

**Council of Europe**  
**Conseil de l'Europe**



**European Union**  
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**CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS**

**SUPPORT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL  
DIVERSITY PROGRAMME OF WORK ON PROTECTED AREAS IN THE EU  
NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY EAST AREA AND RUSSIA:  
EXTENSION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EU'S NATURA 2000 PRINCIPLES  
THROUGH THE EMERALD NETWORK**

### **1. Background information**

#### **1.1. Geographical area and target groups to be covered**

The geographical areas covered by the project are the eastern countries of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) according to regulation EC/1638/2006, namely: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russian Federation, and Ukraine.

The target groups of this project are the relevant ministries (Emerald sites are designated by the governments) and stakeholders within the national biodiversity programmes. The national Emerald teams that were already set up by the ministries for the implementation of the pilot projects will represent important contributors, except in Belarus where this national Emerald team has not been created so far.

#### **1.2. Biodiversity**

The most important direct drivers of biodiversity loss and change in ecosystem services are habitat change - such as land use change, physical modification of rivers or water withdrawal from rivers, loss of coral reefs, and damage to sea floors due to trawling - climate change, invasive alien species, overexploitation of species, and pollution. The drivers of loss of biodiversity and the drivers of changes in ecosystem services are either steady, show no evidence of declining over time, or are increasing in intensity.

Biodiversity contributes directly (through provisioning, regulating, and cultural ecosystem services) and indirectly (through supporting ecosystem services) to many constituents of human well-being, including security, basic material for a good life, health, good social relations, and freedom of choice and action. Many people have benefited over the last century from the conversion of natural ecosystems to human-dominated ecosystems and the exploitation of biodiversity. At the same time, however, these losses in biodiversity and changes in ecosystem services have caused some people to experience declining well-being, with poverty in some social groups being exacerbated.<sup>1</sup>

The Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 adopted the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) which has as main goals conservation of biological diversity, sustainable use of its components, and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources. In this context, EU Heads of State or Government decided at the Gothenburg summit in 2001 that biodiversity decline should be halted with the aim of reaching this objective by 2010. In 2002, the CBD's sixth Conference of the Parties in The Hague adopted the strategic plan for the Convention where parties committed themselves to a more effective and coherent implementation of the three objectives of the Convention, to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional, and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on earth. The world summit on sustainable development held in Johannesburg in 2002 confirmed the 2010 biodiversity target and called for the achievement by 2010 of a significant reduction in the current rate of loss of biological diversity. In 2003,

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<sup>1</sup> Millennium Ecosystem Assessment: Ecosystems and human well-being. Biodiversity synthesis. Washington, 2005.

## **Annex I: Description of the action**

environment ministers and heads of delegation from 51 countries in the UNECE region adopted the Kiev resolution on biodiversity at the fifth ministerial conference Environment for Europe and decided to reinforce the objective to halt the loss of biological diversity at all levels by the year 2010. In 2006, the European Commission (EC) confirmed the goal to halt biodiversity loss by 2010 with a communication and an action plan.

The seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the CBD in Kuala Lumpur 2004 adopted a programme of work on protected areas, the overall purpose of which is to support the establishment and maintenance by 2010 for terrestrial and by 2012 for marine areas of comprehensive, effectively managed, and ecologically representative national and regional systems of protected areas. This global network will contribute to achieving the three objectives of the Convention and the 2010 target to significantly reduce the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional, national and sub-national levels.

As a follow-up to these initiatives, an international conference will be organised by the Council of Europe (CoE) at the beginning of 2010, for the launching of the UN Biodiversity Year. This conference, to be held in Spain, will be included in the official events of the Spanish Presidency of the EU and also be placed under the auspices of the Swiss Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the CoE. It will assess the state of progress of the implementation of the CBD in Europe, and especially the Programme of work on protected areas of the CBD. The development of the two main and complementary networks of protected areas in Europe, Natura 2000 and the Emerald Network, will be highlighted during this conference, as important initiatives for the CBD implementation.

### **1.3. Protected areas**

Protected areas are a vital contribution to the conservation of the world's natural and cultural resources. Their values range from the protection of natural habitats and associated flora and fauna, to the maintenance of environmental stability of surrounding regions.

At European level, the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats was signed in 1979 and came into force in 1982. The convention sets out to conserve wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats, to promote cooperation between states, to monitor and control endangered and vulnerable species, and to assist with the provision of assistance concerning legal and scientific issues.

