU funds and provides practical advice on how to incorporate them into national and regional operational programmes. In the context of limited availability of EU funds for Natura 2000 it also provides guidance on other sources of available funding which could supplement the EU funding including innovative financing instruments such as payments for ecosystem services (PES).

1 Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds, OJ L 20, 26.1.2010, p. 7.

2 Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7.





## 1.2 Handbook: structure and content

The Handbook has the following two-part structure, with separate volumes for Part I and Part II:

### Part I

**Chapter 1 – introduction:** Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the Handbook. It sets out the objectives of and approach for the Handbook, outlines its target audience and provides information on the management activities and types of sites covered.

**Chapter 2 – background and rationale:** Chapter 2 sets out the overall context for the Handbook. It provides an overview of the policy rationale for co-financing the Natura 2000 network. It also identifies a range of benefits associated with the management of Natura 2000, providing both social and economic returns on investment in the network. Finally, the Chapter outlines the overall framework for co-financing Natura 2000 in 2014-2020.

**Chapter 3 – EU multiannual financial framework (MFF) 2014-2020:** Chapter 3 provides a short introduction to the 2014-2020 EU MFF. The MFF establishes the general premises for financing Natura 2000, including setting out the common thematic objectives (TOs) for EU co-funding in 2014-2020.

**Chapters 4 – description and analysis of different funds:** Chapter 4 provides information about the opportunities for financing Natura 2000 from the EU budget in 2014-2020. Chapter 4 offers general description of the funds, outlines their overall objectives and identifies all fund-specific activities that are eligible for co-funding and considered relevant in the context of Natura 2000. It also systematically links these opportunities with different types of Natura 2000 management activities, providing an overview of available opportunities for financing different management measures across different funds. The overview provided in Chapter 4 is supported by a more detailed analysis in Part II.

**Chapter 5 – integration of Natura 2000 in practice:** Chapter 5 recognises that securing adequate co-financing for Natura 2000 is often hindered by the limited uptake of opportunities in practice. Building on experiences gained during the 2007-2013 financing period, the chapter outlines issues to be taken into consideration when ensuring the integration of Natura 2000 in practice, including some suggested solutions to address them.

**Chapter 6 – innovative financing:** Chapter 6 highlights how EU co-financing for Natura 2000 can be, and increasingly needs to be, complemented by funding from other sources. The chapter identifies a range of innovative financing approaches that can be applied to the Natura 2000 network, including both new sources of funds and new types of market instruments as well as more innovative applications of existing funding mechanisms.

**Chapter 7 – references:** Finally, Chapter 7 summarises the key references, publications and websites relevant in the context of the Handbook.

## Part II

**Chapter 1 – detailed analysis of funds:** Chapter 1 of Part II provides a detailed measure-by-measure and fund-by-fund analysis of the opportunities available for financing Natura 2000 in 2014–2020. It identifies the relevant funding opportunities for each main type of Natura 2000 management measure (25 activities in total) and provides short concrete examples on

how the measures can be financed, depending on the fund and eligible activity (i.e. article) in question. The analysis also provides information on both the type of beneficiaries eligible for receiving funding and the various socio-economic benefits that are foreseen.

**Chapter 2 – case studies:** Chapter 2 of Part II documents 10 examples of successfully using EU co-financing to support Natura 2000 management in different Member States. These examples showcase efficient and innovative use of funds for Natura 2000 in the 2007–2013 programming period and highlight links to different social and economic benefits resulting from the investment.

## 1.3 What is the Handbook for?

This Handbook aims to provide information about opportunities for EU co-financing of Natura 2000 in the 2014–2020 funding period under the different instruments including the:

- European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD);
- European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF);
- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF);
- European Social Fund (ESF);
- Cohesion Fund;
- Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE); and
- Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (Horizon 2020).

The Handbook is intended to be useful for national and regional authorities when planning the use of EU funds for Natura 2000 (e.g. completing, updating and/or implementing PAFs, see Box 1.1), for example in order to identify complementarities and synergies among the various financial instruments, while avoiding duplication and overlaps. The Handbook also supports the cross-checking of consistency between PAFs and national and regional operational programmes (OPs) (see Chapter 3 below).

Additionally, the Handbook could be used by a range of stakeholders involved in management of individual sites (e.g. site managers) to identify new ideas for financing different management measures. For example, a range of individual measures could be financed as part of broader rural and regional projects not primarily focused on biodiversity (see Chapter 4).

Finally, the Handbook aims to highlight how EU co-funding could be complemented by different innovative non-EU funding sources, with a view to ensuring adequate overall funding for the network in the light of reduced budget and increasing competition.

Specifically, the Handbook is intended to:

- Signpost possibilities for funding Natura 2000 at the EU level, while drawing attention to funding options that may not be immediately obvious;
- Help to check which management measures can be co-funded from EU funds and where funding from other sources is required;
- Highlight win-wins between financing Natura 2000 and achieving broader socio-economic benefits (e.g. links between Natura 2000 management measures and the the-

matic objectives for EU funding in 2014-2020);

- Provide a reference when drafting PAFs and ensuring consistency between PAFs and OPs;
- Help in providing general understanding of the fund-specific regulations at an operational level;
- Help to indicate how EU co-funding could be complemented by innovative funding opportunities;
- Support the future review of national and regional programmes; and
- Provide information for the purpose of developing and/or updating Natura 2000 management plans with regards to financing different measures.

It should be noted that the Handbook focuses primarily on analysing financing opportunities from EU funds that are managed at the national and regional level. This means that, for most of the funds, concrete funding possibilities for Natura 2000 in 2014-2020 will be determined by the national and regional programmes prepared by the Member States and approved by the Commission.

Finally, it should also be noted that the Handbook does not discuss in detail funding opportunities for all the measures necessary to implement the Birds and Habitats Directives (e.g. measures outside Natura 2000 areas, monitoring, reporting etc.). Its coverage is limited to only those activities that relate to Natura 2000 sites.

In addition to offering a general guidance on financing Natura 2000, this Handbook can also be used in the process of completing, updating and/or implementing Prioritised Action Frameworks (PAFs – see section 2.3.3), including integration of measures identified in the PAFs into the fund-specific programmes.

A dedicated toolkit, available via [www.financing-natura2000.eu](http://www.financing-natura2000.eu), has been developed in parallel to this Handbook. The toolkit provides two checklists aimed at assessing the consistency of PAFs with fund-specific OPs. In principle, once completed, PAFs should identify all relevant Natura 2000 financing needs, related management measures and suitable funding sources within the country or region in question. Consequently, these measures should be integrated into the fund-specific national and/or regional OPs.

The 2014-2020 funding period will be the first time that OPs and PAFs are used together as programming tools for funding Natura 2000. Therefore, it will be very useful to assess the needs, measures and funding sources recognised in PAFs and OPs against the full range of EU-level opportunities identified in the Handbook.

### Box 1.1 Using the Handbook in the developing of PAFs and OPs

## 1.4 Who is the Handbook for?

This Handbook is intended for various audiences including, in particular, the authorities responsible for financing Natura 2000 at the national or regional level. The Handbook aims to assist these authorities in identifying the opportunities for financing of Natura 2000, particularly with regard to EU funds, and fully incorporating them into national and regional funding programmes in the EU MFF 2014-2020.

The Handbook should also be a useful instrument for authorities and stakeholders involved in management activities at individual sites, in-

cluding those responsible for the development of management plans. The Handbook provides ideas on how specific management measures can be financed from different sources. Managers of Natura 2000 sites, due to their specific knowledge and experience, are invited to actively participate in the development of national, regional or sectoral operational programmes (OPs) to support the integration of biodiversity priorities into different funds.

The analysis of the funds also highlights opportunities for the different target groups of poten-

tial beneficiaries (i.e. those 'end-users' of EU funds who actually carry out activities related to Natura 2000 sites) including public administrations, farmers, foresters, fishermen and fish farmers, private land owners, public land owners, land managers, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), education organisations and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Table 1.1 below provides an overview of target groups of potential beneficiaries and their interests in Natura 2000 and consequently potential interest in this Handbook.

Even though this Handbook does not address in detail the specific opportunities for each of these target groups, focusing rather on the stages of national, regional or sectoral programming, authorities at different decision making levels should consider all of these potential target groups when programming different funds.

**Table 1.1**  
**Target readership groups for the Handbook**

<i>Category</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Role in Natura 2000 management</i>	<i>Applicability of the Handbook</i>
Public administrations	Government bodies and public advisory bodies at national, regional or local level, including Natura 2000 management bodies or other bodies responsible for site management	Responsible for designation, general protection and management planning, monitoring; occasionally also a land owners and responsible for implementation of management measures	Identification of different funds and mechanisms which can be used (directly and indirectly) by public administration to facilitate fulfilment of their obligations regarding Natura 2000; better understanding and appreciation of benefits flowing from the network
Farmers	Individuals or organisations involved in commercial agricultural activities	Responsible for the management of Natura 2000 agricultural habitats and species, e.g. grasslands and farmland birds	Identification of possibilities for financing conservation measures on farmland, including compensation for land use restrictions, support from voluntary schemes, investing in physical assets, support through innovative approaches (e.g. payments for ecosystem services); identification of win-win opportunities for the protection of rural biodiversity and improving economic viability of farms
Foresters	Individuals or organisations (public and private) involved in commercial forestry activities	Responsible for the management and monitoring of Natura 2000 forest habitats and species	Identification of possibilities for financing woodland conservation measures, including through compensation for woodland management restrictions, support from voluntary schemes and innovative approaches (e.g. payments for ecosystem services); identification of win-win scenarios opportunities for the protection of forest ecosystems and improving their economic conditions
Private land-owners	Private individuals or organisations that own land (e.g. private forest owners), may include those involved in non-commercial activities on land (not farmers and foresters)	Responsible for ensuring that activities on private land are in line with legal obligations, facilitate the maintenance and improvement of Natura 2000 sites that are privately owned	Gaining an overview of the types of Natura 2000 management measures on private land that are eligible for EU financial support; guidance on how good management practises and improved conservation status can also create concrete (private) benefits to land owners; information about the conservation and socio-economic opportunities related to Natura 2000 sites in compliance with private property rights
Fishermen and fish farmers	Individuals or organisations involved in commercial fisheries and aquaculture activities	Responsible for ensuring that commercial activities are in line with provisions for Natura 2000, developing management practices that help to secure fish stocks while maintaining or improving the status of freshwater and marine Natura 2000 habitats	Identification of ideas for sustainable business opportunities and/or management practises that are compatible with the management of Natura 2000 sites and that improve the sustainability of fishing or aquaculture practices



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NGOs	Non-governmental organisations dealing with nature protection	Actively manage, restore or monitor Natura 2000 sites; involved in the protection of specific habitat types (e.g. wetlands) or species (e.g. bats, butterflies); involved in the scrutiny of legislation or decision making processes; involved in education, training, environmental advocacy; occasionally also land-owners	The application of Handbook depends on the role of a NGO in Natura 2000 management. The Handbook can provide information on the possible sources for financing conservation measures, monitoring and/or activities related to training, education and awareness rising. For NGOs involved in advocacy this Handbook provides valuable information on programming of EU funds and their legal implications
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises as defined in Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises engaged in commercial activities compatible with protection of Natura 2000	Involved in the active management of sites: SMEs with business model that requires raw materials coming from sites (e.g. reed for construction sector or biomass for energy production); SMEs providing services and expertise in the field of conservation (e.g. development of green infrastructure) or SMEs benefiting from the existence of natural features (e.g. tourist companies) and therefore keenly interested in maintenance of high nature values of the sites	Overview and identification of EU funds that can be accessed by entrepreneurs, either individually (ERDF) or in collaboration with other bodies such as NGOs (e.g. LIFE), research institutes (Horizon 2020). Also, information on how EU funding can be used to develop and/or access innovative financing instruments
Educational and research bodies	Organisations involved in providing educational programmes and research	Engaged in rising awareness of the Natura 2000 network and in developing new methods and technologies for and approaches to biodiversity protection	Overview and identification of available EU funds that can be accessed by education and research institutions individually or in collaboration with other bodies such as NGOs or entrepreneurs
Others	Other individuals or organisations that do not fall into any of the previous categories (e.g. women, young and other local associations movements, local action groups)	Active on local and small scale with regard to management activities (e.g. restoration and protection of small rivers, parks, green patches, local populations of animals); raising awareness among municipal authorities, in schools, among neighbours etc.; creating a positive image for biodiversity conservation and Natura 2000 (nature ,ambassadors')	Overview and identification of available EU funds and mechanism; presentation of innovative financing instruments; inspiration for exploring synergies between nature protection and cultural heritage, entrepreneurship, education, improved health and well-being (i.e. socio-economic benefits of nature protection)

## 1.5 What types of sites and measures are concerned?

Table 1.2 sets out the types of Natura 2000 sites that can receive financial support from the EU funds under the relevant rules. Table 1.3 provides a list of different type of activities related to the management of Natura 2000 sites. The list of 25 activities in Table 1.3 has been adopted from the list included in Annex 3 to the Commission's Communication on Financing Natura 2000 (COM/2004/431), which was in turn derived from the list of categories included in the Article 8 Working Group's Final Report on Financing Natura 2000. These 25 measures form

the baseline for the prioritisation of measures in the PAFs<sup>3</sup>.

These classifications have been systematically used throughout the Handbook with a view to help to identify which beneficiaries and activities (e.g. ongoing vs. one-off activities) are eligible for funding under different funds.

<sup>3</sup> Official format for developing PAFs: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/financing/docs/PAF.pdf>

**Table 1.2**  
Types of Natura 2000 sites

This classification has also been used in the detailed analysis of the EU funds in Part II of the Handbook.

Category	Description
Agricultural land	Utilised agricultural area only, including orchards under cultivation
Forests	Forests, including multifunctional agrosylvopastoral systems known as dehesa or montado.
Other terrestrial land	Includes alpine areas, garigue, all other areas that are not included in the other categories (e.g. pasture that is not classified as utilised agricultural area). Includes abandoned farmland and orchards
Inland waters	Rivers, lakes, freshwater
Wetlands	Marshes, swamps, bogs, peatlands, estuaries. <i>Note:</i> may be some cross-over with coastal areas
Coastal areas	Sand dunes, beaches, mud flats. <i>Note:</i> may be some cross-over with wetlands
Marine areas	Inshore waters (within 12 nautical miles from the shore) and offshore marine areas (outside 12 nautical miles)

**Table 1.3**  
Natura 2000 management measures

This classification has also been used in the detailed analysis of the EU funds in Chapter 4 and Part II of the Handbook.

No.	Measure	Description
Category: <b>Establishment of Natura 2000 sites</b>		
1	Administration of site selection process	Funding for authorities carrying out the selection process
2	Scientific studies/inventories for the identification of sites – surveys, inventories, mapping, condition assessment	Scientific studies, research personnel, workshops and meetings, assembly of databases etc.
3	Preparation of initial information and publicity material	Handbooks, seminars, workshops, communication materials for training and capacity building etc.
4	Pilot projects	Initial 'trial' projects at sites
Category: <b>Management planning</b>		
5	Preparation of management plans, strategies and schemes	Elaboration and/or update of management and action plans, land use plans etc.
6	Establishment of management bodies	Start-up funding, feasibility studies, management plans etc.
7	Consultation – public meetings, liaison with landowners	Including costs incurred for the organisation of meetings and workshops, the publication of consultation outcomes, financial support of stakeholders, etc. Can include networking activities (travel, meetings, workshops etc.)

No.	Measure	Description
8	Review of management plans, strategies and schemes	Review and updating of management plans and strategies
9	Running costs of management bodies (maintenance of buildings and equipment)	Running costs incurred to meet depreciation of infrastructure, consumables, travel expenses, rents, leases etc.
10	Maintenance of facilities for public access to and use of the sites, interpretation works, observatories and kiosks etc.	Costs related to guides, maps, related personnel etc.
11	Staff (conservation/project officers, wardens/ rangers, workers)	Ongoing staff costs
<b>Category: Ongoing habitat management and monitoring</b>		
12	Conservation management measures – maintenance and improvement of habitats' favourable conservation status	Restoration work, provision of wildlife passages, management of specific habitats, preparation of management plans etc.
13	Conservation management measures – maintenance and improvement of species' favourable conservation status	Restoration work, provision of wildlife passages, management of specific species (flora and fauna), plans etc.
14	Conservation management measures in relation to invasive alien species (IAS)	Restoration work, infrastructure, management of specific species, preparation of management plans etc.
15	Implementation of management schemes and agreements with owners and managers of land or water for following certain prescriptions	Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agri-environmental measures, e.g. wildlife-friendly production methods, habitat restoration on agricultural land, extensive livestock breeding, conservation of meadows, etc.</li> <li>• Forest-environmental measures, e.g. creation of no exploitation zones, retention of dead wood, control or eradication of invasive alien species (IAS), afforestation or reforestation activities, management of specific vegetation, etc.</li> <li>• Aqua-environmental measures, e.g. habitat maintenance in aquaculture zones etc. (relates to aquaculture rather than fishing)</li> <li>• Other possible agreements such as payment for ecosystem services (PES) schemes, public-private partnership with business etc.</li> </ul>
16	Provision of services; compensation for rights foregone and loss of income; developing acceptability ,liaison' with neighbours	Costs of compensation, e.g. to farmers, foresters or other land owners or users for income foregone as a result of management prescriptions needed for Natura 2000
17	Monitoring and surveying	Refers mainly to one-off costs related to monitoring and surveying activities, such as development of monitoring plans, methods and equipment, training of personnel etc.
18	Risk management (fire prevention and control, flooding etc.)	Preparation of wardening and fire/flood control plans, development of relevant infrastructures, and the acquisition of equipment etc.
19	Surveillance of the sites (ongoing)	Includes ongoing surveillance, wardening and patrolling activities. Can include personnel costs, consumables, travel, etc. in order to implement surveillance and guarding activities, including surveillance for the control of harmful recreational activities, the control of harmful economic activities, and protection against wildfires
20	Provision of information and publicity material	Establishing communication networks, production of newsletters and awareness and information materials, setting up and maintenance of websites etc.
21	Training and education	Production of handbooks, seminars, workshops, communication materials etc.
22	Facilities to encourage visitor use and appreciation of Natura 2000 sites	Investment in maintaining facilities increasing the use and appreciation of sites such as signage, trails, observation platforms, visitor centres etc.

No.	Measure	Description
Category: <b>Investment costs</b>		
23	Land purchase, including compensation for development rights	Purchase of land in service of environmental protection and management schemes
24	Infrastructure needed for the restoration of habitats or species	Includes an array of measures for the creation of infrastructures specific to the management of the environment, e.g. for water management in peat bogs and mines. Can include equipment acquisition relevant to the running of protection and management institutions and actions such as office and IT equipment, monitoring materials, boats, diving equipment, cameras etc.
25	Infrastructure for public access, interpretation works, observatories and kiosks etc.	Infrastructure for public use that is conducive to environmental protection and management, such as infrastructure increasing the amenity value of sites (signage, trails, observation platforms and visitor centres etc.) Can include equipment acquisition relevant to the running of protection and management institutions and actions such as office and IT equipment, monitoring materials, boats, diving equipment, cameras etc.

## 1.6 Application of this Handbook and its limitations

The European funds analysed in this Handbook operate in accordance with a set of objectives and requirements outlined in the Common Strategic Framework and also in fund-specific regulations (see Chapters 3 and 4). Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that the funding possibilities that can be identified in the different funds are always subject to the overall EU objectives and sector specific regulations. The management of Natura 2000 sites is likely to consist of a set of measures that, depending on the site in question, may be funded through different European funds, based on different articles of the funding regulations. For example, habitat restoration financed from EAFRD is limited to rural areas whereas restoration under EMFF needs to have a marine and/or coastal dimension. Similarly, restoration activities financed from ERDF should support broader regional development. The analysis in Chapter 4 and Part II of the Handbook, including examples of possible eligible activities under different combinations of measures and articles in the regulations, takes this context specificity into consideration.

The purpose of this Handbook is to identify not only direct opportunities to fund Natura 2000 (i.e. measures specific to Natura 2000 listed in

the sectoral regulations) but also indirect and/or more innovative possibilities. The latter opportunities include, for example, integration of Natura 2000 into regional risk management plans (e.g. climate adaptation strategies), development of 'green' education and training programmes, and development of infrastructure to support nature-based tourism. Taking up these indirect opportunities may require a more proactive approach, including reaching out to planning authorities, sectoral associations (e.g. organisations dealing with tourism, education and recreational fishing) and other stakeholders. A systematic colour coding has been applied throughout the analysis in Chapter 4 to help the user of this Handbook to differentiate between direct and indirect opportunities.

The majority of the EU funds operate according to a programming process with shared management of funds between the EU and the Member States. This means that decisions on funding priorities are taken at national and regional level. Therefore, it is important to note that the opportunities identified in the fund specific regulations are only indicative and the availability of the funds for a particular activity 'on the ground' will depend on their inclusion into the fund-specific programmes.



In practice, implementation of specific measures for Natura 2000 depends on their compliance with several strategic and operational documents, including:

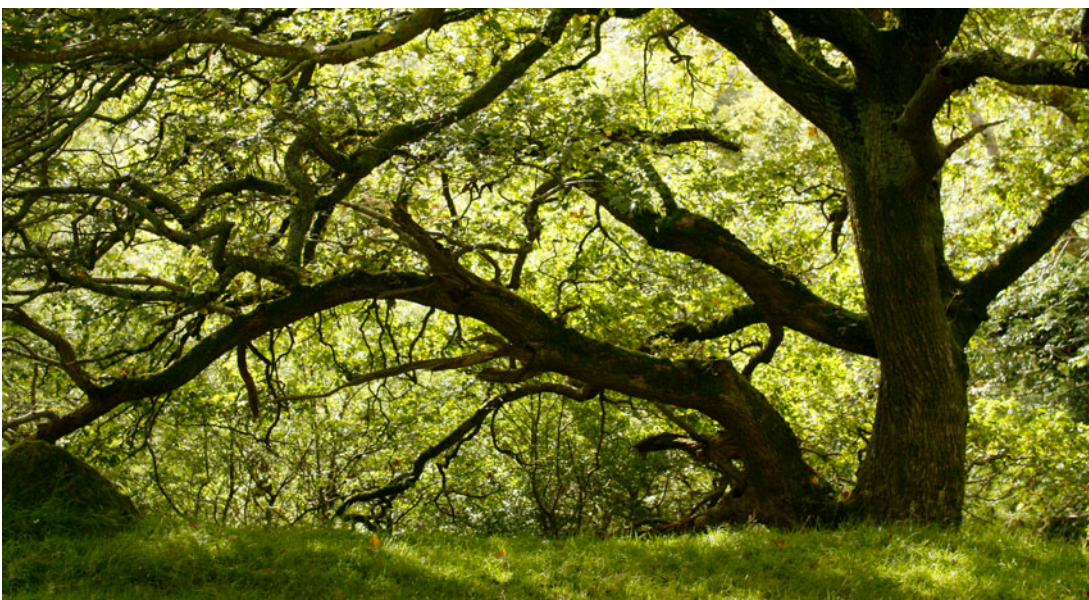
- Overall EU policy objectives (Europe 2020) which in turn are reflected in crosscutting legislation (Common Provisions Regulation – CPR and Common Strategic Framework – CSF) (see Chapter 3)
- Sector specific regulations (e.g. for agriculture and fisheries) (see Chapter 4)
- Agreements between the Commission and the Member States on country specific priorities (e.g. Partnership Agreements)
- Programmes drawn up by the Member States at the national or regional level and approved by the Commission (fund-specific programmes)

These different levels of programming allow the EU and each Member State and/or region to identify the most important development needs, and to prioritise the use of funds in order to address them. The level of detail specific to each programming stage and different instruments varies. For example, programmes to be developed under the EAFRD (i.e. rural development programmes) and the EMFF (European maritime and fisheries fund operational programmes) will contain very detailed descriptions of individual measures that can be funded. By contrast, operational programmes required under the ERDF, ESF and the Cohesion Fund are more strategic and will often present only general categories of eligible measures.

At the national and regional level, Ministries of Finance, Environment, Agriculture and Development (amongst others) have been involved in drafting programmes for the use of EU funds. The Commission does not have primary responsibility for determining the contents of these programmes, but has a role in checking that programmes are in line with EU priorities as set out in the regulations or other strategic documents.

Given the above, users of the Handbook should note that the funding opportunities (i.e. a range of different measures listed in fund-specific articles) listed in Chapter 4 and analysed in more detail in Part II of the Handbook do not lead to identical opportunities in all Member States. Specific opportunities depend on the Member States/regions selection of thematic objectives and specific measures within these objectives as set out by the operational programmes.

