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NATURA 2000
MANAGEMENT P R O G R A M M E
(2015–2020)

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LIST OF ACRONYMS USED

ARSO	Slovenian Environment Agency
ARRS	Slovenian Research Agency
CEIA	comprehensive environmental impact assessment
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
EU	European Union
GERK	graphical agricultural unit of agricultural holding
FMP	forestry management plan
FMU	forestry management unit
FECM	forestry-environment-climate measures (within rural development)
HT	habitat type
IzVRS	Institute for Water of the Republic of Slovenia
PI	public institute
CP	conservation plan
CPR	conservation plan for restoration
LP	landscape park
KGZS	Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia
AEP	agri-environment measures (within rural development)
AEC	agri-environment-climate payments (within rural development)
LIFE+ (the 2007–13 period)	Financial instrument of the European Union for the environment and nature LIFE+
LIFE	Financial instrument of the European Union for the environment and nature LIFE (periods outside the 2007–13 period)
MKGP	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food
MOP	Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning
WMP	River basin management plan for the Danube Basin and the Adriatic Sea Basin 2009–2015
Natura sites	special protected areas (Natura sites) in possible special areas of conservation (potential Natura sites)
PAF Management Programme	prioritised action framework referred to in Article 8 of the Habitats Directive Natura 2000 management programme (2015–2020)
SPA	special protection areas based on the Birds Directive
SAC	special areas of conservation based on the Habitats Directive
FFP	fish–farming plan
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
WWF	World Fund for Nature
ZGS	Slovenia Forest Service
ZON	Nature Conservation Act
ZRSVN	Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation
ZVKDS	Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia
ZVPJ	Cave Protection Act
ZZRS	Fisheries Research Institute

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Legal framework for the Natura 2000 management programme

Legal framework of the European Union

The obligation to protect special protection areas – Natura 2000 sites – arises from the 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), last amended with the Council Directive 2013/17/EU of 13 May 2013 adapting certain directives in the field of environment, due to the accession of the Republic of Croatia (OJ L 158, 10.6.2013, p.193) (hereinafter referred to as '**Habitats Directive**') related to 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), last amended with Council Directive 2013/17/EU of 13 May 2013 adapting certain directives in the field of environment, due to the accession of the Republic of Croatia (OJ L 158, 10.6.2013, p.193) (hereinafter referred to as '**Birds Directive**').

The Habitats Directive requires Member States to designate potential special areas of conservation (hereinafter referred to as 'pSAC'), while the Birds Directive requires Member States to designate special protection areas (hereinafter referred to as 'SPA'). Proposals for pSAC made by Member States are approved by the European Commission. Then Member States must change the status of these areas to special areas of conservation (hereinafter referred to as 'SAC'). The Natura 2000 network is composed of SACs and SPAs.

The Habitats Directive requires that Member States, from the day of their accession to the European Union, prevent the deterioration of natural habitats and the habitats of species, as well as the disturbance of species for which the Natura 2000 sites have been designated¹, in so far as such disturbance could be significant in relation to the objectives of this directive. This provision is applicable to pSACs², SACs and SPAs designated in accordance with the Birds Directive in conjunction with Article 7 of the Habitats Directive. In addition, the Habitats Directive requires Member States to determine the necessary conservation measures which include the appropriate management plans, if necessary, prepared especially for these areas or measures included in other development plans, and appropriate legislative, administrative or contractual measures which correspond to the ecological requirements of natural habitat types referred to in Annex I and types referred to in Annex II in these areas³.

The obligations referred to in both directives have been fully transposed into Slovenian legislation with the nature conservation regulations.

Through the Europe 2020 Strategy approved by the European Council in 2010, EU Member States have committed themselves to pursue the objective of three growths: inclusive, smart and sustainable. The Strategy also includes the provision of ecosystem services and better conservation of biodiversity. In 2011, the European Commission adopted the *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020*. In December 2011, the Council of the European Union confirmed the objectives from the Communication and took additional measures regarding the latter. This management programme also takes into account the aforementioned Communication and Council decisions.

Slovenian legal framework

The Environmental Protection Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, nos. 39/06 – official consolidated text, 49/06 – ZMetD, 66/06 – Constitutional Court Decision, 33/07 – ZPNačrt, 57/08 – ZFO-1A,

¹ Second paragraph of Article 6.

² Designated in accordance with the criteria and the procedure referred to in the fifth paragraph of Article 4 of the Habitats Directive.

³ In the first paragraph of Article 6.

70/08, 108/09, 108/09 – ZPNačrt-A, 48/12, 57/12 and 92/13; hereinafter referred to as 'ZVO-1') establishes a systemic framework for nature conservation whose significant part is to preserve biodiversity. The ZVO-1 thus regulates the protection of the environment from overburdening as the fundamental condition for sustainable development, and within this framework, determines the fundamental principles of environmental protection, measures of environmental protection, monitoring of the state of the environment and information about the environment, economic and financial instruments of environmental protection, public services of environmental protection and other issues related to environmental protection. The objective of environmental protection is to promote and direct social development which will provide long-term resources for human health, well-being and quality of life and also preserve biodiversity.

Nature conservation is part of the environmental protection system with joint planning and programming, environmental impact assessments, arrangements of the monitoring of the environmental status, publicity regarding environmental data and access to them, environmental fees for the use of natural resources, non-governmental organisations in the field of environmental protection which operate in the public interest, and arrangements for concessions for natural resources. Thus the ZVO-1 regulates a joint national environmental protection programme which also contains the National Nature Protection Programme 2005–2015. The operational programmes for environmental protection are defined in Article 36 of the ZVO-1. They are adopted by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia (hereinafter referred to as 'Government') according to the procedure stipulated by Article 37 of the ZVO-1.

The Nature Conservation Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, nos. 96/04 – official consolidated text, 61/06 – ZDru-1, 8/10 – ZSKZ-B and 46/14; hereinafter referred to as 'ZON') establishes a comprehensive nature conservation system with the aim to protect valuable natural features and preserve biodiversity. It defines the subjects of protection, means and measures of protection, organisation, financing, programming and planning of nature conservation and other issues necessary for providing effectiveness in the field. Listed among the protected subjects in the area of preservation of biodiversity which are determined or determinable as priorities are habitat types which are preserved as a priority in a favourable status, habitats of protected and internationally protected wild flora and fauna, important ecological areas and special protected areas (hereinafter referred to as 'Natura 2000 sites'), which compose the European ecological network. The subjects of protection are also endangered, protected and internationally protected wild flora and fauna. All subjects of protection are determined with a corresponding executive act, an act by the minister responsible for nature conservation, or a decree by the Government.

Procedures regarding Natura 2000 sites are stipulated by the ZON defining Natura 2000 sites as ecologically important areas which are critical for conservation or achievement of a favourable status of birds – special protection areas (SPAs), and other species of wild flora and fauna, their habitats and habitat types – special areas of conservation (SACs) in the European Union. Due to different procedures in determining areas, the Government Decree defines SPAs as Natura 2000 sites. Until the decision is reached by the European Commission through internal legislation, special areas of conservation are designated only as potential special areas of conservation (pSACs) or potential Natura sites. No later than six years following the decision by the European Commission, Member States must define them as SACs. The Republic of Slovenia designated SACs, which also became special protected areas or Natura sites, with a decree in January 2012⁴ and prescribed that detailed conservation objectives and measures to attain them as determined in the Operational programme – Natura 2000 management programme must be used to protect these areas until a new management programme pursuant to the amended Article 13 of the decree has been adopted. In accordance with the Commission note, the designation of SAC must include the determination of conservation objectives and measures to attain them which correspond to the ecological requirements of species and habitat types for which an individual area is designated⁵.

⁴ Decree amending the Decree on special protection areas (Natura 2000 sites), (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. [8/12](#))

⁵ Commission Note on the Designation of Special Areas of Conservation, May 2012 (http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/habitatsdirective/docs/commission_note.pdf)

The protection of special protection areas and possible special areas of conservation includes the protection of a favourable status of species of wild flora and fauna, their habitats and habitat types. The protection is provided through measures to attain conservation objectives (hereinafter referred to as 'conservation measures'). Conservation measures are measures according to the ZON and measures according to other regulations that may contribute to the conservation of Natura 2000 sites, which include various sustainable management or natural resources management plans as well as protection forms based on contracts according to, for example, regulations on agriculture (national and EU)⁶.

Conservation measures are defined with a special management programme adopted by the Government as an operational programme for environmental protection content and adoption procedure as stipulated by the ZVO-1 (second paragraph of Article 33 of the ZON).

Conservation measures according to the ZON are direct and indirect. Direct measures include especially contractual protection and stewardship, restoration, as well as temporary protection and permanent protection. Among the most important indirect measures of Natura site and potential Natura site protection is the acceptability assessment of impacts of plans or activities in nature on conservation objectives at Natura sites. The acceptability assessment is regulated for plans within the implementation of the comprehensive environmental impact assessment procedure which are carried out on the basis of regulations on environmental protection, while for activities in nature, the assessment is carried out within the environmental approval, nature protection approval, permits for activities affecting nature or any other permit. The acceptability assessment is more specifically regulated on the basis of the ZON (Articles 33a, 101, 101a, 101b, 101c, 101d, 101e, 101f, 104a and 105a), the Decree on special protection areas (Natura 2000 areas), and the Rules on the assessment of acceptability of impacts caused by the execution of plans and activities affecting nature in protected areas (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, nos. 130/04, 53/06, 38/10 and 3/11), and has been carried out in accordance with the requirements from the Habitats Directive from the day of accession of Slovenia to the European Union.

From the collection of measures set in legislation, the management programme determines those conservation measures which are required to attain the conservation objectives of Natura sites, and regulates the inclusion of expert content in legal, administrative and contractual measures, and most frequently the inclusion in the system of other plans (e.g. protected area management plans, forestry management plans, fisheries management plans or fish farming plans, and water management plans). Measures to preserve biodiversity and the valuable natural feature protection system are also included in measures of cultural heritage protection. While protection and development guidelines refer to the cultural landscape or monuments to cultivated nature protected pursuant to the Cultural Heritage Protection Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, nos. 16/08, 123/08, 8/11 – ORZVKD39, 90/12 and 111/13; hereinafter referred to as 'ZVKD-1'), protection and development guidelines for valuable natural features are determined in agreement with the minister responsible for cultural heritage.

Article 10 of the ZON stipulates that its provisions regarding the obligation to preserve biodiversity and protect valuable natural features do not apply to measures to:

- deter imminent danger to life or health of people or property;
- save people and property;
- carry out urgent measures of national defence.

The provisions do not apply to the duration of imminent danger to life or health of people or property. In such cases, the measure which will be least harmful for nature while achieving the same effects is selected. Based on the provisions of the Protection Against Natural and Other Disasters Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, nos. 1/06 – official consolidated text and 97/10), activities in the event of natural disasters are managed by the Commander of the Civil Protection. Programmes for the implementation of activities to eliminate the consequences of natural disasters pursuant to the Natural Disaster Recovery Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, nos. 114/05 – official consolidated text, 90/07, 102/07, 40/12 – ZUJF and 17/14) are adopted by the Government.

⁶ Second paragraph of Article 33 of the ZON.

The Decree on special protection areas (Natura 2000 areas) (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, nos. 49/04, 110/04, 59/07, 43/08, 8/12, 33/13, 35/13 – corr., 39/13 – Constitutional Court Decision and 3/14) stipulates special protection areas or Natura 2000 sites, conservation objectives for these areas and protection guidelines for the preservation or achievement of a favourable status of species of wild flora and fauna, their habitats and habitat types, whose preservation is in the interest of the European Union, and other types of code of conduct to preserve these areas.