The European Community, as such, is a Contracting Party to the Bern Convention. In order to fulfil its obligations arising from the convention, the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC came into force in 1992. Together with the Birds Directive, it forms the cornerstone of the EU's nature conservation policy. It is built around two pillars: the Natura 2000 network of protected sites and the strict system of species protection. All in all, the directive protects over 1,000 animals and plant species and over 200 so called "habitat types" (for example special types of forests, meadows, wetlands, etc.), which are of European importance. Natura 2000 now covers some 18% of the territory of the EU-15 and is being extended to the EU-12 and to marine areas. By the end of 2007, ca. 28,000 sites covering over 1,000,000 km<sup>2</sup> were part of the network.

## **Annex I: Description of the action**

In order to support the EU Member States with their reporting obligations in the area of biodiversity according to the European directives, the European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity (ETC/BD) was set up. The ETC/BD collects the respective data and consolidates it in the European Environment Information and Observation Network System (EIONET) and the European Nature Information System (EUNIS).

The Bern Convention has now been signed by 42 member states of the CoE, the European Community, Monaco, Burkina Faso, Morocco, Tunisia, and Senegal. The secretariat of the convention is maintained by the CoE.

The Bern Convention led to the creation of the Emerald network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest in 1998 throughout the territory of the parties to the convention. It takes the philosophy of Natura 2000 beyond the borders of the EU to the whole of Europe and part of Africa developing a common approach. The Emerald and Natura 2000 networks are fully compatible with each other and use the same software. The implementation of the Emerald Network represents a tool for preparing the target countries to comply with internationally agreed commitments, including the CBD, the Bern Convention, and the Habitats Directive (for accession countries).

### **1.4. Past and on-going activities**

The EU has stressed in several council conclusions that implementation of the CBD programme of work on protected areas at regional level was an important priority. The EU is therefore co-funding a series of regional workshops in Africa and Asia, and other activities aimed at supporting implementation and the monitoring and reporting on progress made. In addition, other organisations such as the CBD secretariat, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and the German Ministries of Cooperation and Environment have organised a number of regional meetings aimed at promoting implementation. A memorandum of cooperation between the Bern Convention and the secretariat of the CBD centres inter alia on the promotion of joint activities on issues such as protected areas.

The first EC regional cooperation project with non EU-countries to assist with the implementation of the Emerald Network was conducted successfully from 2005 to 2006 in South-East Europe. This project, funded by the Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation (CARDS) in cooperation with the European Environment Agency (EEA) with a budget of 170,000 €, resulted in the identification of 80% of the sites of the Emerald Network and the delivery of 60% of the scientific data in the following countries: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. A second contract has been signed with a budget of 60,000 € for the complete identification of the Emerald Network in these six countries by the end of 2008 and the delivery of all scientific data related to the sites.

In the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and South Caucasus, the CoE implemented a number of pilot projects in order to assist the initial implementation of the Emerald Network. The purpose of the pilot projects was to develop a pilot database, containing a fair proportion of the Areas of Special Conservation Interest and to submit a proposal for the sites designation to the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention. Pilot projects were organised in the Russian Federation (1999, specifically in Karelia), Moldova (2000), Ukraine (2001), Georgia (2002), Azerbaijan (2005), and Armenia (2007).

## **Annex I: Description of the action**

Within the pilot projects, the countries had to form project teams, to carry out the training of the teams, to proceed with the scientific work (data collection on species and habitats concerned, field survey for a selected pilot area, mapping of distribution data on species and habitats), to install the software, to introduce the data on the sites into the database, to prepare standard data sheets on the designated sites, and to transmit this information in electronic form with the project report to the secretariat. The pilot projects were instrumental in mobilising and uniting various experts in national teams, who had not earlier been fully exposed to the objectives and the rationale of the Emerald network. The “team-building” merit of the exercise has been appreciated in all cases.

The adopted methodologies were also new to participants, including the use of standard software for building the common database. The pilot projects brought to light the need for a coherent approach in the collection of scientific data, many of which are outdated or in need of verification. The pilot projects also pointed out the need for updating the lists of species and habitats in order to have more relevant criteria for site selection, especially in the Caucasus. In some countries obtaining reliable cartographic information still meets with difficulties, due to a legacy of the past when such information was classified and not available for scientific use.

