



Sectoral Integration of Biodiversity in Portugal

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1. Introduction

Portugal reported¹ on land use planning, environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment, agriculture, hunting, forests, fisheries, tourism, other policies and activities.

2. Land Use Planning

Among other, the Instruments of Land Management (IGT), are essential for a consistent process of integration of policies, with direct application in land use planning policy and with different implications on sectoral policies, especially the National Programme of the Land Use Planning Policy - PNPT, the Regional Land Use Plans – PROT, the Municipal Land Use Plans - PMOT (which include Municipal Master Plans – PDM - Document regulating land use planning in a given municipality in Portugal. The PDM is formulated by the Municipal Council and approved by the Municipal Assembly. This document is set to organize the municipal territory where by establishing the spatial referencing of uses and activities of municipal land by defining classes and categories relating to the area, identifying the urban networks, roads, transport and equipment, telecommunication systems, water treatment and supply among others.), the Special Land Use Plans - ESDP (for example Protected Areas Land Use Plans – POAP, Coastal Zones Land Use Plans – POOC, Public Water Reservoirs Land Use Plans – POAAP). Under the Sectoral Plans, important examples are the Natura 2000 Sectoral Plan, Watershed Plans and Regional Forestry Plans – PROF.

The approval of a set of instruments that were identified as fundamental to a consistent policy integration process should be mentioned, particularly the PNPT in 2007. In 2009, the majority of PROTs were adopted or reviewed; a significant part of the PDMs have also been reviewed or are being reviewed at present.

Regarding the coastal zones, all POOC were concluded.

On a sectoral level, the publication and entry into force of the PROF should be highlighted. These plans establish the framework for forest development, with a view to preparing management plans on an operational scale. Where these are located within classified areas, they include biodiversity management programs, under the terms imposed by the legal framework for forest planning and management, which was extensively revised in 2009.

Finally, the Sectoral Plan for the Natura 2000 Network, approved in 2008, is the guiding and reference strategic instrument for the management of Natura 2000 sites within the Network, namely with a view to integrate their provisions in new land use planning instruments or in their review. To that end, there is already a draft version of a Methodological Guide for transposing the Sector Plan for the Natura 2000 Network to those instruments, in particular to Municipal Master Plans.

Planning for the marine environment was the object of considerable effort, following the adoption of

¹ Portugal (2010). Fourth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity, Instituto da Conservação da Natureza e da Biodiversidade, I.P., 155 pp.

the National Strategy for the Sea in 2006, which includes objectives, options and guidelines from the ENCNB. In this context, the creation of an Interministerial Commission for the Affairs of the Sea was approved. In 2007 its action plan (in force since 2008) incorporated the preparation of the Plan of maritime spatial planning, now underway, which aims to set a new tool which will contribute to the planning of maritime activities, in close coordination with coastal zone management and is based, among others, in the ecosystem approach.

The National Ecological Reserve (REN), an integral part of the Fundamental Network for Nature Conservation, is intended to be one of the main supports for land use planning and management, grouping the most sensitive and relevant biophysical systems from the point of view of ecosystems services and ecological connectivity; RENs legal framework was reviewed in 2008, with a view to equip it with greater efficiency in terms of its operational and strategic objectives.

3. Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment

Equally important are the processes of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of projects, and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of plans and programs aimed at the implementation of legislative and regulatory framework regarding the compatibility of human activities, namely economic activities, with nature conservation and biodiversity in a sustainable manner.

In terms of EIA, it should be mentioned that at present, the approval of projects and actions take into account descriptors and actions that are directly or indirectly related to natural values. In the case of projects that have an impact on classified areas, the EIA must include explicitly the biodiversity descriptor. As mentioned, the EIA process is carried out under specific legislation. In the particular case of the Natura 2000 Network, all projects or actions that may affect the integrity of a site in that Network must be assessed for environmental impact, even if they are located outside of that site. OK

Portugal has adopted measures with the aim of limiting the use and degradation of biological resources: through Environmental Impact Assessment legislation and land planning, namely through integration of rare and threatened habitats in the Natura 2000 network. Furthermore there are several ecological sustainability conditions to be fulfilled which are incorporated in agricultural, forestry and fishery policies.