The Decree on special protection areas (Natura 2000 areas) regulates in more detail plans for the protection of Natura 2000 sites and potential Natura sites. Such planning is very similar in both areas. Therefore, further in the programme, special protection areas and possible areas of conservation are jointly addressed as “Natura sites”. The difference occurs in the financial and temporal subordination of measures, and nature conservation tasks in view of the measures at Natura sites, which is stated in appropriate cases. The basic planning document is the Natura 2000 management programme. It is intended to attain conservation objectives at Natura sites, and includes the determination of detailed conservation objectives, conservation measures or more detailed protection guidelines, their holders or contractors, and financial resources for each Natura site. A more detailed explanation of the programme stipulated by the Decree is described in Chapter 1.5 Management programme structure. Conservation measures are prepared with due consideration of the characteristics of Natura sites, including socio-demographic, economic and cultural characteristics of the actual situation in the ecosystem, and existing and expected risk factors.

The Decree also stipulates that the management programme is a nature conservation operational plan adopted by the Government at the proposal by the Ministry in accordance with the regulations on nature conservation.

The Cave Protection Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, nos. 2/04, 61/06 – ZDru-1 and 46/14 – ZON-C; hereinafter referred to as ‘ZVPJ’) regulates the protection and use of caves, protection regimes, conservation measures and other types of code of conduct, including the restoration of polluted or damaged caves. The Act is stated here, since many Natura sites have been designated due to species dependant on caves and to the cave habitat type.

Caves are natural resources of national importance and are owned by the state.

The provisions of the ZVPJ are used as a priority for cave protection; while subsidiarily, the provisions of nature conservation regulations are also used. The ZVPJ may systemically be treated as an act on the protection of one type of natural valuable features, i.e. caves. The ZVPJ thus regulates the mandatory management rules regarding caves, whereby it addresses all possible aspects of human behaviour which poses a risk to the existence of caves and all their valuable features. Therefore, the conduct when discovering caves or parts of caves is further regulated which requires special qualification of persons discovering and exploring caves. The mandatory protection regime regulates the possibility to enter a cave which is free, supervised or prohibited in accordance with the level of endangerment of the cave which may be caused by human presence in it. The protection regime which regulates the mode of operation in the cave is regulated in detail by the system of prohibitions and exactly determined exceptions which mostly relate to the issue of special permits. The protection regime also includes a mandatory mode of operation when public interests prevail over the interests of conserving a valuable natural feature and a cave may face destruction. For cave protection particularly, cave conservation measures which include stewardship, protection, temporary protection and rehabilitation may be carried out. These are nature conservation measures regulated under the ZON, whereby a modified and elaborated form of cave stewardship has been implemented for cave protection. Caves may be secured in accordance with the method and procedure regulated by the ZON. Additional cave protection through protection is justified by the fact that protection regimes pursuant to the ZVPJ refer solely to the operation in the discovery and exploration of caves, operations in caves, and in connection with permits for access to caves.

Permitted use of caves is only possible on the basis of a granted concession for cave use, whereas a concession for the supply of drinking water to the population is not necessary. Numerous legal provisions which also regulate permits for open cave arrangements are bound to the implementation of such a concession

Acts on the establishment of protected areas

Among the most important and traditional conservation measures for nature conservation is the protection or establishment of a protected area. Protected areas may be narrow or wide. Wide protected areas include landscape, regional and national parks. They are established to protect valuable natural features, and to preserve biodiversity and landscape diversity. In narrow protected areas which include natural monuments, strict nature reserves and nature reserves are used to preserve biodiversity.

Several protected areas have been established in Slovenia, whose part or entire surface is at a Natura site or sites. Generally, the protection of Natura sites is also provided when preserving biodiversity in protected areas.

The establishment of protected areas, protection and development objectives, protection regimes and other types of mandatory code of conduct, and the method of managing protected areas and the operator are determined by a legal act on the establishment of such areas, which may be an act, a Government decree or an ordinance of local communities. The tasks and public authorisation of the operator of protected areas are roughly determined by the ZON, while the articles of association of a protected area define in more detail the tasks of the public service in view of the characteristics of an individual area.

The most important acts on the establishment of protected areas encompassing Natura 2000 sites, where management of the area through public services or concessions granted is carried out, are the Triglav National Park Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, nos. 52/10 and 46/14 – ZON-C), the Škocjan Caves Regional Park Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, nos. 57/96 and 46/14 – ZON-C), the Trebče Memorial Park Act (Official Gazette of the SRS, nos. 1/81, 42/86, Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, nos. 8/90, 110/02 – ZGO-1 and 119/02 – ZON-A), the Decree on the Sečoveljske soline Landscape Park (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, nos. 29/01 and 46/14 – ZON-C), the Decree on the Goričko Landscape Park (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, nos. 101/03 and 46/14 – ZON-C), the Decree on Škocjanski zatok Nature Reserve (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, nos. 75/13 and 46/14 – ZON-C), the Decree on the Strunjan Landscape Park (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, nos. 107/04, 114/04 – corr., 83/06, 71/08, 77/10 and 46/14 – ZON-C), the Decree on the Kolpa Landscape Park (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, nos. 85/06 and 46/14 – ZON-C), and the Decree on the Ljubljansko barje Landscape Park (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, nos. 112/08 and 46/14 – ZON-C). Such areas under municipal protection are the Notranjska Regional Park, the Logarska dolina Landscape Park and the Landscape Park of the Pivka intermittent lakes.

1.2 Purpose of the management programme

The basic purpose of the management programme is to define the fulfilment of obligations to protect special protection areas – Natura 2000 sites in the 2015–2020 period imposed on the Republic of Slovenia by the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive (see Chapter 1.1). Slovenia will thus attain one of the objectives of the European Union, i.e. to provide a favourable conservation status of species of wild flora and fauna, and habitat types of Community interest. By implementing this programme, the Government will contribute to the attainment of the sustainable development objectives.

The management programme defines in more detail conservation objectives and measures at Natura sites, and also the sectors and operators responsible for the implementation of conservation measures (in Appendix 6.1 “Objectives and measures” due to extensiveness). This will facilitate horizontal connections with strategic plans and development programmes. In addition, the management programme determines priority projects which facilitate exploiting the opportunities at Natura 2000 sites for local and regional development, jobs and economic growth, and cultural heritage preservation taking into account the economic, social, cultural and demographic characteristics, and sustainable development principles. The management programme sets the basis for integrated LIFE projects and for the drawing of funds. It also determines activities for the elimination of insufficient required research, expertise, data and monitoring.

1.3 Natura 2000 network status

Slovenia is among countries with the greatest biodiversity as confirmed by numerous foreign and domestic studies. Its diversity is also shown by a high share of its territory included in the Natura 2000 network.

The analysis of the attainment of the objectives of the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy of Slovenia⁷ establishes that despite a variety of protection regimes and considerable improvements in certain areas (Natura 2000, protected areas, introduction of agri-environmental payments, conservation measures in forests, planning in the field of freshwater fishing), the conservation status of many habitats and species has deteriorated in a relatively short period of time. The deterioration is especially the result of increased pressure on biodiversity due to the expansion of settled areas, the construction of industrial areas and traffic routes, and the intensification of agricultural land in flat areas, the abolishment of agricultural land use in high and remote areas.

In most EU Member States, including Slovenia, the Natura 2000 network is designated and includes the most preserved habitats of European endangered species and habitat types. In all EU Member States, the review of their conservation status is carried out every six years according to the largely uniform methodology. The latest reports on the conservation status of species and habitat types on the basis of Article 17 of the Habitats Directive and Article 12 of the Birds Directive comprise the period between 2007 and 2012⁸. These assessments were the basis for this document which is also partly based on other suitable literature.

Forests cover 71 per cent of the Natura 2000 network in Slovenia. Among non-forest areas, utilised agricultural land covers approximately 20 per cent of the Natura network. The most important are extensive meadows. In terms of surface, inland waters represent only slightly more than one per cent of the network, but they are the habitat of many Natura species and habitat types. An important role in the Natura 2000 network is played by caves which are the subject of conservation in over 70 areas (out of a total of 354). Human dwellings are important for the reproduction, resting and wintering of certain species. Therefore, some built-up areas are also essential at Natura 2000 sites. These are especially birds (e.g. white stork, Eurasian scops owl) and mammals (e.g. bats).

The Government has already adopted the *Operational programme – Natura 2000 management programme for the 2007-2013* period for the period of the expiring financial perspective. The programme determined detailed conservation objectives for each species or habitat type at Natura sites, and conservation measures and guidelines to attain these objectives. An analysis of the attainment of the objectives and the implementation of measures⁹ was carried out. The programmes attempt to eliminate the deficiencies of the previous programme.

The preparation and adoption of management plans for protected areas are delayed due to the substantive complexity and extensiveness of tasks which arise from numerous sectoral responsibilities the size of park surfaces, and the lack of personnel capacities in public institutions and at the Ministry¹⁰. The target share of newly established protected areas was not attained due to limited human and financial resources. The approach to both fields in this management programme was modified.

The mechanism of contractual protection and stewardship only functioned to a limited extent, since funds were not provided, and regulations on caves were not adopted was the prerequisite for such functioning¹¹.

⁷ Kus Veenvliet Jana: [Analysis of attaining the objectives of the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy of Slovenia](#). Zavod Symbiosis, 2012

⁸ http://www.zrsvn.si/sl/informacija.asp?id_meta_type=65&id_informacija=579

http://www.zrsvn.si/sl/informacija.asp?id_meta_type=65&id_informacija=820

⁹ <http://www.natura2000.gov.si/index.php?id=274>, Analysis of the objectives and measures of the Natura 2000 management programme

¹⁰ http://www.natura2000.gov.si/fileadmin/user_upload/LIFE_Upravljanje/A1_A2_Krovni.pdf

¹¹ http://www.natura2000.gov.si/fileadmin/user_upload/LIFE_Upravljanje/A1_A2_Krovni.pdf

The latter is being simplified, and the acquisition of funds for the implementation of contractual protection is also anticipated from project resources.

The drafting of nature protection guidelines for FMP FMU was carried out as planned. Between 2007 and 2012, 140 nature protection guidelines were drafted which were used to introduce the measures planned with the programme in FMP FMU. An analysis of the implementation showed that guidelines related to sustainable forest management were being observed. However, the fulfilment of special requirements of certain specialised qualifying species and habitat types (e.g. woodpeckers, grouse and minority habitat types) must be enhanced¹². More attention in the implementation of this programme is focused on the development of the planning system at the implementation level, while Natura 2000 management is supplemented with active payable measures to improve special requirements of certain qualifying species and habitat types.

In 2012, the objectives regarding adjusted agricultural use were only attained in 11 per cent of areas. The reasons include insufficient inclusion in the so-called biodiversity AEP measures due to entries in more competitive and general (horizontal) measures, unattractive payment for biodiversity AEP measures, insufficient presentation and training. This is also reflected in the rapid disappearance of meadows rich in species at certain Natura 2000 sites (e.g. the Ljubljana marshes, Goriško, the Šentjernejsko polje Plain, etc.), which is mostly the result of their ploughing and the intensification of use. The preservation of cultural elements (hedges, ponds, individual trees, etc.) was also insufficient. The objectives were also not attained due to overgrowing which is the result of complete or partial abandonment of agricultural use from various economic and social reasons¹³. For the period between 2015 and 2020, changes regarding ploughing were introduced at the level of EU regulations (Direct Payment Regulation which introduces areas without ploughing) and also regarding landscape elements (Decree on the regulatory requirements for management and good agricultural and environmental conditions (cross compliance) in farming). The approach to greater inclusion in suitable agri-environment-climate measures and requirements was modified for the period between 2015 and 2020 so that it facilitates better attainment of conservation objectives.

