

*Thematic report on protected areas or areas where special measures need to be taken to conserve biological diversity*

*Please provide the following details on the origin of this report.*

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<b>Submission</b>	
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Date of submission:	

*Please provide summary information on the process by which this report has been prepared, including information on the types of stakeholders who have been actively involved in its preparation and on material which was used as a basis for the report.*

The report is compiled by Prof. Kalev Sepp. Head of Laboratory of Landscape Ecology, Estonian Agricultural University. 4 Akadeemia St., 51003, Tartu, Estonia.

**Review of existing documentation**

National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (compiled and edited by T. Kull, 1999, MoE, UNEP).  
First and Second National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity. Ministry of Environment.  
National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) 2001-2003. Ministry of Environment, Tallinn, 2001.  
*Riigi Teataja*. Tallinn, 1991-2000;

**Meetings with key stakeholders**

Agricultural University  
Nature Protection Department  
Ministry of Environment  
NGOs

**Protected areas or areas where special measures need to be taken to conserve biological diversity**

**System of protected areas**

1. What is the relative priority afforded to development and implementation of a national system of protected areas in the context of other obligations arising from the Convention and COP Decisions?					
a) High		b) Medium	x	c) Low	
2. Is there a systematic planning process for development and implementation of a national system of protected areas?					
a) no					
b) in early stages of development					
c) in advanced stages of development					x
d) yes, please provide copies of relevant documents describing the process					
3. Is there an assessment of the extent to which the existing network of protected areas covers all areas that are identified as being important for the conservation of biological diversity?					
a) no					
b) an assessment is being planned for					
c) an assessment is being undertaken					x
d) yes, please provide copies of the assessments made					

**Regulatory framework**

4. Is there a policy framework and/or enabling legislation in place for the establishment and management of protected areas?	
a) no	
b) in early stages of development	
c) in advanced stages of development	
d) yes, please provide copies of relevant documents	x
5. Have guidelines, criteria and targets been adopted to support selection, establishment and management of protected areas?	
a) no	
b) in early stages of development	
c) in advanced stages of development	
d) yes, please provide copies of guidelines, criteria and targets	x

6. Does the management of protected areas involve the use of incentive measures, for instance, of entrance fees for park visitors, or of benefit-sharing arrangements with adjacent communities and other relevant stakeholders?	
a) no	x
b) yes, incentive measures implemented for some protected areas (please provide some examples)	
c) yes, incentive measures implemented for all protected areas (please provide some examples)	

**Management approach**

7. Have the principal threats to protected areas and the biodiversity that they contain been assessed, so that programmes can be put in place to deal with the threats, their effects and to influence the key drivers?	
a) no	
b) an assessment is being planned for	
c) an assessment is in process	
d) yes, an assessment has been completed	
e) programmes and policies to deal with threats are in place (please provide basic information on threats and actions taken)	x
8. Are protected areas established and managed in the context of the wider region in which they are located, taking account of and contributing to other sectoral strategies?	
a) no	
b) yes, in some areas	x
c) yes, in all areas (please provide details)	
9. Do protected areas vary in their nature, meeting a range of different management objectives and/or being operated through differing management regimes?	
a) no, most areas are established for similar objectives and are under similar management regimes	
b) many areas have similar objectives/management regimes, but there are also some exceptions	
c) yes, protected areas vary in nature (please provide details)	x
10. Is there wide stakeholder involvement in the establishment and management of protected areas?	
a) no	
b) with some, but not all protected areas	x
c) yes, always (please provide details of experience)	

11. Do protected areas established and managed by non-government bodies, citizen groups, private sector and individuals exist in your country, and are they recognized in any formal manner?	
a) no, they do not exist	
b) yes, they exist, however are not formally recognized	
c) yes, they exist and are formally recognized (please provide further information)	x

**Available resources**

12. Are the human, institutional and financial resources available adequate for full implementation of the protected areas network, including for management of individual protected areas?	
a) no, they are severely limiting (please provide basic information on needs and shortfalls)	
b) no, they are limiting (please provide basic information on needs and shortfalls)	x
c) Available resources are adequate (please provide basic information on needs and shortfalls)	
d) yes, good resources are available	
13. Has your country requested/received financial assistance from the Global Environment Facility or other international sources for establishment/management of protected areas?	
a) no	
b) funding has been requested, but not received	
c) funding is currently being requested	
d) yes, funding has been received (please provide copies of appropriate documents)	x