Finally, this Handbook focuses on providing information mainly on the EU funds. Therefore, it complements the available funds and related guidance at national, regional and local levels which are independent of EU funds but are applicable to Natura 2000 sites. Indeed, such funds often play a crucial role in financing a range of measures that fall outside the scope of EU funding. Furthermore, Chapter 6 encourages users of this Handbook also to explore the possibilities for innovative financing to complement often limited EU funds.



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# Chapter 2 Natura 2000: the cornerstone of EU biodiversity policy

## 2.1 Natura 2000 in the broader EU policy context

In 2011 the European Commission adopted the EU Biodiversity Strategy with a headline target of *'halting the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020, and restoring them in so far as feasible, while stepping up the EU contribution to averting global biodiversity loss'*<sup>1</sup>. The Strategy endeavours to address the main pressures on nature and ecosystem services in the EU and beyond, and lays down the policy foundations for EU-level action over the next ten years. The completion and appropriate management of the Natura 2000 network forms an integral part of the Strategy and the crucial actions identified include securing adequate financing for the conservation measures required for Natura 2000 sites at both EU and national/regional level.

The EU Biodiversity Strategy operates in the context of the overall Europe 2020 strategy<sup>2</sup>, for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. This Strategy has set five ambitious objectives on employment, innovation, education, social inclusion and climate/energy, to be reached by 2020. These objectives have been translated into seven flagship initiatives including the flagship initiative on 'A resource-efficient Europe'<sup>3</sup>. Europe 2020 Strategy and its flagship initiatives therefore set the priorities for EU funding in 2014-2020 as well as specific thematic objectives for EU funds.

As explained in more detail in section 2.2 below, activities supporting biodiversity conservation

can – both directly and indirectly – translate into a number of ecosystem services. These include better food and water security, employment, educational opportunities and cost-effective solutions for mitigating and/or adapting to climate change, and increasing social inclusion in rural areas and other regions. Consequently, in addition to being the bedrock for nature conservation, a well-managed Natura 2000 network forms an essential element of support for sustainable and inclusive growth within the EU in line with the Europe 2020 Strategy. These interlinkages are also recognised in the EU Biodiversity Strategy which calls for maximising co-benefits for biodiversity from various funding sources including funding for rural and regional development.

The Natura 2000 network is also a key attribute of the EU's natural capital<sup>4</sup> and forms an integral part of the EU's endeavours towards establishing a green economy. The EU Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe<sup>5</sup> outlines key objectives for green economy in the EU context. It recognises that the economic prosperity and wellbeing of the EU, its Member States and regions depend on their natural capital, including the maintenance of ecosystems and related goods and services. The roadmap recognises, for example, that investing in natural capital such as green infrastructure, often brings higher returns than constructed or manufactured alternatives, with lower up-front costs. It also

<sup>1</sup> COM/2011/244

<sup>2</sup> COM/2010/2020

<sup>3</sup> COM/2011/21

<sup>4</sup> Natural capital is an economic metaphor that refers to the limited stocks of biophysical resources found on Earth, commonly used to refer to the socio-economic importance and value of nature in the context of green economy.

<sup>5</sup> COM/2011/571



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emphasises that the loss of biodiversity can weaken the resilience of ecosystems, compromising the delivery of ecosystem services and making them more vulnerable to environmental shocks. This can further hinder – or even jeopardise – the possibilities for sustainable development of Member States or regions.

Climate change mitigation and adaptation are also strategic objectives for the EU. By 2020, the EU has committed to cutting its emissions to 20% below 1990 levels. This commitment is one of the headline targets of the Europe 2020 Strategy. In parallel, the EU, together with the Member States, has been developing adaptation strategies to help strengthen Europe's resilience to the inevitable impacts of climate change. These ambitious goals have also been translated into an important financial commitment: 20% of the EU budget for the 2014 – 2020 period is dedicated to climate related measures. To achieve this aim, climate mitigation and adaptation actions will be mainstreamed into all major EU programmes, in particular cohesion policy, energy and transport, research and innovation and by greening the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). As discussed below in section 2.2, Natura 2000 sites have an important role to play in climate change mitigation and adaptation e.g. through habitat protection and restoration. These synergies should therefore be assessed and taken up in practice as much as possible.

The EU has also recognised the benefits provided by ecosystem services by proposing a new Green Infrastructure<sup>6</sup> Strategy<sup>7</sup> to promote the development of green infrastructure in both urban and rural areas of the EU, including through incentives to encourage up-front investments in green infrastructure projects and the maintenance of ecosystem services, for example through better targeted use of EU funding streams and public-private partnerships. The Natura 2000 network has a central role to play in development of EU green infrastructure as a reservoir of biodiversity that can be drawn upon to repopulate and revitalise degraded environments. On the other hand, green infrastructure can reduce the fragmentation of ecosystems and thus improve the connectivity between Natura 2000 sites, contributing to a more coherent ecological network and support the adaptation of biodiversity to climate change. The greater focus on green infrastructure may also offer new funding opportunities for Natura 2000 sites capable of delivering a range of ecosystem services and benefits to society.

<sup>6</sup> Green infrastructure can be defined as a strategically planned and delivered network of high quality green spaces and other environmental features which through ecosystem services provide multiple benefits to people and nature; <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/ecosystems/>  
<sup>7</sup> COM/2013/249

## 2.2 Socio-economic importance of Natura 2000

For most people biodiversity has an intrinsic value, and it can be argued that there is a strong moral obligation to ensure its conservation, and to commit the resources necessary to achieve this. This provides a strong rationale for funding the Natura 2000 network. However, a further rationale can be based on the benefits that Natura 2000 provides to society.

In addition to improving nature conservation efforts, the Natura 2000 network is also a core element of Europe-wide green infrastructure supporting human welfare and bringing considerable economic and social benefits. According to recent estimates the ecosystem services<sup>8</sup> provided by Natura 2000 and related socio-economic benefits can be valued as €200-300 billion per annum, amounting to around 1.7 – 2.5% of EU GDP and far exceeding the estimated costs for managing the network<sup>9</sup> (see section 2.3 below).

A summary of ecosystem services and related socio-economic benefits provided by the Natura 2000 network (both directly and indirectly) is provided below, with a systematic categorisation and more concrete examples included in Table 2.1. The examples clearly show that management of Natura 2000 is in line with the various broader EU objectives for 2020. It should be noted that ecosystem resilience, while considered to be one of the underlying benefits supported by the Natura 2000 network, is not included in the categorisation. This is because all measures supporting the management of Natura 2000 sites are considered to directly contribute to maintaining this benefit.

**Food security:** Natura 2000 sites support populations of species – both those for which they are designated and others – many of which are of high socio-economic importance, e.g. pollinating insects, game animals and fish. Furthermore, Natura 2000 sites can help to protect the genetic diversity of crops and husbandry ani-

mals. All these aspects are important contributors to food security at both local and regional level.

**Recreation and tourism:** Natura 2000 areas are known to provide a number of benefits related to recreation and tourism. In several cases Natura 2000 sites are also recognised as an important part of local cultural heritage and identity. Furthermore, as Natura 2000 sites provide a place for both physical exercise and relaxation they also play an important role in maintaining the physical and mental health of local populations.

**Public health:** Presence of green areas can improve life quality and reduce the number of public health problems. This is because such areas provide opportunities for outdoor recreation, and support air quality maintenance and noise control. Conserving and managing green areas close to population centres, including providing access to these areas, can therefore represent a cost-effective means of improving public health. This creates a rationale for using public funding also to manage Natura 2000 sites, especially to finance access infrastructure and visitor facilities.

**Education, research and innovation:** Natura 2000 creates a range of opportunities for environmental education, research and innovation. Well-developed programmes on Natura 2000 sites across Europe have proved effective in drawing school groups to on-site classroom facilities, site visits and outdoor learning opportunities. Natura 2000 sites also function as a 'living library of science' conserving knowledge for future generations and providing material for a range of innovations. As such they provide an ideal setting for promoting and increasing scientific understanding on ecosystem functioning, ecological interactions and provisioning of ecosystem services while also ensuring that traditional knowledge continues to be conveyed to future generations.

**Green infrastructure for risk management:** Natura 2000 sites, as part of broader green

<sup>8</sup> Building on ecosystems' natural processes and structures, the term ecosystem service refers to the aspects of an ecosystem that are of direct or indirect benefit to humans.

<sup>9</sup> ten Brink et al. (2011)

infrastructure, can perform a range of beneficial functions at comparatively low cost while at the same time maintaining their biodiversity values. For example, wetlands and sandy ridges can be important contributors to water security, retaining water quality through capturing excess nutrients and/or maintaining water quantity through groundwater renewal. Similarly, Natura 2000 sites (e.g. forested mountain areas, fire resistant vegetation patches) can help to protect against natural hazards such as wild fires, mudslides, avalanches and extensive erosion. In a number of cases, maintaining or restoring ecosystems' natural functions and/or structure can be used to complement and reduce the cost of operating conventional 'grey' infrastructure or even completely replace it.

**Climate change mitigation and adaptation:**

Natura 2000 sites are also an integral part of climate change mitigation providing significant benefits in terms of carbon storage (e.g. old growth forests, peat bogs) and sequestration (e.g. coastal marine habitats)<sup>10</sup>. Furthermore, the ability of Natura 2000 sites to protect against natural hazards makes them an integral part of nature-based strategies to adapt to climate change. There is also growing evidence that biodiversity confers greater overall resilience within ecosystems. Natura 2000 sites therefore not only supply ecosystem services but also provide ideal conditions for such services to be enhanced and sustained within broader landscapes over time, even in the face of environmental change and an increasing number of extreme events. Establishing links between Natura 2000 and climate change mitigation and adaptation is supported by the European Commission guidance document on how to deal with the impacts of climate change within the context of management of the Natura 2000 network.

It is also important to note that Natura 2000 sites provide and/or maintain ecosystem services that result in socio-economic benefits both within and outside their boundaries, thereby supporting sustainability and rural/regional development at landscape level. For example, Natura 2000 sites with fire resistant vegetation may limit the spread and intensity of

forest fires at broader local and regional levels. Alternatively, the site itself can support several recreational and tourism activities within its boundaries but it can also be essential in attracting tourism to the region at large. This is especially the case with 'flagship' national parks that are also part of the Natura 2000 network.

**Growth and jobs:** The Europe 2020 Strategy (see section 2.1 above) identifies jobs and growth as high priorities for the EU and aims to turn the EU into a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy delivering high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion. In addition to the direct benefits associated with different ecosystem services, Natura 2000 provides more general socio-economic benefits that arise from the ecological significance of the site but are not associated directly with a certain ecosystem service(s). Such broader benefits include direct and indirect employment supported by Natura 2000 sites, direct expenditure on the reserve benefiting local businesses, and spending created by Natura 2000 site employees and volunteers supporting the local economy.

Furthermore, Natura 2000 areas can provide a basis for a range of sustainable business opportunities, supporting structural adjustment and diversification of rural and regional economies. For example, nature-based tourism and recreation helps to create sustainable jobs, with clear positive impacts on the broader regional economy. Also, an increasing amount of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are being created around biodiversity-based innovations. Consequently, Natura 2000 sites can play an integral role in supporting employment and fostering rural and/or regional prosperity.

Implementing the Natura 2000 network therefore has an important role to play in job creation, both through the work required to restore and manage nature sites and by supporting the development of employment opportunities in rural areas. A recent report for the European Commission highlighted the opportunities and implications that delivering the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy will have for job creation and skills development, and estimated that by closing the current funding gap to allow full implementation of the Natura 2000 network, the EU could create an additional 122,000

<sup>10</sup> European Commission (2012a)

full time equivalent (FTE) jobs<sup>11</sup>. The report highlighted the role of a range of EU funding instruments – notably EAFRD, EFF, ESF and LIFE+ – in delivering the EU's biodiversity objectives in the labour market.

**Table 2.1**  
**Types of benefits**  
**provided Natura 2000**

This classification has also been used in the detailed analysis of the EU funds in Part II of the Handbook

<sup>11</sup> Jurado et al (2012)

Category	Description of benefits
Food security	Support for sustainable food production including organic farming, maintenance of soil fertility, maintenance of pollinators, maintenance of natural pest control etc. <b>Example:</b> A study of bee populations in 40 Natura 2000 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) in Ireland confirmed that management which prioritizes the maintenance of a diversity of high-quality habitats within a broad network of protected areas best facilitates bee conservation (Murray et al, 2012)
Water security	Purification of water, water storage (mitigation of droughts) etc.
Climate change mitigation	Carbon storage and sequestration <b>Example:</b> Natura 2000 sites store around 9.6 billion tonnes of carbon, equivalent to 35 billion tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> , which is estimated to be worth between €607 billion and €1,130 billion (stock value in 2010) (Ding, Nunes and Markandya in ten Brink et al, 2011)
Climate change adaptation	Prevention and mitigation of climate-induced natural hazards such as floods (see below), increased resilience of ecosystem processes in changing climate, using green areas as means to reduce the heat island effect etc.
Improved health	Improving the quality of environment (air quality, noise etc.), reduced occurrence of medical problems (physical and mental) <b>Example:</b> Examples from the EU show that accessible green space has the potential to provide a wide range of physical and mental health benefits, increasing our wellbeing, and reducing health care costs (BirdLife International, 2007). Obesity caused by physical inactivity is one of the biggest health risks in the EU, affecting over 200 million people, including three million children. An estimated 40% of the EU population are physically inactive, including 10–20% of children in some countries. Inactivity leads directly to serious conditions such as heart disease and type II diabetes. In the UK, inactivity costs over €11,700 million annually, and there is evidence that the greater the natural diversity of a site, the more likely people will be to visit it regularly and therefore maintain exercise regimes (Bird, 2004)
Protection against natural hazards	Prevention and mitigation of floods, landslides, avalanches etc. <b>Example:</b> A major coastal re-alignment project initiated in 2002 with the objective of restoring Natura 2000 salt marshes in Essex is estimated to provide approximately £500,000 (around €590,000) in benefits over the next twenty years through savings or new incomes on issues such as sea wall maintenance, water quality, flood defence, created ecotourism opportunities and waste water management (Russi et al, 2012)
Recreation and tourism	Creating opportunities for recreation and tourism <b>Example:</b> Visitor spending for the Natura 2000 network was estimated at €50 to €90 billion in 2006 for 1.2 to 2.2 billion visitor days per annum, which generated an additional income of between €50 and €85 billion (Bio Intelligence Service, 2011).
Support and/or diversification of sustainable rural livelihoods	Creating green, Natura 2000 related business opportunities (production of sustainable raw material such as biomass, tourism, recreation, markets for certified products etc.)
Employment	Creating jobs (site management and Natura 2000 related business opportunities) <b>Example:</b> Full time equivalent (FTE) jobs needed to maintain the Natura 2000 network have been estimated to annually amount to 6,728 with an overall average salary of €28,000 across the EU Member States (17 Member States, Gantioler et al, 2010). Tourism and recreation activities related to the Natura 2000 network have been estimated to support between 4.5 and 8 million FTE jobs (Bio Intelligence Service, 2011)
Cultural and natural heritage	Maintaining species and habitats with cultural significance (scenic views, iconic landscapes, culturally importance species etc.)
Education	Providing opportunities for environmental education <b>Example:</b> Educational visits to nature reserves can help improve pupils' confidence, self-esteem and learning skills, as well as greater knowledge of, and confidence in, the natural environment. Contact with nature is also associated with improved behaviour and self-discipline, enhanced emotional development, reduced crime and aggression, and improved community integration (BirdLife International, 2007)
Research and innovation	Providing opportunities for research and innovation (hosting potential species relevant for pharmaceutical industry etc.)

## 2.3 Investing in Natura 2000 in 2014-2020

### 2.3.1. Financing needs

Managing the Natura 2000 network, whether carried out with a view to reaching the objectives of EU nature legislation or delivering wider benefits, requires substantial investments. It has been estimated that the costs of managing the Natura 2000 network are in the range of €5.8 billion per year for the EU-27<sup>12</sup>. In general, around two thirds of these costs are related to the on-going management activities at existing sites with one third of the costs being linked with one-off investments such as infrastructure and land purchase.

While the main responsibility for financing Natura 2000 lies with the Member States, Article 8 of the Habitats Directive explicitly links the delivery of necessary conservation measures for Natura 2000 to EU co-financing. The EU Biodiversity Strategy reiterates this position and calls for better uptake and distribution of funding for biodiversity across all relevant EU funds. Such improved integration of Natura 2000 into available funding instruments is necessary to deliver on internal EU targets formulated in the biodiversity policy but also to meet international commitments to substantially increase financial resources for biodiversity (Target 20 of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, agreed in Nagoya)<sup>13</sup>.

It has been estimated that the financial allocations for Natura 2000 from the 2007-2013 EU budget were between €550 – 1,150 million per year<sup>14</sup>. These figures should be considered a rough approximation only – as the lack of dedicated Natura 2000 budget indicators makes it difficult to precisely calculate the EU contribution. However, these figures indicate that EU co-financing in the period 2007-2013 covered only 9-19% of the estimated financing needs of the network. This level of financing is obviously unsatisfactory and efforts should be made to improve the level of uptake in the next financing period.

A variety of measures, ranging from improved

integration of Natura 2000 into national and regional funding priorities to capacity building at local level (see Chapter 5), are required to address this challenge. At a national level, the PAFs developed to facilitate a more systematic use of different EU funds for Natura 2000 provide an opportunity to address the financing needs in a more structured way (see section 2.3.3 below).

### 2.3.2. Available financing instruments

Since 2007, most EU co-funding for the Natura 2000 network has been made available by integrating biodiversity goals into various existing EU funds or instruments. This integrated co-financing model continues to form the basis for EU funding for Natura 2000 in 2014-2020, supporting the strategic goals to further embed the implementation of the EU's biodiversity policy into other relevant policy sectors and their financing instruments and, at the practical level, linking biodiversity goals with the broader management of land and natural resources.

The EU funds available for financing Natura 2000 during period 2014-2020 include:

- European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD);
- European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF);
- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF);
- European Social Fund (ESF);
- Cohesion Fund;
- European financial instrument for the environment (LIFE); and
- Framework Programme for research and innovation (Horizon 2020).

It is important to note that under the integrated approach only LIFE provides dedicated support to biodiversity and Natura 2000; all other EU funding instruments are primarily targeted to deliver general EU goals: rural, regional, infrastructural, social and scientific development. While this usefully allows the integration of

<sup>12</sup> European Commission (2011), Gantioler et al (2010)

<sup>13</sup> CBD (2012)

<sup>14</sup> Kettunen et al (2011)

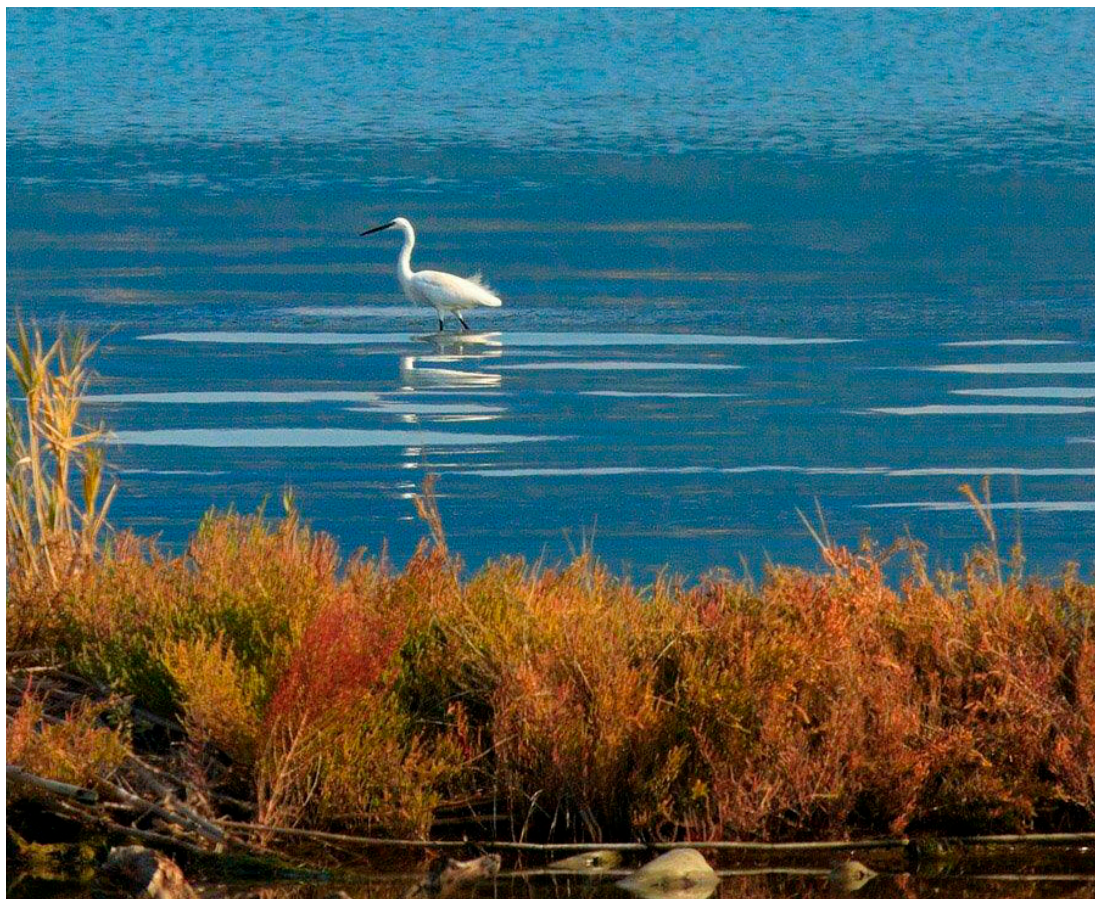
Natura 2000 into the broader rural and regional contexts, for example by aligning socio-economic benefits delivered by the sites with regional and local development goals, it also makes the availability of funding for Natura 2000 dependent on compliance with the overall objectives and rules of the given funding instruments.

Taking into account expected EU allocations for Natura 2000 as well as anticipated contributions from Member States' national or regional budgets it is highly unlikely that these resources will be able to fully cover the financial needs of Natura 2000. The use of innovative financing instruments such as PES, offset schemes, debt instruments or fiscal incentives can fill this gap in and provide essential additional support for management of the Natura 2000 network. The opportunities for a more innovative use of EU co-funding mechanisms is integrated into the analysis in Chapters 4 and Part II of the Handbook, whereas more detailed consideration on how broader innovative funding (e.g. a range of non-EU mechanisms) can complement EU funds is given in Chapter 6.

### 2.3.3. Prioritised Action Frameworks (PAFs) – a more strategic approach for financing Natura 2000

The rather moderate success of the integration approach to financing Natura 2000 in 2007-2013, which resulted in only approximately 9-19% of the financial needs of the network being covered, made it evident that more strategic planning is necessary to improve the uptake of funds for nature conservation. Consequently, to strengthen coordination and integration of financing for Natura 2000, the European Commission together with the Member States have agreed that in 2014-2020 financing of the network should be based on the PAFs developed for the first time by the Member States.

The development of the PAFs is based on the provisions of Article 8 of the Habitats Directive. The purpose of these documents is to establish a national or regional strategy for protection and management of Natura 2000 within the context of the relevant EU financial instruments. In other words, PAFs are planning tools aimed at identifying required Natura 2000 conserva-



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tion priorities and management measures as well as their related costs and potential financing sources, matching the former with the latter. By analysing investment needs and financial opportunities PAFs can therefore contribute to achievement of the favourable conservation status of the habitats and species protected by the network.

PAFs are therefore useful to identify funding opportunities provided from all relevant EU funds, in particular EAFRD, EMFF, ERDF, ESF and the Cohesion Fund as well as LIFE and Horizon 2020. Analysis of necessary national financing and potential use of innovative financing instruments should complement the examination of EU financing. With regard to the LIFE programme, it should be noted that the consistency with the PAFs is a precondition for applying for EU co-financing of an integrated project (see Chapter 4).

As an example, the following scenario for an integrated and complementary approach to financing Natura 2000 on a national or regional scale can be envisaged: the EAFRD could finance management of traditional rural landscapes, with possible links to tourism and recreation; the EMFF could focus on measures aimed at protecting and restoring marine biodiversity and ecosystems and the services they provide; the ERDF and/or the Cohesion Fund could finance restoration of wetlands, with possible links to creating green infrastructure for water purification and/or carbon storage; while the ESF could be used to cover the costs of acquiring

new skills and knowledge related to the socio-economic opportunities provided by Natura 2000 network and LIFE projects could then focus on management priorities that cannot be covered under any of the other EU funds.

