

HABITATS DIRECTIVE ARTICLE 17 REPORT (2001 – 2006)

INTRODUCTION TO BIOGEOGRAPHICAL ASSESSMENTS

This paper is part of the web-based Article 17 Technical Report (2001-2006)
<http://biodiversity.eionet.europa.eu/article17>
compiled by the European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity for the
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INTRODUCTION TO BIOGEOGRAPHICAL ASSESSMENTS

According to Article 17(2) of the Habitats Directive the European Commission will, in 2009, prepare a composite report based on the Member States reports. One of the elements of this composite report will be the assessment of conservation status of species and habitats of Community interest at the biogeographical level.

The European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity (ETC/BD) estimated that for approximately half of the species and habitats covered by the Article 17 reports the biogeographical assessments will be equal to the national assessment(s) – as the habitats/species are restricted to one single country or occurring in several countries but having the same assessment (e.g. all 'favourable'). For the other half, the assessments of conservation status needed additional work and the development of a specific methodology that takes into account the data provided by Member States in their reports.

A number of possible methods for assessing the conservation status of Annex I habitats and species listed on Annexes II, IV & V based on the Article 17 reports from the Member States have been discussed at meetings of the Scientific Working Group (SWG) and at workshops held by the ETC/BD in 2007 and 2008.

Following those discussions, a paper documenting the approach used to assess conservation status at the biogeographical or marine region levels was produced by the ETC/BD ' Guidelines for assessing conservation status of habitats and species at the biogeographic level'

http://circa.europa.eu/Public/irc/env/monnat/library?l=/habitats_reporting/reporting_2001-2007/biogeographic_assessment&vm=detailed&sb=Title.

In summary, three possible methods were identified to assess conservation status of habitats and species at the regional level (biogeographical and marine) based on data and conclusions from Member States assessments:

- Method 1 - Aggregation of data: aggregate data provided by Member States for quantitative parameters and aggregate conservation status for some qualitative parameters:
 - i) Aggregate data on 'range' and 'population' from Annex B¹ (species) and on 'range' and 'area' from Annex D (habitats), and use the evaluation matrices (Annex C for species, Annex E for habitats) to obtain the conservation status of these parameters
 - ii) For 'suitable habitat' and 'future prospects' (species) and 'structure and functions' and 'future prospects' (habitats) the conservation status is obtained by weighted aggregation of the respective national assessments
 - iii) Finally, the overall status is calculated by using the rules given in the last line of the evaluation matrices
- Method 2 - Aggregation of individual parameters: weighted aggregation of each of the four conservation status parameters with an overall assessment using the rules given in the last line of the evaluation matrices (Annex C for species, Annex E for habitats)
- Method 3 - Aggregation of overall status: this method uses a weighted aggregation of the overall conservation status and will be used when data on individual parameters is missing or unusable.

¹ Assessment, monitoring and reporting of conservation status – Preparing the 2001-2006 report under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive (DocHab-04-03-03-rev.3)

http://circa.europa.eu/Public/irc/env/monnat/library?l=/habitats_reporting/reporting_2001-2007/reporting_framework&vm=detailed&sb=Title

All three methods rely, at least partially, on using an area or population to weight assessments at national level together with 'thresholds' for assessing the conservation status of either each parameter or the overall assessment.

The overall conservation status of a habitat type, or species, should reflect the status and proportion of that habitat type, or species, present in each Member State and biogeographical/marine region. Weighting is therefore a fundamental aspect of the process of assessing conservation status at regional level for habitats and species present in more than one Member State. The table below indicates the preferred weight for each parameter; the choice of the weight took into account the availability and quality of the data provided by Member States:

Order of preference	Habitats	Species
1 st	Area (from MS data)	Population (from MS data)
2 nd	Area (from GIS data)	Distribution area - area of 10 km x 10 km grids (from GIS data)
3 rd	Range (from MS data)	Range (from MS data)
4 th	Range (from GIS data)	Range (from GIS data)

Following discussion at both the SWG in November 2007 and at the workshop held by the ETC/BD in March 2008 the following thresholds were used; they are the same for all parameters which makes the assessment simpler to explain and to program; they work as a series of sieves or filters, each applied in sequence (see Figure 1):

1. If the proportion of a habitat/species reported as 'Unfavourable – Bad' (U2, red) is greater or equal than 25% the habitat/species is considered 'Unfavourable – Bad' (U2, red) for the region.
2. If the proportion of a habitat/species reported as 'Favourable' (FV, green) is greater or equal than 75% the habitat/species is considered 'Favourable' (FV, green) for the region.
3. If the proportion of a habitat/species reported as 'Unknown' (XX) is greater or equal than 25% the habitat/species is considered 'Unknown' (XX) for the region.
4. Any other combination is considered as 'Unfavourable – Inadequate (U1, 'amber')

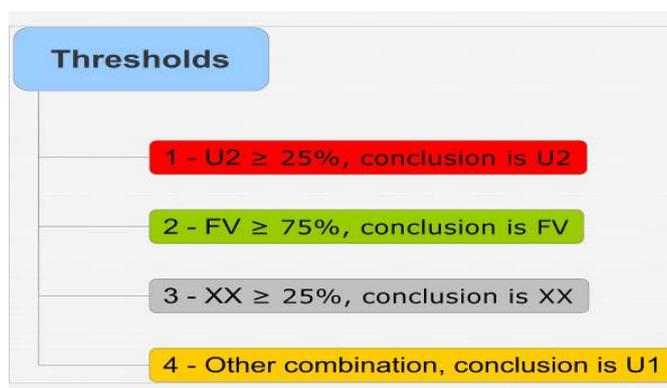


Figure 1 – Decision making chain using thresholds

The ETC/BD made biogeographical assessments for 213 Annex I habitat types and 1 182 species from Annexes II, IV and V across the 11 regions (7 biogeographical regions and 4 marine regions). In total 701 assessments were made for habitat types and 2 240 for species. It should be noted that several assessments were not possible due to the lack of data or major deficiencies with the data provided by Member States: these represent approximately 1% of the habitats assessments and approximately 2% of the species assessments.

The biogeographic assessments and the method used for each assessment are summarised in the paper 'Overview of biogeographical assessments' available from the Article 17 web page. Full details about the assessments and the data used in their production are available from the Article 17 web tool

- For species <http://biodiversity.eionet.europa.eu/article17/speciesprogress>
- For habitat types <http://biodiversity.eionet.europa.eu/article17/habitatsprogress>

An analysis and discussion of the conservation status of species and habitats at the biogeographical level is given in the paper 'Overview of conservation status' available from the Article 17 web page.