## **2. Objective, purpose, and expected results**

### **2.1. Overall Objective**

The overall objective of the project is to protect the biodiversity in the ENPI east countries and to implement the CBD.

### **2.2. Project Purpose**

The purpose of the project is to implement the CBD programme of work on protected areas and of the EU's principles and the Bern Convention concerning the protection of habitats and species in the ENPI east countries.

### **2.3. Results to be achieved**

The Council of Europe as implementing institution shall coordinate, contribute to, and monitor the scientific work leading to the following concrete results to be achieved:

- 1) the multidisciplinary expert's work for the identification of potential sites of Areas of Special Conservation Interest of the Emerald network of the Bern Convention
  - a) in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova: identification of all potential sites,
  - b) in Ukraine: identification of 80% of the potential sites, equitably designated in all the biogeographical regions,
  - c) in the Russian Federation: identification of 50% of the potential sites in several biogeographical regions in European Russia (Alpine, southern part of Boreal, Continental, Steppe, and Black Sea), to be selected in cooperation with the Russian authorities taking into account other programmes currently in progress,

## **Annex I: Description of the action**

- d) Belarus: a pilot project for the launching of the project and the identification of approximately 10% of the potential sites to be conducted in a similar way to the ones described above (1.3) to be achieved at the end of 2009 and followed by a second project of identification of the Emerald Network to be conducted in 2010 and 2011 leading to the identification of 50 % of the potential sites,
- 2) the data needed for the identification shall be provided in three packages:
  - a) 30% of the total data requested by November 2009 (10 % for Belarus),
  - b) 60% of the total data requested by November 2010,
  - c) all the remaining scientific data by November 2011,
- 3) the data provided shall include:
  - a) Distribution per biogeographical region in each country of all species and habitats of Resolutions No. 4 (1996) and No. 6 (1998) of the Bern Convention and Annex I of the Habitats Directive,
  - b) Distribution maps of selected species and habitats in GIS,
  - c) Sites database for the sites to be listed with all ecological data filled in,
  - d) Digital boundaries for all sites in GIS,
  - e) Information on the following aspects: important species, general site character, quality, importance, vulnerability and ownership of the site,
  - f) Site protection status at national and regional level and relationship with CORINE (Coordinated Information on the European Environment) Biotopes sites, information on impacts and activities in and around the site, and map of the site.

### **3. Activities and inputs**

#### **3.1. Management and administration**

The CoE will contribute to this project by management and administrative tasks to be fulfilled for the organisation and the control of the progress of work. These tasks include the preparation and the control of specific contracts and/or administrative arrangements with the countries, transfer of funds, organisation and attendance of meetings, organisation and control of consultancy work, including coherence checking of the data and attendance of coordination meetings. For this purpose, a full time project manager and a half-time secretary will be contracted. The CoE will contribute in kind to the project by bearing some publishing costs for documents and some interpretation for the meetings.

#### **3.2. Scientific work**

The CoE shall ensure that the following steps are taken by the countries involved in its implementation:

## **Annex I: Description of the action**

- setup of a national multidisciplinary Emerald team (Belarus) or cooperation with the Emerald teams created at the occasion of pilot projects (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine);
- if necessary, training of the national Emerald team (Belarus) or information meeting with the existing Emerald team and all the national authorities concerned on the development of the Emerald network and the new programme launched in the framework of this project;
- collection of data for the identification of the species and habitats of Resolutions No. 4 (1996) and No. 6 (1998) of the Bern Convention within each biogeographical region in the country;
- selection of potential areas of special conservation interest (Emerald sites);
- description of potential areas of special conservation interest (filling in the Standard Data form of the Emerald/Natura 2000 software); this Standard Data Form includes detailed information concerning the site, such as site location, site surface area, site length and altitude, administrative and biogeographic region, habitat types from Resolution No. 4 (1996) present on the site and site assessment for them and species covered by Resolution No. 6 (1998) and site assessment for them;
- building up of the database of the selected designated Emerald sites;
- transmission of data to the CoE.

The beneficiary countries will contribute in kind by setting up local committees, arranging meetings and providing the venue for the seminars.