**Assessment**

14. Have constraints to implementation and management of an adequate system of protected areas been assessed, so that actions can be initiated to deal with these constraints?	
a) no	
b) yes, constraints have been assessed (please provide further information)	x
c) yes, actions to deal with constraints are in place (please provide further information)	
15. Is a programme in place or in development to regularly assess the effectiveness of protected areas management and to act on this information?	
a) no	
b) yes, a programme is under development (please provide further information)	x
c) yes, a programme is in place (please provide further information)	

16. Has any assessment been made of the value of the material and non-material benefits and services that protected areas provide?	
a) no	
b) an assessment is planned	
c) an assessment is in process	
d) yes, an assessment has been made (please provide further information)	x

***Regional and international cooperation***

17. Is your country collaborating/communicating with neighbouring countries in the establishment and/or management of transboundary protected areas?	
a) no	
b) yes (please provide details)	x
18. Are key protected areas professionals in your country members of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, thereby helping to foster the sharing of information and experience?	
a) no	
b) yes	x
c) information is not available	
19. Has your country provided information on its protected areas to the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre in order to allow for a scientific assessment of the status of the world's protected areas?	
a) no	
b) yes	x
20. If your country has protected areas or other sites recognised or designated under an international convention or programme (including regional conventions and programmes), please provide copies of reports submitted to those programmes or summaries of them.	
21. Do you think that there are some activities on protected areas that your country has significant experience that will be of direct value to other Contracting Parties?	
a) no	
b) yes (please provide details)	x

### Further comments

4–5. According to the Act on Protected Nature Objects protected natural objects shall be designated on the basis of their endangeredness, rarity, representativity, scientific, historical-cultural, nature conservation or aesthetic value, or in accordance with obligations under international agreements. National parks are listed above named Act. Nature reserves, protected landscapes, protected single natural objects, and protected species, fossils, and minerals of Protection Categories II and III are designated in accordance with the relevant procedure established by the Government of Estonia. Protected areas shall be designated on the basis of applications, with the opinions of land owners, local municipalities, county governments, and the Ministry of the Environment serving as annexes to the applications. The procedure for submitting and reviewing applications are established by the Government of Estonia. Management Plans are drawn up for the purpose of designing measures to implement the protection objectives of national parks and protected areas.

The Manager of a protected natural object is a state institution which has been assigned the power to manage the protected natural object within the scope of authority, and in accordance with the procedure, established by the Law.

The overall priorities for biodiversity conservation in Estonia are set in the *National Environmental Strategy* (1997). This strategy specifies the trends and priority goals of environmental management and protection, and sets the main short-term and long-term tasks to be achieved by 2000 and 2010 respectively. The National Environmental Strategy proceeds from the main traditional goal of environmental protection – which is to provide people with a healthy environment and natural resources necessary to promote economic development without causing significant damage to nature, and to preserve the diversity of landscapes and biodiversity while taking into consideration the level of economic development. The priorities presented in the strategy are taken into account when planning environmental activities, developing international co-operation and allocating national funds.

*The updated National Environmental Action Plan for years 2001 – 2003*, adopted in 5 June 2001, include the obligation to update and adopt the Biodiversity Action Plan (prepared during 1998–1999 with UNEP support).

7. Protection rules and management plans of protected areas must consider existing and potential, internal and external threats on biodiversity and values of protected areas. Also spatial planning and other so called spatial environmental measures must consider threats on protected areas.

9. According the act on Protected Nature Objects a protected area is an area designated for conservation purposes and maintained without the influence of human activities or used in accordance with specific nature conservation requirements, within which natural and/or cultural objects, plant, fungus and animal species, communities, ecosystems, landscapes and their diversity, are protected, studied and introduced to the public. Protected areas are divided into the following types:

- national parks,
- nature reserves,
- protected landscapes (nature parks),
- programme areas.

11. In general the Manager of a protected natural object is a state institution, which has been assigned the power to manage the protected natural object within the scope of authority, and in accordance with the procedure. In some cases the management of protected area is assigned to NGO according to the agreement (For example in the case of Alam-Pedja Nature Reserve NGO “Kotkas” is the manager.

All inhabitants and NGOs in Estonian can make a proposals to establish a new protected area. Protected natural objects shall be designated on the basis of applications, with the opinions of land owners, local municipalities, county governments, and the Ministry of the Environment serving as annexes to the applications.