Through the joint application of EIA and SEA directives (Decree-Law nº 197/05 of 8 November and Decree-Law nº 232/2007 of 15 June), Birds and Habitats Directives (Decree-Law nº 140/99, 24th of April, changed by Decree-Law nº 49/05, 24th of February) any plans, projects or actions susceptible of significantly affect biodiversity and protected areas can be required to submit an environmental impact assessment, an environmental incidences assessment or a strategic environmental assessment (a list of projects for which the environmental assessment is mandatory exists, and is more encompassing on projects in protected areas). The final conclusions of the Environmental Impact Assessment is binding, and decides if the process can go ahead as originally projected, if it needs revision or if it cannot proceed.

At the same time, all projects that are subject to community funding (Cohesion Fund) or funding

from the European Investment Bank are subject to a statement of conformity with the provisions of the legal framework for the Natura 2000 Network in the whole national territory.

The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC) requires that relevant sectoral programmes or plans susceptible to have negative effect on conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, as well as all the plans and programmes that require an evaluation in the terms of Decree-Law nº140/99, 24th of April, (changed by Decree-Law nº49/05, 24th of February), are systematically subject to a previous environmental evaluation as form of integration of the environmental considerations in its preparation and approval.

In 2007, the legal framework for environmental assessment of projects and actions was complemented with the for transposition of the Community Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment (Decree-Law No. 232/2007 of 15 June on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programs on environment) and Directive 2003/35/EC of 26 May on the public participation in drawing up plans and programs concerning the environment (see Aarhus Convention - Resolution AR 11/2003 of 25 February)). From that date, environmental assessment of plans and programs became widespread, namely as regards the critical biodiversity factor. The framework of the SEA result of, which transposes Directive 2001/42/EC of 27 June.

The Environment Portuguese Agency runs a site with extensive information on past and on-going environmental impact assessments.

4. Agriculture

Regarding economic sectors, the agricultural, forestry and herding activities mould Portugal's ecosystems most directly. A large part of the intervention in terms of active management of natural wealth during the last decade has been aimed at reinforcing the maintenance of certain practices in the agro-forestry use of the national territory, in particular within classified areas, with a view to assuring the maintenance and re-establishment of the favourable state of conservation of natural species and habitats.

That is to say, the vision that agro-forestry activity should have its multifunctional vocation reinforced with respect to the use and operation of rural spaces, valuing the component of public service of environmental assets, among which is the production of biodiversity.

This correction has been mainly carried out within the scope of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) rural development policy, both during III Community Support Framework (CSF) and within the context of the last review of the CAP (PRODER 2007-2013).

Within the scope of Agricultural and Environmental Measures of the Rural Development Program (RURIS) that was in force until 2006, around 73,000 ha were supported in areas included in the National System of Classified Areas ([www.dgadr.pt/ar/ruris/avaliacao final/RelatorioFinal.pdf](http://www.dgadr.pt/ar/ruris/avaliacao%20final/RelatorioFinal.pdf)) and in the scope of which the first Zonal Plan was registered, applied to the SPA of Castro Verde. In 2005, other 7 Zonal Plans were added in 7 Protected Areas (Peneda-Gerês, Montesinho, Douro internacional, Serra da Estrela, Tejo Internacional, Serras de Aire e Candeeiros and Sudoeste Alentejano e Costa Vicentina).

With the objective of outlining an approach to integrate the Management of the Natura 2000 Network into the National Strategy for Rural Development (ENDR) 2007-2013 and into the Plan for Rural Development, the preparation of a study entitled "A Strategy for Agricultural and Forest Management for the Natura 2000 Network" was promoted (concluded in 2006). This study had as its starting points the identification of areas with common characteristics, their dynamics, how they compared to the management guidelines arising from the Natura 2000 Network Sector Plan, the design of policy measures needed so that the territory dynamics would ensure conservation of assets protected by the Birds and Habitats Directives and the calculation of financial sums to be allocated for that purpose, based on the express guidance of the new FEADER.

At the end of 2007, the new Program for Rural Development in Mainland Portugal (PRODER) was approved within the scope of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (FEADER). In line with axis 2 of PRODER, regarding Sustainable Management of Rural Space, the Regulation that establishes the way that agricultural/forestry-environmental components of the Integrated Land Interventions (ITI) Measure (the successor of the Zonal Plans) are applied, was approved in 2008. Within the scope of this measure 8 ITIs came into force for the areas covered by the 8 previous Zonal Plans (including the respective areas of the Natura 2000 Network).