It is to be noted, however, that the role of PAFs is not to make commitments for actual allocations under different funds but rather to provide the necessary information about investment needs and conservation priorities related to Natura 2000. Such allocations have to be committed in the national and regional programmes (see Chapter 4) which become the 'implementing tools' for PAFs. Undoubtedly, convincing justification and clear prioritisation of measures presented in PAFs can only facilitate securing funding opportunities for nature-oriented measures in the process of adoption of programmes.

The ultimate goal of the PAFs is therefore to ensure adequate allocations for Natura 2000 under different funds and related programmes. These allocations should be consistent with the priority measures identified in the PAFs and ideally allow comprehensive financing of Natura 2000. A dedicated checklist in the PAF toolkit (see section 1.7 above) has been developed to facilitate an assessment of the level of coverage of Natura 2000 investment needs from different financial instruments. The checklist can also be used to evaluate the correspondence between the priorities identified in the PAFs and those included in national and regional programmes, as well as any remaining gaps.

## Chapter 3 EU financing in 2014-2020

### 3.1 Multiannual financial framework (MFF)

EU's multiannual financial framework (MFF) for 2014-2020<sup>1</sup> sets out the EU spending priorities for the upcoming years. During the 2014-2020 period these priorities are geared to sustainable growth, jobs and competitiveness in line with the EU's Europe 2020 Strategy. In addition, the MFF lays down the maximum annual amounts which the EU may spend on different priorities over the funding period. The general purpose of the MFF is to provide a long-term framework for EU's financial programming and budgetary discipline.

In line with the Europe 2020 Strategy and in order to improve coordination and streamlining of the EU funds it was decided that five EU funds under shared management, i.e. ERDF, ESF and the Cohesion Fund, EAFRD and EMFF – collectively called 'European Structural and Investment Funds' (or the ESI Funds) – in the period 2014-2020 would be governed by a set of common rules and principles as laid down in the so called Common Provisions Regulation (CPR)<sup>2</sup> and set out by the 'Common Strategic Framework' (CSF).

The CPR outlines, among other things, requirements with regard to strategic planning and programming, including thematic objectives linked to Europe 2020. It also includes principles for forming partnerships (e.g. between the Commission and the Member States and in the Member States with social, economic and environmental partners), compliance requirements with applicable EU law and provisions related to sustainable development. The projects and measures financed from the ESI Funds in 2014-2020 must be in line with the overall thematic objectives. These objectives are structured along strategic EU priorities reflecting major socio-economic challenges such as the need to improve innovation and EU global competitiveness, adapt to changing demographics, and respond to major environmental and climate threats.

Thematic objectives (TOs) for the 2014-2020 period are outlined in Table 3.1 below. The table also identifies synergies between the general EU priorities, specific Natura 2000 objectives and related ecosystem services.

<sup>1</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/budget/mff/index\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/mff/index_en.cfm)

<sup>2</sup> COM/2011/615



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**Table 3.1**  
**EU thematic objectives for co-funding in 2014-2020**  
**with examples on how investing in management of**  
**Natura 2000 can support these objectives.**

These synergies are analysed in more detail in the measure-specific analyses in Part II of the Handbook.

EU thematic objective	Synergies between investment in Natura 2000 and thematic objective	Key socio-economic benefit(s) See Part II of the Handbook for detailed analysis
<b>Thematic objective 1:</b> Strengthening research, technological development and innovation	Well-managed Natura 2000 sites help to promote and increase the scientific understanding of ecosystems and can form a source for a range of nature-based innovations for bioeconomy (e.g. biotechnology, pharmaceuticals and sustainable nature-based solutions for natural resources management)	Research and innovation
<b>Thematic objective 2:</b> Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, information and communication technologies (ICT)	Establishing cooperation between ICT and Natura 2000 sites to develop solutions that can support, test and/or pilot innovative e-solutions (e.g. environmental monitoring such as citizen monitoring, environmental governance, public access to information etc.). When developed and tested, such solutions can help to improve the management of Natura 2000 sites	Research and innovation
<b>Thematic objective 3:</b> Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs, of the agricultural sector (for the EAFRD) and of the fishery and aquaculture sector (for the EMFF)	Implementing Natura 2000 management goals while creating direct opportunities for SMEs including, for example, recreation and tourism, marketing of products originating from Natura 2000 sites, enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs by providing nature-based solutions (e.g. cost-effective solutions for water purification), sustainable exploitation of raw material in line with site's conservation objectives (e.g. production of reed for construction or biomass)	Employment Support and/or diversification of sustainable rural livelihoods Recreation and tourism
<b>Thematic objective 4:</b> Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors [New highlight]	Utilising Natura 2000 areas to provide low-carbon solutions for different sectors, e.g. using nature-based solutions such as restoration of Natura 2000 peat lands to sequester carbon, managing Natura 2000 grassland areas to maintain/enhance soil carbon stocks	Climate change mitigation
<b>Thematic objective 5:</b> Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management	Utilising Natura 2000 areas to provide nature-based cost-effective solutions to address environmental risks, including risks related to increased extreme weather events: restoring natural vegetation in Natura 2000 areas to mitigate wild fire risks, restoring wetlands to support water security and flood control, managing sites to maintain healthy populations of pollinating species to support food security etc.	Climate change adaptation Protection against natural hazards Food security Water security Health benefits
<b>Thematic objective 6:</b> Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency (including through investment in Natura 2000)	Maintaining or restoring Natura 2000 sites' functions and/or structure can be an investment in green infrastructure (alternative to 'grey' infrastructure) including, for example, wetland restoration and conservation for water management and purification. Investing in conservation of natural features as an element of cultural heritage (e.g. parks, nature monuments etc.). In case of Natura 2000 sites located within urban and suburban areas, their improvement or upkeep provides multiple benefits for urban populations (recreation, cleaner air and water, flood protection etc.). Promoting resource efficiency through sustainable use and management of resources originating from Natura 2000 sites	Climate change adaptation Protection against natural hazards Food security Water security Health benefits Support and/or diversification of sustainable rural livelihoods Recreation and tourism Cultural and natural heritage

<b>Thematic objective 7:</b> Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures	Developing nature-friendly transport corridors with the help of planning, improved use of impact assessments and technological solutions (e.g. green bridges and underpasses). Developing vessels compatible with nature protection goals (for inland waterways). Improving methods for mitigating negative impacts of transport infrastructure on biodiversity based on mitigation hierarchy (e.g. habitat restoration). Modifying existing infrastructure to improve its biodiversity-friendliness (e.g. building artificial pathways for migrating fish)	Support and/or diversification of sustainable rural livelihoods
<b>Thematic objective 8:</b> Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility	Implementing Natura 2000 management goals while creating direct and indirect employment opportunities: opportunities related to managing activities on the sites (e.g. seasonal employment related to ongoing management), opportunities related to tourism, opportunities related to production of Natura 2000 -branded produce etc.	Employment Support and/or diversification of sustainable rural livelihoods
<b>Thematic objective 9:</b> Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination	Natura 2000 related employment opportunities (Thematic Objectives 3 and 8) directly help to combat poverty in rural areas. Natura 2000 sites as green spaces provide a wide range of physical and mental health benefits, enhancing public wellbeing and health while reducing health care costs. Engaging minority groups in Natura 2000 related activities can help to increase social inclusion	Support and/or diversification of sustainable rural livelihoods Health benefits Cultural and natural heritage Employment
<b>Thematic objective 10:</b> Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning	Natura 2000 sites provide an ideal destination for educational visits to enhance knowledge of children and youth on the natural environment. Natura 2000 related opportunities for employment and/or resource efficient solutions support lifelong learning within a range of economic sectors	Education Support and/or diversification of sustainable rural livelihoods
<b>Thematic objective 11:</b> Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration	Improving the capacity of authorities responsible for nature protection: resources for additional staff, physical assets (equipment, software), expertise (training) and technical assistance (e.g. twinning projects)	Support and/or diversification of sustainable rural livelihoods

**Note:** Thematic objectives that are most directly relevant for Natura 2000 are highlighted. However, it is also to be noted that the other thematic objectives can provide numerous indirect, synergy-based opportunities for financing Natura 2000. Thematic objectives 8-11 are mainly foreseen to be covered by ESF.

## 3.2 Management and implementation of EU funds

Funds governed by the CPR (i.e. the ESI Funds) in 2014-2020 continue to be managed by the Member States on the basis of programmes developed by Member States and approved by the Commission (i.e. shared management). Other EU funding instruments that may provide funding for Natura 2000, LIFE and Horizon 2020, on the other hand, are managed by the Commission. LIFE operates on the basis of Commission-led multiannual work programmes which set out the allocation of funds between priority areas and outline more concrete project topics under which Member State stakeholders may submit proposals. Funding under Horizon 2020 is based on annual calls for proposals from the Commission to which eligible organisations respond. In order to ensure synergies and com-

plementarity between the different funds, a number of links are foreseen between LIFE/Horizon 2020 and the ESI Funds. These include e.g. cooperation between LIFE integrated projects and programmes and the ESI Funds (see section 4.6 below).

Dedicated fund-specific regulations lay down detailed provisions concerning measures which may be supported by these funds in order to contribute to the investment priorities within the thematic objectives defined in the CPR. These regulations are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. In Part II of the Handbook these regulations are analysed in the context of their possible contribution to implementation of the 25 Natura 2000 specific measures.

Building on the CSF each Member State should prepare, in cooperation with its partners and in dialogue with the Commission, the Partnership Agreement (PA). This PA should translate the elements set out in the CSF into the Member State context and set out national commitments to achieve EU objectives, as well as modalities of their delivery through the programming of the ESI Funds. The PAs should set out general investment priorities for each Member State in alignment with the EU 2020 Strategy as well as the fund-specific objectives.

The ESI Funds are implemented through programmes. These programmes have to be in line with the PAs and should set out a strategy to meet the objectives of the EU 2020 Strategy. Each programme should define priorities setting out specific objectives, financial allocations of support from the ESI Funds and corresponding national co-financing. For each priority the OP should set out indicators and corresponding targets expressed in qualitative or quantitative terms, in accordance with fund-specific rules, to assess progress of programme implementation. These must include: (a) financial indicators relating to expenditure allocated; (b) output indicators relating to the operations supported; and (c) result indicators relating to the priority.

Result indicators, such as the number of species of habitats with improved conservation status or number of Natura 2000 management plans prepared, are more 'quality oriented' than simple output indicators (area covered by certain measures or units of infrastructure built etc.). Therefore, the former are often more appropriate for measuring the progress in reaching biodiversity targets. The same principle applies at the project level. It has to be recognised, however, that for certain 'soft measures' such as training, awareness rising, conflict resolution, output indicators (number of persons trained, publications prepared etc.) might be the only feasible solution. For further discussion on indicators please see also Chapter 5.

Article 8 of the CPR specifically requires Member States to ensure that environmental protection requirements, resource efficiency, climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity and ecosystem protection, disaster resilience and risk prevention and management are promoted in the preparation and implementation of the PAs and operational programmes. In addition the CPR requires that the ESI Funds should be programmed in coordination with the other financial instruments (including LIFE and Horizon 2020).

Given the limited resources in the EU budget and competition between different funding priorities, for nature projects to succeed at the stage of OP programming it is necessary firstly to appropriately justify their rationale and secondly to secure as many multiple benefits with other EU priorities as possible, in particular the overall objective of growth and jobs.

For all funds implemented under the CPR, the Commission has proposed (Art. 32-35 CPR) a common approach for community led local development (CLLD). CLLD provides bottom-up opportunities across all CPR funds (including and similar to EAFRD LEADER) that are based on local action strategies, aimed specifically at mobilising and involving local communities and organisations<sup>3</sup>. Local actors are responsible for developing their strategies and applying for funding in 2015. However, for CLLD to be eligible for EU co-financing Member States have to incorporate this measure in their PAs and OPs. CLLDs can be well-suited for incorporating biodiversity issues into local development and therefore form a way of funding the management of Natura 2000. A CLLD strategy for Natura 2000 could include, for example, sustainable management of one or more sites through late mowing or seasonal grazing, creating a cooperative to produce and market products originating from the site(s) (organic food, sustainable construction materials or biomass etc.), improving agri-tourism and/or offering education programmes.

<sup>3</sup> European Commission (2012c)

# Chapter 4 Descriptions of funds available for Natura 2000

## 4.1 European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development

Council Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of 17 December 2013 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)

### 4.1.1. Objectives

The EAFRD is foreseen to achieve the following objectives as set out in Article 4 of the Regulation:

- Fostering the competitiveness of agriculture;
- Ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources, and climate action; and
- Achieving a balanced territorial development of rural economies and communities including the creation and maintenance of employment.

The priorities of the EAFRD, in line with the overall EU thematic objectives (Table 3.1), are set out in Article 5 of the Regulation and outlined below.

Note: The most relevant priorities in the context of Natura 2000 are in bold.

1. Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas with a focus on a) innovation, cooperation, and the development of the knowledge base, b) strengthening the links between agriculture, food production and forestry and research and innovation, including for the purpose of improved environmental management and performance and c) fostering lifelong learning and vocational training in the agricultural and forestry sectors.
2. Enhancing farm viability and competitiveness of all types of agriculture in all regions and promoting innovative farm technologies and the sustainable management of forests, with a focus on a) improving the economic performance of all farms and facilitating farm restructuring and modernisation (e.g. increasing market participation and orientation, and agricultural diversification) and b) facilitating the entry of adequately skilled farmers into the agricultural sector and, in particular, generational renewal.
3. Promoting food chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture, with a focus on a) improving competitiveness of primary producers by better integrating them into the agri-food chain and b) supporting farm risk prevention and management.
4. **Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry, with a focus on a) biodiversity, including Natura 2000 areas, and in areas facing natural or other specific constraints, and high nature value farming, as well as the state of European landscapes, b) improving water management, including fertilisers and pesticides and c) preventing soil erosion and improving soil management.**



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5. **Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors, with a focus on a) efficiency in water use by agriculture, b) efficiency in energy use in agriculture and food processing, c) supply and use of renewable sources of energy, of by-products, wastes and residues and of other non food raw material, for the purposes of the bio-economy, d) reducing green house gas and ammonia emissions from agriculture and e) carbon conservation and sequestration in agriculture and forestry.**
6. Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas, with a focus on a) diversification, creation and development of small enterprises, as well as job creation, b) local development in rural areas and c) accessibility, use and quality of information and communication technologies (ICT) in rural areas.

#### 4.1.2. EAFRD programming and funding

The EAFRD will be implemented in the Member States through rural development programmes (RDPs). RDPs are required to build on an ex-ante evaluation of funding needs in specific countries and regions, and must address at least four of the six EAFRD priorities, which are all expected to contribute also to the cross-cutting objectives of innovation, environment and cli-

mate change mitigation and adaptation. Needs analysis will underpin the choice of programme objectives contributing to EU thematic priorities, budget allocations in relation to these objectives, and design of the packages of measures to deliver benefits for these objectives. Member States are free to choose any combination of EAFRD measures to deliver their chosen priorities, but among other requirements, the Regulation stipulates that RDPs need to demonstrate an appropriate approach towards the environment, including the specific needs of Natura 2000 areas (Article 8(c)(v) of EC Regulation 1305/2013).

Member States are required to reserve a minimum of 30 % of the total contribution from the EAFRD to each RDP for measures supporting investments related to the environment and climate, forest area development and improving the viability of forests; and for annual payments for agri-environment-climate, forest-environment and climate and forest conservation, organic farming, Natura 2000 farmland/forests and areas facing natural or other specific constraints (Article 59(6) of EC Regulation 1305/2013).

A Member State may develop either a single programme for its entire territory or a set of regional programmes. Member States with regional programmes may also develop a national framework containing common elements for these programmes without a separate budgetary allocation. Member States may include within their RDPs separate thematic sub-programmes to address specific needs identified at regional or sub-regional level (Article 7 and Annex IV of EC Regulation 1305/2013). These

thematic sub-programmes may focus, among other needs, on climate change mitigation and adaptation and biodiversity, small farms and mountain areas. Higher payment rates may be offered in the case of support for biodiversity, climate change mitigation and adaptation, small farms and young farmers within thematic sub-programmes. They may also address specific needs relating to the restructuring of agricultural sectors with a significant impact on the development of a specific rural area.

Regardless of the chosen structure of their RDP(s), it is highly important for Member States to develop integrated packages of measures under CAP pillar 1 (direct payments) and pillar 2 (EAFRD) to ensure economic viability of Natura 2000 farms, and then embed funding for specific Natura 2000 activities in these packages (see Box 4.1).

**Box 4.1**  
**Use of EAFRD in the**  
**context of broader**  
**CAP payments**

The CAP represents one of the most important potential sources of EU funding for the management of farmland in Natura 2000 sites. The two pillars of the CAP differ in terms of financing, functioning and structure. Pillar 2 offers a wide range of measures implemented through multi-annual Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) prepared by national or regional administrations. Pillar 1 provides direct payments to farmers (and also funds other measures such as market interventions and export refunds). The new legislation introduces significant changes that are relevant to support Natura 2000 farming from both pillars of the CAP.

From 2015 there will be some compulsory payments: a new Basic Payment Scheme (or continuation of the Single Area Payment Scheme), a 'greening' payment and an additional payment for young farmers. Member States can choose to offer two additional components of direct payments, to farmers in areas facing natural constraints, and coupled payments to environmentally, economically or socially important types of farming that are facing difficulties. As an alternative to all these payments a much simpler direct payment scheme can be set up specifically for small farmers.

The 'green payment' for agricultural practices beneficial to climate change and the environment comprises three measures with which most farmers entitled to pillar 1 direct payments must comply: maintenance of permanent grasslands, and (in relation to arable land) crop diversification and Ecological Focus Areas. At least 5 per cent of arable land eligible for direct payments is to be managed for ecological purposes, e.g. as landscape features, fallow lands, terraces and buffer strips. Farmers in Natura 2000 areas will only have to implement the greening practices that are compatible with Natura 2000 objectives. Member States (or regions) must allocate 30 per cent of their budget for pillar 1 direct payments to this new 'green payment'.

To protect permanent grasslands within Natura 2000 areas Member States must designate environmentally sensitive grasslands which need protection, including those on peat and wetlands. For farmers in these areas the 'greening' requirement is to not convert or plough the grassland. Member States can choose to apply similar designations and protection to other environmentally important grasslands outside Natura 2000 areas. The requirement at more general level is the maintenance of the ratio of permanent grassland to the total agricultural area (compared to a specified, earlier reference year) does not fall by more than 5 per cent.





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Member States can choose to apply this requirement nationally or regionally. They can also set this obligation at the level of individual farms.

Natura 2000 farming systems are often labour-intensive. Their economic viability is in many areas under threat due to difficult access to markets, product processing facilities, and economic pressures to abandon traditional methods or cease managing land entirely. Ensuring the stability of farm incomes, investing in farm infrastructure and farmers' capacity to manage land (and often livestock) appropriately is a high priority in Natura 2000 systems.

Integrated packages of measures from CAP pillar 1 and pillar 2 therefore should be carefully designed to support the viability and continuation of the relevant farming systems. Support to management practices for Natura 2000 habitats and for activities for Natura 2000 implementation should complement the package. In situations where only part of a farm is in Natura 2000, ensuring the viability of a whole farming system is usually essential for successful site management. For 2014-2020, the pillar 1 measures that could be used to support the economic viability of Natura 2000 farming systems include the basic payment scheme, and its associated green payment, the single area payment scheme, the young farmers scheme and (if Member States choose to use these), the small farmers' scheme, payments for areas with natural constraints, and coupled payments for specific sectors in difficulties (including those important for the environment). Rural development (EAFRD) measures to use for this purpose include Natura 2000 payments, payments for areas with natural constraints and organic farming, plus support for training, information and advice, farm and business development and investment in physical assets. It is also important to support Natura 2000 farmers in accessing markets, and in setting up producer groups and participating in quality schemes for agricultural products.

With underlying support for the Natura 2000 farming system in place, EAFRD measures for agri-environment-climate, forest-environmental conservation and related investments can support specific habitat and species management practices. Cooperation, innovation and local participation (LEADER) measures may help in delivering packages of integrated Natura 2000 support from both pillars of the CAP in the 2014-2020 period.

Many of the detailed rules under CAP regulations will be set out in delegated acts and implementing acts to be published later in 2014.

**Box 4.1**  
**Use of EAFRD in the**  
**context of broader**  
**CAP payments**

### 4.1.3 Opportunities for Natura 2000 under the EAFRD in 2014-2020

The EAFRD will continue to provide several opportunities to fund Natura 2000 during 2014-2020. Direct opportunities include, for example, financing a range of Natura 2000 activities in the context of agri-environment-climate and forest-environmental schemes, compensation payments for additional costs and income foregone resulting related to managing agricultural and forest land within Natura 2000 sites, improving knowledge on rural biodiversity, and drawing up Natura 2000 management plans. Furthermore, a great variety of more indirect opportunities are available, allowing the man-

agement of Natura 2000 to be linked with broader rural development efforts, such as promoting organic farming, improving risk management and enhancing business development. These indirect opportunities can provide, for example, support to carrying out certain activities identified in site-specific management plans such as supporting biodiversity-friendly organic farming and branding of local produce from Natura 2000 sites.

A summary of EAFRD articles relevant to Natura 2000 is provided in Table 4.1 below. A detailed analysis of how these articles could be used in the context of the 25 different Natura 2000 management measures is provided in Table 4.2 and Part II of the Handbook. Table 4.2 provides

#### Box 4.2 Schemes and approaches under the EAFRD relevant to Natura 2000

##### **LEADER**

In the financing period 2014-2020 the EAFRD will continue financing a special type of local rural development approach called LEADER which may be of particular relevance in Natura 2000 areas. The name LEADER comes from the French abbreviation for 'Liaison Entre Actions pour le Development de L'Economie Rurale' (which roughly translates to 'links between actions for developing the rural economy'). The LEADER approach is based on a number of elements including partnership, 'bottom-up' territorial development, innovation and cooperation.

LEADER initiatives are implemented by local area partnerships which bring together public, private and civil society sector organisations. LEADER partnerships are known as Local Action Groups (LAG). Each LAG has a Local Development Strategy (LDS) which contains a set of rural development actions and objectives that have been suggested by local communities in the LAG territory. This approach ensures that all LEADER actions are driven from the 'bottom-up'.

Innovation is another important part of the LEADER methodology. By promoting innovation, LAGs aim to encourage local organisations and businesses to test new ways of developing their territory. LEADER has been extremely effective at stimulating all sorts of different socio-economic and environmental innovations throughout rural Europe.

In past programming periods, many LEADER projects have shown clear benefits for Natura 2000. Its key benefit is in promoting cooperation between local actors and the development of integrated projects. Therefore, it is very suitable for areas with strategies that combine nature conservation and other land uses in a sustainable way such as enhancing the value of Natura 2000 sites, e.g. by ecotourism, marketing of sustainable regional products or establishing nature-based solutions for water and/or risk management. Examples of past LEADER projects and programmes and more information are available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rur/leaderplus/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rur/leaderplus/index_en.htm)

a helpful rapid assessment tool for quickly assessing the overall opportunities for financing different Natura 2000 related measures across EU funds. More detailed measure-specific analysis of the opportunities is provided in Part II of the Handbook, including dedicated examples of activities foreseen to be eligible for financing and related socio-economic benefits. In addition, two dedicated schemes/approaches relevant for Natura 2000 in the context of the EAFRD are outlined in Box 4.2. For concrete opportunities and measures interested readers should contact the relevant managing authorities and programmes in the respective country or region, for contacts see Chapter 7.

#### **EUROPEAN INNOVATION PARTNERSHIP (EIP)**

The EAFRD in the 2014-2020 period also includes a provision to support the implementation of a European Innovation Partnership (EIP) on Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability. The EIP aims at promoting resource efficiency, building bridges between research and practice and generally encouraging innovation. The partnership acts through operational groups responsible for innovative projects and is supported by a dedicated EIP network.

The objectives of the EIP include:

1. Promoting a resource efficient, economically viable, productive, competitive, low emission, climate friendly and resilient agricultural and forestry sector, working towards agro-ecological production systems and working in harmony with the essential natural resources on which farming and forestry depend;
2. Helping deliver a steady and sustainable supply of food, feed and biomaterials, including existing and new types;
3. Improving processes to preserve the environment, adapt to climate change and mitigate it; and
4. Building bridges between cutting-edge research knowledge and technology and farmers, forest managers, rural communities, businesses, NGOs and advisory services.

