



## **Sectoral and Cross-Sectoral Integration of Biodiversity in Latvia**

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## 1. Introduction

Latvia reported<sup>1</sup> on national strategies and programmes, such as Latvian Sustainable Development Strategy 2030, National Development Plan 2007-2013, Declaration of the Intended Activities of the Cabinet of Ministers; cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies, such as the Spatial Development Concept of the Coastal Zone (2011-2017), the Land Use Policy Concept 2008-2014; sectoral strategies and programmes, including environment, economy, communication, transportation, agriculture, forestry, tourism, education and science, defence.

## National strategies and programmes

### 2. Latvian Sustainable Development Strategy 2030

It is being elaborated and hierarchically it will be the highest national long-term development planning document. Nature as a future capital is defined as one of the directions of strategic development.

Until adoption of Latvian Sustainable Development Strategy 2030 the **Latvian Sustainable Development Concept** (2002) is in force where biodiversity and nature conservation issues are significantly reflected. The targets of the Concept adapt the targets of Rio Declaration according to the national situation. There are several overall goals of the Concept directly related to biodiversity:

- (1) to ensure adequate activities for conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems;
- (2) to ensure integration of environmental issues and to develop wide use of environmental policy instruments in other sectoral policies;
- (3) to ensure public involvement in sustainable development processes.

The particular targets of the biodiversity conservation sector are:

- to maintain and restore diversity of ecosystems and their natural structures;
- to maintain and enable diversity of local wildlife species;
- to maintain genetic diversity of wildlife species as well as cultivated plants and domestic animals;
- to facilitate conservation of traditional landscape;
- to ensure sustainable use of natural resources.

### 3. National Development Plan 2007-2013

It was approved by the Government in 2006 and it is the highest medium-term development planning document. The objective of the plan is to facilitate a balanced and sustainable development of the country, as well as to ensure an increase of Latvia's competitiveness. The strategic goal of the National Development Plan (NDP) is – education and knowledge for the growth of the national economy and technological excellence. The priorities of the National Development Plan are:

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<sup>1</sup> Latvia (2010). 4<sup>th</sup> National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity, 2010, 57 pp.

- An educated and creative individual;
- Technological excellence and flexibility of companies
- Development of science and research.

The chapter “Prerequisites for sure and sustained development” of NDP presents the most important areas for the achievement of the strategic objective, the chapter “Reasonably used and well-preserved natural environment” being among them. This chapter includes also several tasks related to biodiversity:

- (1) to facilitate the preservation and reasonable use of biological diversity and protected territories;
- (2) to promote the inclusion of the protected territories into the economic development determining different prohibited zones of economic activities and substantiating the socio-economic decisions in their determination, as well as to attract financial resources for their management;
- (3) to encourage public participation in environmental protection and preservation by providing timely and true information to the local inhabitants about environmental quality and natural resources;
- (4) to facilitate the development of environmental education, as well as to foster education for sustainable development and to raise environmental awareness among the general public;
- (5) to support sustainable development of the natural environment for recreation purposes and to promote ecotourism;
- (6) to facilitate evaluation, mitigation and monitoring of the risks to nature, including climate change and industrial risks.

#### **4. Declaration of the Intended Activities of the Cabinet of Ministers**

It is the document of political guidelines. Declaration of today’s Government includes several priorities directly or indirectly related to biodiversity conservation:

- (1) Development and adoption of new environmental policy guidelines by defining the main objectives and activities for the development of the environmental policy during the next seven years;
- (2) Development of a harmonised nature protection management system;
- (3) Development and adoption of river basin management plans by ensuring public discussions and by starting implementation of the plans.
- (4) Ensuring fish passes in small hydro-electric power stations.

In order to implement the Declaration the Cabinet of Ministers develops and approves the **Government Action Plan** with particular tasks, time schedule and indicated responsible institutions. Tasks related to biodiversity conservation are:

- (1) To develop and adopt the Environmental Policy Concept (adopted in 2009);

(2) To reorganize the Nature Protection Board and 6 administrations of protected territories (completed in 2009);

(3) To ensure public involvement in discussions of projects of river basin management plans. To synchronize criteria of environmental quality assessment and environment quality targets in transboundary river basins with Estonia and Lithuania.

(4) To develop and adopt river basin management plans for all the largest rivers in Latvia.

(5) To improve legislation on small hydro-electric power stations.

### **Cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies**

#### **5. The Spatial Development Concept of the Coastal Zone (2011-2017)**

It is being elaborated by the Ministry of Regional Development and Local Governments.