The management programme 2007 had been adopted prior to the adoption of the first water management plans (WMP) and the programme of measures. Therefore, it was based on measures anticipated according to applicable legislation, which could contribute to providing a favourable status of species and habitat types. WMP and the programme of measures included strategic measures. The implementation of conservation measures was made difficult by the lack of a long-term water management plan and insufficient definition of the availability of surface waters for use. An analysis showed that the inclusion and implementation of conservation measures was carried out in compliance with standard administrative procedures. In the field of regulation of watercourses, a huge discrepancy exists between conservation measures planned in the programme in 2007 and WMP, and the actual situation in the field¹⁴. Therefore, the measures in this management programme are more focused on standard administrative procedures, and more useful WMP and the programme of measures 2015–2021 in terms of implementation.

Monitoring the status of species and habitats and the scope of monitoring for establishing the conservation status of species and habitat types at the national level or at the level of biogeographic regions increased, but not to the extent planned¹⁵. Therefore, the programme adds financing sources.

The inclusion of research activities anticipated in the programme in the co-financing of research programmes and projects was minimally carried out¹⁶.

Based on these findings, the measures in the Natura 2000 management programme and in operational programmes for drawing EU funds were amended and corrected.

¹² http://www.natura2000.gov.si/fileadmin/user_upload/LIFE_Upravljanje/A1_A2_Analiza_gozdarstvo.pdf

¹³ http://www.natura2000.gov.si/fileadmin/user_upload/LIFE_Upravljanje/A1_A2_Analiza_kmetijstvo.pdf

¹⁴ http://www.natura2000.gov.si/fileadmin/user_upload/LIFE_Upravljanje/A1_A2_vode.pdf

¹⁵ http://www.natura2000.gov.si/fileadmin/user_upload/LIFE_Upravljanje/A1_A2_Krovni.pdf

¹⁶ http://www.natura2000.gov.si/fileadmin/user_upload/LIFE_Upravljanje/A1_A2_Krovni.pdf

1.4 Structure of the Management Programme

The mandatory content of operational programmes – Natura 2000 management programmes are defined in the Decree on special protection areas (Natura 2000 areas) and this programme has also been prepared in accordance with this Decree.

The programme determines:

- i. detailed conservation objectives which generally refer to zones, and arise from the conservation objectives stipulated by the Decree on special protection areas and from conservation objectives to preserve habitats of endangered species of wild flora and fauna, and habitat types, which are preserved in a favourable state as a priority in accordance with the regulations on nature conservation, and adopted strategies and programmes with which this field is planned;
- ii. measures to attain conservation objectives, whereby the set of measures is determined in view of individual Natura sites, i.e.:
 - nature conservation measures with a statement regarding operators, deadlines and financial sources;
 - measures of modified use of natural resources with a statement regarding the planned use of a natural asset, detailed protection guidelines which are taken into account during the preparation of the plan, and the operator of the plan;
 - measures of adjusted agricultural practice which are used to attain conservation objectives and the manner to provide these measures;
 - water management measures with a statement regarding water management plans, detailed protection guidelines which are considered in the plan, and the operator of the plan;
 - measures of cultural heritage protection which are used to attain conservation objectives and the manner to provide these measures;
 - other measures required to provide a favourable status of species of wild flora and fauna, and habitat types;
- iii. indicators which must be regularly monitored to establish the efficiency of measures to achieve a favourable status of species of wild flora and fauna, their habitats and habitat types with a statement regarding operators, deadlines and financial sources;
- iv. measures of protection and activities required to provide the connection with the European ecological network;
- v. research activities in the field of basic and applied sciences required to improve knowledge of the ecology of species of wild flora and fauna, and habitat types.

Natura sites addressed by the management programme are special protection areas (SPA) designated on the basis of the Birds Directives, and special areas of conservation (SAC) and possible special areas of conservation (pSAC) based on the Habitats Directive.

The management programme also determines **indicators** which must be regularly monitored to establish the efficiency of measures to achieve a favourable status of species of wild flora and fauna, their habitats and habitat types.

The programme includes detailed conservation objectives and measures for their attainment determined in the table in Appendix 6.1 “Objectives and measures”. It also includes priority projects for the attainment of the programme objectives financed from the Operational Programme for the Implementation of the European Cohesion Policy 2014–2020, the basis for the implementation of integrated LIFE projects and community-led local development for the priority area of nature conservation (hereinafter referred to as ‘CLLD nature conservation’) stated in Appendix 6.4 “Planned projects”. Projects financed from activities for the elimination of insufficient required research, expertise, data and monitoring are determined in Appendix 6.5 “Monitoring and research”.

2 DETAILED CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

General conservation objectives determined by the Decree amending the Decree on special protection areas (Natura 2000 areas) (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 35/13) apply to Natura sites and are uniform for the entire area. Regarding SAC, the European Commission states in its note¹⁷ that conservation objectives must be determined so that they contribute to the preservation or achievement of a favourable conservation status of species or habitat types (which is determined at the level of biogeographic region in the country). Due to similarity and changes in this status, it is sensible to determine it in an act applicable over a certain period – the management programme.

The management programme determines detailed conservation objectives in Appendix 6.1 “Objectives and measures”, which generally refer to each species or habitat type (stated in this appendix under “Name of species/HT”, “Scientific name of species” and “EU HT code”) at each Natura 2000 site (stated in this appendix under “Site ID” and “Name of site”) and arise from conservation objectives in accordance with the Decree on special protection areas (Natura 2000 areas). Considering the situation in nature, detailed conservation objective (in the appendix under “Detailed conservation objectives for”) determine whether the actual situation must be preserved, restored or improved for species and habitat types to be preserved or restored to a favourable conservation status. Detailed conservation objectives are determined on the basis of reference values of a favourable status. The category of reference values was introduced by the European Commission when implementing the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive¹⁸.

The conservation objectives of a favourable status based on reference values determine key requirements which must be met for a species or habitat type to have a favourable status. They define the population size (in species with a natural variation of the population size, this is a multiannual average), the habitat or habitat type size, and for each species or habitat type, specific structures in habitats and the use of habitats or processes required to maintain a favourable status of species and habitat types.

Detailed conservation objectives determined in Appendix 6.1 “Objectives and measures” generally refer to Natura site zones shown in the Nature Conservation Atlas¹⁹ and on the website of the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation²⁰.

In certain places, Natura sites (special protection areas and special areas of conservation or possible special areas of conservation) overlap. The appendix additionally names such sites in the column “Group of sites”. At sites designated for several species and habitat types, detailed conservation objectives are coordinated so that they do not contradict each other. In measures carried out with nature conservation guidelines, sectoral measures at overlapping sites are determined in the procedure of issuing nature conservation guidelines. Target areas were determined for agriculture, which refer to zones in combined areas and are thus stated in special Appendix 6.3 “Target AEC areas”. In the implementation of horizontal measures, overlapping does not play any role; therefore, the determination of zones for potential entries is not required.

¹⁷ Commission Note on Setting Conservation Objectives for Natura 2000 sites

(http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/habitatsdirective/docs/commission_note2.pdf)

¹⁸ EUROPEAN COMMISSION. July 2011. Assessment, monitoring and reporting under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive: Explanatory Notes and Guidance. Final Version.

(http://circa.europa.eu/Public/irc/env/monnat/library?l=/guidelines_reporting&vm=detailed&sb=Title)

¹⁹ www.naravovarstveni-atlas.si

²⁰ www.zrsvn.si

3 MEASURES TO ATTAIN CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

In compliance with the note of the European Commission²¹, conservation measures are a method to attain detailed conservation objectives. These measures are carried out by public services and individuals, especially land owners. The behaviour of individuals is determined by sectoral legislation whose key areas include binding sectoral plans for the use and protection of natural resources (for forests, fish, wild animals). A favourable status of species and habitat types at Natura 2000 sites in Slovenia may be provided by sectoral plans and measures for managing natural resources (forestry, fisheries, hunting, water management), and suitable spatial planning. On agricultural land without sectoral planning, the behaviours of owners may be guided by financial instruments of the Common Agricultural Policy, especially of rural development.

Where there are sectoral plans, conservation measures are written in more detail and target-oriented. In these cases, nature conservation topics enter natural resource management through nature conservation guidelines and opinions. In these cases, specific guidelines to attain detailed conservation objectives or implement similar conservation measures may be additionally determined in nature conservation guidelines.

Where there are no nature conservation guidelines or implementing (sectoral) measures for natural resource management must be provided at the highest planning level, conservation measures are included by participating in the programming procedure of operation programmes which determine natural resource management.

In addition to measures which directly create habitats (forest, agricultural, fisheries, water management), the subject of the Natura 2000 management programme is also other measures which are not directly linked to the creation of habitats.

Measures include measures related to municipal public services. These are tasks the services carry out according to other regulations and are important for the attainment of conservation objectives. The programme merely determines the method for their execution.

Extensive and relatively well-maintained nature with numerous interesting species and habitats facilitates experiencing, and learning about, species of wild flora and fauna, and natural processes. A development opportunity for Slovenia also lies in experiencing these assets through its tourist offer, and in connection between experiencing cultural heritage, and high-quality food and lifestyle. Therefore, this document lists opportunities for the co-financing of investments and services in the sustainable development of ecotourism which is connected with the marketing of biodiversity at or around Natura sites.

Certain principles apply to all types of measures to attain conservation objectives and are summarised in this introduction. Conservation measures are determined in Appendix 6.1 "Objectives and measures" of this programme where the content of a measure is also stated (under "conservation measures"). Also stated is the sector responsible for the implementation of measures (under "sector"). In accordance with the Decree on special protection areas (Natura 2000 areas), this most frequently involves the responsibility for nature conservation measures, measures of modified use of natural resources (forestry, hunting, fisheries), measures of adjusted agricultural practice and water management measures. In certain cases, measures are not required, while other cases include other measures of spatial management, cultural heritage preservation, etc. Since sectoral legislation makes this possible, sectoral measures are stated and where sectoral legislation determines operators, the operator is stated under "operator".

The implementation area for each of the aforementioned measures or guidelines is the whole or part of the zone of a species or habitat type, which, in accordance with the Decree on special protection areas (Natura 2000 areas), spatially define those parts of the area which are significant parts of habitats or individual

²¹ Commission Note on Establishing Conservation Measures for Natura 2000 sites (<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/comNote%20conservation%20measures.pdf>)

species of wild flora and fauna, and individual habitat types due to which a Natura site is defined (hereinafter referred to as “internal zone”). These zones are defined by entries in the register of sites important for the preservation of biodiversity, which is included in the Nature Conservation Atlas of the ZRSVN²² and the Environmental Atlas²³ of the Slovenian Environment Agency (hereinafter referred to as ‘ARSO’).

Numerous conservation measures are carried out by the drafting and adoption of acts, and the issue of consents and permits, and are accompanied by the administrative costs of existing public administration. Financing sources for the implementation of other conservation measures vary. Therefore, individual sources are stated with each group of measures.

3.1 Nature protection measures

Nature protection measures are carried out by the State to attain detailed conservation objectives at Natura sites. Systemically, these measures are regulated by the ZON (contractual protection and stewardship, temporary protection, protection by establishing protected areas, restoration, markings in nature, limited tours and visits) and the Decree on protected wild animal species (limited behaviour which endangers protected animal species). They are listed under “sector” below the text on “nature conservation” in Appendix 6.1 “Objectives and measures”.