The cooperation measures proposed in the EAFRD for 2014-2020 could potentially play an important role in financing Natura 2000 and related EIP activities. The measures could be used to support partnerships between farmers, foresters, producers, other rural actors and researchers, for example, to co-develop closed and resource efficient local resource loops or local added value products linked to Natura 2000 management (e.g. short supply chains and local markets for wildlife-friendly products). The EIP support through the EAFRD could also be provided to pilot projects to test innovative agro-ecological approaches in Natura 2000 farming systems. To provide an incentive for land managers to apply as a group for agri-environment-climate schemes, Member States have the option of adding an extra 30 per cent to the payment calculation to cover the group's transaction costs.

#### **Box 4.2** **Schemes and approaches under the EAFRD relevant to Natura 2000**

**Table 4.1**  
**List of key articles in the EAFRD Regulation providing a legal base for investments and annual payments in Natura 2000**

**Note:** articles most directly relevant for Natura 2000 are highlighted.

Article	Scope of support	Relevant paragraph and/or examples of eligible measures*
Article 14	Knowledge transfer and information actions	Vocational training and skills acquisition actions, demonstration activities and information actions
Article 15	Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services	Support for the setting up and use of these services and to promote the training of advisors
Article 16	Quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs	Participation by farmers and groups of farmers in quality/value added product or certification schemes
Article 17	Investments in physical assets	(1)(d) Non-productive investments linked to the achievement of agri-environment-climate objectives, including biodiversity conservation status of species and habitat as well as enhancing the public amenity value of a Natura 2000 area or other high nature value systems to be defined in the programme
Article 18	Restoring agricultural production potential damaged by natural disasters and catastrophic events	(1)(a) Investments in preventive actions aimed at reducing the consequences of probable natural disasters
Article 19	Farm and business development	(1)(a) Business start-up aid (1)(b) Investments in creation and development of non-agricultural activities (1)(c) Small farm amalgamation
Article 20	Basic services and village renewal in rural areas	(1)(a) Drawing up and updating development plans including protection and management plans relating to Natura 2000 sites and other areas of high nature value (1)(d) Investments in basic rural services and infrastructure (1)(e) Investments in recreational infrastructure, tourist information and small scale tourism infrastructure (1)(f) Studies and investments associated with maintenance, restoration and upgrading of the cultural and natural heritage, rural landscapes and high nature value sites (1)(g) Investments targeting the relocation of activities and conversion of buildings or other facilities located within or close to rural settlements, with a view to improving the quality of life or increasing the environmental performance of the settlement
Article 21	Forest area development and improvement of the viability of forests	(1)(a) Afforestation and creation of woodland using species adapted to environmental and climatic conditions. This article should be read in conjunction with Article 22 which sets specific conditions for afforestation (1)(b) Establishment of agroforestry systems. This article should be read in conjunction with Article 23 (1)(c) Prevention and restoration of damage to forests from forest fires and natural disasters and catastrophic events. This article should be read in conjunction with Article 24 (1)(d) Investments improving the resilience and environmental value of forest ecosystems, e.g. climate change mitigation potential. This article should be read in conjunction with Article 25

Article	Scope of support	Relevant paragraph and/or examples of eligible measures*
Article 27	Setting up producer groups and organisations	Investments to facilitate the setting up of producer groups and organisations in the agriculture and forestry sectors for the purpose of market requirements, establishing common rules on production information, development of business and marketing skills and the organisation and facilitation of the innovation processes etc.
Article 28	Agri-environment-climate payments	Support granted annually per hectare to farmers or groups of farmers for agricultural practices that make a positive contribution to the environment and climate, including in Natura 2000
Article 29	Organic farming	Support granted annually per hectare to farmers or groups of farmers who undertake, on a voluntary basis, to convert to or maintain organic farming practices and methods
Article 30	Natura 2000 and Water Framework Directive payments	Support granted annually per hectare of agricultural area or per hectare of forest in order to compensate beneficiaries for additional costs and income foregone resulting from disadvantages in the Natura 2000 areas and in other delimited nature protection areas with environmental restrictions applicable to farming or forests which contribute to Article 10 of the Habitats Directive
Article 31	Payments to areas facing natural or other specific constraints	Support granted annually per hectare to farmers in mountain areas and other areas facing natural or other specific constraints granted annually per hectare of agricultural area in order to compensate farmers for the additional costs and income foregone related to the constraints. This article should be read in conjunction with Article 32
Article 34	Forest-environmental and climate services and forest conservation	Support granted annually per hectare of forest to public and private forest-holders who undertake, on a voluntary basis, to carry out operations consisting of one or more forest-environment and climate commitments
Article 35	Co-operation	For example joint approaches to environmental projects, on-going environmental practices and preservation of agricultural landscapes and also cooperation in the context of European Innovation Partnership (EIP)
Article 36	Risk management	(1)(a) Premiums for crop, animal and plant insurance against economic losses to farmers caused by adverse climatic events, animal or plant diseases, pest infestation, or an environmental incident. This article should be read in conjunction with Article 37
<b>Strategic / cross-cutting approaches under EAFRD</b>		
Articles 42-44	LEADER	Support for local action groups and LEADER start-up kits
Articles 51-55	Technical assistance and networking	Support to actions relating to the implementation of rural development programmes

\* Articles have been shortened for the purpose of this Handbook. For accessing the full text, please consult the EAFRD Regulation. When not the whole article is relevant for Natura 2000, reference to appropriate paragraphs have been provided.

**Table 4.2**  
**EAFRD rapid assessment table – identified opportunities**  
**for financing different Natura 2000 management**  
**measures (measures 1-25, see Chapter 1)**

**Note:** articles most directly relevant for Natura 2000 are highlighted.

<i>Natura 2000 management categories and measures eligible for funding</i>																									
<i>Article</i>	<i>Establishment</i>				<i>Management planning</i>							<i>Ongoing habitat management and monitoring</i>										<i>Investment</i>			
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>25</i>
Article 14			x																x		x				
Article 15			x																			x			
Article 16				x								x	x												
Article 17(1)(d)				x						x		x	x	x	x	x						x		x	
Article 18(1)(a)												x	x			x		x							
Article 19(1)(a-c)																									x
Article 20(1)(a)			x		x			x																	
Article 20(1)(d)										x											x				
Article 20(1)(e)												x								x	x	x			x
Article 20(1)(f)			x									x	x	x								x		x	
Article 20(1)(g)																									x
Article 21(1)(a) and Article 22												x	x												
Article 21(1)(b) and Article 23												x	x												
Article 21(1)(c) and Article 24												x	x						x						
Article 21(1)(d) and Article 25												x	x	x											
Article 27				x								x													
Article 28												x	x	x	x	x			x						
Article 29												x	x		x										
Article 30												x	x		x	x			x						
Article 31												x	x		x										
Article 34												x	x	x	x	x									
Article 35			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	
Article 36 and Article 37																									
<b>Strategic / crosscutting approaches under EAFRD</b>																									
Articles 42-44			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
Article 51 and Articles 52, 53 and 54																									
<i>See more:</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Part II, page</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>41</i>	<i>42</i>	<i>53</i>	<i>63</i>	<i>76</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>83</i>	<i>88</i>	<i>94</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>101</i>	<i>108</i>	<i>111</i>	<i>113</i>	<i>117</i>

**Note:** The link between the measure and identified relevant article can be either direct or indirect and the articles most relevant for Natura 2000 are highlighted. Detailed measure-specific analysis explaining the foreseen opportunities in more detail is provided in Part II of the Handbook.



## 4.2 European Maritime and Fisheries Fund

Council Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 of 15 May 2014 on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).

### 4.2.1. Objectives

The EMFF aims to contribute to the following objectives as set out in Article 5 of the Regulation:

1. Promoting competitive, environmentally sustainable, economically viable and socially responsible fisheries and aquaculture;
2. Fostering the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP);
3. Promoting a balanced and inclusive territorial development of fisheries and aquaculture areas; and
4. Fostering the development and implementation of the Union's Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) in a manner complementary to cohesion policy and to the CFP.

It is to be noted that the pursuit of these objectives shall not result in an increase in fishing capacity.

The priorities of the EMFF, in line with the overall EU thematic objectives (Table 3.1), are set out in Article 6 of the Regulation and outlined below.

Note: The most relevant priorities in the context of Natura 2000 are in bold.

1. **Promoting environmentally sustainable, resource-efficient, innovative, competitive and knowledge-based fisheries by pursuing the following specific objectives:** a) reducing the impact of fisheries on the marine environment, b) protection and restoration of aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems, c) ensuring of a balance between fishing capacity and available fishing opportunities, d) enhancing the competitiveness and viability

of fisheries enterprises and the safety and working conditions, e) provisioning of support to technological development and innovation (e.g. energy efficiency and knowledge transfer) and f) developing professional training, new professional skills and lifelong learning.

2. **Fostering environmentally sustainable, resource-efficient, innovative, competitive and knowledge based aquaculture by pursuing the following specific objectives** a) technological development, innovation and knowledge transfer, b) competitiveness and viability of aquaculture enterprises, including safety and working conditions, in particular of SMEs, **c) protection and restoration of aquatic biodiversity, enhancement of ecosystems related to aquaculture, and promotion of resource-efficient aquaculture**, d) promotion of aquaculture having a high level of environmental protection, and promotion of animal health and welfare and of public health and safety, and e) developing of professional training, new professional skills and lifelong learning.
3. Fostering the implementation of the CFP by pursuing the following specific objectives a) improving and supplying scientific knowledge and the collection and management of data, and b) provisioning support to monitoring, control and enforcement, thereby enhancing institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administration, without increasing the administrative burden.
4. Increasing employment and territorial cohesion by pursuing the following specific objective: the promotion of economic growth, social inclusion and job creation, and providing support to employability and labour mobility in coastal and inland communities which depend on fishing and aquaculture, including the diversification of activities within fisheries and into other sectors of maritime economy.



5. Fostering marketing and processing by pursuing the following specific objectives
  - a) improving of organisation for fishery and aquaculture products and b) encouraging investment in the processing and marketing sectors.
6. Fostering the implementation of the IMP.

40(f)). Such general support can also be used, for example, to contribute to maintaining and/or restoring the overall ecological connectivity of the Natura 2000 network. Finally, support is also provided for the uptake of aquaculture methods compatible with biodiversity conservation, including Natura 2000 management requirements (Article 54).

#### 4.2.2. EMFF programming and funding

The EMFF is implemented by Member States through national operational programmes (OPs) (Chapter 3). In contrast with the other ESI Funds, for the EMFF, each Member State draws up a single OP.

#### 4.2.3. Opportunities for Natura 2000 under EMFF in 2014-2020

The EMFF provides several opportunities to fund Natura 2000 in the framework of sustainable fishing activities during the 2014-2020 period. In general, the EMFF Regulation stipulates that where appropriate the specific needs of Natura 2000 areas and the contribution of the programme to the establishment of a coherent network of fish stock recovery areas should be integrated into the EMFF OPs (Article 18(c) of the Regulation). According to the Regulation, dedicated support in accordance with PAFs is provided for the management, restoration and monitoring of coastal and marine Natura 2000 sites (Article 40(e)). Support is also foreseen to be given to the preparation, including studies, drawing-up, monitoring and updating of protection and management plans for fishery-related activities relating to Natura 2000 sites (Article 40(d)). In addition, support is also made available for the management, restoration and monitoring of other marine protected areas (MPAs) to support the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) (Article

Furthermore, a variety of more indirect opportunities are available, allowing the management of Natura 2000 to be linked with the broader development of fisheries and/or viability of fishing communities. Such opportunities include, for example, the establishment of cooperation between scientists and fishermen, and the diversification of livelihoods in rural communities. While these indirect opportunities do not necessarily cater for all management measures relevant to a site, they can provide support for carrying out certain activities identified in site-specific management plans such as development of Natura 2000 monitoring in the context of broader schemes aimed at monitoring the marine environment.

A summary of EMFF articles relevant to Natura 2000 is provided in Table 4.3 below. A detailed analysis of how these articles could be used in the context of the 25 different Natura 2000 management measures is provided in Table 4.4 and Part II of the Handbook. Table 4.4 provides a helpful rapid assessment tool for quickly assessing the overall opportunities for financing different Natura 2000 related measures across EU funds. More detailed measure-specific analysis of the opportunities is provided in Part II of the Handbook, including dedicated examples of activities foreseen to be eligible for financing and related socio-economic benefits. For concrete opportunities and measures interested readers should contact the relevant managing authorities and programmes in the respective country or region, for contacts see Chapter 7.

**Table 4.3**  
**List of key articles in the EMFF Regulation providing a legal base for investments in Natura 2000**

**Note:** articles most directly relevant for Natura 2000 are highlighted.

Article	Scope of support	Relevant paragraph and/or examples of eligible measures*
Article 27	Advisory services	(1)(b) Provisioning professional advice on environmental sustainability, with a focus on limiting and, where possible, eliminating the negative impact of fishing activities on marine, terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems
Article 28	Partnerships between scientists and fishermen, with a view to transfer knowledge	(1)(a)(b) Creation of and activities carried out by a network composed by one or more independent scientific bodies and fishermen or one or more organisations of fishermen  (2) Activities may cover data collection and management activities, studies, pilot projects, dissemination of knowledge and research results, seminars and best practices
Article 29	Promotion of human capital, job creation and social dialogue	(1)(a) Professional training, lifelong learning, joint projects, the dissemination of knowledge of an economic, technical, regulatory or scientific nature and of innovative practices, and the acquisition of new professional skills, in particular linked to the sustainable management of marine ecosystems [...]
Article 30	Diversification and new forms of income	(1) Investments contributing to the diversification of the income of fishermen through the development of complementary activities, including investments on board, angling tourism, restaurants, environmental services related to fishing and educational activities concerning fishing
Article 33	Temporary cessation of fishing activities	Support for measures for temporary cessation of fishing activities in case of implementation of Commission measures or MS emergency measures or of conservation measures (as laid out in the CFP Regulation 1380/2013)
Article 36	Support for the system of allocation of fishing opportunities	Investments contributing to transferable fishing concessions in order to adapt fishing activities to fishing opportunities
Article 37	Design and implementation of conservation measures and regional cooperation	(1)(b) Stakeholder participation and cooperation between Member States in designing and implementing conservation measures and regionalisation
Article 38	Limitation of the impact of fishing on the marine environment and adaptation of fishing to the protection of species	(1)(a) Investment in equipment improving size selectivity or species selectivity of fishing gear  (1)(b) Investment in on board or in equipment that eliminates discards by avoiding and reducing unwanted catches of commercial stocks, or that deals with unwanted catches  (1)(c) Investment in equipment that limits and, where possible, eliminates the physical and biological impacts of fishing on ecosystem or sea bed  (1)(d) Investment in equipment that protects gear and catches from mammals and birds protected by Habitats and Birds Directives, provided that it does not undermine the selectivity of the fishing gear and that all appropriate measures are introduced to avoid physical damage to the predators
Article 39	Innovation linked to the conservation of marine biological resources	Support to operations aimed at developing or introducing new technical or organisational knowledge that reduces the impact of fishing activities on the environment, including improved fishing techniques and gear selectivity, or aimed at achieving a more sustainable use of marine biological resources and coexistence with protected predators
Article 40	Protection and restoration of marine biodiversity and ecosystems and compensation regimes	(1)(a) Collection of waste by fishermen from the sea such as the removal of lost fishing gear and marine litter  (1)(b) Construction, installation or modernisation of static or movable facilities intended to protect and enhance marine fauna and flora, including their scientific preparation and evaluation  (1)(c) better management or conservation of marine biological resources

Article	Scope of support	Relevant paragraph and/or examples of eligible measures*
Article 40		<p>(1)(d) preparation, including studies, drawing-up, monitoring and updating of protection and management plans for fishery-related activities relating to Natura 2000 sites and spatial protected areas under MSFD and relating to other special habitats</p> <p>(1)(e) Management, restoration and monitoring of Natura 2000 sites</p> <p>(1)(f) Support for management, restoration and monitoring of MPAs in view of the implementation of the spatial protection measures referred to in the MSFD</p> <p>(1)(g) increasing environmental awareness, involving fishermen, with regard to the protection and restoration of marine biodiversity</p> <p>(1)(h) schemes for compensation for damage to catches caused by mammals and birds protected by the Habitats and Birds Directives</p> <p>(1)(i) Participation in other actions aimed at maintaining and enhancing biodiversity and ecosystem services, such as the restoration of specific marine and coastal habitats in support of sustainable fish stocks, including their scientific preparation and evaluation</p>
Article 44	Inland fishing and inland aquatic fauna and flora	<p>(3) Support for the development and facilitation [...] for the advisory services in accordance with Article 27 and for partnerships between scientists and fishermen in accordance with Article 28</p> <p>(4) Diversification of inland fishing activities to complementary activities under the conditions laid down in Article 30</p> <p>(6)(a) Management, restoration and monitoring of Natura 2000 sites which are affected by fishing activities, and the rehabilitation of inland waters in accordance with the Water Framework Directive (e.g. spawning grounds and migration routes for migratory species), where relevant with the participation of inland fishermen</p> <p>(6)(b) Construction, modernisation or installation of static or movable facilities intended to protect and enhance aquatic fauna and flora, including their scientific preparation, monitoring and evaluation</p>
Article 47	Innovation	(1)(a) Technical, scientific or organisational knowledge in aquaculture farms which reduces the impact on the environment [...] fosters a sustainable use of resources in aquaculture, improves animal welfare or facilitates new sustainable production methods
Article 48	Productive investments in aquaculture	<p>(1)(d) Improvements and modernisation related to animal health and welfare, including the purchase of equipment aiming at protecting the farms from wild predators</p> <p>(1)(e) Investments in reducing the negative impact or enhancing the positive effects on the environment and increasing resource efficiency</p> <p>(1)(g) Restoration of existing aquaculture ponds or lagoons through the removal of silt, or investments aimed at the prevention of silt deposits</p> <p>(1)(h) Diversification of the income of aquaculture enterprises through the development of complementary activities outside aquaculture (i.e. aquaculture environmental services)</p> <p>(1)(i) Investments resulting in a substantial reduction in the impact of aquaculture enterprises on water usage and quality</p> <p>(1)(j) Promotion of closed aquaculture systems minimising water use</p>
Article 49	Management, relief and advisory services for aquaculture farms	(1)(b) Purchase of farm advisory services of a technical, scientific, legal, environmental or economic nature

Article	Scope of support	Relevant paragraph and/or examples of eligible measures*
Article 50	Promotion of human capital and networking	(1)(a) Professional training, lifelong learning, the dissemination of scientific and technical knowledge and innovative practices, the acquisition of new professional skills in aquaculture and with regard to the reduction of the environmental impact of aquaculture operations
Article 51	Increasing the potential of aquaculture sites	(1)(a) Identification and mapping of the most suitable areas for developing aquaculture [...] identification and mapping of areas where aquaculture should be excluded in order to maintain the role of such areas in the functioning of the ecosystem  (1)(b) Improvement and development of support facilities and infrastructures required to increase the potential of aquaculture sites and to reduce the negative environmental impact of aquaculture, including investments in land consolidation, energy supply or water management
Article 53	Eco-management and audit schemes and organic aquaculture	(1)(a) Conversion of conventional aquaculture production methods into organic aquaculture  (1)(b) Participation in the Union eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS)
Article 54	Aquaculture providing environmental services	(1)(a) Aquaculture methods compatible with specific environmental needs and subject to specific management requirements resulting from the designation of Natura 2000 areas  (1)(b) Participation in ex-situ conservation and reproduction of aquatic animals, within the framework of conservation and biodiversity restoration programmes  (1)(c) Aquaculture operations which include conservation and improvement of the environment and of biodiversity, and management of the landscape and traditional features of aquaculture zones
Article 63	Community-led local development strategies	Enhancing and capitalising on the environmental assets of the fisheries and aquaculture areas, including operations to mitigate climate change. Support for strengthening the role of fisheries communities in local development and the governance of local fisheries resources and maritime activities
Article 76	CFP control and enforcement	(2)(a) Purchase, installation and development of technology enabling the gathering, administration, validation, analysis, risk management, presentation and exchange of, and the development of sampling methods for, data related to fisheries [...]  (2)(b) Development, purchase and installation components ensure data transmission, including components used for control purposes  (2)(d) Implementation of programmes aiming at exchanging and analysing data between Member States  (2)(e) Modernisation and purchase of patrol vessels, aircrafts and helicopters, provided they are used for fisheries control for at least 60% of the time for fisheries control of use per year  (2)(g) Innovative control and monitoring systems and pilot projects related to fisheries control, including fish DNA analysis and websites related to control  (2)(h) Training and exchange programmes, including between Member States, of personnel responsible for monitoring, control and surveillance of fisheries activities  (2)(j) Enhancing awareness among fishermen and other players of the need to fight illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and on the implementation of the CFP rules

Article	Scope of support	Relevant paragraph and/or examples of eligible measures*
Article 77	Data collection	<p>(2)(a) Management and use of data for the purpose of scientific analysis and CFP implementation</p> <p>(2)(b) National, transnational and subnational multi-annual sampling programmes</p> <p>(2)(c) At-sea monitoring of commercial and recreational fisheries, including monitoring of by-catch of marine organisms such as marine mammals and birds</p> <p>(2)(d) Research surveys at sea</p> <p>(2)(f) Improvement of data collection and data management systems, including pilot studies</p>
Article 79	Integrated Maritime Policy	(1)(b) the promotion of the protection of the marine environment, in particular its biodiversity and MPA such as Natura 2000 sites, and the sustainable use of marine and coastal resources and the further definition of boundaries of the sustainability of human activities that have an impact on the marine environment
<b>Measures financed under direct management</b>		
Article 83	Support to Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP)	<p>(1)(a) Studies</p> <p>(1)(b) Projects</p> <p>(1)(c) Public information, publicity campaigns, stakeholder platforms, communications, to promote protection of the marine environment</p> <p>(1)(d) Conferences, seminars, fora and workshops</p> <p>(1)(e) Coordination activities, including information-sharing networks, and development support for sea-basin strategies</p> <p>(1)(f) Development operation and maintenance of IT systems</p> <p>(1)(g) Training projects</p> <p>(2)(b) Coordination and cooperation among Member States to develop maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management</p>
Article 86	Scientific advice and knowledge to accompany measures for CFP and IMP	<p>2(a) Studies and pilot projects needed for the implementation and development of the CFP, including on alternative types of sustainable fishing management techniques</p> <p>2(b) Support for the provision of scientific opinions and advice by scientific bodies and research institutions</p> <p>2(c) Participation of experts in meetings on fisheries scientific and technical issues</p> <p>2(e) Cooperation activities between Member States in the field of data collection, including various regional stakeholders and setting up regionalised databases</p>
Article 87	Control and enforcement to accompany measures for CFP and IMP	(2)(a) Support for purchase and/or chartering of patrol vessels, aircrafts and helicopters, provided they are used for fisheries control for at least 60 % of the total period of use per year
Article 91	Communication activities under the CFP and the IMP	(b) Support for travel and accommodation costs of stakeholder representatives invited by the Commission to meetings
Article 92	Technical assistance at the initiative of the Commission	(c) Support for technical assistance, the setting up of a European network of Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) aiming at capacity building, disseminating information, exchanging experience and best practice and supporting cooperation between local partnerships

\* Articles have been shortened for the purpose of this Handbook. For accessing the full text, please consult the EMFF Regulation. When the whole article is not relevant for Natura 2000, reference to appropriate paragraphs has been provided.