The Concept:

- will include an overview of existing situation and problems in the coastal area,
- will define values of national importance in the coastal area;
- will define unified goal of conservation and development of the coastal area;
- will determine policy principles and actions to be implemented from 2011-2017.

#### **6. The Land Use Policy Concept 2008-2014**

It is a medium term policy planning document defining targets, principles and results of land use policy, problems to be solved and necessary actions. The Concept includes biodiversity issues to some extent, for example, issues on biodiversity conservation in agricultural lands which are not used for agricultural purposes and issues of land fragmentation (particularly forest lands) are highlighted in a descriptive part of the Concept. Conservation of biologically valuable territories is highlighted as one of the policy results.

### **Sectoral strategies and programmes**

#### **7. Environment**

**The Environmental Policy Concept** and the **Programme of Localization of Distribution of Hogweed 2006-2012** have been already described in the Chapter II of the report.

The primary goal of **The Climate Change Mitigation Programme 2005-2010** – to ensure that starting from 2008, the total amount of GHG emissions does not exceed 92% of 1990 level. The primary goal is to be achieved by implementing several activities, e.g.:

- 1) increase the share of renewable energy sources in the energy balance;

2) promote the implementation of environmentally sound agricultural methods that reduce direct GHG emissions;

3) increase CO<sub>2</sub> removals in forestry;

In the implementation of the climate change mitigation policy, the following activities, indirectly related to biodiversity conservation, are analysed among others in detail:

- promotion of biomass use;
- promotion of biogas use;
- support for energy generation in small hydro-electric power stations;
- support for wind power production;
- support for biofuel production and promotion of biofuel use;
- support for the construction of combined heat and power generation plants and energy efficiency projects;
- sustainable use of agricultural resources;
- development of environmentally friendly agriculture and promotion of Good agricultural practice;
- increase of forest stand productivity
- afforestation of unmanaged agricultural land;

It is highlighted in the Programme that development of small hydro-electric power stations has to be balanced with requirements of nature conservation and conservation of fish resources. It is also indicated that nature conservation requirements have to be taken into account in ecologically valuable and vulnerable territories.

## **8. Economy**

The overall goal of the **Latvian National Lisbon Programme 2005-2008** is to facilitate employment and development of the country. The Programme is a policy planning document which shows how, in 2005-2008 Latvia will reach the Lisbon strategy goals on the basis of the Integrated Guidelines, approved by the European Council in July 2005. To maintain biodiversity on existing level is one of the activities included in the Programme to ensure sustainable use of natural resources. Each year a report of progress of implementation of the Programme is prepared as well as new tasks and activities added.

**The Concept of Energy Sector Development 2007-2016** includes some information on restrictions for nature conservation purposes in energy development.

## **9. Communication, transportation**

**The Transport Development Concept 2007-2013** describes situation, problems, policy goals and actions in transport sector. Nature and biodiversity issues are not reflected in this Concept.

## **10. Agriculture**

**Latvian Rural Development National Strategy Plan 2007-2013** is a middle term policy planning document pursuant to the Regulation of EC on support of Rural Development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. The objective of the Plan is - prosperous people in sustainably

populated countryside of Latvia - for the achievement of which the following four activity directions are identified:

- 1) Development of Capacities of Rural People;
- 2) Enhancement of Labour Generated Income in Rural Territories;
- 3) Sustainable Management of Rural Natural Resources;
- 4) Development of Rural Living Environment.

The **Rural Development Programme for Latvia 2007-2013** was prepared and adopted to achieve the objectives set out in the National Rural Development Strategy Plan, conditions and activities consistent with utilization of Community's and Latvia's financial resources. Activities in the Programme are divided in 3 axes with following objectives:

- 1) The objective of axis 1 is to improve the competitiveness of agricultural and forest management by supporting their restructuring, development and innovation as well as to improve the professional knowledge and qualifications of the population by ensuring the availability of the required advisory services.
- 2) Axis 2 measures promote improvement of environment and rural landscape by supporting activities aimed at preservation of the nature values of rural territories, attractive landscapes and biodiversity.
- 3) The objective of axis 3 is to promote improvement of the quality of life in rural areas by supporting the development of the local roads and the infrastructure required by the local initiative groups, to diversify the economic activities as well as to preserve and develop the cultural heritage of rural territories.

