



The European Natura 2000 Award

2024 edition selection criteria for Communication 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 Communication 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 Communication applications](#) document.

Communication category

This award recognises communication achievements that led to increased awareness about Natura 2000, and which brought lasting positive changes in attitudes or behaviour towards the network.

Applications to this category must be targeted at specific Natura 2000 sites. If an application addresses multiple sites or the whole Natura 2000 network by targeting a whole interest group or the general public, it must nevertheless show a tangible positive impact on at least one Natura 2000 site.

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 were in delivering a real, measurable and measured, change in knowledge / attitudes / behaviour in the targeted audience(s). This change should concern:

1. The target audience's knowledge related to Natura 2000 site(s) or conservation features or conservation objective(s) and measures;
2. Attitudes of the target audiences to specific Natura 2000 sites / habitats / species; and/or
3. The target audience's behaviour directly affecting Natura 2000 implementation.

Outreach to civil society – to raise awareness and positive attitudes towards Natura 2000 – is the prime focus of this Award. Applications targeting the general public are likely to score better, although applications can target specific stakeholder groups too. A multi-level communication campaign tuned to different audiences, which targets both the general public and focus groups, would have an advantage.

Suggestions on what to include in your application:

- What was the situation before you started work?

Describe why there was a need for the communication activities and why you launched the campaign / activities.

What were you aiming to achieve?

- Which target audience(s) were you targeting? Is the target audience widespread or specific?

Is the target audience the most appropriate, with respect to the initial issues identified?

- Have you noticed a change in the initial situation as a result of your activities?

Have there been concrete changes in the knowledge / attitudes / behaviour among the targeted audience(s)?

Wherever possible, please provide information about both the quantity (figures) and quality (description) of your achievements.

Please provide links to your communications activities and materials where available.

- How did you measure the impact on the targeted audience(s)?

For example, did you carry out a survey or questionnaire before and after your activities? Please provide figures wherever you have them.

Experience from previous editions of the Award has shown that successful applications provide a clear description of concrete changes in knowledge and / or attitudes / behaviour in Communication applications as well as quantitative data.

Originality criterion (5% of total evaluation)

How original are / were your activities?

Originality can be assessed at various levels:

- Technical (e.g., innovative communication message / tool / method developed);
- Contextual (e.g., existing tool / method used for new target audience or in different way); 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 communication 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 concerns the durability of the results and the durability of the actions. Any proof of lasting changes in attitude / behaviour because of the communication activities would be a distinct advantage.

The criterion also considers the concrete steps that have actually been put in place to ensure the continuation of the 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 communication activities will continue to have an impact in the future, beyond the end of your campaign?
- Describe if you expect to carry-out follow-up communication activities, to keep the message alive and / or to refresh it.

What follow-up activities are foreseen and what is the timeframe?

- What lasting changes in attitudes and in behaviour have you noticed?

If you have recorded or measured changes in attitudes or behaviour, please describe the quantity (figures) and quality (description) of the changes for each target group.

- Who would be responsible for any future activities, what means will be needed, and how will they be funded?

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 implemented actions with the number of people / size of audience reached.

The second level would be to match the cost with effectiveness, namely compare the incurred costs with the achieved changes in knowledge / attitudes / behaviour among the target audiences.

Suggestions on what to include in your application:

- How much did your communication activities cost (in €)?
- How many people were reached?
- Explain how effective your communication activities have been, in view of the money spent.

Please provide quantitative data (e.g., how many people reached per target group) 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?

On one hand, this criterion looks at the replicability potential of the actions / achievements and, on the other, whether specific steps have been made to actually disseminate the results to other partners, other contexts and / or to replicate them.

Suggestions on what to include in your application:

- Have your activities been – or could they be – applied elsewhere?
- Are there any actual or potential barriers (cultural or financial) to using communication method to other circumstances?
- Please describe what efforts you have made to share your work with others, to allow them to implement them elsewhere.

For example, did you disseminate the results or create specific toolkits, to allow others to use the same / similar approach (e.g., in other Natura 2000 sites, partnering organisations, etc.)?