



# The European Natura 2000 Award

## 2024 edition selection criteria

for

## Conservation on land and Marine conservation categories

### Table of Contents

Introduction .....	2
Effectiveness criterion (40% of total evaluation).....	3
Originality criterion (5% of total evaluation).....	4
Durability criterion (20% of total evaluation).....	5
Cost-benefit criterion (15% of total evaluation).....	6
Replicability criterion (20% of total evaluation).....	7

# Introduction

Applications to the Natura 2000 Award are independently evaluated against five key aspects (criteria):

1. Effectiveness
2. Originality
3. Durability
4. Cost-benefit
5. Replicability

Below, we provide some suggestions for the kinds of information that could be provided in the application form for each criterion in the Conservation on land and Marine conservation categories. Applications providing descriptive yet to-the-point qualitative and quantitative information for each criterion are likely to score better. In addition to the suggested information, you can provide links to background, contextual or other relevant materials (websites, documents, etc.), but the evaluation will mainly be based on the information provided in the application form itself.

You can also find good examples of how to fill out the application form in the [Good examples for Conservation](#) document.

## Conservation on land category

This award recognises achievements that have improved the conservation status of a particular terrestrial habitat type and / or species. Targeted habitat types or species must be in the Habitats Directive Annex I or II or Birds Directive Annex I or be a regularly occurring migratory bird. This means that species only listed in Annex IV of the Habitats Directive, for instance, cannot be the target and such applications would not be eligible.

Applications presenting successes in the creation of improved connections and corridors between sites in the Natura 2000 network are welcome, as they respond to an important concern for the implementation of Natura 2000.

## Marine conservation

This award recognises achievements that have improved the conservation status of a particular marine or coastal habitat type and / or marine or coastal species. Targeted habitat types or species must be in the Habitats Directive Annex I or II or Birds Directive Annex I or be a regularly occurring migratory bird. This means that species only listed in Annex IV of the Habitats Directive, for instance, cannot be the target and such applications would not be eligible.

Applications presenting successes in the creation of improved connections and corridors between sites in the Natura 2000 network are welcome, as they respond to an important concern for the implementation of Natura 2000. The coastal habitats under this category must be associated with the conservation of marine species or marine habitats. If they are associated with terrestrial habitats / species, then the application should be presented under the Conservation on land category.

More information on all categories can be found on the [Award website](#). For any questions, you can contact the [Award Secretariat](#).

## Effectiveness criterion (40% of total evaluation)

### *How effective are / were your activities?*

This criterion assesses how successful the activities have been in producing concrete and measurable positive results affecting the conservation status of habitat types and / or species. This assessment also involves an examination of the size of the positive change in the conservation status of each habitat type (range, area, structure, functions, future prospects) or species targeted (range, population, habitat, future prospects).

Suggestions on what to include in your application:

- What was the situation before you started work?

Describe the threats, pressures and problems you were addressing at the start.

- How have things changed?

What changes have taken place in the conservation status of each habitat type or species you focused on?

Wherever possible, provide information about both the quantity (figures) and quality (description) of changes in each habitat type (i.e. the conservation status including range, area, structure, functions, future prospects) or species (range, population, habitat, future prospects) targeted by your actions.

- How much of the initial problem has been solved?

Wherever possible, provide qualitative and quantitative information about changes you achieved.

- Describe how your actions directly contributed to this change.

- Describe the monitoring activities, tools or mechanisms that were in place to track your achievements.

This can include data collection, reporting and analyses, for example.

- Describe how you have measured the success (effectiveness) of your actions.

Have your results been assessed by any independent body?

Experience from past editions of the Award has shown that the discussion of changes in conservation status, and quantification of results in terms of targeted habitats surfaces and targeted species populations, are key points of successful Conservation applications.

## Originality criterion (5% of total evaluation)

*How original are / were your activities?*

Originality can be at various levels:

- Technical / methodological (e.g., new conservation tool / method developed);
- Contextual (e.g., existing tool / method used for a different species / habitat type); and / or
- Geographical (e.g., existing tool used for first time in specific geographic area: EU level / Member State level / regional level, etc.).

Suggestions on what to include in your application:

- Do you consider your conservation activities to be of an original nature?
- If your activities were original, was this to do with:
  - A new technology or technique
  - A new methodology
  - The first time the activities had been implemented in this context or area (country or region), and / or
  - Some other original feature?

## Durability criterion (20% of total evaluation)

*How long-lasting are / were your activities and how sustainable are their results?*

This criterion is related to:

- The durability of actions and their impact over time (for instance, raising water level is technically more durable than clearing scrub); and
- The steps that have been put in place to ensure recurring management / recurring actions, where this is necessary. This includes technical but also financial solutions.

Suggestions on what to include in your application:

- What have you done to make sure your conservation activities will continue to have an impact in the future?
- Describe how you expect your work and investments to evolve in the future.
- Does the success you achieve depend on further interventions?

If so, who will be responsible, what technical means will be needed, and how they will be funded.

## Cost-benefit criterion (15% of total evaluation)

### *How cost-effective are / were your activities?*

The first step of a cost-benefit analysis would be to match the cost of the actions implemented with the surface of habitats and / or population sizes of species targeted.

The second step would be to match the cost with effectiveness, i.e., compare the incurred costs to the achieved changes in the conservation status of the targeted habitats / species.

Suggestions on what to include in your application:

- How much did your conservation activities cost (in €)?
- What habitat surface and / or species population size was reached?
- Explain how effective your conservation activities have been in view of the money spent.

For example, you can describe the size of change / impact in relation to the cost.

Please provide quantitative data (e.g., specific costs related to land surface, or number of species) for this criterion, wherever you have it.

## Replicability criterion (20% of total evaluation)

*Is it possible to replicate your activities in other places or contexts? Have you done so?*

This criterion looks at the replicability potential of the actions. How widespread is the problem that this method solves? How easily can it be transferred to other partners, other contexts? In addition to the potential of replicability, it is of interest to know whether specific steps have been made to actually disseminate the results and to replicate them.

Suggestions on what to include in your application:

- Have your activities been – or could they be – applied elsewhere?

Describe why and how.

- Are there any real or potential barriers (cultural, technical or financial) to using the conservation tool or method elsewhere?

If such barriers do exist, how could they be addressed?

- Please explain what efforts you made to share your work with others, to allow them to implement similar activities elsewhere.

For example, did you provide a package that other professionals can use (e.g., a manual, toolbox, guidelines), or did you present your results at a conference or thematic workshop, etc.?