12. The allocation of funds for protected area management is not regulated to meet the actual needs for areas. Financing of the protected areas is based on traditions and the level of financing rather than actual needs arising from resource management locally. Protected areas lack of sufficient resources to organize monitoring and research of the protected areas. The protected areas are staffed unevenly, varying by the

number of people per area of the protected area many times. The number of staff at all protected administration shows a tendency of decrease, despite the continuous increase of responsibilities resulting from property and land reform.

### 13. GEF supported Projects in Estonia on biodiversity:

Project Name:	Implementing Agency	Executing Agency	Description
Assessment of Capacity-building needs for Biodiversity and Participation in Clearing House Mechanism	United Nations Environment Programme	Ministry of Environment, Estonia	Estonia NBSAP identified several key areas where it was necessary for the country to develop capacity to conserve and manage the use of biodiversity. However, certain constraints did not permit delineation of specific mechanisms needed to investigate these capacity building needs. As the biodiversity clearing house mechanism is not yet established in Estonia, the project will build up a national network for exchange of biodiversity information.
National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA) for Global Environment Management	United Nations Environment Programme	Institute of Ecology at Tallinn Pedagogical University	
National Biodiversity Strategy, Action Plan and First National Report to the CBD	United Nations Environment Programme	Department of Nature Conservation and Wildlife Management, Ministry of Environment	The aim of the project is to assist the country with the ability to formulate and manage sectoral and cross-sectoral programmes to meet the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity through a cost effective approach within the context of national sustainable development efforts, and to report to the Convention on progress achieved in implementing agreed commitments. The activities stipulated in this project thus focus specifically on implementing Article 6 of the CBD and on the preparation of the first national report pursuant to Article 26 of the CBD, which were highlighted as programme priorities by the second meeting of the COP in its Decisions II/7 and II/17.
Baltic Sea Regional Project, Phase I	United Nations Environment Programme	Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) in cooperation with the International Baltic Sea Fisheries Commission (IBSFC) and International Council for the Exploration of	The Baltic Sea Regional Project (BSRP) objective is to increase sustainable biological productivity, improve coastal zone management and reduce agricultural non-point source pollution through the introduction of ecosystem-based approaches for land, coastal and marine environmental management. The Project's long-term goal is to provide the three Baltic Sea cooperating international bodies, HELCOM, IBSFC, ICES, and the recipient countries with management tools for sustainable agricultural, coastal and marine management, while



		the Sea (ICES)	improving social and economic benefits for the farming, coastal and fishing communities.
Development of the National Biosafety Framework for Estonia	United Nations Environment Programme	Ministry of Environment, Estonia	The aim of this project is to carry out an assessment of current technological capacity to manage Biosafety issues, and the implications of this on the implementation

The project Assessment of Capacity-building needs for Biodiversity and Participation in Clearing House Mechanism in Estonia (supported by GEF through UNEP) is ongoing (January 2002-July 2003). The objectives of the project are: to establish and operate an information network through the National Biodiversity Clearinghouse Mechanism; and to assess capacity building needs for managing the use and conservation of biodiversity in Estonia.

Development of the National Biosafety Framework for Estonia (also supported by GEF through UNEP) is on ongoing (January 2002-January 2003). The aim of this project is to carry out an assessment of current technological capacity to manage Biosafety issues, and the implications of this on the implementation. Estonia has signed the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and is in the process of ratification.

EU LIFE Nature programme supports several projects in Estonia projects:

- 1) Restoration, management and education project at Häädemeeste wetland complex, the project co-ordinator is the Estonian Ornithological Society, 2001;
- 2) Preservation of Boreal-Baltic coastal meadows (West-Estonia), the project co-ordinator is the Estonian Ministry of Environment, 2001;
- 3) Recovery of *Mustela lutreola* in Estonia: captive and island populations, the project co-ordinator is the "Lutreola", NGO, 2001;
- 4) Preservation of Natura 2000 biotopes in Karula National Park, the project co-ordinator is the Karula National Park, 2002;
- 5) Protection of priority forest habitat types in Estonia, the project co-ordinator is the Estonian Forest Centre, 2002;
- 6) Conservation of Natura 2000 biotopes in Räpina polder, the project co-ordinator is the Environmental Department of Põlva county; MoE, 2003;
- 7) Restoration of habitats of endangered species in Silma Nature Reserve, the project co-ordinator is Silma Nature Reserve, MoE, 2003.

14-15. According to the proposal of the Estonian Ministry of Environment and financed by the European Union Integration Project, a short-term project was complemented. The objective of the project was to conduct a review of the current protected area management system, focus on the administrative performance in the framework of the tasks set by the law and financial resources allocated for enforcement of the these tasks. A publication Peterson, K, Koitjärv, T, Erlich, Ü., Haapanen, A. and Helminen, M. "Protected areas in Estonia and its management,

16. Some pilot studies have been done. For example about the Karula National Park. Also some studies by Estonian Economic Institute, Technical University of Tallinn.

