

# Funding for Nature and Climate from ESIF Funds

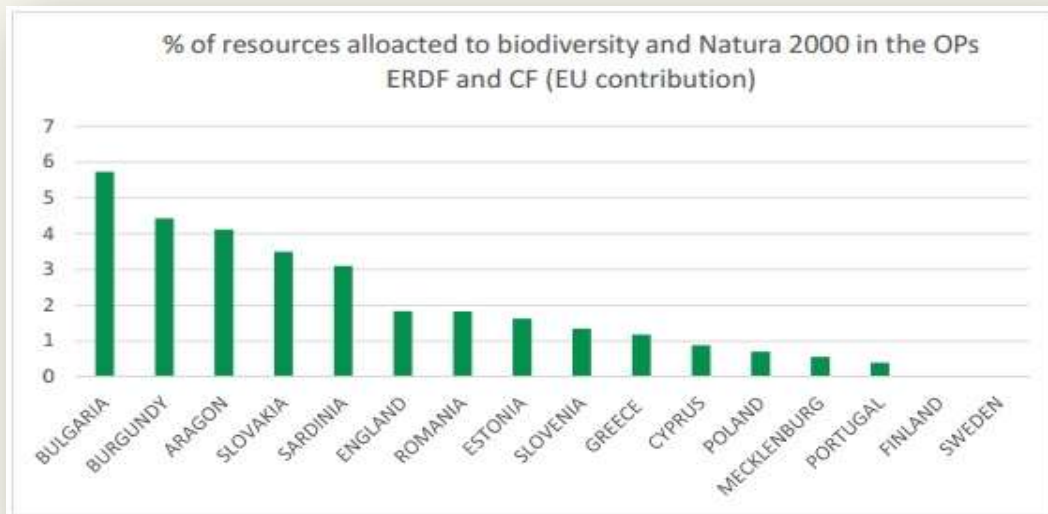
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Nature Conservation and EU  
Financing – Challenges, Best  
Practices and Options



## ESIF Funding for Natura 2000: Where PAs meet PAs.

- From the Danube delta to the Carpathian Mountains, our region - *the Green Heart of Europe* - includes many of Europe's last virgin and natural forests, intact rivers and wetlands & endemic species.
- Also, coverage of the Natura 2000 network is at its most extensive: *Bulgaria (34,4%), Slovakia (29,5%), Romania (22,5%), Hungary (21,4%)*.
- This has not been missed by ESIF funds management authorities:





# Priority Actions Getting Priority Funding ~ Most Always

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## **PROS:**

- The *Priority Action Frameworks (PAF)* in our region are developed with specific intent to be financed by ERDF and CF (in fact, in BG and RO, they were co-developed with respective OP instruments)
- *Climate adaptation measures*, focused on ecosystems, have been expressly included in PAFs/OPs (“green infrastructure measures”)

## **CONS:**

- Significant funding gaps remain (Romanian case - € 335 million earmarked for 2014-2020; € 500 million annual Natura 2000 costs)
  - ESIF funding often covers administrative & management activities, while actual restoration & status improvement co-funded by LIFE.
  - Green infrastructure, connectivity and landscape-level restoration low on priorities (e.g. not a single GI flood protection project in BG)
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# The devil is hidden in the details of implementation

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## WHO:

- Beneficiaries of ESIF projects are not the same as PA managers (bad practice: no PA managers; good practice: PA custodians)
- Financing requirements limit Natura 2000 restoration candidates (bad: excessive financial corrections; good: ESIF co-funding LIFE)

## WHERE:

- Poor siting for EU-funded projects within Natura 2000 areas (bad: road and RES projects in PAs; good: respecting PA restrictions)
- Funded TEN-T road/rail projects significantly overlap Natura 2000 (bad: no alternative on cost/absorption grounds, good: proper AAs)

## HOW:

- Programme/project KPIs lack relevance, objectivity and specificity. (bad KPIs: “No. of documents created”, “No. of species targeted”; good KPIs: real quantitative/qualitative change of status achieved)



# The perfect EU-funded conservation project is possible!

**Location:** Danube Delta

**Natura 2000:** Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve

**Landowner:** Local Council

**ESIF programme:** Operational Programme  
“Environment” 2007-2013, Priority Axis 4 (ERDF)

**Project Cost:** € 2.5 million

**Project Duration:** March 2012-December 2015

**Project Summary:** A first of its kind ecological reconstruction of the Danube Delta implemented by the local community, in partnership with WWF.

**Project Benefits:** 924 ha agricultural land were reconnected to natural wetlands/lakes, improving conditions for plants, birds and fish. 18 habitats were preserved. Reed harvest and bird tourism business opportunities were created. The local community supported the project intensely.





# Thank you

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