



The European Natura 2000 Award

2024 edition selection criteria

for

Cross-border cooperation category

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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 Cross-border cooperation category. 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 Cross-border cooperation applications](#) document.

Cross-border cooperation category

This category concerns the establishment of effective partnerships between stakeholders involved in the management / conservation of Natura 2000 sites that are aimed at resolving Natura 2000 issues more constructively than would have been the case if the partners had operated individually.

This category targets two main types of partnerships:

- 1) Cross-border collaboration in order to achieve better conservation of a species / habitat type whose geographic distribution requires such an approach. Cross-border cooperation may be between countries or self-governing regions in a federal state (such as Germany, Belgium, Austria, Spain). It can also include the transfer of knowledge / best practice in the explicit framework of a biogeographic region context; and / or
- 2) Networking among structures with similar thematic targets (e.g., wetland Natura 2000 sites, managers of Natura 2000 sites, partners working on a same species or group of species such as carnivores, reptiles, etc.) within the same country (or same region for federal countries).

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 actions have been in achieving the objectives that had been set out. It looks with particular attention at the strategic role of the cross-border cooperation / networking actions, and at their added value compared to independent approaches (i.e., if cross-border cooperation / networking had not occurred).

Suggestions on what to include in your application:

- What was the situation before you started?
Describe threats, pressures and problems you were addressing.
- Describe the partners involved, how the cooperation was set up, and why.
Please also describe the original relationship of the partners.
- Was joint fieldwork carried out, with concrete field activities? If so, please describe.
- Was the focus of your collaboration on exchanging information, experience or know-how?

If so, please provide details about the information, experience or know-how, and how it was used in practice by the partners.
- What is the situation now?

Wherever possible, please describe the changes in the relationships between the partners (results) and the impact of those changes on the Natura 2000 site, species and / or habitat types concerned.

If you have figures (quantitative information), please provide them.
- Describe the monitoring activities, tools or mechanisms that were in place to track your achievements.
- Describe the added value of your collaboration. Why was the collaboration preferable to similar independent actions (i.e., if partners had kept doing independently the activities, instead of forming a partnership and doing them jointly)?

Originality criterion (5% of total evaluation)

How original are / were your activities?

Originality can be at various levels:

- Technical (e.g., new cross-border cooperation / networking method developed);
- Contextual (e.g., existing tool / method used for the first time between a particular type of operators); 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 cross-border cooperation / networking 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?
- Are there other similar cross-border cooperation / networking activities that you are aware of?

Durability criterion (20% of total evaluation)

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

This criterion concerns on one hand the durability of the results (e.g., how permanent are the outputs of the partnership) and on the other hand the durability of the actions (e.g., which actions will have to continue in order to ensure that the attained results are preserved).

Suggestions on what to include in your application:

- What have you done to ensure the maximum lasting impact of your collaborative activities?
- If there were tangible activities in the field, will they be continued in the future, and for how long?
- Will the collaboration continue in the future?
If so, have structures or processes been set up to maintain the collaboration scheme and deal with any future internal differences?
- Please describe what the future funding needs are, and how will they be covered.

Cost-benefit criterion (15% of total evaluation)

How cost-effective are / were your activities?

The first level of a cost-benefit analysis would be to match the cost of the actions with the number / type / size of stakeholders involved. If the collaboration focuses on specific habitat types / species, then the surface of habitats / size of species population directly affected can be checked against the costs incurred.

The second level would be to match the cost with effectiveness: How significant is the result of the cross-border cooperation / networking? What is the size of the positive effect on Natura 2000 site(s) management and / or habitats / species' conservation status?

Suggestions on what to include in your application:

How much did your cross-border cooperation / networking activities cost (in €)?

What was the reach of your activities?

For example, how many partners, or Natura 2000 sites were involved, how many habitat types and species were targeted?

Explain how effective your collaborative activities have been in view of the cost of the money spent.

For example, describe the size of change or impact, providing concrete figures wherever possible.

Replicability criterion (20% of total evaluation)

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

This criterion concerns the replication potential of an action/method (e.g., does the cross-border cooperation / networking address an issue prevalent throughout other Natura 2000 sites?).

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 in other areas / with other partners.

Suggestions on what to include in your application:

- For cross-border cooperation activities: how relevant are your actions in terms of learning or sharing experience with other regions or by other partners?
- For networking activities: is it possible to expand the network, or reproduce it for similar groups?

Are there any plans to expand the partnership to new areas or members?
- Are there any real or potential barriers (cultural, technical or financial) to using a similar approach elsewhere?

If such barriers do exist, please explain how they could be addressed.
- Please describe what efforts you have made to expand or broaden your collaborative activities. Discuss how successful they have been.
- Have you disseminated the results? How and to whom?