17. A transboundary nature reserve –Sookuninga (3847 ha) was established on the Estonian and Latvian border in 1999. A management plan has been drafted.

18. Union of Protected Areas, which is unifying protected areas in Estonia is a member of IUCN.

19. Data is provided through the EEA Common Database of Designated Areas (CDDA) according to agreement between WCMC and EEA that data about national designated areas from countries in Europe that are members of EEA will provide data to WCMC through EEA priority dataflow – CDDA. Data provided is coming from official source database – Estonian national nature conservation register which is a part of Estonian Nature Information System (EELIS). Data is provided to CDDA at 22.03.2003 and with the date of revision as 1.01.2003.

20. Estonia is a Party to the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl

Habitat (Ramsar Convention) since 1993. Focal point Management Authority: Ministry of the Environment, Estonian Ramsar Committee. The Estonian Ramsar Committee as an advisory body is promoting coordination between the various administrative and scientific institutions responsible for conservation and wise use of wetlands.

Participation on international conferences (COP meetings), yes

Reports:

- National Report of Estonia for COP7
- National Report of Estonia for COP8

Estonia has designated 10 Ramsar sites: Matsalu Nature Reserve, Soomaa National Park, Nigula Nature Reserve, Muraka Nature Reserve, Puhtu-Laelatu-Nehatu Nature Reserve, Islets of Hiiumaa and Käina Bay, Alam-Pedja Nature Reserve, Emajõe Suursoo mire and the Endla Nature Reserve, Vilsandi National Park. Sixteen areas, including already protected areas like the Läänemaa-Suursoo mire complex, Nätsi-Võlla Bog, etc. and areas not yet protected, such as Kihnu Straits, Hari Kurk Straits, etc., have been designated as potential Ramsar sites.

The Important Bird Areas (IBAs) In Estonia the inventories of IBAs, accomplished by the Estonian ornithological society. In 1989 eight IBAs in Estonia were included in the list of European IBAs. The Estonian list of IBAs has been revised and updated in 1996-2002 and an additional 49 new IBAs were proposed for designation to BirdLife International's secretariat. Currently in Estonia has 57.

European Habitats and Birds Directives. Estonia has ready to implement the European Habitats and Birds Directives, preliminary selection of NATURA 2000 areas has been completed by 2002. Followed by the EU accession process, MoE is preparing for the establishment of Natura 2000 network, which expands the current network of protected areas by area and protection goals. Estonian Government has adopted a state programme on the establishment of Natura2000 in 2000–2007 in Estonia. SPAs and pSCIs will be selected and proposed to the European Commission for consideration on the date of accession to EU. It is anticipated that the current extent of protected areas may expand. Amended structure, procedure of designation and management of sites will be stipulated in the new nature conservation act, which is currently being drafted.

In 2003 Matsalu Nature Reserve became a European Diploma Site.

Estonia participated in the HELCOM PITF MLW (Marine Lagoons and Wetlands) programme with two case studies on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM). These were the Matsalu Bay and Käina Bay. Ongoing extensive information exchange via HELCOM HABITAT workgroup and via EUCC (European Union of Coastal Conservation) facilities take place. The Helsinki Convention through its Recommendation 15/5 has adopted in 1994 three marine and coastal areas in Estonia (Lahemaa, Matsalu and Vilsandi) to be a part of the system of Baltic Sea Protected Areas (BSPA-s). Another two areas - Kõpu Peninsula and Islets of Hiiumaa, both of them included in the West-Estonian Archipelago Biosphere Reserve - are planned to be established as BSPAs.

Paris (1972) Convention on Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. Tallinn is included to the list of World Cultural and Natural Heritage and the Tallinn Old City has got a certification as "Objects of Global Natural & Cultural Heritage". The Soomaa National Park, the Ontika Landscape Reserve, Kuressaare Bisohops Castle are the other sites which have been proposed by the Estonian Government for inclusion in the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Another To this international network consisting of 328 biosphere reserves of 82 countries, the West-Estonian Archipelago Biosphere Reserve (1989), belongs into the UNESCO international programme of the "Man and Biosphere".

21. Methodological aspects of the management plans of protected areas, methodological aspects of inventories of biodiversity and key habitats in the forest, defining valuable landscapes and working out management plans for them.