The Programme includes description of Latvia's biodiversity and protected territories and these issues are also recognized as one of the strengths in SWOT analysis. There are several activities (e.g. *Natura 2000* payments (both in agricultural and forest lands), payments for maintaining biodiversity in biological grasslands, preservation of genetic resources of farming animals) in the Programme directed towards biodiversity conservation. Implementation of the Rural Development Program is co-financed by the EU Rural Development Fund.

The general objective of the **Latvian Fisheries Development Plan 2007-2013** is to ensure sustainable use of fish resources for benefit of future generations and to ensure prosperity of people involved in fisheries. Short information of Latvia's protected territories is included in the Plan. A few activities of the Plan are directed towards biodiversity conservation (e.g. restoration of fish spawning areas, building and improvement of fish-passes). Implementation is co-financed by European Fishery Fund.

**The Programme on Sustainable Use and Long-term Conservation of Genetic Resources of Plants and Animals, Forest and Fishes used in Agriculture and Food, 2007-2009** has been described already in the Chapter II of the report.

## 11. Forestry

**Latvian Forest Policy** (adopted in 1998) defines the long-term strategic and tactical goals and principles of forest sector development. The overall goal of the Policy is the sustainable management of forests and forest lands. The goal of the Policy particularly regarding biodiversity is the preservation and maintenance of biodiversity at the current level.

**The 2004 - 2008 Corporate Strategy of the State Stock Company “Latvijas valsts meži” (LVM)** includes LVM goal in nature conservation and environment protection which is: “to conserve biological diversity (genetic resources, rare and endangered species and ecosystems) and protect the related environmental values like soils, waters, and landscape”. Several tasks to achieve the goal are given in the Strategy, inter alia:

- In the forests under management systematically identify the sites essential for the conservation of protected species and habitats;
- Work out individual management plans for the forest areas having special management goals:
  - 8-10% of forests are managed for biodiversity conservation, excluding there any management or planning only the activities necessary for maintaining and enhancing the biodiversity;
  - 10-12% of forests are managed for protecting the environment components like waters, soils and landscape, and maintaining the forest’s recreational values and cognition opportunities essential for the public;
- Work out and by the end of 2008 implement the model for landscape ecological planning;
- Assess and within limits possible reduce the impact of management activities on the environment, reducing to the minimum the use of chemical plant protection agents in forests; starting with 2005 use in forest operations only biodegradable oils.

## 12. Tourism

**The Concept of Latvian Tourism Development** was elaborated for 2004-2008 and currently a new Concept for 2009-2015 is being elaborated. The target of the previous Concept was to ensure increase of tourism proportion in Latvian Gross Domestic Product. Nature and biodiversity issues were not reflected in this Concept.

## 13. Education and science

Biodiversity and nature conservation are not directly reflected in policy documents regarding education and science.

**The Science and Technology Development Concept 2009 – 2013** was elaborated to set the policy targets and priorities in development of science and technology. One of the policy principles mentioned in the Concept is that development of science and technology is determinant for sustainable development of Latvian economy, prosperity and maintenance of natural resources.

One of the problems identified in the **Education Development Concept 2007-2013** is insufficient number of students in natural sciences, engineering and technologies. The task to deal with this problem is to increase the number of students financed by the state budget in natural sciences, engineering, medicine and environmental sciences

## 14. Defence

The goals of **Environment Strategy 2005-2009 of the Ministry of Defence and National Armed Forces** are: maintain high environment quality standards; reduce the pollution and sustainable use of natural resources. Regarding biodiversity conservations the targets are:

- to ensure implementation of nature conservation requirements and to ensure conservation of protected species and habitats;
- to maintain ecosystems, biodiversity and social and heritage values.

A good example of biodiversity conservation in defence sector is the LIFE Nature project “Restoration of Biological Diversity in Military Training Area and *Natura 2000* site “Ādaži”” administered and implemented by the State Agency for Defence Properties under the Ministry of Defence from 2006-2009. Project had 3 main objectives:

- Integrate nature conservation and military interests.
- Restore the Military Training Area’s *Natura 2000* values to, and maintain them at, a favourable conservation state.
- Educate military personnel and cooperate with military *Natura 2000* site managers.

The main activities implemented during the project are:

- management plan for the *Natura 2000* site “Ādaži” developed and approved;
- more than 1000 ha of dry heath habitat restored;
- 1400 ha cleaned up of unexploded ammunition;
- 1000 military personnel received training on nature conservation issues;
- Open-door event organized with more than 600 participants.

More information on the project can be found at: [www.adazinatura.lv](http://www.adazinatura.lv)