To that end, a second project was developed between 2007 and 2008, under which technical proposals, based on agricultural/forestry-environmental measures and non productive investments for a second stage of ITI. This corresponds to a vast group of sites in the Natura 2000 Network, whose management depends primarily on maintenance and recovery of certain agricultural, forestry and herding practices.

The reinforcement of funding aimed at the Natura 2000 Network provided for in PRODER will be used to ensure the widening of the ITIs to all remaining classified areas that require directed agricultural and forestry management to meet their conservation objectives.

Throughout the decade, and alongside the funding for Zonal Plans or ITIs (agricultural/forestry-environmental measures), RURIS supported around 640,000 ha connected to agricultural production systems between 2001 and 2006. This had a significant positive impact on biodiversity. 73,000 ha of this area are within a classified area of the Natura 2000 Network. Since 2008, PRODER included another three measures related to nature conservation and biodiversity, namely measures directed towards Maintenance of Agricultural Activity in Deprived Areas (within and outside the Natura 2000 Network), Valuation of Production Methods (changes in agricultural production methods, protection of domestic biodiversity - autochthonous breeds and plant genetic resources, so as to promote their valuation, as well as measures relating to changes in production methods - and conservation and improvement of plant and animal genetic resources), biological agriculture and integrated production, with direct and indirect positive effects on protection of biodiversity and management of forest and agricultural forest space (minimizing risks, planning and recovery of settlements and environmental enhancement of forest spaces). Finally, measures for diversifying activities that include support of ecotourism and nature tourism should be mentioned, as a way of promoting the valuation of environmental services and landscape that are part of rural spaces.

At the same time, payments within the scope of these measures should be in line with the horizontal rules of environmental conditionality and good agricultural and environmental conditions, as well as

the minimum requirements relating to the use of fertilizers and products for plant health and maximum yield in herding.

It is expected that from 2010 onwards modulation mechanisms will be reinforced, through the transfer of sums for direct help from the CAP (1st pillar) for rural development. According to PRODER, these will be aimed as a matter of priority to reinforce funding to the Natura 2000 Network and for projects with structural character. The funds will be divided equally (50% split) between these two priorities. The reinforcement of funding aimed at the Natura 2000 Network will be used for ensuring the widening of ITIs as described above.

5. Hunting

Still within the context of sector activities that depend on rural sustainability, it is important to emphasize the reinforcement of biodiversity integration within hunting policy, arising especially from the application of reviews from 2004 and 2005 of the legal framework for conservation, fostering and exploitation of hunting resources, with a view to its sustainable management and to provide the strategic framework of the hunting policy.

The promotion of hunting planning in the whole national territory is highlighted as the most relevant result in this regard, implementing sustainable management models for game species. This objective, aimed at bringing an end to un-planned hunting, was successful, since only around 10% of hunting grounds are unregulated at this time.

This new regime further allowed to integrate in hunting legislation procedures that contemplate the specificity of classified areas and the natural wealth to be preserved, specifically in terms of approval of hunting areas and their hunting planning and hunting management plans. By way of example, currently the national authority on conservation of nature and biodiversity (ICNB) supports and monitors the management of around 33% of the total hunting areas in the country, which corresponds to around 1,300 hunting zones. Within the same scope, it should be noted that land use planning in protected areas also includes provisions that regulate hunting.

6. Forests

Regarding forests, measures aimed at promoting the environmental value of forests are highlighted, contributing to improving biodiversity. In addition, they lessen the effects of climate change, minimize the effects of soil erosion and protect water resources. Measures aimed at preventing forest fires, included in PRODER and within the frame of the National Plan for the Protection of Forests from Fires, also have a significant contribution to make to the objective of conservation in terms of the losses that would have been associated with large forest fires, which are avoided.

7. Fisheries

Within the fishing sector, the Fishing Operational Program (PROMAR) should be mentioned. Under this program, various policy and financial support measures are provided for the sustainability of fishing activity and actions of conservation in sensitive areas such as those within the Natura 2000 Network, when related to fishing.

8. Tourism

Another economic sector that is very relevant to the management of biodiversity in Portugal is tourism, not only due to the impact it can have on sensitive areas from the point of view of nature conservation but also, inversely, by the potential that sustainable tourism has to offer for the enjoyment, knowledge and preservation of natural wealth. For this to happen, an essential condition is that the activity includes biodiversity adequately within its core business.

