

## BUILDING NATURA 2000

For the **Birds Directive**, the Member States designate SPAs which are then automatically integrated in the Natura 2000 network.

For the Birds and Habitats Directive, the ETC/BD receives the new designations and the new proposals from the Member States and produces two updates of the Central European database of SPAs and of SCIs per year (in June and December).

For the **Habitats Directive**, the Sites of Community Importance (SCIs) to be designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are identified by the Commission (in the framework of the biogeographical regions and in agreement with Member States) from National Lists of possible sites proposed by the Member States.

The ETC/BD assists the Commission in analysing the proposals of each member state and building the Community List of SCIs. The member states send their proposals to DG Environment via their permanent representatives using an agreed format (the Standard Data Form) and also in the form of a database (using the Natura 2000 software). The database is then forwarded to the ETC/BD.

After reception of data, the ETC/BD checks the quality of the data. A report listing any technical problems (*e.g.* empty fields) with the database is sent to the concerned Member State (unpublished). They are asked to correct the information by updating and/or completing the database.

The second stage is to evaluate the proposals and to build the Community list of SCI's. DG Environment and the ETC/BD have published a document (Hab. 97/2 rev. 4 18/11/97) to focus the discussions during the biogeographical seminars (see below) and to facilitate the selection of the sites, according to the text of the Habitats Directive.

Annex III of the Habitat Directive provides "criteria" for the two following stage :

- (i) selecting eligible sites at national level (Annex III, stage 1) and
- (ii) assessing the Community importance of sites at EU or biogeographical level (Annex III, stage 2), which will be obviously useful for establishing the Community List.

Seminars are held for each biogeographic region to discuss the scientific assessments of the proposals by Member state (Annex III, stage 2). The DG Environment chairs the discussions during the seminar while the ETC/BD provides a scientific evaluation of the proposals (working documents) :

- a Reference List (distribution of Annex I habitat types and Annex II species by biogeographic region and by Member states) reviewed during the scientific seminar and adopted with the Community list of SCIs (see here current reference lists) ;
- an assessment of the degree of representativity of Annex I habitats and Annex II species present in SCIs proposed by each Member State (unpublished);
- the conclusions giving details of which habitats and species require additional proposals or corrections to existing proposals (see here current conclusions).

DG Environment, together with the Member states, established a format and timetable for the Biogeographic seminars (HAB 97/3 Rev. 3 10/11/97).

The Biogeographic seminars review the proposals from a scientific perspective and include the following groups of participants:-

- The European Commission,
- Member States,
- Individual experts invited by EEA-ETC/BD,

- Representative of the [European Habitat Forum](#), (Nature conservation NGOs)
- Representative of the [Forum Natura 2000](#), (land owner & users organisations)
- Representative of accession countries or other Member States (as observers).

Since 1996, at least two [seminars](#), per biogeographic region have been held, supplemented in some instances by bilateral meetings (discussions between DG Environment and a Member State).

The ETC/BD prepare the "Community list of pSCI for the biogeographic region" following the criteria for the selection of the sites given in Annex III, stage 1. The list (of selected sites, priority characteristics, areas and co-ordinates of each site) is validated by each Member states concerned by the biogeographic region and published as a Commission decision in the Official Journal.

By December 2005, five Community lists of sites had been adopted for the EU15 and covered the [Macaronesia](#), [Alpine](#), [Atlantic](#), [Continental](#) and [Boreal](#) regions.

The information on the Sites of Community Importance (published Community lists) and on the Special Conservation Areas are available on the European Nature Information System ([EUNIS](#) – information system of EEA – ETC/BD). Only the public data listed by the Member States are provided on the website.

During 2005, DG Environment and ETC/BD started the process for the 10 Member States who joined the EU in 2004 with seminars for the Alpine, Pannonian and Boreal regions and bilateral meetings with Cyprus and Malta for the Mediterranean region. The Continental seminar is planned for April 2006.