The leading principle when selecting **types of measures** to attain detailed conservation objectives were primary legal measures which had already contributed to the attainment of the objectives or were a suitable basis for their attainment.

3.1.1 Protection and temporary protection measure

The provisions of the act on protection apply to Natura sites or parts of Natura sites which are also protected areas. In certain areas, the operator has been determined with a concession contract for protection. The operator's tasks include *inter alia* the implementation of conservation measures in the protected area, the conclusion of contracts on protection and stewardship, the preparation and maintenance of paths and markings, and other infrastructure intended for visitors of the protected area. One public institute may manage several protected areas.

The ZON or the act on protection also determines the obligation to adopt a management plan for the protected area. This is a measure that may contribute to the attainment of a detailed conservation objective. In these cases, the conservation measure in Appendix 6.1 “Objectives and measures” includes the basis which must be included in the preparation of the management plan as a conservation measure for the Natura site.

The operator responsible for the submission of the management plan to the Government is the MOP. The ZON already imposes the preparation of such plans to operators with expert assistance from the ZRSVN, which means that the operator responsible for the preparation of the measures from this programme is determined. Between 2015 and 2020, the responsible operator must prepare one management plan for the protected area per year.

Individual measures in nature (e.g. maintenance of saltpan infrastructure, communication activities, etc.) are also stated for Natura sites which are also protected areas with an operator, since operators of protected areas carry out these activities as their tasks.

3.1.2 Contractual protection and stewardship

The following set of nature conservation measures constitutes contractual protection and stewardship. A contract on protection is the conclusion of a contract with the owner of areas within a Natura 2000 sites

²² www.naravovarstveni-atlas.si

²³ gis.arso.gov.si/atlasokolja/

which are the habitat of Natura species or the surfaces of Natura habitat types. Pursuant to the ZON, the contract must especially determine;

- abandonment or activities of the owner, which are used to protect valuable natural features; and
- the amount of funds for abandonment or activities of the owner referred to in the previous indent.

The same elements that are included in contractual protection are also included in agri-environment-climate payments (stated in Chapter 3.4), and are paid from public funds. Very similar or the same content is also determined in contracts which constitute a measure according to other regulations, especially contracts on the implementation of agri-environment-climate payments. There are two divides between measures according to other regulations and a contract on protection. The latter is concluded for areas that require certain use, but are not designated as areas entitled to e.g. agri-environment-climate payments. The second divide which refers to the conclusion of a contract on protection is abandonment or required activities for the protection of Natura 2000 sites, which exceed abandonment or required activities arising from e.g. agri-environment-climate payments.

Regarding contractual protection and stewardship, the operator responsible for the implementation of the measure is the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning (hereinafter referred to as 'MOP') with bodies within the ministry (narrow MOP or the ARSO, depending on the division of authority within the ministry), except in protected areas with their own operators where this constitutes their tasks (this is separately stated in Appendix 6.1 "Objectives and measures"). The preparation of an expert proposal for the implementation of this measure in special protection areas is imposed on the ZRSVN by the ZON. Stewardship is granted by concluding a stewardship contract after the publication on the conclusion of stewardship has been completed, and according to the conditions on the qualifications for the implementation of stewardship. In relation to the implementation of agri-environmental measures, the operators are described and stated in Chapter "Adjusted agricultural use".

The possibilities to finance measures of contractual protection exist within the application and implementation of a suitable LIFE project, and also within the European Regional Development Fund.

The Republic of Slovenia is entitled to donations from certain highly developed countries (Swiss financial contribution, Norwegian Financial Mechanism, EEA Financial Mechanism). The application and implementation of projects provide an opportunity for the payment for such measures to be carried out in a similar manner as from the LIFE mechanism with more or less similar restrictions as described in the latter.

3.1.3 Markings on the site

The measure of marking in nature may be used when markings in nature re-routing visitors may contribute to the attainment of detailed conservation objectives. The efficiency of such re-routing may be enhanced with suitable supervision when markings are introduced. In accordance with regulations, the operator responsible for the measure is the ZRSVN, except in protected areas with their own operators where this constitutes one of their tasks. The management programme does not plan such measures, but the need for them may arise at a later point.

3.1.4 Viewing and visiting restriction, and restriction of activities threatening protected animal species

Limitations may be required if the presence of many people pose a risk to the achievement of a favourable status of species and habitat types. The reason for limitations is generally an unfavourable impact on species that are not used to human presence, and it especially appears when many people come for tourism or recreation (alpine climbing, rock climbing, hiking, water sports, air sports, visits to caves, etc.). The measures of limiting tours and visits, and limiting behaviour which endangers protected animal species are stated in Appendix 6.1 "Objectives and measures" especially for areas where the presence of many people may have a significant unfavourable impact on the attainment of conservation objectives. In this parts of Natura sites (Appendix 6.1 "Objectives and measures"), the regulation is carried out by adopting a suitable regulation or an act on protection for protected areas. The operators responsible for the drafting of such acts are determined with nature conservation regulations and are not separately mentioned here.

3.1.5 Restoration

This programme determines the measure of restoring a part of a Natura site (conservation measures for valuable natural features also provide the protection for Natura sites), while Appendix 6.1 "Objectives and measures" states where necessary the measure of restoration. The Ministry makes a decision regarding the minor measure of restoration instead of the Government, whereby the obligation to implement the measure is arranged with the public service provider in the field of nature conservation in the annual work programme.

3.2 Measures of modified use of natural resources

The crucial activities of modified use of natural resources serving to attain are forestry which also includes hunting, and fisheries.

The measure of modified use of natural resources signified the inclusion of the detailed conservation objective and guideline referred to in Appendix 6.1 “Objectives and measures” in nature conservation guidelines of the ZRSVN (in line with point 3 of the fourth paragraph of Article 98 of the ZON). Nature conservation guidelines include the definition of specific protection guidelines which are then included in the plan for the use of the natural asset pursuant to Article 97 of the ZON. In the plan, guidelines from nature conservation guidelines are transferred into the measures of the plan in line with sectoral legislation. The plans for the use of the natural asset which determined guidelines and measures in more detail are stated under “responsible operator” in Appendix 6.1 “Objectives and measures” of this management programme. The entity preparing an individual forest management or fish farming plan referred to in the aforementioned appendix is determined with sectoral legislation and is also determined by this management programme as the provider of guidelines and conservation measures at Natura sites.

Sustainable natural asset management determined in Appendix 6.2 “Natura plans” may be directly related or required for the protection of protected areas. During the verification procedure of plans for which a comprehensive environmental impact assessment must be carried out, these plans, if they include objectives and measures or guidelines for the attainment of conservation objectives on the basis of this management programme and if they meet other statutory conditions, are determined as plans for sustainable natural asset management which are required to preserve a favourable status of habitat types and habitats of species at Natura sites. The finding whether the plans include the aforementioned objectives is formed during the process of the preparation and adoption of plans stated in the appendix “Natura plans” in accordance with statutory provisions. With thus finding, such a plan becomes a place directly required to protect Natura sites, which does not require the assessment of acceptability in accordance with the ZON.

Table 1 – Overview of adoption of plans of modified use of natural resources by years

Year of adoption	10-year FMU plan	10-year FMA plan	10-year HMA plan	Water Management Plan	Fish-farming plans
2015	23			1 ²⁴	64
2016	24				
2017	25				
2018	25				
2019	25				
2020	23				
2021 ²⁵	18	14	15		
Total	163	14	15	1	64

3.2.1 Measures in the forestry sector

In forestry, Natura 2000 sites are managed through forest management plans which plan the implementation of measures for the modified use of natural resources. The framework for the measures is forestry legislation which facilitates planning and implementation of all necessary measures to ensure a favourable status of forest habitat types and species bound to forest ecosystems. Detailed conservation objectives and guidelines for modified use of forests (natural resources) are indicated by areas in Appendix 6.1 “Objectives

²⁴ The plan refers to two areas.

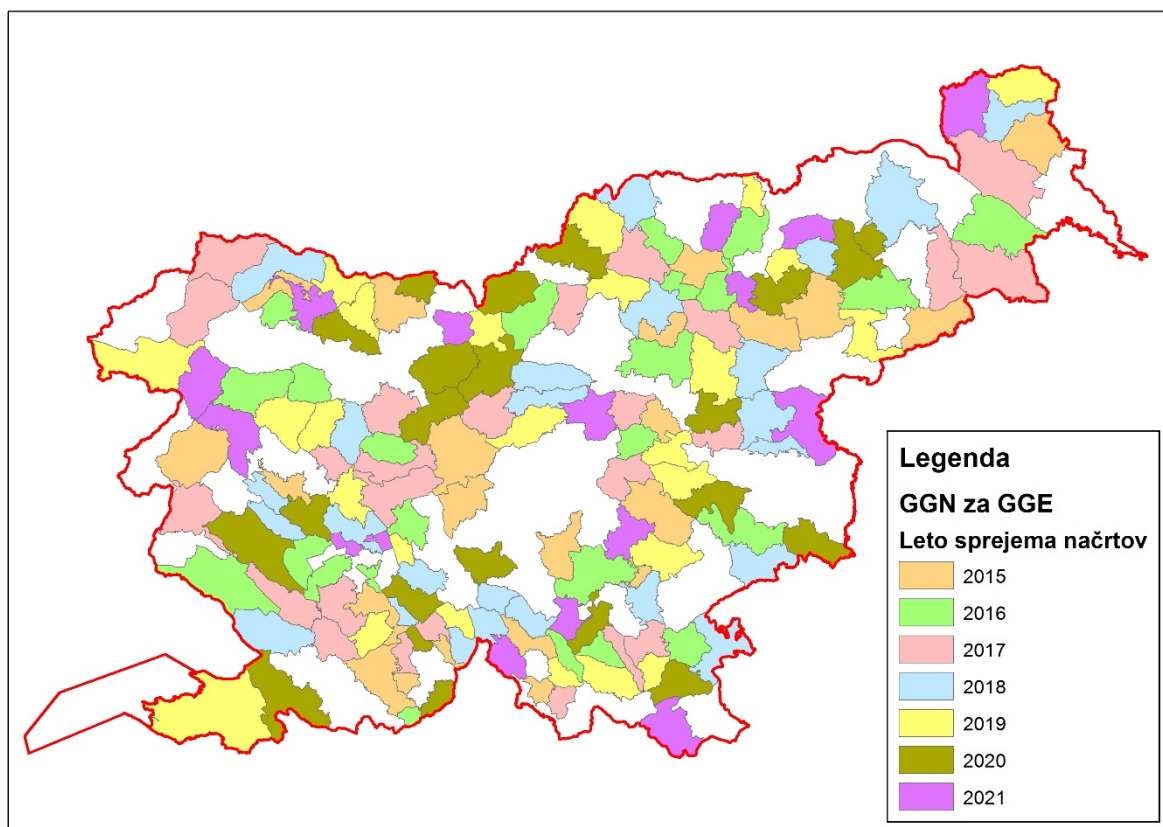
²⁵ The year following the conclusion of this programme has been added, as public services draft documents to be adopted a year before.

and measures". Plans with the authority to define the implementation of these measures are designed in accordance with forestry regulations on forest management plans. These unit (FMU) plans are defined in Appendix 6.2 "Natura plans" together with the planned year of adoption.

Forest management plans for forest management units (FMP for FMU) must include specific guidelines and measures provided in nature conservation guidelines. In the case of specific conditions in the field, the preparation of the latter allows changes to attain reference values. Following a suitable inclusion of guidelines from nature conservation guidelines and by determining measures in FMP for FMU, the ZRSVN issues a positive opinion about them. These plans then become plans directly required to preserve Natura 2000 sites in forests.