Thus, at the level of the National Network of Protected Areas, the creation of a Visiting and Communication Program (within the scope of the National Program for Nature Tourism created in 1998) in 2006 is worth mentioning. This was intended to improve visiting conditions in these areas in an integrated and sustainable way, with a view to recreation and environmental awareness, while at the same time improving the current model of service to the public. Still within this scope, there was significant investment in optimizing the infra-structures and dissemination of materials in these areas. This program includes a standard signalling system (around 320 identification and boundary signs and 870 information and interpretation panels relating to the existing natural heritage), developed within the scope of a project which was finished in 2007.

In the meantime, the year 2000 saw the creation of an incentive system for strategic tourism products within the scope of CSF III (2000 to 2006). Among other things, it supported the development of Nature Tourism projects, exclusively for companies that wanted to develop tourism and accommodation projects within the territory encompassed by the National Network of Protected Areas, as well as the facilitation of projects for sustainable development, as long as they were implemented in areas next to protected areas.

More recently, the approval of the National Strategic Plan for Tourism (PENT) in 2007 should be mentioned. PENT established a set of intervention guidelines aiming to guide tourism activities in Portugal. Among them, one to be highlighted is the strategy for consolidating and developing ten strategic tourist products selected due to their market share and growth potential, as well as the suitability and competitive potential in Portugal; according to the PENT, these should form the basis for the development and capacity policies for Portugal's tourism offer. Among these products, nature tourism and cultural and landscape touring are worthy of note; their objectives are the valorisation of nature and biodiversity as tourist products.

In 2008 the approval of the legal framework for installing, operating and running tourist enterprises was reviewed thereby consolidating the product Nature Tourism, widening it to the whole territory of Portugal and creating the possibility to such enterprises to, according to established criteria, be acknowledged by the ICNB as Nature Tourism operators.

9. Other policies and activities

Finally, regarding the integration of biodiversity in other policies and activities, special mention should be made of the efforts relating not only to direct impacts of infrastructure on natural values, in particular linear infrastructures, but especially the impacts on ecological connectivity and the fragmentation they impose on the territory.

In this regard, the protocols for cooperation established between the companies that transport and distribute energy, the ICNB and ENGOs should be mentioned. These started off in 2003, and were responsible for pioneering work on describing the impacts that electricity lines had on birds, on making electricity lines compatible with bird protection, on monitoring the effectiveness of the corrective measures introduced, on testing new types of structure that minimise the impacts, and on implementing operations for the correction of lines identified as being dangerous to birds.

Furthermore, guidelines for project analysis were prepared, namely for projects for the installation of overhead distribution lines and electric energy transport, for roads and communication routes, and for wind farms, with a view to standardizing the proposed solutions at the EIA stage or in licensing processes and to ensure that these solutions are effective.

As a final note, the various activities linked to education and training on the subject of conservation and biodiversity, involving projects at regional and local level, some of which are undeniably important in the field of education, and many of which were started by ENGOs. Also to be mentioned is the Cooperation Protocol established between the Ministry for the Environment and the Ministry of Education, under which many actions were carried out in areas that are part of the national system of classified areas.

Within the domain of professional training and within the remit of nature conservation and biodiversity, various initiatives were developed aimed at various agents with an intervention in this area. The purpose was to refine and update their technical knowledge.

As an example of an initiative on a national scale the "Escola na Natureza" (School in Nature) project deserves a mention. This was a result of a protocol established in 2005 between the ICNB and the Department of Innovation and Curricular Development at the Ministry of Education. Its objectives are: a) To allow all students of the 8th grade to have a relationship with Portugal's natural heritage; b) To allow teachers to make use of the existing resources within Protected Areas in their teaching; c) To mobilize society to conserve and value the Protected Areas.

In subsequent years, the project was widened to include all Protected Areas on mainland Portugal with a view to gradually encompassing all schools in the country that teach up to 3rd Cycle of Basic Education (in Portugal, up to the age of 14/15).

The Art'Ambiente Project should also be mentioned, which was started in the 1999/2000 academic year. The target audience included from pre-school students up to Secondary School students living within protected areas, being widened in 2005 to all protected areas on the mainland (around four thousand students). This project focused on aspects of nature conservation, with a different theme every year. Technicians from the protected areas brought the theme into schools and students were challenged to produce a piece of artwork or sculpture on that theme. At the end of the academic year, at the World Environment Day, the works of art are exhibited to the public and there is a prize-giving ceremony, with various educational and recreational activities for participants.