**Table 4.4**  
**EMFF rapid assessment table – identified opportunities for financing different Natura 2000 management measures (measures 1-25, see Chapter 1) with articles most directly relevant for Natura 2000 highlighted**

**Note:** articles most directly relevant for Natura 2000 are highlighted.

<i>Natura 2000 management categories and types of measures eligible for funding</i>																									
Article	<i>Establishment</i>				<i>Management planning</i>							<i>Ongoing habitat management and monitoring</i>								<i>Investment</i>					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Measures financed under shared management (i.e. Member State-led initiatives, co-funded by the EU budget)																									
Article 27															x										
Article 28		x		x											x			x							
Article 29(1)(a)																						x			
Article 30(1)										x													x		
Article 37(1)(b)							x																		
Article 38(1)(a-d)												x	x		x										
Article 39												x	x		x										
Article 40(1)(a)												x	x												
Article 40(1)(b)												x	x	x											
Article 40(1)(c)								x				x	x	x				x							
Article 40(1)(d)		x		x	x		x										x								
Article 40(1)(e)								x				x	x	x	x		x	x	x						
Article 40(1)(f)								x				x	x	x	x		x	x	x						
Article 40(1)(g)			x				x													x	x				
Article 40(1)(h)																x									
Article 40(1)(i)								x				x	x	x	x			x							
Article 44(3)		x		x											x		x								
Article 44(4)										x													x		
Article 44(6)(a)												x	x	x	x									x	
Article 44(6)(b)												x	x	x			x	x						x	
Article 47(1)(a)																						x			
Article 48(1)(e)												x	x	x	x										x
Article 48(1)(g)												x	x	x											x
Article 48.1(h)			x											x								x	x		
Article 48(1)(i-j)												x	x	x	x										x
Article 49(1)(b)															x										
Article 50(1)(a)																						x			
Article 51(1)(a-b)			x														x								x
Article 53(1)(a-b)												x	x	x		x									
Article 54(1)(a)												x	x	x	x	x									
Article 54(1)(b)													x	x											
Article 63							x																		
Article 76(2)(a)																						x			
Article 76(2)(b)																						x			

Article 76(2)(d)	x											x																
Article 76(2)(e)																												x
Article 76(2)(g)				x																								
Article 76(2)(h)																												x
Article 76(2)(j)																												x
Article 77(2)(a–d, f)	x																											x
Article 79	x	x	x	x	x																							x
Measures financed under direct management (i.e. Commission-led initiatives, fully covered by the EU budget)																												
Article 83(1)(a)(b)(f)(g)	x																											x
Article 83(1)(c)																												x
Article 83(1)(d)(e)																												
Article 83(2)(b)	x				x																							x
Article 86(2)(a)	x		x																									
Article 86(2)(b)(c)(e)	x																											x
Article 87(2)(a)																												x
Article 91(b)																												x
Article 92(c)					x																							
<i>See more:</i>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>			
<i>Part II, page</i>	6	7	12	15	22	25	27	32	36	37	41	45	56	65	77	81	83	89	94	97	102	108	111	112	117			

**Note:** The link between the measure and identified relevant article can be either direct or indirect and the articles most relevant for Natura 2000 are highlighted. Detailed measure-specific analysis explaining the foreseen opportunities in more detail is provided in Part II of the Handbook.

## 4.3 European Regional Development Fund

### 4.3.1. Objectives

Council Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 of 17 December 2013 on specific provisions concerning the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and on specific provisions concerning the investment for growth and jobs goal

Council Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 of 17 December 2013 on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation goal (section 4.3.4).

The scope of ERDF support is set out in Article 3 of the Regulation and it covers:

- Productive investment contributing to creating and safeguarding sustainable jobs, through direct aid to investment in SMEs;
- Productive investment related to research, technological development and innovation, enhancing access to / use and quality of ICT in cooperation between large enterprises and SMEs, and supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors;

- Investments in infrastructure providing basic services to citizens in the areas of energy, environment, transport, and ICT;
- Investment in social, health, research, innovation, business and educational infrastructure;
- Development of endogenous potential through fixed investment in equipment and small-scale infrastructure, including small-scale cultural and sustainable tourism infrastructure, services to enterprises, support to research and innovation bodies and investment in technology and applied research in enterprises; and
- Networking, cooperation and exchange of experience between competent regional, local, urban and other public authorities, economic and social partners and relevant bodies representing civil society, studies, preparatory actions and capacity-building.

The investment priorities of the ERDF, in line with the overall EU thematic objectives (Table 3.1), are set out in Article 5 of the regulation and outlined below.

**Note:** The most relevant priorities in the context of Natura 2000 are in bold.

1. Strengthening research, technological development and innovation including a) research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure and capacities and b) business R&I investment, and technological and applied (pilot) research;
2. Enhancing access to and use and quality of ICT including a) broadband deployment and high-speed networks, b) ICT products and services and c) ICT applications for e-government, e-learning, e-inclusion and e-health;
3. Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs including a) promoting entrepreneurship, b) developing and implementing new business models for SMEs, c) creation and extension of advanced capacities for product and service development and d) supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets, and to engage in innovation processes;
4. **Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors including a) renewable energy sources, b) energy efficiency and renewable energy use in enterprises, c) energy efficiency, smart energy**

- management and renewable energy use in public infrastructures and in the housing sector, d) smart distribution systems at low and medium voltage levels, **e) low-carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility and mitigation-relevant adaptation measures,** f) research and innovation in, and adoption of, low-carbon technologies and g) high-efficiency co-generation of heat and power based on useful heat demand;
5. **Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management, including a) supporting investment for adaptation to climate change, including ecosystem-based approaches and b) promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems;**
  6. **Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency including a-b) investment in the waste and water sectors, c) natural and cultural heritage, d) protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure, e) improving the urban environment, f) innovative technologies related to environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste and water sectors and with regard to soil, or to reduce air pollution and g) industrial transition towards a resource-efficient economy, promoting green growth, eco-innovation and environmental performance management in the public and private sectors;**
  7. Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures including a-b) investing in the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T), c) support to environment-friendly and low-carbon transport systems, d) investing in the railway system and e) improving energy efficiency and security of supply;
  8. Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility including a) business incubators and self-employment, micro-enterprises and busi-



ness creation, **b) employment-friendly growth**, c) local development initiatives and aid for structures providing neighbourhood services to create jobs and d) investing in infrastructure for employment services;

9. Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination including a) health and social infrastructure, b) physical, economic and social regeneration of deprived communities in urban and rural areas, c) support to social enterprises and d) investment in the context of community – led local development strategies;
10. Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning by developing education and training infrastructure; and
11. **Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration through actions to strengthen the institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administrations and public services related to the implementation of the ERDF, and in support of actions under the ESF to strengthen the institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administration.**

#### 4.3.2. ERDF programming and funding

ERDF projects are implemented in the Member States through OPs developed in accordance with the CPR (Chapter 3 above). In general, OPs will consist of priority axes, each axis corresponding to a CPR thematic objective and comprising one or more investment priorities related to the given objective (Article 96 of the CPR).

When an integrated approach between different OPs is required to deliver the set policy goals, a dedicated approach for integrated territorial investment (ITI) can be used to pool investments from ERDF, ESF and/or the Cohesion Fund. Actions carried out as an ITI may also be complemented with financial support from EAFRD or EMFF. Such investment needs have to be identified in the relevant OPs, e.g. setting out

the indicative financial allocation under different objectives (priority axis) of OPs. In practice, ITI will allow Member States to bundle funding from several priority axes of one or more OPs for the purposes of more cross-sectoral intervention. This means, for example, that Member States adopting the ITI approach can clearly choose to target funding towards integrated, multi-benefit projects such as an ecosystem-based approach for climate change mitigation and/or adaptation (thematic objectives 5 and 6).

The support available for EU Cohesion Policy (i.e. ERDF, ESF and Cohesion Fund) at Member State or regional level depends on the level of economic development (per capita GDP). For the period 2014-2020 three categories of regions have been identified: less developed regions (GDP per capita less than 75% of the average GDP of the EU-27), transition regions (GDP per capita between 75% and 90% of the average) and more developed regions (GDP per capita above 90% of the average).

In general, support from the ERDF will be concentrated on certain key thematic objectives: R&I, ICT, SMEs and promoting a low carbon economy. The regional allocations to these priorities depend on the category of regions as follows:

- **More developed regions:** at least 80% of the total ERDF resources at national level will be allocated to two or more of these thematic objectives and at least 20% of the total ERDF resources at national level will be allocated to the thematic objective on promoting a low carbon economy.
- **Transition regions:** at least 60% of the total ERDF resources will be allocated to two or more of these thematic objectives and at least 15% of the total ERDF resources will be allocated to promoting a low carbon economy.
- **Less developed regions:** at least 50% of the total ERDF resources will be allocated to two or more of these thematic objectives and at least 12% of the total ERDF resources will be allocated to promoting a low carbon economy.

### 4.3.3. Opportunities for Natura 2000 under ERDF in 2014-2020

The ERDF will provide several opportunities to fund Natura 2000 during the 2014-2020 period. Dedicated support is possible for the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem services, including Natura 2000. In addition, support is also made available for a range of activities supporting broader sustainable regional development, with possible indirect links to Natura 2000 management. Such indirect measures include, for example, supporting investment in the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change (e.g. nature-based solutions for carbon storage and sequestration, mitigating risks of climate change), protecting, promoting and developing cultural heritage (e.g. Natura 2000 sites) and integrating Natura 2000 related socio-economic opportunities into broader plans to regenerate deprived urban and rural communities.

A summary of ERDF articles relevant to Natura 2000 is provided in Table 4.5 below. A detailed analysis of how these articles could be used in the context of the 25 different Natura 2000 management measures is provided in Table 4.6 and Part II of the Handbook. Table 4.6 provides a helpful rapid assessment tool for quickly assessing the overall opportunities for financing different Natura 2000 related measures across EU funds. More detailed measure-specific analysis of the opportunities is provided in Part II of the Handbook, including dedicated examples of activities foreseen to be eligible for financing and related socio-economic benefits. For concrete opportunities and measures interested readers should contact the relevant managing authorities and programmes in the respective country or region, for contacts see Chapter 7.

**Table 4.5**  
List of key articles in the ERDF Regulation providing a legal base for investments in Natura 2000

**Note:** articles most directly relevant for Natura 2000 are highlighted.

Article	Scope of support	Relevant paragraph and/or examples of eligible measures*
Article 5.1	Strengthening research, technological development and innovation	(a) Enhancing research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure (b) Promoting business research and innovation investment in innovation and research, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development (R&D) centres and higher education including for eco-innovation
Article 5.2	Information and communication technologies (ICT)	(c) Strengthening ICT applications for e-government, e-learning, e-inclusion and e-health
Article 5.3	SME competitiveness	(a) and (c) Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms
Article 5.4	Low-carbon economy	(a) Promoting the production and distribution of energy derived from renewable sources (c) Supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructures and in the housing sector (e) Promoting low-carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility and mitigation-relevant adaptation measures.
Article 5.5	Climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management	(a) Supporting dedicated investment for adaptation to climate change, including ecosystem-based approaches (b) Promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems

Article	Scope of support	Relevant paragraph and/or examples of eligible measures*
Article 5.6	Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency	(a) Investment in the waste sector including (f) promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector
		(b) Investment in the water sector including (f) promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the water sector
		(c) Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage
		(d) Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure and (f) promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector, soil protection or to reduce air pollution
		(e) Action to improve the urban environment, e.g. regeneration of brownfield sites, reduction of air pollution and promotion of noise-reduction measures; also (f) promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency to reduce air pollution
Article 5.7	Sustainable transport	(c) Developing and improving environment-friendly and low-carbon transport systems to promote sustainable regional and local mobility
Article 5.8	Employment and labour mobility	(a) Development of business incubators and investment support for self-employment, micro-enterprises and business creation
		(b) Supporting employment-friendly growth through the development of endogenous potential as part of a territorial strategy for specific areas, including the conversion of declining industrial regions and enhancement of accessibility to, and development of, specific natural and cultural resources
		(c) Development of local development initiatives and aid for structures providing neighbourhood services to create new jobs, where such actions are outside the scope of ESF
Article 5.9	Social inclusion, combating poverty and discrimination	(a) Investing in health and social infrastructure which contribute to national, regional and local development, also through cultural and recreational services, including (d) through CLLD strategies
		(b) Support for physical, economic and social regeneration of deprived communities in urban and rural areas, including (d) through CLLD strategies
		(c) Support to social enterprises, including (d) through CLLD strategies
Article 5.10	Education, training and lifelong learning	Investing in education, skills and lifelong learning by developing education and training infrastructure
Article 5.11	Enhancing institutional capacity and efficiency of public authorities and stakeholders	Improving efficiency of public administrations and public services related to the implementation of the ERDF and ESF
<b>Specific horizontal provisions on the treatment of particular territorial features</b>		
Articles 7-9	Specific provisions for territorial features	Urban areas: The ERDF will support, within OPs, sustainable urban development through strategies that set out integrated actions to tackle the economic, environmental, climate, demographic and social challenges affecting urban areas (Article 7), including innovative actions in the area of sustainable urban development (e.g. studies and pilot projects to identify or test new solutions which address issues that are related to sustainable urban development and are of relevance at Union level) (Article 8)
Articles 10-12	Areas with special needs	Areas with natural or demographic handicaps: In the OPs co-financed by the ERDF, covering areas with severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps as defined in the CPR (e.g. mountainous areas and sparsely populated areas), particular attention will be paid to addressing the specific difficulties of those areas and co-financing rates may be modulated to take account of these constraints

\* Articles have been shortened for the purpose of this Handbook. For accessing the full text, please consult the EMFF Regulation. When the whole article is not relevant for Natura 2000, reference to appropriate paragraphs has been provided.

**Table 4.6**  
ERDF rapid assessment table – identified opportunities for financing different Natura 2000 management measures (measures 1-25, see Chapter 1) with Articles most directly relevant for Natura 2000 highlighted

**Note:** articles most directly relevant for Natura 2000 are highlighted.

Article	Natura 2000 management categories and types of activities eligible for funding																									
	Establishment				Management planning							Ongoing habitat management and monitoring											Investment			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
Article 5.1(a)		x		x							x			x				x							x	
Article 5.1(b)		x		x			x					x	x	x			x	x		x	x					
Article 5.2(c)				x			x	x		x				x			x	x		x	x	x				
Article 5.3(a)			x	x			x	x		x		x	x	x						x	x	x			x	
Article 5.4(a)				x			x	x				x		x				x				x				
Article 5.4(c)				x						x															x	
Article 5.4(e)				x	x		x	x				x		x			x	x		x	x		x			
Article 5.5(a)				x			x	x				x	x				x	x		x	x				x	
Article 5.5(b)				x			x	x				x	x	x			x	x		x	x	x			x	
Article 5.6(a) and (f)				x			x					x	x					x		x	x				x	
Article 5.6(b) and (f)				x			x					x	x	x			x	x		x	x				x	
Article 5.6(c)			x	x	x		x	x		x		x	x	x				x		x	x	x	x	x	x	
Article 5.6(d) and (f)		x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x	x			x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	
Article 5.6(e) and (f)		x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x	x			x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	
Article 5.7(c)				x						x		x	x	x								x			x	
Article 5.8(a)				x								x		x						x	x	x				
Article 5.8(b)				x	x					x		x		x				x		x	x	x			x	
Article 5.8(c)				x								x		x						x	x	x				
Article 5.9(a) and (d)			x	x				x		x		x		x			x	x		x	x	x			x	
Article 5.9(b) and (d)			x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x	x			x			x	x	x			x	
Article 5.9(c) and (d)			x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x	x				x		x	x	x			x	
Article 5.10			x	x			x			x		x	x									x	x			x
Article 5.11				x			x	x	x					x				x	x		x	x			x	
<b>Specific horizontal provisions on the treatment of particular territorial features</b>																										
Article 7 in conjunction with Articles 8 & 9		x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x	x			x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	
Articles 10, 11 and 12		x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x	x			x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	
<i>See more: Part II, page</i>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	
	6	9	12	16	23	25	28	33	36	38	41	48	59	69	79	82	85	90	95	97	103	109	111	114	117	

**Note:** The link between the measure and identified relevant article can be either direct or indirect and the articles most relevant for Natura 2000 are highlighted. Detailed measure-specific analysis explaining the foreseen opportunities in more detail is provided in Part II of the Handbook.

**Note:** Cross-border and transnational cooperation on sharing of human resources, facilities and infrastructures is possible in the context of all identified opportunities, as based on European Territorial Cooperation Regulation ((EU) No 1299/2013), see section 4.3.4 below.

#### 4.3.4 European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) under the ERDF

The European Territorial Cooperation is an integral part of the ERDF funding. It provides specific provisions for enhancing territorial cohesion by supporting joint actions and policy exchange between different Member States.

In the 2014–2020 funding period this cooperation will be focused on integrated territorial development and delivering the overall EU thematic objectives as set out for ERDF funding (Table 3.1) with specific focus on a) cross-border labour markets, gender equality and social inclusion, joint education and training schemes, and legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens and institutions, b) supporting transnational cooperation by development and coordination of macro-regional

and sea-basin strategies and c) supporting interregional cooperation by disseminating good practices, exchange of expertise and strengthening the evidence base.

All investment priorities of the ERDF are also available for territorial cooperation, with stronger emphasis on joint actions and sharing good practice and know-how. In addition, a range of ETC specific investment priorities are outlined in the regulation (see Box 4.3).

ETC programmes are implemented in the Member States through OPs developed in accordance with the CPR (Chapter 3 above). In general, OPs will consist of priority axes as under ERDF. The support available for ETC at Member State or regional level is comprised of three levels of programmes with different geographic scope. The territories covered by the pro-

##### Cross-border cooperation:

- (i) promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility by integrating cross-border labour markets, including cross-border mobility, joint local employment initiatives, information and advisory services and joint training;
- (ii) promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination by promoting gender equality, equal opportunities, and the integration of communities across borders;
- (iii) investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning by developing and implementing joint education, vocational training and training schemes;
- (iv) enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens and institutions.

Transnational cooperation: enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration by developing and coordinating macro-regional and sea-basin strategies;

Interregional cooperation: enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration by:

- (i) disseminating good practices and expertise and capitalising on the results of the exchange of experience in relation to sustainable urban development, including urban-rural linkages pursuant to point (3)(b) of Article 2.
- (ii) promoting the exchange of experience in order to reinforce the effectiveness of territorial cooperation programmes and actions as well as the use of EGTCs pursuant to point (3)(c) of Article 2;
- (iii) strengthening the evidence base in order to reinforce the effectiveness of cohesion policy and the achievement of the thematic objectives through the analysis of development trends pursuant to point (3)(d) of Article 2.

#### Box 4.3 Investment priorities for European Territorial Cooperation (ETC Article 7)

grammes are set out by the Commission by means of delegated act:

- Cross border programmes (INTERREG Va) cover neighbouring border regions on a smaller geographic level;
- Transnational cooperation programmes (INTERREG Vb) cover several regions and countries on a macro-regional level that are often linked by similar geographic features (e.g. Baltic sea, Alpine space, Danube Basin);
- One Interregional cooperation programme (INTERREG EUROPE) covers the whole territory of Europe.

At least 80 % of the ERDF allocation to each cross-border cooperation and transnational programme will be concentrated on a maximum of four of the EU thematic objectives (Table 3.1). Interreg Europe can, in principle, cover all EU objectives although it is anticipated that this programmes will also concentrate its support to certain thematic areas. The cross border, transnational and interregional programmes will receive 74.05%, 20.36% and 5.59% of the overall ETC allocations, respectively.

Cooperation in the context of the ETC is foreseen to be relevant for financing a range of cross-border and transnational initiatives on Natura 2000. In particular, it is foreseen that

ETC will provide an important means for funding Natura 2000 in the more developed regions of the EU that receive less ERDF funding overall than the less developed regions. Given the set objectives, the ETC could support capacity building and information sharing between authorities responsible for cross-border sites (e.g. financing joint promotion and development of Natura 2000 related job opportunities) or help to integrate Natura 2000 related opportunities and socio-economic benefits into macro-regional strategies for sustainable development. All these measures can be funded in the same way as under the ERDF, while bearing in mind the requirements for exchange of information and experience, territorial nature of measures and that at least two different Member States must be involved in projects.

A summary of articles relevant to Natura 2000 is provided in Table 4.5 above whereas Table 4.7 below outlines a number of additional investment priorities specific for ETC. A detailed analysis of how these articles could be used in the context of the 25 different Natura 2000 management measures is provided in Table 4.6 and Part II of the Handbook. For concrete opportunities and measures interested readers should contact the relevant managing authorities and programmes in the respective country or region, for contacts see Chapter 7.

**Table 4.7**  
**List of investment priorities specific for the ETC (additional to the ERDF above) Regulation providing a legal base for investments in Natura 2000**

**Note:** articles most directly relevant for Natura 2000 are highlighted.

Article	Scope of support	Relevant paragraph and/or examples of eligible measures*
Article 7	Cross-border cooperation	(a) ERDF shall support ERDF investment priorities (ERDF Article 5), as well as the following investment priorities within the thematic objectives indicated for each ETC component: cross-border cooperation for i) integrating cross-border labour markets, ii) promoting gender equality, equal opportunities, and the integration of communities across borders, iii) joint education, vocational training and training schemes and iv) legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens and institutions
Article 7	Transnational cooperation	(b) ERDF shall support [see above] : transnational cooperation for development and coordination of macro-regional and sea-basin strategies
Article 7	Interregional cooperation	(c) ERDF shall support [see above] : interregional cooperation for i) disseminating good practices, ii) exchange of expertise and iii) strengthening the evidence base

\* Articles have been shortened for the purpose of this Handbook. For accessing the full text, please consult the EMFF Regulation. When the whole article is not relevant for Natura 2000, reference to appropriate paragraphs has been provided.

## 4.4 European Social Fund

Council Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of 17 December 2013 on the European Social Fund (ESF)

### 4.4.1. Objectives

The mission of the ESF, as set out in Article 2 of the Regulation, is to promote high levels of employment and job quality, improve access to the labour market, support the geographical and occupational mobility of workers and facilitate their adaptation to industrial change and to changes in production systems needed for sustainable developments, encourage a high level of education and training for all and support the transition between education and employment for young people, combat poverty, enhance social inclusion, and promote gender equality, non-discrimination and equal opportunities, thereby contributing to the priorities of the Union as regards strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion.

The priorities of the ESF, in line with the overall EU thematic objectives (Table 3.1), are set out in Article 3 of the Regulation and outlined below.

1. Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility through a) access to employment, b) integration of young people, **c) self-employment, entrepreneurship and business creation**, d) equality, e) adaptation of workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs to change, f) active and healthy ageing and g) modernisation of labour market institutions;
2. Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty through a) active inclusion, b) integration of marginalised communities, c) combating discrimination, d) enhancing access to services, e) promoting the social economy and social enterprises and f) community-led local development strategies;
3. **Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and life-long learning** through a) good quality early-childhood, primary and secondary education, b) good quality and accessible tertiary

and equivalent education, c) lifelong learning and d) labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality; and

4. **Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration through a) investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services** and b) capacity building for stakeholders delivering education, lifelong learning, training and employment and social policies.

Through the investment priorities above, ESF will also contribute to the other EU thematic objectives (Table 3.1).

### 4.4.2. ESF programming and funding

ESF projects are implemented in the Member States through national and regional OPs developed within the CPR framework.

### 4.4.3. Opportunities for Natura 2000 under ESF in 2014-2020

The ESF could provide several opportunities to fund Natura 2000 during the 2014-2020 period. Most of the opportunities are not, however, Natura 2000 specific but rather support broader social and economic cohesion, with possible indirect links to Natura 2000 management. Such indirect opportunities include, for example, enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs dealing with Natura 2000 and enhancing Natura 2000 related institutional capacity and efficient public administration.

A summary of the ESF articles relevant to Natura 2000 is provided in Table 4.8 below. A detailed analysis of how these articles could be used in the context of the 25 different Natura 2000 management measures is provided in Ta-

**Note:** The most relevant priorities in the context of Natura 2000 are in bold.

ble 4.9 and Part II of the Handbook. Table 4.9 provides a helpful rapid assessment tool for quickly assessing the overall opportunities for financing different Natura 2000 related measures across EU funds. More detailed measure-

specific analysis of the opportunities is provided in Part II of the Handbook, including dedicated examples of activities foreseen to be eligible for financing and related socio-economic benefits.

**Table 4.8**  
List of key articles in the ESF Regulation providing a legal base for investments in Natura 2000

**Note:** articles most directly relevant for Natura 2000 are highlighted.

Article	Scope of support	Relevant paragraph and/or examples of eligible measures*
Article 3.1	Investment priorities related to TOs 8, 9, 10, 11 (see Table 3.1)	(a) Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility, e.g. access to employment through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility; self-employment, entrepreneurship and business creation; adaptation of workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs to change
		(b) Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination through, for example, active inclusion, integration of marginalised communities, promoting the social economy and social enterprises, and community-led local development strategies
		(c) Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning through, for example, enhancing access to lifelong learning, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce and increasing the labour market relevance of education and training systems
		(d) Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration through i) investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services and ii) capacity building for stakeholders delivering education, lifelong learning, training and employment and social policies
Article 3.2	Investment priorities related to the remaining TOs (see Table 3.1)	(a) Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon, climate-resilient, resource-efficient and environmentally sustainable economy, through the improvement of education and training systems necessary for the adaptation of skills and qualifications, the up-skilling of the labour force, and the creation of new jobs in sectors related to the environment and energy
		(b) Enhancing the accessibility of, and use and quality of, ITC through the development of digital literacy and e-learning, and investment in e-inclusion, e-skills and related entrepreneurial skills
		(c) Strengthening research, technological development and innovation through the development of post-graduate studies and entrepreneurial skills, the training of researchers, networking activities and partnerships between higher education institutions, research and technological centres and enterprises
		(d) Enhancing the competitiveness and long-term sustainability of SMEs, through promoting the adaptability of enterprises, managers and workers, increased investment in human capital, and support for bodies providing practice-oriented vocational education and training

\* Articles have been shortened for the purpose of this Handbook. For accessing the full text, please consult the EMFF Regulation. When the whole article is not relevant for Natura 2000, reference to appropriate paragraphs has been provided.