The entity preparing an individual forest management plan referred to in Appendix 6.2 "Natura plans" is determined with forestry regulations and also determined by the management programme as the entity responsible for the inclusion of guidelines and measures from Appendix 6.1 "Objectives and measures". The costs for drafting management plans by the competent public services (ZGS), and nature conservation guidelines and opinions (ZRSVN), as well as the procedures of their adoption, are of administrative nature. The drafting of forest management plans and nature protection guidelines for all forests, regardless of ownership, are financed from the budget of the Republic of Slovenia.

Map 1 - Overview of FMU plans serving to attain conservation objectives



The source of the data on the border of FMU is the ZGS.

The implementation of measures which are a higher standard in view of the obligations from existing legislation in the field of forestry depends on available funds. During the adoption of the Rural Development Programme of the Republic of Slovenia 2014–2020, an action plan to finance these measures from national funds was prepared. The determination of the amount of these funds is planned. The funds are intended only for target measures for qualifying species and habitat types whose status is deteriorating (with the non-inclusion of forestry environment-climate measures in the Rural Development Programme). The conservation objectives for all species and habitat types in individual areas are coordinated if necessary during the process of drafting nature conservation guidelines so that they do not exclude each other in individual areas.

In certain tasks, municipalities or their public services are stated as the operators. These are tasks municipalities or their public services carried out in line with other regulations, while this management programme determines only the method for their realisation.

3.2.2 Measures in the hunting sector

There are only few hunting-related objectives at Natura sites. They are attained through modified use of wild animals (natural resources) regulated by regulations on wild animals and hunting. The measures to attain the objectives refer especially to limitations of feeding wild animals and brown bears, the maintenance of environmentally suitable population density of herbivorous cloven-hoofed animals (nutrition base for wolves, rejuvenation of autochthonous tree species), and to limitations of hunting in areas that are important for endangered species of birds (securing peace). Activities of managing wild animal habitats at many Natura sites contribute to the attainment to conservation objectives related with agriculture, forestry, water management, etc. Similar protection guidelines regarding modified use of wild animals are included in Appendix 6.1 "Objectives and measures". Plans with the authority to define measures to implement these guidelines are in line with hunting regulations, management plans for wild animals and hunting management plans 2011–2021 as plans directly required to preserve Natura 2000 sites designated by the Operational programme – Natura 2000 management programme (2007–2013). Guidelines from Appendix 6.1 "Objectives and measures" of this programme are appropriately transferred into subordinated plans of wild animal management.

The entity preparing an individual wild animal management plan referred to in Appendix 6.2 "Natura plans" is determined with hunting regulations and also determined by the management programme as the entity responsible for the inclusion of guidelines and measures from Appendix 6.1 "Objectives and measures".

3.2.3 Measures in the fisheries sector

Fisheries activities include freshwater and marine fisheries. Freshwater fisheries include the management of fisheries resources in inland waters. Marine fisheries include marine commercial fishing and sport and recreational fishing. Marine commercial fishing is carried out in order to provide the market with fisheries products. To market fisheries products, aquaculture on inland waters and at the sea is carried out. Both commercial fishing and aquaculture are part of the EU Common Fisheries Policy. Most aquaculture and marine commercial fishing is carried out outside of Natura 2000 sites. Despite these sites being subject to conservation measures, they must facilitate the further development of aquaculture. If aquaculture is developed at Natura sites, conservation measures at these sites are also eligible for co-financing. The framework for certain co-financing projects is defined in Table E in Appendix 6.4 "Planned projects". The projects will be defined in more detail within the Decree implementing the Operational Programme for the Implementation of the European Maritime and Fisheries Funds in the Republic of Slovenia 2014–2020.

The management of fisheries resources in inland waters as sustainable use of a natural asset is carried out in most watercourses, parts of which are also located at Natura 2000 sites. The management of fisheries resources in inland waters is regulated by regulations on freshwater fisheries which determine *inter alia* the adoption of the programme and plans for the management of fish as fisheries resources. The guidelines for the modified use of fisheries resources (natural resources) are included in Appendix 6.1 "Objectives and measures" determined by Natura sites. Plans with the authority to define measures to implement these guidelines are in line with the fisheries legislation, fisheries management plans in fisheries areas and fish-farming plans for fishery zones. These plans are determined in Appendix 6.2 "Natura plans".

The entity preparing an individual fisheries management plan for fishery zones or fish farming plans referred to in Appendix 6.2 "Natura plans" is determined with fisheries regulations (Fisheries Research Institute) and also determined by the management programme as the entity responsible for the inclusion of measures to Natura sites. In the field, measures in line with the fisheries legislation are carried out by concessionaires (e.g. fishing clubs) and by the ZZRS in waters of special significance.

3.3 Measures of modified agricultural practice

Pursuing a suitable agricultural activity at many Natura sites is the prerequisite for preserving the outstanding conservation status of certain species and habitats. In accordance with the applicable regulations, the use of agricultural land is regulated at the EU level by regulations which determine the establishment of rules for direct payments and by cross compliance. Since 2014 or 2015, these regulations have been regulating certain additional behaviours which contribute to the attainment of conservation objectives at Natura 2000 sites. These behaviours include the prohibition of ploughing grassland rich in species with a poor conservation status at Natura 2000 sites or their parts, and cross-compliance which now also includes the preservation of landscape features.

Article 45 of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 establishing rules for direct payments to farmers under support schemes within the framework of the common agricultural policy and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 637/2008 and Council Regulation (EC) No 73/2009 (OJ L 347, 20. 12. 2013, p. 608), last amended by Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1001/2014 of 18 July 2014 amending Annex X to Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing rules for direct payments to farmers under support schemes within the framework of the common agricultural policy (OJ L 281, 25. 9. 2014, p. 1), regulates the preservation of permanent grassland at Natura 2000 sites. Grassland surfaces at Natura 2000 sites in sensitive areas (grassland rich in species with a poor conservation status) must not be changed or ploughed. Such sensitive areas are designated by the State.

Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy and repealing Council Regulations (EEC) No 352/78, (EC) No 165/94, (EC) No 2799/98, (EC) No 814/2000, (EC) No 1290/2005 and (EC) No 485/2008 (OJ L 347, 20. 12. 2013, p. 549), last amended by Regulation (EU) No 1310/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down certain transitional provisions on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), amending Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards resources and their distribution in respect of the year 2014 and amending Council Regulation (EC) No 73/2009 and Regulations (EU) No 1307/2013, (EU) No 1306/2013 and (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards their application in the year 2014 (OJ L 347, 20. 12. 2013, p. 865), also regulates rules regarding cross-compliance. The subject of cross-compliance is also now the preservation of landscape features, which includes the preservation of vegetation along watercourses, small water surfaces, dry-stone walls, terraces, groups of olive trees, valuable natural features (trees, trees in rows and groups of trees), boulders and solitary rocks.

The instrument to guide agricultural use which exceeds the aforementioned is agri-environment-climate payments (AEC). This is still the most important method to guide agricultural activity to sustainable agricultural forms. Financial incentives within agri-environment-climate payments from the Rural Development Programme of the Republic of Slovenia for the 2014–2020 period (hereinafter referred to as 'RDP') are granted in accordance with voluntary decision of farmers to accept the commitments from individual operations – fulfilment of mandatory and additional requirements. Farmers commit that they will fulfil the conditions from the AEC requirements in included areas for five years. In terms of nature conservation measures, this commitment meets the conditions for measures of contractual protection according to other regulations (agricultural). The management programme includes measures of adjusted agricultural use which ensure the striking conservation status of certain species and habitats, and are to be included in suitable AEC requirements determined for individual Natura sites or for a group of Natura sites in Appendix 6.1 "Objectives and measures". The implementation area of each of the aforementioned requirement is the whole area or part of the internal zone of a species or habitat type. The AEC operations from the RDP are used for the proposed agriculture-related measures. The appendix includes the indication of groups of sites or sites, zones within sites (groups of zones), operations or requirements for the zones. Where necessary, target values for the AEC requirements are included in special Appendix 6.3 "Target AEC areas". Acronyms used in both appendices are designations for the following measures or groups of requirements:

- to directly protect populations of species and provide a favourable habitat

- HAB_KOS: Mowing/grazing is not permitted until 30 June
- MET_KOS: Mowing/grazing is not permitted between 15 June and 15 September
- VTR_KOS: Mowing/grazing is not permitted before 1 August
- STE_KOS: Mowing/grazing is not permitted before 25 August
- HAB_ORGG: Fertilisation with organic fertilisers only in limited quantity
- KRA_VTSA: High-trunk meadow orchards
- to assist in maintaining the habitat quality
 - HAB/MET_MRVA: Harvesting of hay from grassland.
 - HAB/MET/VTR/STE_NPAS: In geographical agricultural units larger than 1ha, the unmown surface of a meadow to be mown in the following year amounts to between 5 and 10 per cent of the surface of the meadow).
- to preserve landscape elements and landscape
 - KRA_MEJ: Conservation of hedgerows
 - KRA_S50: Conservation of steep meadow habitats
 - KRA_GRB: Mowing of hummocky meadows and harvesting
 - KRA_CRED: Mountain pasture on paddocks
 - KRA_PAST: Mountain pasture with a shepherd
- for cohabitation with large carnivores
 - KRA_OGRM: Protection of the herd with mobile protective electric fences and electric nets
 - KRA_VARPA: Protection of the herd in the presence of a shepherd
 - KRA_VARPP: Protection of the herd in the presence of a herding dog

Farmers enter agri-environment measures voluntarily. An important role in their guidance and the provision of advice on the most appropriate measures for them is played by the agricultural advisory service operating within the Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia (KGZS). Its tasks include stimulating farmers to enter Natura sites and the AEC operations most appropriate for their farms.

In addition to these measures, payments for less favoured areas for agricultural activity (LFA) may also contribute to the attainment of the objectives at Natura sites, which contribute to the cultivation of land and the prevention of overgrowing in grassland areas at Natura sites. This measure does not require target values to be determined.

Within the RDP, other measures are also available to attain conservation objectives. These measures are Cooperation, CLLD, Knowledge transfer and Advisory services. The “Cooperation” measure is stated for certain areas in Appendix 6.1 “Objectives and measures”, where it will contribute to the attainment of the objectives as a priority. The CLLD operations are carried out in areas where they are in accordance with the local development strategies and are selected by local action groups or local partnerships.

The measures of CLLD, Knowledge transfer and Advisory services are horizontal, and contribute to greater awareness and better understanding of the significance of implementing adjusted agricultural practice at Natura 2000 sites.

Measures in hydro-amelioration channels (especially adjusted treatment of amelioration ditches and channels) are carried out on the basis of the Agricultural Land Act which stipulates that the owners of agricultural land are responsible for the maintenance of hydro-amelioration systems. The public institute the Farmland and Forest Fund of the Republic of Slovenia, together with concessionaires, then determines the volume of maintenance works, while in the procedure of the assessment of acceptability such volume and course of works is determined which does not worsen the status of Natura species and habitat types. The Act also established a systemic financing resource for these activities through a tax on the management and maintenance of hydro-amelioration systems.

3.4 Water management measures

Water management is important to preserve biodiversity and achieve a favourable conservation status of Natura sites. There are 140 species and habitat types which depend on water to achieve a favourable conservation status. These are species which spend part of their annual or life cycle in water or next to it for

reproduction, feeding or overwintering, and habitat types which depend on constant presence of water (ground or surface water). Therefore, the method of water management is crucial for their preservation.