A scientific consultant (full time, four months per year) will be contracted to control the data, which will be submitted according to the established work plan. At the end of the project, the scientific consultant shall build up the final Emerald data base as a regionally integrated and consistent database, which is to be delivered to the EEA and its ETC/BD for checking and integration in the European data base. This procedure will ensure the coherence and compatibility of data within the various biogeographical regions and with the data of the neighbouring sites of Natura 2000.

The national lists of the sites proposed by the states will be submitted to the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention for examination and official acceptance. This procedure will take place after the closure of this project, at the first plenary meeting of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention following the end of the project.

### **3.3. Meetings**

Several meetings will be organised in the framework of this project, focusing on the various scientific, technical and administrative aspects of building up the Emerald Network in the countries and, depending on the state of progress of work, on management aspects, integration of sectorial policies, participation of various stakeholders and communication:

- national meetings in each country, several per year;
- meetings of the project manager and the scientific consultant with the members of the Emerald team set up in the countries, once per year;

## **Annex I: Description of the action**

- sub-regional coordination meetings once per year, for two groups of countries (South-Caucasus, other countries);
- meetings of the steering committee, once per year in Strasbourg, preferably back-to-back with the meeting of the experts group of the Emerald network and the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention.

### **3.4. Complementary actions**

The ENP Regional Strategy Paper 2007-2013 stipulates that the establishment of effectively managed protected areas constitutes a challenge for the region. The ENP National Action Plan of Armenia furthermore specifies that existing national plans and programmes on biodiversity and protected areas need to be further developed and implemented. The countries involved in this project will therefore be requested to start the elaboration of integrated management strategies for land, water and living resources for the identified sites, promoting the ecosystem approach supported by the CBD, in view of ensuring conservation and sustainable use. Needs to develop legislation and basic procedures will be supported. The countries also identify possibilities for enhanced regional cooperation. The integration of all the concerned states as contracting parties to the Bern Convention will ensure follow-up and monitoring of the areas incorporated into the Emerald Network. The accession of Belarus to the Bern Convention will be encouraged.

### **3.5. Work plan for 2009**

#### **First quarter**

- Official confirmation of the programme with the national authorities
- Preparation and signature of the 2009 contracts between the CoE and the ministries
- Preparation and signature of the 2009 contract with the scientific consultant
- Workshop for the launching of the pilot project in Belarus (attendance: project manager, scientific consultant, national team, NGOs, etc.)
- First meeting with the national teams in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine (attendance: project manager, scientific consultant, national team, NGOs, etc.)
- If necessary, training of national Emerald teams
- Start of scientific field work

#### **Second quarter**

- Continuation of scientific field work
- Organisation of two regional workshops

#### **Third and fourth quarter**



## **Annex I: Description of the action**

- Continuation of scientific field work
- First meeting of the steering committee
- Delivery by Belarus of 10 % of the total data requested (October 2009)
- Delivery of 30 % by the other countries of the total data requested (October 2009)
- Delivery of potential selected sites
- Control of the data by the scientific consultant
- Delivery of the data by the CoE to the EC by November 2009
- End of the 2009 contracts between the CoE and the ministries

## **4. Assumptions and risks**

### **4.1. Assumptions underlying the project intervention**

The prerequisite for reaching the project purposes is a strong and continuous political support from the partner countries' governments at regional, national, and local level. Another assumption is that the experts for the national Emerald teams can be mobilised in due time.

### **4.2. Risks**

Lack of political stability within and possible tensions between the countries of the region may negatively affect the satisfactory implementation of the activities.

Environmental institutions in the beneficiary countries are generally weak and there is a lack of financial resources.

## **5. Stakeholders**

The CoE will cooperate and coordinate with the CBD Secretariat, the EEA, as well as the international organisations already involved in promoting the implementation of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas in the ENPI east countries, such as WWF and the IUCN. The exchange of information on progress made as well as their participation in regional and national workshops will be ensured. Other concerned NGOs will be invited to contribute to the scientific work and to participate in the national and regional meetings.

## **6. Coordination**

The coordination of the project will be ensured by the set-up of a steering committee, presided jointly by the EC and the CoE. The steering committee will meet at least once per year, preferably jointly with the committee(s) of the CoE dealing with ecological network and protected areas.

## **7. Visibility**

The project will be included in the Joint Activities Programme of the CoE with the EC and, as such, will benefit from the visibility action of this programme.