**Table 4.9**

**ESF rapid assessment table – identified opportunities for financing different Natura 2000 management measures (measures 1-25, see Chapter 1)**

**Note:** articles most directly relevant for Natura 2000 are highlighted.

Article	Natura 2000 management categories and types of measures eligible for funding																													
	Establishment				Management planning							Ongoing habitat management and monitoring										Investment								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25					
<b>Investment priorities</b>																														
Article 3.1(a)			x	x			x	x								x													x	
Article 3.1(b)			x	x			x	x	x							x	x	x		X	x				x	x				
Article 3.1(c)			x	x	x					x						x	x			X	x				x	x				
Article 3.1(d)			x	x	x	x	x	x								x	x	x		X	x				x	x				
<b>See more:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>					
<b>Part II, page</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>118</b>					

**Note:** The link between the measure and identified relevant article can be either direct or indirect and the articles most relevant for Natura 2000 are highlighted. Detailed measure-specific analysis explaining the foreseen opportunities in more detail is provided in Part II of the Handbook.

## 4.5 Cohesion Fund

Council Regulation (EU) No 1300/2013 of 17 December 2013 (Corrigendum) on the Cohesion Fund

### 4.5.1. Objectives

The scope of the Cohesion Fund support is set out in Article 2 of the Regulation as follows:

- Investment in the environment, including areas related to sustainable development and energy which present environmental benefits; and
- Trans-European networks (TEN-T) in compliance with the guidelines adopted by Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013.

The investment priorities of the Cohesion Fund, in line with the overall EU thematic objectives (Table 3.1), are set out in Article 4 of the Regulation and outlined below.

1. Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors through a) production and distribution of energy derived from renewable sources, b-c) energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in enterprises and, public infrastructures and housing sector

d) smart distribution systems at low and medium voltage levels, e) **low-carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multi-modal urban mobility and mitigation-relevant adaptation measures** and f) use of high-efficiency co-generation of heat and power based on useful heat demand;

2. **Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management through a) investment for adaptation to climate change including ecosystem-based approaches and b) investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems;**
3. **Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency through a-b) investment in the waste and water sectors, c) protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure and d) improving the urban environment, including regeneration of brownfield sites, reduction of air pollution and promoting noise-reduction measures;**

**Note:** The most relevant priorities in the context of Natura 2000 are in bold.

4. Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures through a) investing in TEN-T, b) support to environment-friendly and low-carbon transport systems and c) investing in developing and rehabilitating comprehensive, high quality and interoperable railway systems and promoting noise-reduction measures; and
5. Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration through actions to strengthen the institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administrations and public services related to the implementation of the Cohesion Fund.

#### 4.5.2. Cohesion Fund programming and funding

Cohesion Fund projects are implemented in the Member States through national OPs developed within the CPR framework (Chapter 3 above). OPs consist of priority axes, each axis corresponding to a CPR thematic objective and comprising one or more investment priorities related to the given objective. Given the similarities with ERDF programming and structure, joint OPs are commonly developed for ERDF and the Cohesion Fund.

Member States eligible for support from the Cohesion Fund are those whose gross national income (GNI) per capita, measured in purchasing power parities (PPP) and calculated on the basis of Union figures for the period 2008 to 2010, is less than 90% of the average GNI per capita of the EU-27 for the same reference period. The Member States eligible for funding from the Cohesion Fund in 2013, but whose nominal GNI per capita exceeds 90% of the average GNI per capita of the EU-27 will receive support from the Cohesion Fund on a transitional and specific basis (Article 90 of CPR). During 2014-2020 the countries eligible for financing from the Cohe-

sion Fund include the following Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Croatia, Cyprus (phasing out), Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia\*.

#### 4.5.3. Opportunities for Natura 2000 under the Cohesion Fund in 2014-2020

The Cohesion Fund (CF) will provide a number of opportunities to fund Natura 2000 during the 2014-2020 period. Dedicated support is provided for the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem services (e.g. in the context of green infrastructure). Support is also made available to a range of activities supporting investment in broader sustainable regional development, with possible links to Natura 2000 management. Such indirect measures include, for example, supporting investment in adaptation to climate change (e.g. nature-based solutions and integrating Natura 2000 related socio-economic opportunities into broader plans to regenerate deprived urban and rural communities).

A summary of articles relevant to Natura 2000 in the Cohesion Fund Regulation is provided in Table 4.10 below. A detailed analysis of how these articles could be used in the context of the 25 different Natura 2000 management measures is provided in Table 4.11 and Part II of the Handbook. Table 4.11 provides a helpful rapid assessment tool for quickly assessing the overall opportunities for financing different Natura 2000 related measures across EU funds. More detailed measure-specific analysis of the opportunities is provided in Part II of the Handbook, including dedicated examples of activities foreseen to be eligible for financing and related socio-economic benefits. For concrete opportunities and measures interested readers should contact the relevant managing authorities and programmes in the respective country or region, for contacts see Chapter 7.

\* [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/what/future/eligibility/index\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/what/future/eligibility/index_en.cfm)

**Table 4.10**

List of key articles in the CF Regulation providing a legal base for investments in Natura 2000

**Note:** articles most directly relevant for Natura 2000 are highlighted.

Article	Scope of support	Relevant paragraph and/or examples of eligible measures*
Article 4(a)	Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy	<p>(i) Promoting the production and distribution of energy derived from renewable sources</p> <p>(iii) Supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructure, including in public buildings, and in the housing sector</p> <p>(v) Promoting low-carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility and mitigation-relevant adaptation measures</p>
Article 4(b)	Climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management	<p>(i) Supporting dedicated investment for adaptation to climate change, including ecosystem-based approaches</p> <p>(ii) Promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems</p>
Article 4(c)	Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency	<p>(i) Investment in the waste 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</p> <p>(ii) Investment 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</p> <p>(iii) Protecting and restoring biodiversity, soil protection and restoration and promoting ecosystem services including through Natura 2000 and green infrastructures</p> <p>(iv) Improving the urban environment, including regeneration of brownfield sites, reduction of air pollution and promoting noise-reduction measures</p>
Article 4(d)	Sustainable transport	(ii) Developing environment-friendly and low-carbon transport systems to promote sustainable regional and local mobility
Article 4(e)	Institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders	Actions to strengthen the institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administrations and public services related to the implementation of the Cohesion Fund

\* Articles have been shortened for the purpose of this Handbook. For accessing the full text, please consult the EMFF Regulation. When the whole article is not relevant for Natura 2000, reference to appropriate paragraphs has been provided.



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**Table 4.11**  
Cohesion Fund rapid assessment table – identified opportunities for financing different Natura 2000 management measures (measures 1-25, see Chapter 1)

**Note:** articles most directly relevant for Natura 2000 are highlighted.

Article	Natura 2000 management categories and types of measures eligible for funding																								
	Establishment				Management planning							Ongoing habitat management and monitoring										Investment			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Article 4(a)(i)				x								x													
Article 4(a)(iii)				x						x															x
Article 4(a)(v)				x								x									x				x
Article 4(b)(i)				x			x	x				x	x	x			x	x		x	x	x			x
Article 4(b)(ii)				x								x		x			x	x			x				x
Article 4(c)(i)				x								x									x				x
Article 4(c)(ii)				x								x	x	x							x				x
Article 4(c)(iii)		x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x	x			x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Article 4(c)(iv)				x								x	x								x				x
Article 4(d)(ii)				x						x		x		x											
Article 4(e)				x																	x				
<i>See more: Part II, page</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	6	9	14	20	24	26	31	35	36	39	41	51	62	74	79	82	87	93	95	100	106	110	111	115	118

**Note:** The link between the measure and identified relevant article can be either direct or indirect and the articles most relevant for Natura 2000 are highlighted. Detailed measure-specific analysis explaining the foreseen opportunities in more detail is provided in Part II of the Handbook.

## 4.6 Programme for Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)

Council Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013 of 11 December 2013 on the establishment of a Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)

### 4.6.1. Objectives

The LIFE Programme has the following general objectives as outlined under Article 3 of the Regulation:

- To contribute to the shift towards a resource-efficient, low-carbon and climate-resilient economy, to the protection and improvement of the quality of the environment and to halting and reversing biodiversity loss, including the support of the Natura 2000 network and tackling the degradation of ecosystems;

- To improve the development, implementation and enforcement of Union environmental and climate policy and legislation, and to act as a catalyst for, and promote, the integration and mainstreaming of environmental and climate objectives into other Union policies and public and private sector practice, including by increasing public and private sector capacity;
- To support better environmental and climate governance at all levels, including better involvement of civil society, NGOs and local actors; and
- To support the implementation of the 7th Environment Action Programme.

Through the objectives above, the LIFE Programme will contribute to sustainable development and to the achievement of the objectives

**Note:** The LIFE Programme also allows certain non-EU countries (e.g. European Neighbourhood Policy – European Neighbourhood Instrument countries) to participate in the programme and it also allows for activities outside the EU (in exceptional cases and under specific conditions) (Articles 5 – 7 of the Regulation).

and targets of the Europe 2020 Strategy and of relevant Union environment and climate strategies and plans.

#### 4.6.2. LIFE programming and funding

During the 2014-2020 period the LIFE Programme will be divided into two sub-programmes: one for Environment and the other for Climate Action. The former will be further divided into three priority areas: Environment and Resource Efficiency, Nature and Biodiversity and Environmental Governance and Information. The priority areas for the latter include: Climate Change Mitigation, Climate Change Adaptation and Climate Governance and Information.

Around 75% of the total LIFE funding is allocated to the sub-programme for Environment, of which at least 55% of the resources dedicated to projects financed by way of action grants shall be allocated to support the conservation of nature and biodiversity. The remaining 25% of the funds is allocated to the sub-programme for Climate Action. Furthermore, at least 15% of the budgetary resources dedicated to projects is recommended (although not obliged) to be allocated to transnational projects.

LIFE Programme funding will be based on a flexible approach with the Commission in consultation with the Member States being responsible for developing multi-annual work programmes. The first programme will run for four years and the second programme for three years. The first programme maintains country specific allocations for distributing funding between Member States, however these allocation will be abolished during the implementation of the second programme. They will lay out the allocation of funds between different LIFE priority areas within each sub-programme, selection and award criteria for grants, and a list of project topics implementing the thematic priorities. The topics included in the work programmes will not be exhaustive in order to allow applicants to submit proposals in other areas and to incorporate new ideas and react to new challenges.

Within the framework of the multi-annual work programmes, the Commission publishes annual calls for project proposals. Member States receive and collect the individual proposals and put them forward to be considered by the Commission. Finally, the Commission decides which projects should receive funding from the annual LIFE budget. When selecting the projects pri-

In 2014-2020 the LIFE Programme includes a new type of project named Integrated Projects (IPs). IPs will operate on a large territorial scale (in particular regional, multiregional, national or transnational) and will be oriented towards the implementation of environmental and climate action plans or strategies required by environmental or climate legislation, pursuant to other Union acts or developed by the Member States' authorities. In practice, IPs will be implemented with a view to ensuring geographical balance at the EU level.

IPs for the sub-programme for Environment will primarily focus on the implementation of plans and programmes related to nature (including Natura 2000 management), water, waste and air quality. These IPs should also allow results to be achieved in other policy areas, such as the (Marine Strategy Framework Directive) MSFD. For the sub-programme for Climate Action, IPs should focus on the implementation of mitigation and adaptation strategies and action plans.

IPs will aim at mobilising other funding sources by exploiting synergies and ensuring consistency between funding from different sources (EU, national and/or private). They should provide examples of good practice for efficient and well-coordinated implementation of EU environmental and climate policy in Member States and regions. A maximum of 30 % of the budgetary resources allocated to action grants may be allocated to integrated projects.

#### Box 4.4 LIFE Integrated Projects (IPs)

ority is given to those which make the greatest contribution to EU-wide environmental objectives, including transnational projects. Based on the experience gathered in the implementation of the multi-annual work programme, the Commission will analyse whether a sufficient number of projects for a given area of action have been funded and, based on that, may make adjustments to the LIFE thematic priorities.

Action grants to finance projects responding to annual calls will continue to be the main tool for distributing financing under LIFE. Operating grants for non-profit-making entities which are primarily active in the area of environment or climate action are also possible. It should also be noted that the LIFE Programme allows the use of innovative financial instruments to complement the grant funding (See Chapter 6 below).

The LIFE Programme should be implemented in coordination with other EU funds, with an aim to establish synergies and avoid overlaps between different funds. At EU level, this coordination between the LIFE Programme and other funding programmes is established within the CPR.

#### 4.6.3. Key articles in the LIFE Regulation in relation to Natura 2000

The key articles in the LIFE Regulation in relation to Natura 2000 are Article 11 which sets out the specific objectives for the priority area Nature and Biodiversity and Articles 18, 19, 20 and 22, which set out the types of activities and eligibility criteria for projects to be funded under the Regulation.

According to Article 18, financing via action grants is available for: pilot projects, demonstration projects, best practice projects, integrated projects (IPs), technical assistance projects, capacity building projects, preparatory projects, information, awareness and dissemination projects, and any other projects needed for the purpose of achieving the LIFE Programme's objectives.

According to Article 19 projects financed under LIFE Programme shall satisfy the following criteria:

- Being of Union interest by making a significant contribution to the achievement of 1) one of the general objectives of the LIFE Programme as well as 2) the specific objectives for the relevant priority area, thematic priorities set out in the Regulation, or specific objectives for the priority areas;
- Ensuring a cost-effective approach and being technically and financially coherent; and
- Being sound in the proposed implementation.

According to Article 22 actions eligible for funding under LIFE as a whole\* may include:

- Information and communication, including awareness raising campaigns. Financial resources allocated to communication activities pursuant to this Regulation will also cover corporate communication regarding the political priorities of the Union, as well as regarding the implementation and transposition status of all major Union environmental and climate legislation;
- Studies, surveys, modelling and scenario building;
- Preparation, implementation, monitoring, checking and evaluation of projects, policies, programmes and legislation;
- Workshops, conferences and meetings;
- Networking and best-practice platforms; and
- Any other activities needed for the purpose of achieving the LIFE Programme objectives.

\* The list includes actions eligible for LIFE funding both within and beyond action grants, including actions taken by the European Commission to support the implementation of LIFE (evaluation of projects, policies, programmes and legislation etc.).

## 4.7 Horizon 2020 – The Framework Programme for Research and Innovation

Council Regulation (EU) No 1291/2013 of 11 December 2013 establishing Horizon 2020 – The Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020)

### 4.7.1. Objectives

Horizon 2020 sets out the Community framework, priorities and activities in the area of R&I for the period 2014-2020. The objectives of the programme are particularly aimed at supporting the delivery of the Europe 2020 Strategy. Horizon 2020 will contribute to building an economy based on knowledge and innovation across the whole Union by leveraging sufficient additional research, development and innovation funding.

Horizon 2020 will support transnational research in a range of priority areas. One of the priority areas responds directly to the policy priorities and societal challenges identified in the Europe 2020 Strategy and it includes the following areas of support:

- Health, demographic change and wellbeing;
- Food security, sustainable agriculture, marine and maritime research, and the bio-economy;
- Secure, clean and efficient energy;
- Smart, green and integrated transport;
- Climate action, environment, resource efficiency and raw materials;
- Europe in a changing world – Inclusive, innovative and reflective societies; and
- Secure societies – protecting the freedom and security of Europe and its citizens.

### 4.7.2. Horizon 2020 programming and funding

The EU co-funding to support R&I under Horizon 2020 will be based on a specific programme that sets out objectives and rules for the implementation of the fund. This general programme

will be implemented through Work Programmes established for each of the themes under Horizon 2020.

Work Programmes are biennial and based on a strategic orientation. The concrete project opportunities, including possible elements focusing on and/or relevant to managing the Natura 2000 network, are then defined by theme specific calls from the Commission – describing challenges, scope and expected impacts for each research topic – for which European R&I institutes and researchers then submit respective proposals. Calls will be published on the internet, with more information available through the Europa and Cordis websites.

Given the scope of Horizon 2020, all opportunities related to financing management activities on Natura 2000 sites need to take place in the research context. However, this allows for a wide range of Natura 2000 measures to be funded, mainly related to the development and testing of new management approaches and/or evaluation of the past Natura 2000 management regime.

A summary of articles relevant to Natura 2000 in the Horizon 2020 Regulation is provided in Table 4.12 below. A detailed analysis of how these articles could be used in the context of the 25 different Natura 2000 management measures is provided in Table 4.13 and Part II of the Handbook. Table 4.13 provides a helpful rapid assessment tool for quickly assessing the overall opportunities for financing different Natura 2000 related measures across EU funds. More detailed measure-specific analysis of the opportunities is provided in Part II of the Handbook, including dedicated examples of activities foreseen to be eligible for financing and related socio-economic benefits. For concrete opportunities and measures interested readers should contact the relevant managing authorities and programmes in the respective country or region, for contacts see Chapter 7.

**Table 4.12**  
List of key provisions in the Horizon 2020 Regulation  
providing a legal base for investments in Natura 2000

<i>Legal base</i>	<i>Scope of support</i>	<i>Examples of eligible measures</i>
Article 5.2 / Part III / Theme 5	Climate action, environment, resource efficiency and raw materials	a) fighting and adapting to climate change, b) protecting the environment, sustainably managing natural resources, water, biodiversity and ecosystems, c) ensuring the sustainable supply of non-energy and non-agricultural raw materials, d) enabling the transition towards a green economy through eco-innovation, e) developing comprehensive and sustained global environmental observation and information systems and f) cultural heritage
Article 5.2 / Part III / Theme 2	Food security, sustain- able agriculture and forestry, marine, maritime and inland water research, and the bioeconomy;	Securing supplies of safe, healthy and high quality food and other bio-based products, by developing productive, sustainable and resource-efficient primary production systems, fostering related ecosystem services and the recovery of biological diversity, alongside competitive and low-carbon supply, processing and marketing chains
Article 5.2 / Part III / Theme 4	Smart, green and integrated transport	Securing transport system that is safe, resource-efficient, climate- and environmentally-friendly



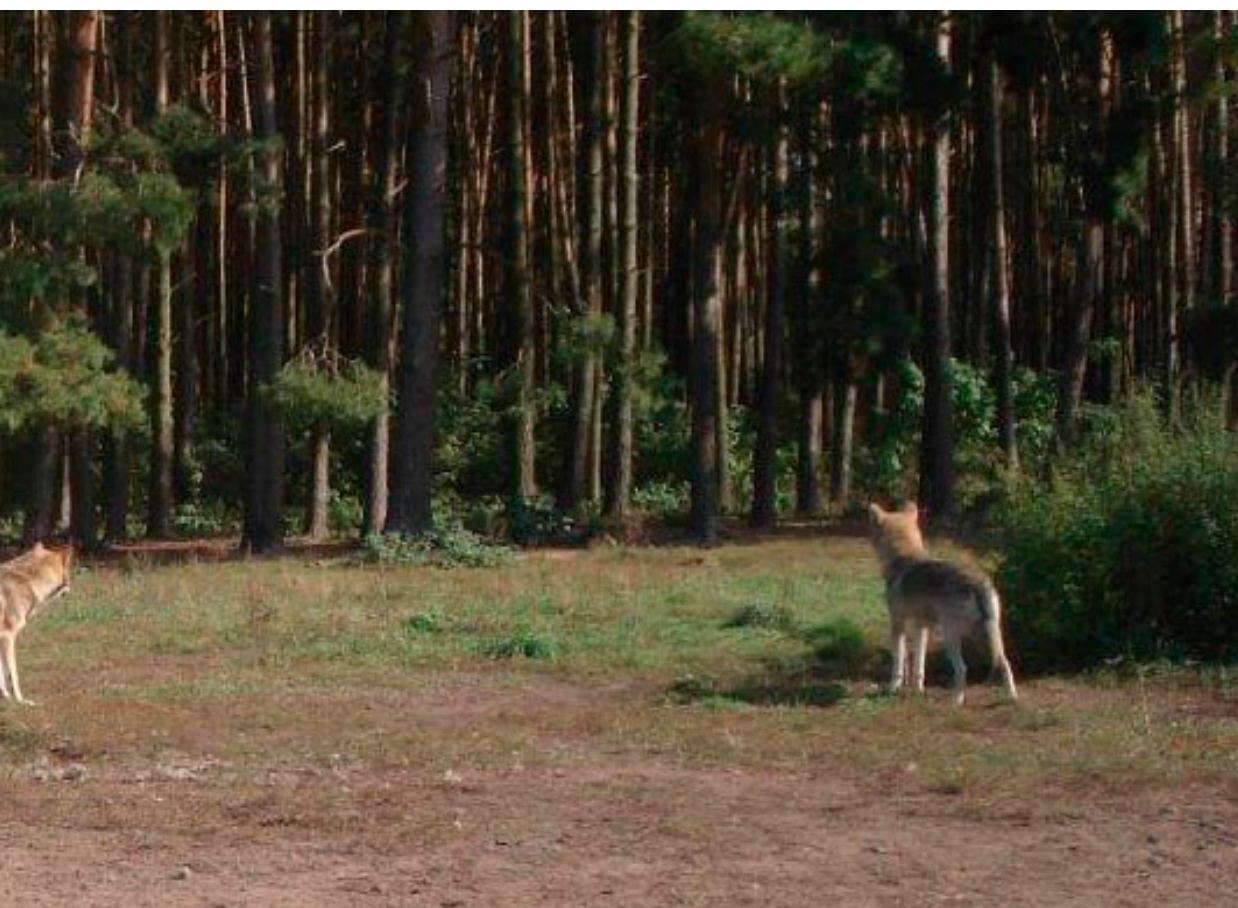


**Table 4.13**

Horizon 2020 rapid assessment table – identified opportunities for financing different Natura 2000 management measures (measures 1-25, see Chapter 3)

Article	Natura 2000 management categories and types of measures eligible for funding																								
	Establishment				Management planning							Ongoing habitat management and monitoring										Investment			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	23	25
Article 5.2 / Part III / Theme 5		x		x			x	x				x	x	x	x		x	x		x	x			x	
Article 5.2 / Part III / Theme 2		x		x			x	x				x	x	x	x		x	x		x	x			x	
Article 5.2 / Part III / Theme 4		x		x			x	x				x	x	x	x		x	x		x	x			x	
<i>See more:</i>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
<i>Part II, page</i>	6	10	14	21	24	26	31	35	36	40	41	52	62	75	79	82	87	93	95	100	107	110	111	116	119

**Note:** The link between the measure and identified relevant article can be either direct or indirect and the articles most relevant for Natura 2000 are highlighted. Detailed measure-specific analysis explaining the foreseen opportunities in more detail is provided in Part II of the Handbook.



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## Chapter 5 Integration in practice

As shown in Chapter 4 and Part II of the Handbook, the EU funds for 2014-2020 provide a range of opportunities for financing Natura 2000. However, these opportunities will only be realised if taken up by different authorities and stakeholders at the national, regional and local level.

The analysis of the 2007-2013 funding period shows that the financing opportunities provided by different funds have not been taken up fully<sup>1</sup>. Many reasons have contributed to this situation, but the main overarching causes of low uptake of funds have probably been the insufficient appreciation of nature among decision-makers and managing authorities, and the lack of understanding of how biodiversity protection contributes to the overall objectives of economic growth, regional development, job creation and quality of life.

For the majority of EU funding instruments, the allocation of funds between different national and regional priorities is primarily decided by the Member States. Member States' decision-makers and administrations have a tendency to focus on the investment priorities which have the highest importance at national and regional level (such as transport infrastructure, energy installations or support for SMEs). Since the Natura 2000 network is often regarded as a secondary priority for funding, competition with other investment priorities has often meant that investments in nature protection are sidelined.

Slow progress in site designation and delays in the establishment and adoption of management plans for Natura 2000 have also contributed to slow progress in financing site-specific conservation measures. Insufficient consultation of environmental authorities in the process of programme development has resulted in the lack of proper consideration of biodiversity in the programmes.