By adopting the Water Framework Directive²⁶, sectoral planning of water management came closer to comprehensive planning through the inclusion of all factors of the water environment and public participation. The payment of costs for the use of water is introduced through the economic principles “polluter pays” and “comprehensive reimbursement of costs”, and users are encouraged to its more efficient use. Based on the Water Framework Directive, the first water management plans (WMP) and the programme of measures (PM) 2010–2015 which brings a new ecosystem approach to water management were adopted in 2011. In addition to achieving the good chemical status of waters, the basic objective of water management is to achieve of good ecological status or potential of waters which, by preserving structures and functions of water ecosystems, significantly contributes to the preservation of species and habitat types at Natura 2000 sites.

A new WMP and PM 2015–2021 are being drafted, which will include detailed conservation objectives from Appendix 6.1 “Objectives and measures” through nature conservation guidelines. These are especially detailed conservation objectives which refer to ensuring the passability of watercourses and reducing hydro-morphological burdens (improving the structure of the bed and banks of watercourses), and objectives attained by maintaining watercourses or their restoration (such maintenance of embankments and channels which facilitates the survival of Natura species, and preserves the structure and function of riparian habitat types, adjusted clearing of vegetation in watercourses and removing alluvial material).

Appendix 6.1 “Objectives and measures” in the management programme directly determines sectoral measures to achieve a favourable status of species and habitat types.

Measures to restore watercourses

Numerous sectoral measures refer to the restoration of watercourses (re-naturalisation, revitalisation). A list of areas with conservation objectives joined by individual bodies of water where projects are being implemented as a priority is included in special Appendix 6.4 “Planned projects”.

Measures to preserve or improve river dynamics, including the flood regime and the level of groundwater

The measure of reduced water runoff is stated for certain areas. It is planned in relation to the anticipated measures to improve the status of waters and non-construction measures to reduce flood risk, such as the identification of key flooding areas and their suitable arrangement for more controlled flooding during major flood events. The State's guidelines are to seek synergies in these areas between establishing a favourable status of wetlands, marsh meadows and other important species and habitats, and reducing flood risk. Appendix 6.4 “Planned projects” is taken into account regarding priority projects.

Measures to restore sources of pollution

Very few measures refer to reducing pollution from industrial sources. In these cases, the obligation to take action arises from regulations, while costs are borne by the owners of facilities. The owners also generally bear the costs of restoration, except in the case of a subsidiary obligation of the State. Certain measures refer to the requirements regarding the treatment of urban wastewater, especially in underground habitats. In view of the requirements of the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive, the Republic of Slovenia must provide suitable discharge and treatment systems for urban wastewater from all settlement areas with 2,000 or more PE by 31 December 2015, whereby 100 per cent connection of the population to these systems must be ensured. The conservation status of these species and habitat types is expected to improve. In some of these cases, a situation may occur that the level of wastewater treatment in the hinterland will have to be adjusted to the requirements to reduce nutrients in groundwater or that suitable discharge and

²⁶ Directive 2000/60/EC of the European parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1)

treatment systems for urban wastewater will have to be ensured also in certain settlement areas with under 2,000 PE in the hinterland of these Natura sites.

Measures to reduce pollution from agriculture are carried out on the basis of the RDP, especially through agri-environment-climate payments; Focus area 4B: Improving water and land management, and contributing to the fulfilment of the objectives of the Water Framework Directive.

Measures related to the management of small dams

Certain mostly small dams at Natura sites are an important habitat of Natura species, especially dragonflies and amphibians. Inadequate maintenance or inappropriate management of these dams may result in the loss of the habitat. The facilities include water infrastructure facilities managed by the State and specially used facilities managed by entities with water rights. Managing dams which are considered water infrastructure is the task of the State's public services and is financed by the Waters Fund. In other cases, the management costs are provided from private funds, except when management is included in the implementation of projects.

The basis for the inclusion of special conservation measures related to the management of specially used dams is a water approval or a concession act, and, in cases of concessions, also a concession contract. Entities with water rights must have the Rules of Procedure for the operation and maintenance of a water facility or device, except for water facilities or devices for the extraction of water for personal drinking water supplies. Appendix 6.1 "Objectives and measures" includes the administrative measure of inclusion into one of the aforementioned acts.

Numerous aforementioned measures will be carried out as a mandatory public service for water management (funds for the operation of the service are provided from the budget headings of ARSO and Waters Fund). Its tasks are stipulated by the Waters Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, nos. 67/02, 2/04 – ZZdrI-A, 41/04 – ZVO-1, 57/08, 57/12, 100/13 and 40/14), i.e.:

- operation and maintenance of water infrastructure intended to preserve and balance water quantities;
- operation, maintenance and monitoring of the status of water infrastructure intended to protect against harmful effects of water;
- implementation of extraordinary measures when the level of risk due to harmful effects of water is increased;
- maintenance of water and waterside land;
- provision of water protection supervision.

In addition, the operation of this service is regulated by the Decree on the provision of obligatory state services of general economic interest for water management and on concessions and public services (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, nos. 109/10, 98/11, 102/12 and 89/14), and the Rules on the types and scope of tasks of mandatory state public utility services in the field of water management (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 57/06). Funds for its operation are provided from the Waters Fund.

If investment measures to reduce flood risk are carried out at the Natura sites concerned, the funds are provided from the Waters Fund. If activities in accordance with programmes to eliminate the consequences of natural disasters are carried out at the Natura sites concerned, the funds are provided from the integral budget.

When activities to eliminate the consequences of natural disasters adopted by the Government, and signify the implementation of measures to deter imminent danger for life or health of people or property or save people and property, in accordance with Article 10 of the ZON, the provisions of this Act regarding obligations to preserve biodiversity do not apply and neither do measures to attain the objectives of this programme. The ZON stipulates that, in such cases, the measure which will be least harmful for nature while achieving the same effects is selected. It is sensible to include experts in the designing and implementation process of these measures. Past experience shows that technically the most appropriate for the attainment of the objectives of Natura sites is the establishment of the state of water facilities which serves the purpose and the objectives of flood safety, but it is not the same as the establishment of the destroyed state

(sustainable arrangement of water facilities). When the establishment of the previous state of water facilities is not crucial for the attainment of flood safety objectives, this is a suitable solution to attain the objectives of Natura sites.

The EU financial perspective 2014–2020 will support investments in the establishment of green infrastructure, and priority will be given to synergies with anti-flood measures and measures to improve the hydro-morphological status of waters. If necessary the purchase of land important for nature conservation will be supported as part of comprehensive measures at Natura 2000 sites where this will be crucial and justified in order to preserve and restore ecosystems which provide key ecosystem services.

In certain tasks, municipalities or their public services are stated as the operators. These are tasks municipalities or their public services carried out in line with other regulations, while this programme determines only the method for their implementation.

3.5 Cultural heritage protection

Important parts of habitats of certain groups of animal species are located in cultural heritage protection areas. Therefore, the method of cultural heritage protection is important in order to achieve a favourable conservation status for Natura 2000 sites. Generally, measures for cultural heritage protection and measures to attain the objectives of Natura 2000 are mutually coordinated and supplement each other.

A great deal of cultural heritage protection areas and Natura 2000 sites overlap, which is an excellent basis for joint investments in wider educational, interpretative, promotional and tourist offers, including investments in infrastructure. Comprehensively and sustainably designed management of common protected areas is important for the achievement of positive synergistic effects and provision of a comprehensive offer for satisfied users of cultural heritage and protected valuable natural features as well as Natura 2000 sites.

Monuments protected on the basis of treaties to which the Republic of Slovenia is a signatory and all sites must have managers who realise their tasks on the basis of management plans drafted on the basis of the Cultural Heritage Protection Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, nos. 16/08, 123/08, 8/11 – ORZVKD39, 90/12 and 111/13). Management may also be entrusted to a manager of a natural site if so provided for with the act on protection of a protected natural site, and if the manager has professional qualifications to manage the site. Management plans drafted by managers with the expert assistance of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia (hereinafter referred to as 'ZVKDS') determine strategic and implementing guidelines for a comprehensive preservation of monuments or sites, and the method for the implementation of their protection. If the site and area protected on the basis of nature conservation regulations overlap, management plans are drafted in cooperation with the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation and adopted in agreement with the ministry responsible for nature conservation.

A culture protection approval (hereinafter referred to as 'CPA') must be obtained from the ZVKDS beforehand for each activity on monuments, in impact areas of monuments, heritage protection areas and registered immovable heritage if such an obligation is determined by a spatial act, and for each exploration of heritage which is not archaeological remain. Prior to the issue of a CPA, culture protection conditions of the ZVKDS (hereinafter referred to as 'CPC') must be obtained. With the cultural protection conditions the institute lays down the requirements which are to be satisfied by the project design for the acquisition of the building permit or by other project documentation required for the implementation of activities, and requirements regarding professional qualifications of the providers of specialised works. In the case of complex activities which pose a risk of destruction or endangerment of protected valuable features or if conservation-restoration works must be carried out during activities, the ZVKDS requires a conservation plan (hereinafter referred to as 'CP') to be prepared within the process of issuing a CPC. A CP is part of the project documentation which determines the elements of monuments that must be preserved, and guidelines for their preservation and functioning. A CP is always required for activities in the structural elements of monuments.

When a detailed municipal spatial plan plans a comprehensive restoration in heritage areas or part of such areas, the preparation of a conservation plan for restoration (hereinafter referred to as 'CPR') is mandatory. Such a plan determines proposals for determining borders of spatial management areas and areas of intended use, proposals for development conditions, and limitations from the aspect of protection by spatial management units. If the CPR is prepared for the area of a cultural landscape, nature conservation requirements must be observed accordingly.

Therefore, measures to achieve a favourable conservation status of species in these areas are included at the beginning of the preparation procedure of the aforementioned plans. In Appendix 6.1 "Objectives and measures", the measure is stated by "the measure is not required" under "conservation measure", which means that the existing state of the facility enables the achievement of a favourable conservation status of species and that the measure is not required to preserve the status of this population. If the facilities must be maintained to preserve a suitable state of facilities, this will help provide a favourable conservation status. Therefore, in Appendix 6.1 "Objectives and measures", "cultural heritage preservation" is stated under "sector", and "determine nature conservation guidelines and opinions, and guidelines and opinions from the aspect of cultural heritage protection, and culture protection conditions and culture protection approvals" is stated under "detailed protection guidelines".

In accordance with cultural heritage conservation measures, cultural heritage and monuments located at Natura 2000 sites must receive regular maintenance and restoration activities which are usually carried out between April and October. Occasionally, this may be in contravention of the ecological requirements of certain animal species. In such extraordinary cases, competent organisations agree on a method of work which will least endanger the achievement of a favourable status of these species, and facilitate the protection of monument features of cultural heritage.

3.6 Spatial planning mechanism

The purpose of spatial management is to facilitate coordinated spatial development by coordinating economic, social and environmental protection aspects. This is one of the mechanisms to ensure sustainable spatial development, since it may facilitate nature conservation, the protection of natural resources and cultural heritage, and other features of the natural and cultural environment using methods of spatial and urban planning. This mechanism is important for the attainment of the objectives of Natura sites, since the adopted spatial acts are the basis of regulated spatial activities, while municipal acts especially ensure that areas that must be undeveloped remain undeveloped. Due to different terminology used in various legislations and a uniform title of the column, the term "spatial sector" is used in Appendix 6.1 "Objectives and measures" for spatial planning mechanism, although it denotes a mechanism.