In addition to the provisions on visibility of Article 6 of Annex II, the Communication and Visibility Manual for EU External Actions (April 2008) shall be followed.<sup>2</sup>

## **8. Reports**

The reporting obligations are laid out in Article 2 of Annex II. Two paper copies and an electronic version (Word compatible) of the progress reports and the final report must be submitted to the contact addresses provided in the special conditions of the contract. A summary of the results of the project will be made available on the website of the CoE. The EC and the EEA may use the results of the project for their publications.

## **9. Monitoring and evaluation**

Internal monitoring will be assured by the steering committee and by the progress reports. The monitoring and evaluation of the scientific data of the Emerald sites identified within this programme will be done by the scientific consultant and in cooperation with the EEA and its European Topic Centre for Biological Diversity (ETC/BD), in application of the Memorandum of Cooperation between the CoE and the EEA. The ETC/BD shall therefore be involved in

- the coherence checking and analysis of the data, the final results of the project, and the integration of the data in the European databases;
- the organisation and attendance of the regional coordination workshops;
- the attendance of the meetings of the steering committee.

The group of experts of the Emerald network and the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention will be asked to give their opinion on the quality and quantity of the delivered data and to approve the proposed areas of special conservation interest.

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<sup>2</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/visibility/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/visibility/index_en.htm)

## 10. Logframe

	Intervention logic	Objectively verifiable indicators of achievement	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
<b>Overall objective</b>	Protection of biodiversity in the ENPI east countries and implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).	Evolution of species and habitats	Progress reports to CBD	---
<b>Project purpose</b>	Implementation of CBD programme of work on protected areas and of EU's principles and the Bern Convention concerning the protection of habitats and species in the ENPI east countries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existence and effective implementation of legislation and management plans on protected areas</li> <li>- Evolution of species and habitats in the Emerald sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Progress reports to CBD and Bern Convention</li> <li>- Opinion of Standing Committee of the Bern Convention</li> <li>- Progress and final reports of project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political will and financial resources in the partner countries to take further measures to protect biodiversity</li> <li>- Political stability within countries</li> </ul>
<b>Results</b>	<p>A) Identification of potential sites of Areas of Special Conservation Interest of the Emerald network of the Bern Convention</p> <p>1) Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova: all potential sites</p> <p>2) Ukraine: 80% of potential sites</p> <p>3) Russia: 50% of potential sites</p> <p>4) Belarus: 10% of potential sites in pilot project; 50% at later stage</p> <p>B) Submission of scientific data according to the requirements of the Bern Convention</p> <p>1) 30% by November 2009 (10 % for Belarus)</p> <p>2) 60% by November 2010</p> <p>3) Remaining data by November</p>	<p>A) Percentage of identified potential sites</p> <p>B) Quantity and quality of submitted scientific data</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conclusions of national, regional, and steering committee meetings</li> <li>- Opinion of scientific consultant</li> <li>- Opinion of Emerald expert group</li> <li>- Opinion of European Topic Centre for Biological Diversity</li> <li>- Progress and final reports of project</li> <li>- Database</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political will and financial resources in the partner countries to develop and implement legislation and management plans on protected areas</li> <li>- Experts for continuous monitoring can be mobilised</li> <li>- Stakeholder involvement to ensure successful implementation</li> <li>- Political stability within countries</li> <li>- Absence of tensions between countries for cross-border sites</li> </ul>

# Annex I: Description of the action

	2011.			
<b>Activities</b>	<p>A) Management and administration</p> <p>B) Scientific work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- set-up of national Emerald teams</li> <li>- training</li> <li>- field work</li> <li>- data collection</li> <li>- selection and description of potential sites</li> <li>- building up of database</li> <li>- data transmission</li> </ul> <p>C) Meetings for coordination and exchange of experiences</p> <p>D) Complementary actions</p>	<p>Inputs:</p> <p>EC contribution of EUR 1,484,000 for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- full-time project manager at Council of Europe (CoE)</li> <li>- half-time secretary at CoE</li> <li>- scientific consultant (full time, four months per year)</li> <li>- subcontracts with the partner countries' governments</li> <li>- costs for travelling and meetings</li> </ul> <p>Contributions in kind of CoE and partner countries</p>	Financial part of progress and final reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support from the partner countries' governments</li> <li>- Experts for national Emerald teams can be mobilised</li> <li>- Political stability within partner countries</li> <li>- Absence of tensions between partner countries for cross-border sites</li> </ul>