The lack of capacity and know-how among conservation organisations and authorities for accessing EU funds has often hampered the use of existing opportunities. High administrative burdens and difficulties in securing co-financing have dissuaded many potential beneficiaries, particularly small and/or non-governmental organisations, from applying for EU funds. Finally, limited expertise or insufficient appreciation of nature in the project selection committees have also contributed to the low uptake of funds.

Further dedicated efforts are therefore needed to ensure better integration of Natura 2000 into the EU funding instruments in the coming years. Recently developed PAFs – if appropriately and effectively used – can serve as a suitable basis for enhancing the process.

The section below discusses key issues that were identified to hinder the integration of Natura 2000 into EU funds in the 2007-2013 period and proposes ways of addressing them in the context of the 2014-2020 period.

<sup>1</sup> Kettunen et al. (2011)



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## 5.1 Improving integration of Natura 2000 into operational programmes (OPs)

The majority of EU funds support environmental priorities through their integration into sectoral policies such as agriculture, marine, fisheries and cohesion. This approach offers certain benefits but also poses challenges and limitations. The benefits of this approach include: possibility of accessing major EU funding streams, requirement for the managing authorities to integrate biodiversity into the programme development process, possibility for developing multi-purpose and multi-sectoral projects, and uniform rules for project applications, eligibility of costs and project implementation. The challenges and limitations include: competition with other policy priorities which can risk the side-lining of biodiversity concerns, the need to align biodiversity investments with the fund-specific overarching priorities (such as regional development, growth and jobs, rural development or sustainable management of fish stocks), the requirement to develop programmes in such a way as to ensure clear and measurable results, and project application and selection processes which are more suited to major infrastructure developments rather than biodiversity conservation (indicators, level of co-financing, administrative burden etc.).

As explained in the previous chapters, the EU financing framework provides ample possibilities for investing in nature and natural capital. However, due to the fact that fund-specific regulations provide only an option – rather than create an obligation – to use different funds for

Natura 2000, it is for the Member States and stakeholders to ensure that the available opportunities are taken up. The EAFRD is a noticeable exception in this respect as it requires the Member States to spend a minimum of 30 per cent of the total EAFRD contribution to each RDP on climate and environmental issues (see section 4.1.2).

Available information from the 2007-2013 funding period suggests that better integration of biodiversity into the programmes requires closer cooperation between different authorities. The experience shows that authorities responsible for Natura 2000 are often not sufficiently consulted or involved in drawing up programmes and in deciding on the allocation of money from different funds.

To address this problem, in the EU MFF for 2014-2020, specific emphasis is placed on the need to ensure partnership and consultation. The CPR specifically requires that for each funding programme Member States should organise a partnership with the representatives of competent regional, local and other public authorities, and other relevant bodies representing civil society, including environmental and non-governmental organisations. There is therefore a requirement to improve participation of public, as well as non-governmental, stakeholders in the development of the programme, to strengthen their ability to implement biodiversity conservation through EU funding.

There is also a need for greater coordination between measures financed from different funds (e.g. EAFRD and ERDF). Such cooperation helps to improve synergies, avoid duplications and improves chances of long-term sustainability of projects. Clear demarcation between different programmes in terms of targeted conservation priorities, management measures and beneficiaries also helps all the interested parties to ensure full coverage of Natura 2000 related management needs while avoiding duplication of efforts. PAFs should provide the road maps for setting up the appropriate architecture of national programmes.

Setting clear objectives for biodiversity investment, in line with EU and national biodiversity strategies and the fund-specific objectives, helps to underpin funding for biodiversity and for the Natura 2000 network. Ideally these objectives should reflect national or regional conservation priorities. Measures should target those habitats and species which are in the direct need of active conservation and/or which – in addition of their conservation values – also support the maintenance of important ecosystem services. They should also address the most important pressures which threaten biodiversity. For these reason ‘simple’ objectives, such as maximising the area covered by measures or maximising the number of beneficiaries, may not always be the most suitable approach. PAFs should serve as reference documents for the selection of conservation priorities in the programmes.

Biodiversity objectives should be complemented by dedicated indicators which help to monitor programme implementation. Detailed indicators could measure different aspects of the biodiversity investments, such as financial aspects, outputs and results, to help evaluate their success. Financial indicators gauge how much financial resource has been allocated, contracted and spent on relevant activities, both in terms of absolute outlay and percentage of the overall programme budget. Output indicators measure the quantity of goods and services delivered in exchange for allocated resources (e.g. number of hectares under active management measures, number of prepared management plans, and number of training activities or information campaigns organised). Result indicators, on the other

hand, show progress towards the ultimate objectives of the programme and/or policy (e.g. hectares of habitat or number of species with improved conservation status, hectares of restored habitats which in addition to their conservation values deliver important ecosystem services, or percentage of population with better understanding and appreciation of biodiversity and Natura 2000).

Result indicators are considered to be the most appropriate tools for measuring the progress in reaching biodiversity targets. This is because they can capture change in the quality of environment rather than just quantity of measures. They are also the most compelling in terms of proving evidence for value for money. However, result indicators are also the most problematic to develop, since biodiversity conservation is very complex, prone to many pressures and often characterised by long response times<sup>2</sup>. In many cases measurable positive impacts on biodiversity may not be seen until several years after a project has been completed. For measures such as information and communication activities and training, the result indicators also pose a number of challenges. Ideally they should capture the behavioural change in a given population or improved quality of biodiversity related products or services (e.g. better quality of impact assessments carried out by authorities). However, the measurement of such trends is challenging and costly and may require contract work by special agencies or companies.

Developing appropriate result indicators also requires good knowledge of the baseline situation. Important preparatory work may therefore be necessary, such as habitat mapping, ecosystem assessment, preparation of databases and opinion polls. Such actions can be co-financed by the EU. It should, however, be pointed out that many Member States and regions have already carried out substantial preparatory work (also to a large extent co-financed by the EU). Therefore, site-specific measures and indicators measuring their success should, as much as possible, be based on existing knowledge. Project indicators should also be in line

<sup>2</sup> The lag in time between the measures being taken and evidence of a positive change in the environment.



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with programme indicators, and should be able to be aggregated so that progress towards achieving the objectives of the programme can be measured.

Ensuring maximum uptake also requires that a wide range of relevant stakeholders have access to and are actively involved in project development and implementation (see below). The programmes should therefore allow sufficiently wide categories of potential beneficiaries to submit and implement projects. Chapter 1 (Table 1.1) indicates the categories of stakeholders that should be considered as potential beneficiaries.

In case of 'green' investment priorities which do not directly target nature and biodiversity (e.g. ecosystem-based water management), it would be important to link these priorities to indirect and/or secondary benefits to Natura 2000. In the selection process, projects offering such multiple benefits should be prioritised.

Making use of opportunities for funding also depends on the capacity of national and regional authorities to effectively manage the programmes (including publication of calls for proposals, ensuring co-financing and certification of expenditure). Technical assistance including knowledge sharing, study trips and twinning projects is available to different branches of administration through dedicated programmes or

dedicated thematic objectives (TO11) within cross-sectoral programmes.

**Quick tips for successful integration of Natura 2000 in the operational programmes:**

- Make the legal, political and economic case for investing in Natura 2000;
- Align biodiversity priorities with the priorities of specific funds and policies;
- Adapt programme priorities to conservation needs;
- Use PAFs as a tool to coordinate funding at national level and to ensure that all Natura 2000 management requirements are catered for;
- Use increasing evidence on the socio-economic benefits of biodiversity and ecosystem services to enhance arguments in support of conservation;
- Look for synergies and multi-benefit approaches with other sectoral policy goals such as climate change mitigation and adaptation, resource efficiency and green infrastructure;
- Provide clear and usable biodiversity indicators to be included in the programme indicators, to measure progress and success of the programmes;
- Secure complementarity between different funds; and
- Improve cooperation between different authorities and participation of stakeholders in the development of the programmes.

## 5.2 Improving integration of Natura 2000 into project development and management

In the case of project-based instruments (i.e. operating on the basis of calls for proposals or indicative project lists), the possibility of using EU funds for managing Natura 2000 will be conditional upon ensuring the opportunities in the relevant programmes, and upon the capacity of individuals and organisations to develop concrete projects that both fit the overall requirements of different funds and appeal to decision-makers. For example, in the case of projects carried out under the Cohesion Policy, there is a need to link different Natura 2000 management activities with the economic and societal context and to demonstrate the broader socio-economic benefits achieved. In the context of LIFE funding, there is a need to show elements of innovation and value added at the EU level. Consequently, obtaining EU funding often requires a cross-sectoral analysis and a wider horizontal perspective.

The uptake of EU financing depends also on the capacity of beneficiaries to effectively spend the funds. For some funds, especially those administered centrally by the European Commission, the resources needed to obtain funds might pose important challenges to prospective beneficiaries. For example, developing full proposals for LIFE or Horizon 2020 takes a significant amount of time and resources, going beyond the capacity of individual organisations. Building partnerships with institutions with more administrative capacity can help to lessen or at least share the administrative burden.

In addition, EU funding often requires the establishment of partnerships with a range of stakeholders, some of whom are not traditionally and/or commonly involved in conservation actions. For example, utilising opportunities related to the development of environment-oriented businesses (such as nature tourism, Natura 2000-branded products or innovations related to biotechnology) requires cooperation with SMEs and/or research institutes. Similarly, establishing links between Natura 2000 and water management and/or risk mitigation (for example restoring wetlands for biodiversity, water quality and flood control) has to rely on coop-

eration with water management companies and flood control authorities. Furthermore, funds like the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund tend to finance large scale projects, requiring wide partnerships at regional level. Consequently, building partnerships and ensuring that all relevant partners are eligible as beneficiaries is integral to the successful uptake of EU funds at the project level.

As discussed in the previous section, it is also crucial to develop dedicated biodiversity indicators for assessing the success of projects. These indicators should be practical and measurable. They need to be consistent with the programme indicators, to enable them to demonstrate how the project is contributing to the objectives of a programme.

Project award criteria reflecting conservation needs should be further developed. Elements to be considered in the award process should be: innovation, ensuring best value for money, delivering multiple benefits, creating partnerships, supporting long-term sustainability, and building on previous work. However, experience shows that it is better not to set excessive and unworkable criteria for project selection. For example, requiring compliance of projects with Natura 2000 management plans might become a barrier if such plans do not yet exist. The programme selection committees should include biodiversity experts who would be able to properly assess projects from a biodiversity point of view. In case of investment priorities which do not target directly nature and biodiversity but which offer important secondary benefits for Natura 2000 (e.g. ecosystem based water management), the establishment of explicit biodiversity criteria and/or dedicated biodiversity related objectives for project calls and selection phases could facilitate the uptake of funding for Natura 2000.

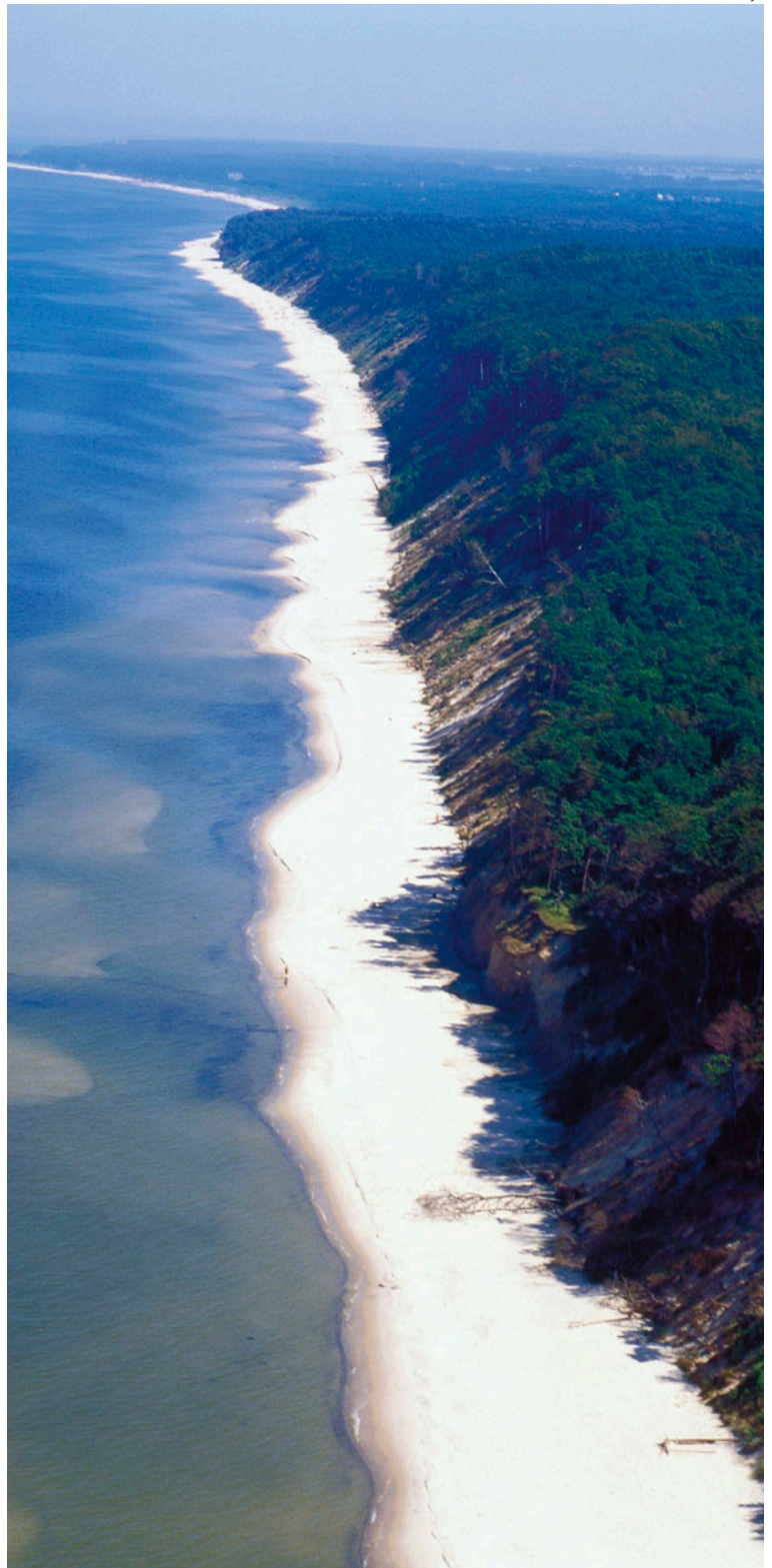
Difficulty in ensuring match funding for EU co-funded projects has often been quoted as a limiting factor for developing biodiversity related projects, particularly by small and/or non-governmental organisations. This is a complex is-

sue since availability of matching funds might be related to the general economic situation of a Member State or region. However, using the right arguments regarding the contribution of a project to overall development of a region and/or Member State and emphasising multiple benefits can ease this process. Matching EU co-financing with innovative financial instruments (Chapter 6) might also offer a way forward.

**Quick tips for successful integration of Natura 2000 in project development and management:**

- Set appropriate criteria for project selection: choose clear conservation objectives for biodiversity-oriented projects and include biodiversity conservation in the award criteria for projects which do not target biodiversity as their primary objective;
- Develop dedicated biodiversity indicators for assessing outputs of projects;
- Provide guidance and support to stakeholders interested in accessing EU funds, including support for building partnerships at local and regional level;
- Use increasing evidence on the socio-economic benefits of biodiversity and ecosystem services – including benefits of protected areas – to enhance arguments for financing conservation projects. Provide dedicated administrative support to beneficiaries to help them place their projects in a broader socio-economic context.
- Use evidence on the socio-economic benefits of biodiversity and ecosystem services and synergies between biodiversity and other policy objectives (sustainable agriculture, water supply, health, tourism etc.) to attract co-funding from different sources;
- Facilitate access to funding for stakeholders from a range of funding sources and explore more innovative funding opportunities, including increasing private sector involvement in co-financing;
- Ensure cooperation and coordination related to project development at national and/or regional level by establishing permanent or ad-hoc structures that are responsible, amongst other things, for information sharing or networking between relevant stakeholders and administrations; and
- Use and share best practice examples.

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# Guidance for complementing EU funds with innovative financing

## Chapter 6

To date the majority of funding for the Natura 2000 network has come from the public sector (national budgets and EU funds). Most co-funding for Natura 2000 sites from Member States also comes from public (national or regional) nature conservation budgets. This comes as no surprise since Natura 2000 sites deliver important ecosystem services for society as a whole, both for current and future generations. However, the ability of sites to deliver a range of public benefits should encourage Member States to consider the potential to use a wider selection of public funding sources to enhance their management e.g. economic development, public health, climate and education budgets as well as those for water management, flood control and coastal protection.

Where Natura 2000 sites provide benefits to private individuals or companies, this offers potential for private sector funding, through new funding mechanisms and market creation. Opportunities for private sector funding may occur through a range of mechanisms such as the development of product markets, corporate

sponsorship, biodiversity offsets, visitor pay-back schemes and PES.

These new opportunities may arise from motivations that are largely philanthropic (e.g. donations) or profit driven (e.g. product markets, payments for ecosystem services), or a combination of the two (e.g. corporate funding or voluntary offsets designed to enhance corporate reputation). They may also be driven by regulatory developments, such as mandatory biodiversity offsetting requirements. Environmental NGOs also have an important role to play in the funding of many Natura 2000 sites, particularly those that they own and manage themselves. The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that a range of innovative financing approaches can be applied to the Natura 2000 network, which potentially include new sources of funds and new types of market instruments, as well as more innovative applications of existing funding mechanisms. The multiple benefits of the Natura 2000 network, and the actions to implement it, provide the key to identifying and exploiting these opportunities.

### 6.1 Assessing the opportunities for innovative finance

The importance of Natura 2000 in the delivery of public goods provides a strong argument in favour of continued public sector funding of the network. Indeed, markets do not capture all of the benefits that the network delivers and therefore cannot be the only source of financing. However, bearing in mind the gap in financing of Natura 2000 and potential for innovative

instruments to fill this gap, these new instruments should be used to a larger extent.

The key to the better use of innovative funding mechanisms for Natura 2000 is to understand the range and socio-economic value of benefits and services the network provides, to identify potential sellers and buyers for these services





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(among the private, public or non-governmental sectors) and to develop payment mechanisms that match potential buyers of these services with potential sellers taking into account market barriers and limitations for such transactions.

The ecosystem services provided by Natura 2000 can be divided into two groups:

- Public benefits: e.g. enhancing air quality, landscape, climate and our cultural heritage, which benefit the public as a whole, and display public good characteristics of non-excludability and non-rivalry; and
- Private benefits (both for businesses and individuals): e.g. tourism and recreation potential (e.g. for SMEs operating on a site), improved marketing possibilities due to geographical Natura 2000 origin (e.g. local or organic products), purification of water (where it benefits a water company or individual users) and flood management (where this benefits specific interests rather than wider communities).

Appropriate identification of services (benefits) and potential buyers (users) is necessary for any further analysis of suitable financing instruments. Some of these instruments are already well established. They include, for example, user fees, farm tenancy agreements and marketing of food, timber and other products of ecosystems. There are also opportunities for new, more innovative, market-based financial instruments such as targeted PES schemes, carbon credits, product labelling and marketing initiatives, and the sale of licences for rights to natural resources.

It can also be noted that the public benefits flowing from Natura 2000 may contribute to meeting the objectives of different other public policies (e.g. health, water management, food security). Therefore the use of other public funding sources, as well as nature conservation budgets, can be justified to finance delivery of these benefits. Potential funding sources can include cohesion, rural development, fisheries management, food security, education and health budgets.

Table 6.1 presents a typology of the different approaches and instruments that can be used to co-fund actions for Natura 2000 sites from non-EU sources. These instruments range from more traditional funding methods such as direct public expenditures from Member States' budgets and grants, to more innovative approaches such as biodiversity offsets and participation in carbon markets.

A series of questions can help to identify and appraise options for innovative financing approaches (Box 6.1).

**Table 6.1**  
**Overview of the different non-EU co-funding mechanisms for Natura 2000 and the scope for innovative approaches**

Type of Instrument	Applications	Scope for innovation	Key criteria/success factors	Applicability potential	Examples
<b>Direct public funding from Member State budgets</b>	Direct funding of the Natura 2000 sites by Member State (national, regional and local authorities) and NGOs. Applicable to both capital and management funding.	Public budgets not directly related to nature conservation could be used to finance win-win Natura 2000 projects – e.g. climate, public health, education, economic development. One of the possibilities for more innovative and effective mechanism of financing Natura 2000 from public funds could be partnerships between the public sector and private sector / NGOs.	Ability to demonstrate multiple benefits of projects including for Natura 2000.	<b>High</b> – public funding will remain a key source of financing. The challenge will be to secure ‘best value for money’ and ensure cross-sectoral benefits.	Widely used. Check webpages of nature agencies for calls for proposals or other application conditions.
<b>Grants</b>	Government, lottery funding for good causes, charitable foundations may contribute to Natura 2000. Widely used (e.g. LIFE, forestry grants, grants for good causes).	Possibility to make new or greater use of some grant awarding mechanisms (e.g. lottery funds), particularly by demonstrating multiple benefits of Natura investments.	Most applicable for capital funding.	<b>High</b> – will remain significant and offers potential for growth by demonstrating multiple benefits (e.g. social and education) and applying new types of grants.	LIFE and structural funds provide significant grant funding for Natura 2000 sites. Heritage Lottery Fund in the UK has provided substantial capital funding for habitat restoration and public access, including Natura 2000 sites.
<b>Trust funds and endowments</b>	Different types of funds may be applicable: endowment funds (interest but not capital is spent); sinking funds (income and part of the capital is spent, sinking fund to zero over time); revolving funds (continually receive revenues and make expenditures). May be funded by private sector, lottery funds etc.	Scope for wider use – could fund long term management.	Offer a long term solution but high capital requirement. May be used with biodiversity offsets to provide funding for future management.	<b>Moderate</b> – high capital requirement limits attractiveness.	Applied by WWF to invest in the Amazon region. New South Wales BioBanking Scheme in Australia uses trust fund in biodiversity offsets.
<b>Management agreements, including PES schemes</b>	Incentives to private land managers – usually publicly funded (e.g. agri-environment schemes) but schemes involving private buyers are becoming more popular.	Scope for new schemes outside agriculture, and innovation in instrument design (e.g. linked to Natura 2000 outcomes and site management requirements, tendering schemes). Opportunities for wider use of PES schemes to include greater private involvement (e.g. water companies, insurance companies).	Widespread application where private land management generates external benefits.	<b>High</b> – ‘public PES’ schemes will remain important and scope to extend to wider range of sites and broaden funding base.	Management agreements widespread through agri-environment; some innovative examples in forestry e.g. Finnish Metso programme – public PES scheme with competitive tendering by providers; private PES schemes – e.g. Vittel in France and United Utilities in UK.

Type of Instrument	Applications	Scope for innovation	Key criteria/success factors	Applicability potential	Examples
<b>Tax incentives</b>	Making private funding for Natura 2000 projects by firms and individuals tax deductible. Could apply to existing or new taxes.	A wide range of potential opportunities for innovation exist across the tax system, including corporate and individual tax reliefs.	Needs to demonstrate benefits compared to collecting and spending taxes by government agencies– e.g. by lowering transaction costs. Requires government regulation and control.	<b>High</b> , given the scale of taxation, but highly dependent on being able to demonstrate benefits compared to redistributive role of the government (collecting and spending money).	UK Landfill and Aggregates Taxes have used credits for environmental (including nature) projects.
<b>Loan finance and bonds</b>	Possible loan funding from public loans (e.g. European Investment Bank (EIB)) or private sources. An EU Natural Capital Financing Facility (NCCFF) is being developed. Environmental bonds are tradable financial securities that promise to pay back the holder at a pre-defined interest rate, and could potentially be used to fund Natura 2000 projects.	NCCFF is a new and innovative approach to financing natural capital projects, and could fund a wide range of potential investments which generate commercial returns, including some in Natura 2000 areas – e.g. green infrastructure, tourism and offset schemes.	Depends on ability to repay loan and interest, i.e. capital investment generates revenue returns over time. Likely to be most applicable to private sector managers of Natura 2000 sites, including utilities.	<b>Moderate</b> – few Natura 2000 investments generate market returns. Those that do may attract private loan finance; instruments such as NCCFF aim to fill gaps and address market failures.	EIB has committed over €30 million to an investment fund which will seek returns from forestry and sustainable forest management, with focus on EU and neighbouring countries. NCCFF is under development. TESS project funded by the 7th Framework Programme tested certain environmental transactional support systems. <sup>1</sup>
<b>Private equity</b>	Potential to fund commercial enterprises involved in activities in and around Natura 2000 sites (e.g. forestry, product processing and marketing, eco-tourism).	Private equity is widely used for business investment but focusing on Natura 2000 based businesses would be innovative.	Depends on profitable business opportunities consistent with sustainable management of sites.	<b>Moderate</b> – opportunities to attract additional finance for Natura 2000 management likely to be limited, although NCCFF will help to stimulate equity investments.	Dasos Timberland Fund raised €85 million in 2009 for sustainable forest management in EU, including input from EIB. Proposed EU NCCFF will facilitate equity as well as debt investments.
<b>Marketed products</b>	Many Natura 2000 sites generate revenues from sales of products (e.g. food and timber), especially where farming or forestry is the predominant land use.	Scope to enhance returns through labelling and marketing initiatives, encouraging sympathetic management.	Production methods need to be compatible with management requirements. Labelling schemes need to be based on appropriate and certifiable standards to contribute to sympathetic management – transaction costs may be significant.	<b>Moderate</b> – some scope to add value to existing products and extend range of products marketed.	French regional parks Marque label, Parcs Naturels Régionaux links products to protected landscapes. Tourism eco-labels have been used in various Natura 2000 areas.