The procedure for the preparation and adoption of the spatial planning and implementation acts at the municipal and national levels is also an important instrument for the attainment the objectives of Natura 2000 sites. During the preparation of these acts, a negative impact from the planned activities on the objectives of Natura sites, their comprehensiveness and connection to the European Natura network have been verified since Slovenia's accession to the European Union in 2004. Activities are guided so that negative impacts are insignificant, making activities acceptable. In this procedure, the impacts of the planned activities are assessed on the case-by-case basis, and activities with no significant negative impact may be carried out. Potential significant negative impact of activities may frequently be mitigated to become insignificant using suitable measures. The activities may also be carried out in these cases. The same applies to infrastructure facilities. Activities with a significant negative impact may also be placed and implemented if suitable procedures are carried out, which include the prevalence of another public interest and the implementation of compensation measures. The decision on the prevalence of another public interest over the public interest in nature conservation is adopted by the Government in line with Article 1010 of the ZON, while the spatial or implementation act is then adopted by the authority competent for its adoption (the Government in the case of NSP). Appendix "Acceptability assessment for protected areas" includes some recommendations for the optimisation of these procedures.

In relation to measures brought by this programme which reduce barriers in the siting of the planned important infrastructure facilities, special attention is paid to the Natura sites where the siting of important infrastructure facilities is planned. Siting is easier in areas where most species and habitat types have a favourable conservation status, and activities in space (depending on the percentage of the loss of habitat or habitat type caused by them) have generally less significant negative impact than in areas with a mainly unfavourable status of species and habitat types. Therefore, the priority orientation of measures from appendices 6.1 “Objectives and measures” and 6.4 “Planned projects” is to preserve and improve the status of endangered species and habitat types at Natura 2000 sites which may be affected by infrastructure facilities planned in the procedure for the preparation and adoption of national spatial plans (NSP). A favourable and improved status will be established outside buffer zones of existing motorways, expressways and other roads and railways, which will facilitate their undisturbed siting, construction and maintenance. The objectives do not apply to buffer zones of existing transport infrastructure.

Special attention in siting and impact assessment procedures must be paid to the possibility to site important infrastructure facilities to the Natura sites where species and habitat types have an unfavourable conservation status. In such cases, proposals for compromises must be sought, without immediate exclusion of the possibility to site such facilities, since activities in space which could have a significant negative impact are conditionally allowed through the implementation of certain mitigation measures. In cases of such activities, mitigation measures might be important for the preservation and improvement of the status of endangered species and habitat types.

To alleviate problems during the preparation of NSP, NSP areas are designated as areas for priority implementation of measures from appendices 6.1 “Objectives and measures” and 6.4 “Planned projects” to speed up the establishment of a favourable status of species and habitat types, and alleviate problems. The realisation of the management programme includes replacement habitats due to activities at Natura sites as the consequence of the expansion of transport infrastructure in buffer zones of existing motorways, expressways and other state roads and railways, and related activities, and NSP in the preparation phase. Within the assessment of acceptability, the realisation level of the measures from the management programme is verified. Establishing a favourable conservation status will facilitate the preparation of NSP and implementing the management programme will provide the conditions for the realisation of the planned activities. If the implementation of measures from appendices 6.1 “Objectives and measures” and 6.4 “Planned projects” does not suffice, additional measures to attain both purposes will be determined if necessary. The entities designing and drafting NSP and environmental reports verify whether it is possible to improve the status of species and habitat types with methods of project implementation.

The provision of data on the status of species and habitat type, targets (reference values) and measures facilitated by Appendix 6.1 “Objectives and measures” of this programme constitutes a contribution to shorter, cheaper and simpler confirmation procedures. A more extensive monitoring programme to establish the conservation status of species and habitat types at the level of the State or biogeographic region, which is planned with this programme, together with public accessibility of this data, contributes to speedier and simpler procedures. Nevertheless, due to various levels of parameters monitored when establishing the conservation status and the impact of activities, this programme cannot provide all data required to establish the level of negative impacts of activities during investments and methods for their mitigation.

3.7 Contribution to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth

Slovenia may contribute to global and European development objectives by actively conserving nature which is the basis for truly green growth. Slovenia has numerous relatively well-preserved ecosystems which provide important ecosystem services such as recreational opportunities, relaxation (good conditions in a tranquil natural environment are extremely important for the restoration of organism) and tourism (especially ecotourism), high quality drinking water, the production of healthy and safe food, protection against erosion and floods, wood as an important natural material, etc.

The most extensive operational programme which facilitates the implementation of such projects is the OP for the implementation of the European cohesion policy in the 2014–2020 period. This chapter and Appendix

6.4 “Planned projects” therefore include the framework for the preparation and implementation of projects to improve the status of species and habitat types of Community , whereby priority will be given to those with a poor conservation status and endemic species, the establishment of green infrastructure and the preservation of key ecosystem services. The list of these projects refers to priority Natura sites, key measures proposed by expert on species and habitat types, and projects proposed by key stakeholders at these sites. Priority sites were designated on the basis of the number of species and habitat types with an unfavourable status, relative significance of the size of the population of each of these species and habitat types, and the need for the restoration of the habitat of a species or a habitat type. Appendix 6.4 “Planned projects” and the implementation of the OP for the implementation of the European cohesion policy in the 2014–2020 period anticipate the following activities:

- establishment of a good nature conservation status at priority Natura 2000 sites (e.g. restoration or maintenance of ecosystems to preserve biodiversity, manage invasive non-indigenous species, etc.);
- purchase or establishment of contractual protection or stewardship of areas important for nature conservation where this is justified and relevant. The establishment of suitable management to attain nature conservation objectives and provide key ecosystem services is planned in these areas;
- establishment of corridors to ensure a favourable status of protected species;
- provision of high quality interpretation of neatly arranged nature conservation areas, which includes in necessary investment in public infrastructure with priority being given to existing facilities and minor construction projects (e.g. observation points, trails, information points) and emphasis on education and raising awareness of nature conservation, and cultural heritage and landscape preservation without negative impacts on the attainment of nature conservation objectives while ensuring conditions for sustainable mobility of visitors;
- ecosystem services in synergy with measures to improve the status of waters and reduce flood risk. To improve the hydro-morphological status, the implementation of measures will be crucial, including the restoration of watercourses (re-naturalisation) which includes the improvement of the status of the hydrological regime, morphological conditions and of the continuity of the current (passability for aquatic organisms and better transport of alluvial material). Exceptionally, the purchase of areas important for nature conservation is included to preserve and restore ecosystems which provide key ecosystem services.

The set of investments shown in the appendix is considered the national programme of projects with a positive impact on the attainment of the objectives of Natura 2000 sites. In accordance with available funds, a part of the investments for these purposes will be co-financed within the Operational Programme for the Implementation of EU Cohesion Policy in the Period 2014–2020; priority investments are “Protection and restoration of biodiversity and soil, and promotion of ecosystem services, including the Natura 2000 network and green infrastructures” and “Investments in the water sector in order to meet the requirements of the Union acquis and to satisfy the needs for investments defined by Member States which exceed these requirements”.

The instrument LIFE 2014–2020 is a programme dedicated to providing funds for the environment and climate change, and supplements other financing programmes of the EU. A new feature in the 2014–2020 period is integrated LIFE projects which constitute a comprehensive implementation of action plans of policies in wider geographical areas. Appendix 6.1 “Objectives and measures” of the operational programme, which includes objectives and measures by sites, species and habitat types, includes frameworks for integrated LIFE projects which would most directly contribute to the attainment of specific objectives of Natura 2000 sites. These sites are mostly sites where the conservation status of species and habitat types needs the most improvement. It is sensible for potential applicants of other types of LIFE projects (especially LIFE Nature and LIFE Communication) to consider these frameworks and the set of projects from Appendix 6.4 “Planned projects” in the preparation of their applications.

In the procedure of determining Natura 2000 sites, the Government adopted the Plan establishing the effects of Natura 2000 impact areas and determining development measures. Development measures from this document may also be indicated in this Natura 2000 management programme. In the plan, the Government established that numerous sources of finance are available for nature conservation, including the preservation and management of Natura sites. In the new programming period, the measures in operational programmes for nature conservation and protected area preservation should be strengthened, and activities

which contribute at least indirectly to this should be supported. Through the Operational Programme for the Implementation of EU Cohesion Policy in the Period 2014–2020, the Government made a step in this direction and included the content of Natura 2000 in suitable sections of this programme. The plan also emphasises the strengthening of the implementation of these programmes once they have been adopted. Therefore, it is sensible to suitably include the financing of Natura in future project selection criteria. To improve Slovenian participation and the drawing of funds available for nature conservation in centralised and international programmes, support for applicants should be provided in the future in various forms; from training in project preparation to advisory services for all potential applicants regarding the preparation of applications. In addition, co-financing a part of own share of projects which succeed at centralised and international programmes' tenders would stimulate potential applicants. Awareness is still being raised among people to increase the understanding of the Natura network and strengthen knowledge of opportunities from activities which contribute to the preservation and management of Natura sites (agriculture, forestry, certain forms of recreation, sports and tourism). An online guide to the financing of Natura projects will further contribute to this objective.

In addition to the aforementioned activities which have a direct positive impact on the attainment of the objectives of Natura 2000 sites, it is important to stimulate the implementation of activities which indirectly contribute to the attainment of these objectives, but which are more development oriented. This includes infrastructure for visits, sustainable transport management, sustainable use and consumption promotion, etc. Potential sources of financing of this projects are the instrument of European Territorial Cooperation, financial mechanisms of European countries which are not EU Member States (Swiss financial contribution, Norwegian Financial Mechanism, EEA Financial Mechanism), and the Rural Development Programme (LEADER and "Cooperation" measures). The logic of these sets is described below.

To further upgrade better conservation status of species and habitat types, high-quality and attractive interpretation of the significance of successful preservation of biodiversity to ensure key ecosystem services is also promoted. In interpretation of the significance of the preservation of biodiversity, measures for re-routing visitors to less sensitive areas and for greater awareness of visitors and residents of the significance of Natura 2000 sites for Slovenia will be supported. In this way, the demonstration effect on other similar areas and thus a positive impact on the conservation status of species and habitat types will be achieved. In these measures, synergies will also be sought with the field of cultural heritage protection, tourism and agriculture.

Sustainable transport management (e.g. cycling infrastructure, vehicles to transport visitors, car parks for visitors, moorings at the sea and the coast, bridges over watercourses for visitors) is important from the aspect of environmentally and nature-friendly access to areas of visits. The emphasis is on green solutions with as little greenhouse gas emissions as possible and a suitable siting so that there is no significant negative impact on the attainment of conservation objectives, or the impact is minimal.

To attain the objectives of Natura sites which require minimal or moderate human presence (e.g. the cultivation of land and agricultural activities), it is important to also promote nature-friendly use reflected in consumption of thus produced products and services (e.g. the development of trademarks of protected areas, traditional cultural products and services).

3.8 Supervision

Analyses of the implementation of measures and the status in nature show that certain threats to the achievement of a favourable status of species and habitat types still occur, despite adopted prohibitions and regimes. Therefore, enhanced implementation of these regulations is required to ensure the attainment of detailed conservation objectives. The supervision in the field of nature conservation regulations is inspections, supplemented by direct supervision. Supervision providers are competent inspection services and entities competent for direct supervision. The latter includes nature conservation supervision in protected areas carried out by authorised nature conservation supervisors, supervision in forests carried out by authorised supervisors of the Slovenian Forest Service (hereinafter referred to as "ZGS"), and voluntary supervision. Appendix 6.1 "Objectives and measures" especially emphasises the supervision of legislation regarding water management, agriculture and nature conservation.

4 INDICATORS

In line with the established indicator categories (e.g. those monitored by the European Environment Agency, while data are provided by EU Member States) for establishing the efficiency of measures and the attainment of objectives (a favourable status of species of wild flora and fauna, their habitats and habitat types), there are two types of indicators.

