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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

**Group of Experts on  
Protected Areas and Ecological Networks**

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4<sup>th</sup> meeting  
18-19 September 2012  
Council of Europe, Strasbourg, France

**Report of the second technical seminar for the setting-up  
of the Emerald network in Norway**

*Document established  
by Mr Tore Opdahl*

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## 1. Status for national work

Tore presented a short background and status report for the Emerald work in Norway (Status Emerald Network\_Tech Seminar\_29\_5\_2012.pdf). Note that all estimates of number and area of candidate sites are just preliminary and have significant uncertainty.

The Norwegian delivery can be expected at the end of 2012. Therefore, it will not be possible to submit the delivery for the Standing Committee this year.

During phase I Norway has not paid any attention to report new species or habitats to the lists of resolution 6 and resolution 4. Marc confirmed that this is not necessary to fulfill phase I, and that Norway could initiate such reporting at a later stage.

### Conclusion

- A formal delivery of candidate sites by the Norwegian Ministry of the Environment (MoE) will be regarded as an end to phase I of the Norwegian project.
- It is not necessary to get any confirmation/adoption from the Standing Committee (SC) to proceed with the evaluation process (phase II).
- No decision regarding Emerald network on Svalbard has been taken by the Norwegian MoE.

## 2. Further process nationally

The last work package (4) will be finished by 1st of July 2012. DN will convert the results from the review process to the Emerald Standard data format. Then a full set of Emerald candidate sites will be submitted to the MoE, with the recommendation of nominating them to the CoE as soon as possible.

Marc suggested us to start filling in the Reference lists for species and habitats, before the delivery of candidate sites. This process will give us a better overview of the data material and could reveal potential problems at an early stage. The reference list is also the main tool and "language" to discuss the sufficiency of the network at the biogeographical seminars. A successful and productive seminar relies heavily on a well-prepared reference list. The necessary knowledge base to fill in the reference list seems to be quite good. Both the report of "Emerald Network in Norway" (DN-report 1b-2007) and the red list evaluation of Norwegian species and habitats (Norwegian Biodiversity Information Center) will be used for this process.

The biogeographical seminars is supposed to gather experts from EEA and the European Topic center for Biodiversity (ETC-BD), national experts on habitats and species and NGOs. Neighborhood countries within the same biogeographic regions should also be invited as observers. A Norwegian seminar is expected to hold around 30-35 participants. This seminar will deal with all of the biogeographical zones in Norway, and the full evaluation process will probably need two seminars, and both for two days.

To keep up with the Emerald calendar, it is necessary to hold a Norwegian Biogeographic seminar in 2013. The best timing for such a seminar would probably be in May or June 2013.

Marc suggested that Norway attend the first Swiss biogeographical seminar in Basel 5 July 2012 as an observer. This is useful as a preparation and planning the Norwegian seminar. The Swiss seminar might be the only opportunity to get such experience before the Norwegian seminar.

The European Environment Agency (EEA) and the Council of Europe (CoE) has confirmed their intentions to support the evaluation process (phase II) for Norway, referring to letters of 5th January 2011 from EEA to CoE, and of 18th January 2011 from CoE to Norway. Necessary steps to start the process were initiated in 2011, as the technical seminar in Norway 6th and 7 September 2011.

## Conclusion

- Norway assume no further confirmation from CoE or EEA is necessary to proceed with phase II.
- Norway has to make agreements with CoE and EEA about a biogeographical seminar for Norway in 2013 as soon as possible.

### 3. Explanatory notes: how to use the Emerald-manual

Norway explained some problems with interpreting the assessment criteria:

Representativity for a habitat has partially been linked to "the relative size of the particular habitat on the site". A habitat could have been set to B, or even C, because of just being "small" relative to the site area. Marc explained that this wrong. Relative size of a habitat compared to the site itself is already documented by given number of total site area and cover (%) of the habitat in question. The Criteria for Representativity should therefore only consider how well the actual habitat suits the definition of the habitat, according to the definition of the habitat type in resolution 4 (1996).

It is rather difficult to use Global assessment in a coherent way. The rationale behind a given assessment could actually indicate a "lot of things". Marc largely supported this view. Nevertheless, he also noted that the most important assessment criteria during the evaluation are Representativity and Relative surface (national territory). Therefore, uncertainty about the Global assessment might not be such a big issue anyway.

## Conclusion

- These issues occurred mostly during the last work package (4). DN will consider, and if necessary adjust these assessments before the final delivery of candidate Emerald sites.
- DN will check the assessment data from neighboring countries (Sweden, Finland and Denmark), to fine-tune the use of assessment criteria.

### 4. Quality check on "most important tables" (biotop, habitat1, species etc...)

The Biotop table seems to miss most of the description data (text). Some of these are regarded as Obligatory for the delivery, as QUALITY, VULNAR, DESIGN and CHARACT. DN cannot promise to fill inn all these text fields individually, as to many sites are involved. We will rather try to use some standard text and phrases, or maybe fact-sheets for the relevant protected area. In this regard DN refers to the fact that descriptive text-fields is of little or no used for automatic evaluation procedures anyway, but has to be read an interpreted individually.

The Species tables (Amphibian/reptiles, Birds, Fishes, Invertebrates, Mammals and Plants) have some problems with missing or invalid values. However, it seems rather easy to fix these issues.

The habitats (Habitat1 table) have not been translated from the old Res. 4 to the new (EUNIS) Res. 4 habitat codes. Several challenges where a single old code has been split into several new codes were identified. Some examples are Sub littoral organogenic concretions (11.25), Dunes (16.2) and River gravel banks (24.2). In general, we perceive great challenges with translating habitats form national classification systems to Emerald/EUNIS. Grasslands and wetland habitats are probably the most difficult to translate.

Designations code used in Emerald Software will be converted to CDDA designations codes. Emerald codes no longer in use will be translated to the relevant CDDA designation code.

## **Conclusion**

- DN will compare the number of reported species and habitats with the neighboring countries (N2000). Significant deviations in numbers will be checked more closely before delivery of Emerald candidate sites.
- DN will translate all habitats to the new habitat codes (EUNIS) before delivery of candidate Emerald sites.
- DN probably needs more advice from CoE and/or ETC-BD about the habitat definition and translation between the classification systems.