Type of Instrument	Applications	Scope for innovation	Key criteria/success factors	Applicability potential	Examples
<b>User fees, tourist levies and payback schemes</b>	Entry fees, car parking charges, visitor donations, retail sales and payback schemes based on compulsory or voluntary levies.	Conventional market based systems are widely established so scope for innovation limited. Possibility to develop new approaches – e.g. levies collected through tourism operators in Natura 2000 areas.	May work where the site offers a special experience with limited competition from alternatives, and where it is possible to limit entry or provide on-site services. Car parking charges offer added opportunities for many sites. Voluntary tourism levies require co-operation from tourism sector.	<b>Moderate</b> – likely to remain widespread but limited scope for innovative growth.	Minority of sites in EU have entry fees, but car park charges are widespread and many visitor centres raise revenue from retail sales. Tourism levies have been widely used in different parts of EU, with varying success.
<b>Biodiversity offsets and compensatory measures</b>	Schemes to enhance habitats or species to compensate for losses of biodiversity elsewhere. May be mandatory (as part of a no net loss policy) or voluntary (encouraging companies to achieve no net loss).	Natura 2000 sites are highly protected and any habitat loss should be subject to compensatory measures, under existing laws. However, offsetting biodiversity loss incurred outside Natura 2000 could generate funding for Natura 2000 restoration projects.	Wider application of offsets to Natura 2000 depends on demonstrating compatibility with conservation objectives of the site and additionality to existing conservation obligations as specified in the nature legislation.	<b>Moderate</b> – significant opportunity for biodiversity funding, in line with EU target for no net loss of biodiversity by 2020, but opportunities for new funding are greatest outside Natura 2000.	Biodiversity offsets have been widely used in the US and Australia and are increasingly used in the EU, especially Germany, France, Sweden, Netherlands and the UK.
<b>Carbon trading/ offsets</b>	Natura 2000 sites store carbon so offer potential opportunity to participate in carbon markets, e.g. selling carbon credits/offsetting emissions.	Opportunity to trade carbon credits could significantly enhance returns from creation and restoration of habitats such as forest and peatlands.	Need to demonstrate additionality and long term sustainability of the project. Need for a highly regulated legal framework. Demonstrating additionality may be more difficult in the EU than in developing countries (where rates of loss are greater and legal protection less well developed).	<b>Moderate</b> – potentially significant but currently limited to voluntary trading. Substantial challenges need to be overcome, especially demonstrating additionality, for schemes to meet regulatory requirements (e.g. EU ETS).	Being pursued in developing countries through Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD). Woodland carbon credits can be traded within the EU on a voluntary basis (e.g. as voluntary offsets).
<b>Licensing of extraction/ harvesting/ grazing rights</b>	Natura 2000 sites provide marketable outputs including (farmed and wild) food, timber, fibre, and genetic resources; rights to these can yield revenue through licensing rights, tenancy agreements etc.	Widespread and not particularly innovative, though there are opportunities for new initiatives linked to product marketing schemes.	Works where the provisioning service is sufficiently valuable to yield income, and where this is consistent with sustainable management of the site, and where resources are not already privately managed by landowner.	<b>Low</b> – already widespread, but some scope for growth through new approaches.	Certain forms of agreement (e.g. farm tenancies) are widespread.
<b>Licensing of development rights</b>	Natura 2000 sites may offer potential for small scale sustainable development – e.g. renewable energy, tourist accommodation etc.; rights could be licensed or land sold.	May offer some new opportunities – e.g. for further growth in tourism and renewable energy.	Only applicable for certain types of small scale development in certain areas where development does not compromise conservation objectives.	<b>Low</b> – likely to be limited in scale but may generate funds for some sites.	No specific initiatives identified.

Type of Instrument	Applications	Scope for innovation	Key criteria/success factors	Applicability potential	Examples
<b>Business funding/sponsorship</b>	Opportunity to secure funding/sponsorship for Natura 2000 as part of corporate social responsibility agenda.	Already happens (e.g. business partnerships with NGOs) but there may be some scope for expansion.	Business likely to be attracted by image/reputational benefits.	<b>Moderate</b> – significant potential for growth from relatively low base.	RSPB (2010) gives various examples including HSBC support for WWF work for fresh water habitats in UK.
<b>Regional accounts/financial products</b>	Bank financing of regional conservation projects through regional fund based on percentage of total interest at regional level. Other financial products could work in a similar way by devoting a percentage of interest to Natura 2000 projects.	Possible innovative funding mechanism.	Depends on bank being convinced to give up a share of profits. May be attractive to mutual lenders.	<b>Low</b> – uptake likely to be limited.	The Dutch land foundation Taking Green Forest and Rabobank have jointly launched 'Rabo Green Forest' to raise funding for sustainable development initiatives in National Landscape Het Groene Woud (The Green Forest).

**What benefits and services does the Natura 2000 site deliver?** Identifying the character of benefits and services is the first step to identifying who might benefit and the potential sources of funding. In cases where the main benefits are limited to nature conservation, scope for innovative funding may be limited, but if wider benefits exist this opens more opportunities to harness new sources of funding.

**Who are the beneficiaries of these services, and what is the proportion of public and private benefits?** If the benefits are spread across society as a whole, this suggests a need for public funding, either from nature conservation or other public budgets. However, if there are significant private beneficiaries, this offers greater scope for new funding instruments and market-based transactions.

**Are the benefits clearly defined and measurable?** Being able to define and measure the benefits that the site provides will be important in making the case for, and designing, suitable funding instruments. For example, it will be necessary to understand and quantify the effect of the site on jobs and growth, carbon storage, flood risk, public health or water quality in order to make the case for public sector funding or to convince potential buyers of services to enter a PES scheme. The lack of robust and site specific evidence may often be a key barrier to developing new funding sources for Natura 2000.

**How do the costs and benefits of managing the Natura 2000 site compare with those of alternative solutions?** In order to make the case for funding Natura 2000, it will be important to understand how the costs and benefits of delivering the ecosystem services provided by the network compares with other solutions (e.g. traditional approaches to flood defence, water quality management or public health improvement). A key advantage of investing in nature- and/or ecosystem-based solutions is that they are often capable of delivering multiple benefits compared to more traditional approaches.

#### Box 6.1 Questions to inform innovative financing

**Box 6.1**  
**Questions**  
**to inform**  
**innovative**  
**financing**

**What are the additional net benefits of investing in Natura 2000?** The delivery of nature related benefits is on its own unlikely to be sufficient to make a convincing case for funding – it will also be necessary to demonstrate that financing Natura 2000 actions is capable of delivering additional benefits. For example, a potential buyer of ecosystem services is only likely to enter a PES scheme if this secures benefits that would otherwise not be provided or be at risk (e.g. payment for a change of management practice or for continuation of a practice that would otherwise be at risk of termination or modification). The buyer might be unlikely to pay for the services provided for free by an already protected site. There may be a good case for a water utility to enter a PES agreement with the manager of an unprotected grassland or woodland site to secure the water purification services that the site provides, and to avoid conversion to intensive arable farming. The opportunity to interest the water utility in a PES agreement may be reduced, however, if the site is a Natura 2000 site and the services it provides are seen as protected. There is therefore a potential ‘free rider’ problem that limits the opportunities for innovative funding. Forested Natura 2000 sites may have limited opportunity to benefit from carbon trading since they already receive a high degree of protection, unlike many forests in developing countries for which added incentives are needed to secure their future.

**What actions are needed to realise the opportunities identified?** Experience confirms that markets on their own rarely deliver sufficient resources for conservation management, and that public intervention is usually needed. This may include provision of funding (through direct government expenditures, publicly funded incentive schemes or provision of government grants), or measures to create, promote and/or regulate markets (for example by facilitating PES schemes, creating and regulating carbon markets, requiring biodiversity offsets or introducing labelling and marketing schemes). Government intervention may also be needed to provide or facilitate the ‘third party’ functions necessary for functioning private instruments, such as certification, evaluation and monitoring. These elements can pose significant transaction costs, and as such may undermine the viability of PES schemes. These functions are generally necessary for private investment instruments as they ensure some degree of credibility with investors.

## 6.2 Potential for innovative financing to contribute to different Natura 2000 management measures

Some overall conclusions can be drawn about the application of different types of funding mechanism to the Natura 2000 network. In general, direct public sector funding for Natura 2000 activities remains the most versatile financial instrument, applicable to all of the activities required. There is little alternative to this funding for some key activities, especially administrative measures. Business sponsorship is potentially flexible and applicable to a wide range of Natura 2000 activities. However it poses a number of challenges that might need to be

carefully considered. Also, a wide variety of financial instruments, including innovative instruments, can potentially be applied to core species and habitat management actions. Finally, capital funding for land purchase and infrastructure for conservation and public access can in principle be provided by a variety of sources, potentially loan finance, tax incentives and biodiversity offsets as well as grants and direct funding measures. Table 7.2 examines the potential role of innovative funding in contributing to each of the 25 Natura 2000 management measures.

Innovative approaches can potentially be applied to a wide range of Natura 2000 actions, but work better for some actions than others. Table 7.2 distinguishes between types of actions that offer low, moderate or high potential for the use of innovative financing approaches. Actions with high potential for innovative financing include those relating to visitor access and infrastructure, which offer opportunities for visitor payback schemes, entry charges and donations, as well as potentially the application of tourism, education and economic development budgets. Conservation management of habitats also offers potential to use a wide range of new funding sources, such as PES schemes, biodiversity offsets, carbon markets, corporate sponsorship, new sources of grant

funding, trust funds and endowments, tax incentives, loans and marketed products.

Many of the actions offer relatively low levels of opportunity to apply innovative funding. These include a range of administrative and managerial actions, scientific studies, monitoring and surveying, information actions, consultations and meetings and staffing. This suggests that the scope for innovative instruments to address specific funding gaps for particular actions may be limited, and that innovative approaches are likely to work best for those types of actions for which funding opportunities already exist. Even so, innovative approaches still have a potentially important role in closing the gap in the overall level of funding provided.

### 6.3 Opportunities for innovative financing instruments to work with main EU funds

New and innovative sources for financing have the potential to reduce the size of the current funding gap for the Natura 2000 network. However, the relatively limited use of innovative approaches to date, and the continued reliance of traditional sources from the EU budget and nature conservation budgets within Member States, is evidence that applying innovative approaches is challenging and is likely to take time. Rather than being seen as alternatives to the application of EU funding, innovative funding approaches offer opportunities to work in combination with these funds in financing Natura 2000 actions. EU funding instruments can be used to catalyse and pilot new approaches, with a view to developing more innovative financing mechanisms and reducing the reliance on traditional funding sources over time.

Potential opportunities for EU funds and innovative approaches to work together include:

- Use of new sources of finance, such as business sponsorship, to co-finance EU funded projects;

- Use of EU funds to pilot the development of new instruments, such as offsets or PES schemes; and
- Use of EU funds to finance the development and marketing of produce from Natura 2000, thus helping to develop new markets.

Finally, there are also certain challenges for the development of new financing approaches, which arise from the rules governing EU funding instruments, and the way that these instruments operate. For example, EU funding may sometimes replace or 'crowd out' more innovative approaches, and may be seen as an easier approach than developing new instruments. Furthermore, EU funding rules may restrict the scope for developing new approaches. For example, agri-environment payments must be based on income foregone (to comply with WTO rules). This may limit the scope to develop new PES schemes which add to existing schemes but may contravene payment rules.

**Table 6.2**  
Scope for innovative financing for Natura 2000 related management measures

<i>Natura 2000 management measure</i>		<i>Potential for innovative financing</i>	<i>Possible innovative financing approaches</i>
<b>Establishment of Natura 2000 Sites</b>	1 <b>Administration of site selection process</b>	low	This is a core action for the establishment of Natura 2000 and the potential for wider benefits is limited. It is therefore likely to rely on core funding from public sector budgets.
	2 <b>Scientific studies/inventories for site identification</b>	low	This is a core action for the establishment of Natura 2000 and the potential for wider benefits is limited. It is therefore likely to rely on core funding from public sector budgets.
	3 <b>Preparation of initial information and publicity material</b>	low	This is a core action for the establishment of Natura 2000 and the potential for wider benefits is limited. It is therefore likely to rely mainly on core funding from public sector budgets. There may be some scope for attracting new funding for publicity materials – for example through corporate sponsorship.
	4 <b>Pilot projects</b>	moderate	Pilot projects have the potential to combine core management objectives of Natura 2000 with the delivery of wider benefits, including potentially the piloting of PES schemes and new funding approaches, as well as projects that contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation. This opens opportunities for utilising a range of EU funds and Member State budgets, and potentially attracting private sector funding.
<b>Management planning</b>	5 <b>Preparation of management plans, strategies and schemes</b>	moderate	Management plans are a core action for Natura 2000 and are likely to rely mainly on core funding from public sector budgets. Corporate sponsorship could provide some funding. Where management strategies seek to provide wider benefits (e.g. climate, water regulation, recreation) there may be scope to attract funding from wider budgets and potentially from the private sector (e.g. water utilities).
	6 <b>Establishment of management bodies</b>	low	This is a core action for the management of Natura 2000 and is likely to rely mainly on core funding from public sector budgets. There may be some scope for attracting new funding – for example through corporate sponsorship or from departments or organisations with wider management interests (e.g. tourism, water management) where there is a strong interest in managing Natura 2000 for these purposes.
	7 <b>Consultation and networking – public meetings, networking, liaison with landowners</b>	low	This is a core action for the management of Natura 2000 and is likely to rely mainly on core funding from public sector budgets (e.g. EU funds). There may be some scope for attracting new funding from some of the interest groups involved – e.g. farmers, landowners, water sector.
	8 <b>Review of management plans, strategies and schemes</b>	moderate	Management plans are a core action for Natura 2000 and are likely to rely mainly on core funding from public sector budgets. Corporate sponsorship could provide some funding. Where management strategies seek to provide wider benefits (e.g. climate, water regulation, recreation) there may be scope to attract funding from wider budgets and potentially from the private sector (e.g. water utilities).
	9 <b>Running costs of management bodies</b>	low	This is a core action for the management of Natura 2000 and is likely to rely mainly on core funding from public sector budgets. There may be some scope for attracting new funding – for example through corporate sponsorship or from departments or organisations with wider management interests (e.g. tourism, water management) where there is a strong interest in managing Natura 2000 for these purposes.
	10 <b>Maintenance of facilities for public – access to and use of sites</b>	high	Entry fees, voluntary donations and other user levies such as car park charges have a clear role to play. Visitor payback schemes could be used more to finance public access infrastructure. Tourism and education benefits offer potential for wider use of EU funds (e.g. ERDF) and other public sector budgets (economic development, tourism, public health).

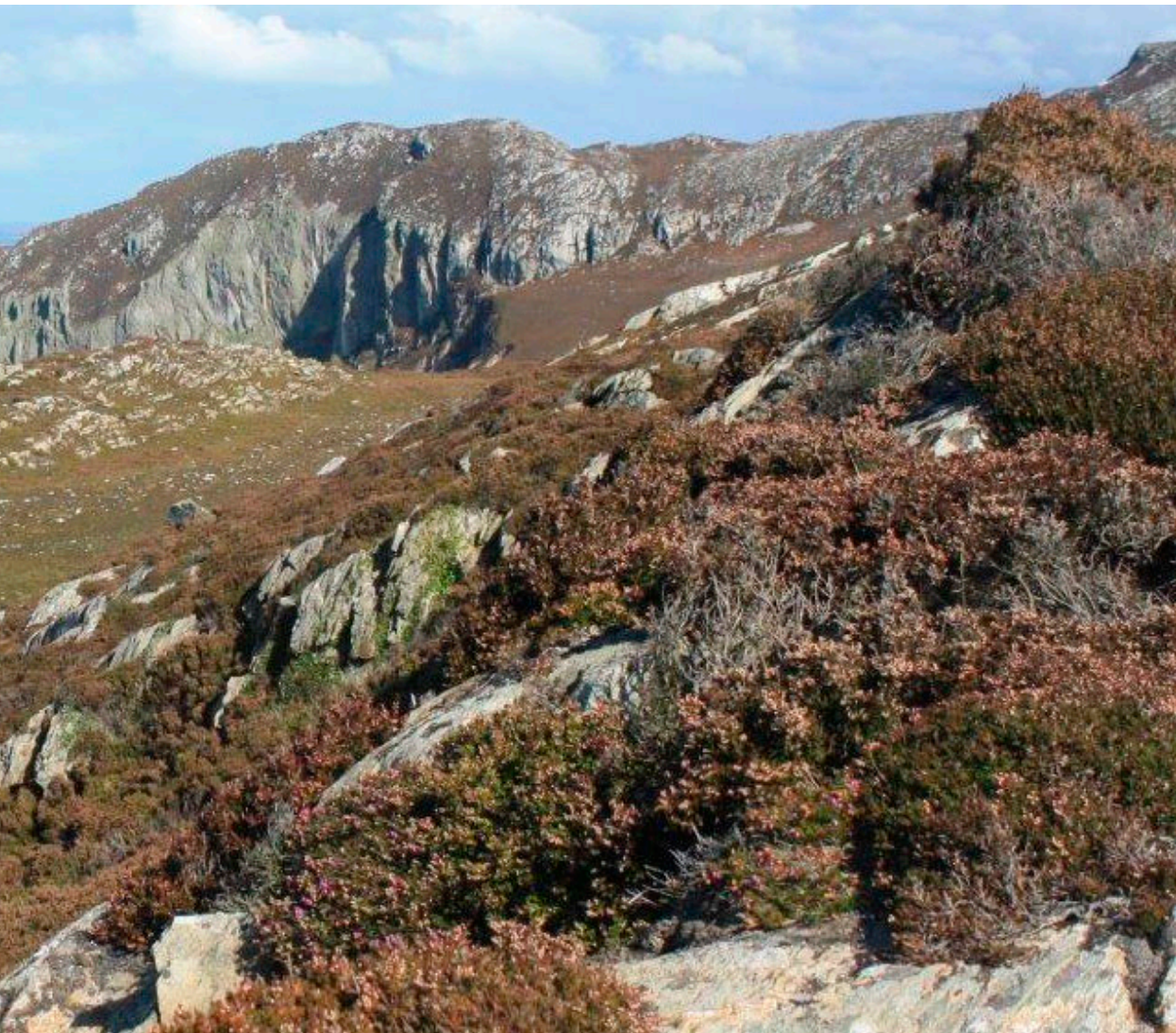


<i>Natura 2000 management measure</i>	<i>Potential for innovative financing</i>	<i>Possible innovative financing approaches</i>
11 <b>Ongoing staff costs</b>	low	This is a core action for the management of Natura 2000 and is likely to rely mainly on core funding from public sector budgets. There may be some scope for attracting new funding – for example through corporate sponsorship or from departments or organisations with an interest in funding staff with wider management interests (e.g. tourism, water management) where there is a strong interest in managing Natura 2000 for these purposes.
12 <b>Conservation management - habitats</b>	high	Habitat management offers a wide range of opportunities to use new funding sources, such as climate mitigation and adaptation programmes, PES schemes, biodiversity offsets, carbon markets, corporate sponsorship, new sources of grant funding, trust funds and endowments, tax incentives, loans and marketed products.
13 <b>Conservation management - species</b>	moderate	Opportunities to use new funding sources include biodiversity offsets, corporate sponsorship, new sources of grant funding, trust funds and endowments, tax incentives, loans and marketed products.
14 <b>Conservation management - invasive alien species (ias)</b>	moderate	Opportunities to attract funding from sectors and interests affected by IAS – e.g. water, agriculture, forestry, public health.
15 <b>Implementation of management schemes and agreements</b>	moderate	Potential to attract additional buyers of ecosystem services through PES schemes, including water companies, insurers, developers and other private sector interests.
16 <b>Provision of services, compensation for rights foregone and loss of income</b>	moderate	Potential to attract additional buyers of ecosystem services through PES schemes, including water companies, insurers, developers and other private sector interests.
17 <b>Monitoring and surveying</b>	low	Much monitoring activity will focus on nature conservation interests of the site, and will require core funding. Some potential for corporate sponsorship. Wider monitoring of ecosystem services (e.g. water flows and quality, visitor numbers) offers potential to attract funding from other budgets.
18 <b>Risk management</b>	moderate	Risk management measures offer opportunities for funding from other budgets (e.g. flood and coastal protection, prevention of forest fires). Green infrastructure can offer opportunities for cost effective management of environmental risks.
19 <b>(Ongoing) surveillance of sites</b>	low	Much surveillance activity will focus on nature conservation interests of the site, and will require core funding. Some potential for corporate sponsorship. Surveillance activities that affect wider benefits and services – such as visitor management and water protection – may offer potential to attract funding from other budgets.
20 <b>Provision of information and publicity material</b>	moderate	There are opportunities from wider budgets where information and publicity offers wider benefits for tourism, education and skills development. There is also potential for corporate sponsorship of publicity materials.
21 <b>Training and education</b>	moderate	Natura 2000 offers scope for creation of skilled and knowledge based jobs. There is wider scope to use training and education programmes in Natura 2000 sites – including ESF and Member States' training and education budgets.
22 <b>Facilities to encourage visitor use and appreciation of Natura 2000 sites</b>	high	Entry fees, voluntary donations and other user levies such as car park charges have a clear role to play in the funding of visitor facilities. Visitor payback schemes could be used more to finance public access infrastructure. Tourism and education benefits offer potential for wider use of EU funds (e.g. ERDF) and other public sector budgets (economic development, tourism, public health).

Ongoing habitat management and monitoring

<i>Natura 2000 management measure</i>		<i>Potential for innovative financing</i>	<i>Possible innovative financing approaches</i>	
Investment costs	23	<b>Land purchase, including compensation for development rights</b>	moderate	A range of means could be used to fund land purchase and compensation measures, including biodiversity offsets, public appeals, new sources of grant funding, loans and environmental bonds, corporate sponsorship and purchase of land by NGOs.
	24	<b>Infrastructure needed for the restoration of habitats or species</b>	moderate	A range of means could be used to fund restoration infrastructure, including biodiversity offsets, new sources of grant funding, loans and environmental bonds and corporate sponsorship.
	25	<b>Infrastructure for public access</b>	high	Entry fees, voluntary donations and other user levies such as car park charges have a clear role to play in the funding of visitor facilities. Visitor payback schemes could be used more to finance public access infrastructure. Tourism and education benefits offer potential for wider use of EU funds (e.g. ERDF) and other public sector budgets (economic development, tourism, public health).





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# References, key publications, key websites

## Contact information for regional and national authorities

EU fund	Source for contact information
EAFRD`	<a href="http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/general-info/whos-who/implementing-authorities/managing-authorities/en/managing-authorities_en.cfm">http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/general-info/whos-who/implementing-authorities/managing-authorities/en/managing-authorities_en.cfm</a>
EMFF	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/eff/apply_for_funding/index_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/eff/apply_for_funding/index_en.htm</a>
ERDF, EFS and Cohesion Fund	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/manage/authority/authority_en.cfm">http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/manage/authority/authority_en.cfm</a>
LIFE Programme	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/contact/nationalcontact">http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/contact/nationalcontact</a>
Horizon 2020	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/">http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/</a>

### Financing Natura 2000

The Commission Staff Working Paper on financing Natura 2000: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/financing/docs/financing\\_natura2000.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/financing/docs/financing_natura2000.pdf)

Format for Prioritised Action Frameworks (PAFs) agreed between the Commission and the Member States: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/financing/docs/PAF.pdf>

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