The first type comprises indicators of the status of species and habitat types which are currently determined with reference values or the last established status in Appendix 6.1 "Objectives and measures". If possible according to the level of knowledge, detailed conservation objectives are expressed with numerical values of populations or the size of habitat types' areas. To calculate the aforementioned, the data for establishing changes in natural areas of expansion and population dynamics of species or areas covered by habitat types are provided. The provision of such data is addressed in the "Monitoring" chapter.

The second type comprises indicators for monitoring the implementation of measures. If possible according to the level of knowledge, measures are laid down in a way that they can be measured. These indicators are also determined in the measure. They are calculated on the basis of data on the implementation of measures. During the preparation of this programme, special attention was paid to the coordination of the texts of measures and manner of the collection of data on the implementation of measures.

For satisfactory reporting to international institutions (especially EU authorities and authorities of international conventions) which monitor changes in the status of Natura species and habitat types, the species and habitat types from appendices to the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive, biodiversity and the efficiency of measures, demanding reports must be regularly prepared on the basis of the aforementioned data and their interpretation. This data is also more and more frequently demanded by the Slovenian public and certain stakeholders (e.g. assessors, experts and researchers) to enhance the quality of their products.

4.1 Monitoring

To monitor the indicators for reports for the EU and authorities of international conventions and agreements, the nature conservation status must be monitored in accordance with Article 108 of the ZON (nature conservation monitoring). This also includes monitoring species of wild flora and fauna, their habitats, habitat types and special protection areas (Article 108 of the ZON). Monitoring the status for the needs of this management programme is entirely within its framework. Appendix 6.5 "Monitoring and research" includes species and habitat types which are the subject of monitoring, and the status of activities (under "conservation measures"). Monitoring of certain species and habitat types is already in progress. Therefore, the appendix includes its continuation. For other species and habitat types, the level of its development is stated (monitoring of species presence, population monitoring). The table also shows that, in order to determine reference status in an area, field data must be acquired. Data acquired through such monitoring is also important for better management of areas. Therefore, they are also useful where special management measures may be carried out, e.g. in protected areas on State-owned land.

To ensure suitable implementation of measures, extensive monitoring in pilot areas should also be carried out in addition to the aforementioned monitoring. Findings derived on the basis of the aforementioned monitoring may be inaccurate. Pilot monitoring is sensible at the project level, together with the implementation of measures. Findings from monitoring also contribute to better management and implementation of measures. Management can most easily be adjusted in State-owned areas with a known operator (e.g. protected areas).

4.2 Databases

The number of data collected on species and habitat types has been growing each year. They must be in electronic form and included in an organised database which facilitates fast use by key users in order for the data to be useful. A minor database has been established within the Nature Conservation Atlas of the

ZRSVN. It must be supplemented, and regularly filled in and maintained to regularly provide key users with data, data sets or interpretations derived from such data.

The ZON stipulates that the ZRSVN manages databases on natural valuable features and elements of biodiversity. To supplement, and regularly fill and maintain the database, it is crucial to complete the following:

- the digitalisation of important older non-electronic data and data that is not in a suitable digital form;
- the establishment of mechanisms to stimulate collection of suitable data in the field;
- the establishment of mechanisms to stimulate the inclusion of data, especially data collected by public funds, into the database.

The supplementation of the database would facilitate the implementation of OP and their evaluation, especially of the Rural Development Programme and the Operational Programme for the Implementation of EU Cohesion Policy in the Period 2014–2020. Therefore, the supplementation may be subject to technical assistance from the aforementioned programmes if it meets their conditions.

Even more target-oriented and successful implementation of measures to attain conservation objectives may be monitored by enhancing accessibility and connectivity of these databases within databases from other fields, for example from the field of water management.

5 SUPPORT ACTIONS FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF NATURA SITES

5.1 Cohesion of the European ecological network

The cohesion of the European ecological network and satisfactory integration of Slovenian Natura sites with the European Natura network are the responsibilities of the European Commission. The established procedure in this regard comprises biogeographic seminars for individual biogeographic regions where additional obligations for Member States are determined in negotiations between that state and the Commission. Slovenia fulfilled additional obligations from these seminars by adopting the Decree amending the Decree on special protection areas (Natura 2000 areas) in April 2013. The European Commission verified the final fulfilment of the obligations from these seminars at the so-called bilateral biogeographic seminar.

5.2 Research and technology development

To use knowledge in practice better, this programme states research activities of basic and applied sciences, which are performed and financed as a priority, since they are essential to improve the knowledge of the ecology of Natura species and habitat types. These activities are research to improve the knowledge of the status of structures and features of habitats and habitat types, the ecology of species of wild flora and fauna, habitat types of species, population parameters, the determination of endangerment and key sources of endangerment of species, habitats and habitat types, and of ecosystem services. The expected results include the development of technologies (e.g. use of natural resources) which preserve biodiversity and thus facilitate equal or even more efficient use of natural resources in the coming decades. “conservation measures” in Appendix 6.5 “Monitoring and research” include the topics of research required for more efficient attainment of conservation objectives, and better implementation of measures and Natura management.

In accordance with the applicable sectoral legislation, this appendix is taken into account in the allocation of funds for research programmes, research projects, target research projects, applied research, and other suitable tenders and programmes.

The basic source of financing is the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (Horizon 2020). This is a centralised mechanism which includes exact definition of biodiversity and has the possibility to be financed from two societal challenges: Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry, Marine, Maritime and Inland Water Research and the Bioeconomy (Societal Challenge 2²⁷); Climate Action, Environment, Resource Efficiency and Raw Materials (Societal Challenge 5²⁸). For this source of financing, applicants apply their research projects directly to the European Commission to tender topics published in accordance with the action programme. Therefore, Appendix 6.5 “Monitoring and research” should be understood in relation to such a source of financing as a proposal to research organisations whose content users need. The scope of climate action, environment, resource efficiency and raw materials in the EC action programme for 2014–2015 especially includes the definitions of projects on environmental protection, sustainable natural resource management, and biodiversity and ecosystems focused on ecosystem services and on the role of biodiversity²⁹. In the action programme to ensure food safety 2014–2015, the mentioned significance of the preservation of biodiversity and healthy functional ecosystems is indirectly included through sustainable use of natural resources³⁰.

²⁷ <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/food-security-sustainable-agriculture-and-forestry-marine-maritime-and-inland-water>

²⁸ <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/climate-action-environment-resource-efficiency-and-raw-materials>

²⁹ <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/food-security-sustainable-agriculture-and-forestry-marine-maritime-and-inland-water>

³⁰ <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/food-security-sustainable-agriculture-and-forestry-marine-maritime-and-inland-water>

Research content may also be realised with the assistance of other financial mechanisms (such as European Cohesion Policy funds, European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and fisheries mechanism).

Research content used to preserve Natura species and habitat types will also be supported by Target research projects (TRP). The ministry responsible for nature conservation has limited funds at PP 302810 and PP 248010 for ordering special studies and minor research.

5.3 Information, communication, raising awareness of the public

The management of Natura 2000 sites is a demanding task. A reason for this is also that it includes numerous active and passive stakeholders – from institutions competent for management on the basis of regulations, scientists and other experts on nature conservation and preservation of species and habitats, to current users of these sites (the owners of land, fishermen, hunters, local residents, recreational sportsmen) and potential new users (investors in new activities in Natura 2000 sites or near these sites), and nature lovers. Therefore, in the plan of measures when determining Natura sites in 2013, the Government emphasised the activities of providing information, communication and cooperation which are also reflected in this programme. Information, communication, consultations, dialogue promotion and inclusion in decision making:

- reduce the risk of conflicts;
- increase support for measures;
- enhance the quality of measures;
- improve the implementation of measures.

In addition, comprehensive information enhances the transparency of the work of the public sector.

The measures of Information, communication (two-way) and raising awareness frequently overlap, and one measure may be used to attain the objectives in several fields. Measures regarding information and communication are especially agreements between project partners, and with stakeholders, and the wider public. The tools used are mainly direct personal communication, printed material and electronic messages, websites, new social media and campaigns. The focus of Appendix 6.1 “Objectives and measures” are areas or species and habitat types which have been given priority in communication. The implementation of numerous projects (stated as “project” under “source of financing” in Appendix 6.1 “Objectives and measures”) will require the measures of information, communication and raising awareness.

Measures regarding raising awareness are focused especially on individual sections of the public (most frequently young people and pupils), interest groups, tourists and visitors, and the general public. Most frequently, the means include websites and new social media, printed material, exhibitions, infrastructure for visitors (natural science trails, information centres), guided tours, lectures, etc. To include principles and certain similar conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites in the curriculum of kindergartens and primary schools, a simplified text must be prepared in a manner to create a direct two-way information and knowledge exchange (adults–children). Conditions for wider and in-depth learning about the direct and remote protected natural environment of each individual kindergarten or school must be prepared, the school network must be connected with the network of expert institutions included in Natura 2000, and the environment for direct cooperation must be created as the basis and constant opportunity for children to learn about individual disciplines and potential selection of occupations.

To a certain extent, communication and publicity activities are part of regular work of the MOP, all public institutions and public service providers which operate in the field of nature conservation. To this extent, these activities are financed from the budget of the Republic of Slovenia within the scope of the public service financing.

Each year, the Government Communication Office supports information–communication and education projects of non-governmental organisations through a public tender which address predetermined topics,

including the promotion of Natura 2000. There is also a possibility to include the topics of Natura 2000 in communication activities related to the affairs of the EU.

In the 2014–2020 period, project financing from the LIFE financial mechanism is also possible. The set of environmental management and information, including the field of nature and Natura 2000 conservation, is intended for the aforementioned financing. Funds will be allocated to raise awareness, and to promote communication, information, knowledge exchange regarding successful solutions, expansion of practice and approaches, and training.

In the first multiannual LIFE action programme³¹, the European Commission anticipates funds for national and international awareness raising campaigns whose objective is to raise awareness of the public of Natura 2000. These campaigns should significantly raise awareness and bring changes in the behaviour of the target public or of a certain social administrative or economic sector. In addition, funds will be allocated to campaigns for large carnivores at the level of the population of individual species. Funds for information and raising awareness of the EU Biodiversity Strategy³² are also anticipated which should raise awareness and enhance the understanding of citizens and key stakeholders, including decision-makers, the business sector, local administration, as to the objectives of this Strategy.

Providing information about, raising awareness of, and promotion of, nature are activities justified in projects financed under the LEADER programme which is part of the Rural Development Programme. In Slovenia, the connection between the production of high-quality food, local offers and short supply chains will be emphasised.

Education and training of young people will be financed from the Erasmus+ programme³³ which also facilitates education for adults. Organisations for adult education and local and regional institutions that are active in this field may compete for the funds from the Erasmus+ programme for adult education.

Communication and promotion activities will be included in projects of international cooperation some of which also include awareness raising activities.

Also available are funds contributed by European countries which are not EU Member States, e.g. Swiss financial contribution, Norwegian Financial Mechanism, EEA Financial Mechanism.

³¹ *LIFE Multiannual Work Programme for 2014-2017* (February 2014)

³² *EU Biodiversity Strategy*.

³³ More on the Erasmus+ programme at: http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/index_en.htm

6 APPENDICES:

6.1 Appendix “Objectives and measures”

6.2 Appendix “Natura Plans”

6.3 Appendix “Target AEC areas”

6.4 Appendix “Planned projects”

6.5 Appendix “Monitoring and research”

6.6 Appendix “Acceptability assessment for protected areas”