

Strasbourg, 14 September 2018
[Inf04e_2018.docx]

T-PVS/Inf(2018)4

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

38th meeting
Strasbourg, 27-30 November 2018

**Management of protected areas
from climate change perspective**

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR BERN CONVENTION
CONTRACTING PARTIES AND PARTNERS**

*Document prepared by
Mr Otars Opermanis*

QUESTIONNAIRE ON MANAGEMENT OF PROTECTED AREAS FROM CLIMATE CHANGE PERSPECTIVE

Addressed to Bern Convention Contracting Parties and Partners

Introduction

In the past decade the effects of Climate Change on biodiversity have been increasingly recognised by the Bern Convention. During this period, several recommendations¹ to Contracting Parties have been endorsed by the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention. Thousands of highly relevant scientific papers and many books have been published. Several of them cover the whole European territory (i.e. climatic atlases such as for birds and butterflies), thus this information is very informative for all European countries, including those outside the European Union. Based on this existing and constantly improving knowledge, many international and national guidelines have been prepared by various governmental and non-governmental institutions.

A special issue is the role of **protected areas** in adapting biodiversity and its conservation to Climate Change. In the European context, the most relevant and up-to-date guidance to policy makers and site managers is given in the 2013 “Guidelines on Climate Change and Natura 2000”². Although this guideline is primarily dedicated to European Union’s Natura 2000 network of protected areas, all principles are also applicable to the Emerald Network of sites in the non-EU countries .

Yet, it has been observed that Climate Change adaptation/mitigation measures linked to the management of protected areas have been implemented at different scales with various success in different Contracting Parties to the Bern Convention³. Thus the aim of this questionnaire is to reveal and take stock of particular needs of Contracting Parties for tackling Climate Change in the context of the **management of protected areas**, particularly Emerald Network sites. Based on the answers received from the Contracting Parties to this questionnaire, the Bern Convention Secretariat will assess the needs of Contracting Parties and identify appropriate responses which will provide orientations on how to help countries integrate Climate Change in protected areas management frameworks in a more systematic way.

The questionnaire is addressed to Focal Points to the Bern Convention in all its 51 Contracting Parties. As a minimum one response (i.e. filled questionnaire, representing the institution of the Focal Point) from each country should be returned, but Focal Points are free to distribute this questionnaire further to other institutions if they may have an active position with regards to the subject of Climate Change and protected areas.

This questionnaire does not cover issues related to the constitution of Natura 2000 or the Emerald Network, where the elements of mitigation and adaptation to climate change are embedded in the methodology⁴ of setting-up these networks, namely addressing site size and connectivity between sites (even across country borders) which is discussed in the Biogeographical evaluation seminars or bi-lateral meetings on network sufficiency for both EU and non-EU countries. But it is assumed that more sites, or adjustments to site boundaries (both under the Natura 2000 or the Emerald networks) in future would be necessary to face Climate change challenges.

¹ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/bern-convention/recommendations-on-climate-change>

² <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/climatechange/pdf/Guidance%20document.pdf>

³ An analysis of the implementation of recommendations made by the Group of experts on Biodiversity and Climate change (2006-2011) <https://rm.coe.int/1680746249>

⁴ <https://rm.coe.int/168074669d> (p 82)

CLIMATE CHANGE AND PROTECTED AREAS: QUESTIONNAIRE

Abbreviations: CC=Climate Change, PA=Protected Areas (i.e. Natura 2000 and Emerald Network)

GENERAL INFORMATION			
Country	Slovakia	Compilers	Libor Ulrych, Eva Viestová, Jana Durkošová
Date of submission	17.10.2018	E-mail	libor.ulrych@sopsr.sk , eva.viestova@enviro.gov.sk ; jana.durkosova@enviro.gov.sk
		Telephone	+ 421 911 062 361; +421 905 668 183; +421 917 235 113;
		Institution	State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic; Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic

Part I. General indicative self-assessment of progress in the implementation of CC adaptation / mitigation measures linked with protected areas

1. Please provide score from 0 (no CC related issues were addressed) to 5 (ideal situation both in quantity and quality) in the grey area corresponding to each question.

I-1_A	Is the awareness about CC and acceptance that it is unavoidable sufficient/appropriate in your institution?	3
I-1_B	Are conservation objectives for protected areas developed so as to take into account the species, habitat types and ecosystems which are most likely to be affected by CC?	2
I-1_C	Are there adequate pro-active conservation measures in place for PAs which take into account CC aspects?	2
I-1_D	Is the success of conservation measures monitored, and are monitoring results publicly available and taken into account in reviewing conservation objectives and management techniques?	4

Additional comments:

The State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic has **not evaluated specifically the sensitivity of protected areas (their species, habitats, ecosystems respectively) to the climate change (CC) yet.**

However, this issue is subject of several national strategic documents adopted by the Government of the Slovak Republic, mainly the **updated national strategy and action plan for biodiversity protection 2011 – 2020**⁵ (within aims B.3 and C.4, the most relevant task is No 164 “implement research on impacts of CC on biota and on possible mitigation and adaptation measures”) as well as the **updated strategy for adaptation to climate change**⁶ (specific detail chapter “5.3 natural environment and biodiversity”) and the **Priority action framework for financing Natura 2000 in the Slovak Republic during EU programming period 2014 – 2020**⁷ (specific priority and specific priority measures on ecosystem services in Natura 2000 mainly in relation to CC – mitigation and adaptation measures; there are several tasks mentioned in chapter F.3.2 and F.3.3, including “complete key information from research including mapping and assessment of ecosystem services in Slovakia in order to improve knowledge on connection between the biodiversity and CC and on specific role for instance soil biodiversity and landscape diversity on providing key ecosystem services such as food supply or water storage”). The issue was partly included also to the **Action Plan to the updated Policy on protection of wetlands in**

⁵ Available in the Slovak language: <http://www.minzp.sk/postupy-ziadosti/ochrana-prirody-krajiny/medzinarodne-dohovory/dohovor-biodiverzite/>

⁶ Adopted on 17 October 2018 - available in the Slovak language: <https://rokovania.gov.sk/RVL/Material/23275/1>

⁷ Available in the Slovak language: <http://www.minzp.sk/sekcie/temy-oblasti/ochrana-prirody-krajiny/uzemna-ochrana-prirody/natura-2000/prioritny-akcny-ramec-financovania-natura-2000-slovenskej-republike-eu-programove-obdobie-2014-2020/>

Slovakia.⁸

Recently **several project proposals have been developed dealing with conservation and restoration measures in some protected areas concerning climate change aspects.**

In addition, each **management plan for protected area** is based on the definition of conservation status of habitats and species, that are so called “subject of protection” within this protected area. This definition takes into consideration all relevant aspects and is the basis for definition of conservation objectives and conservation measures. That means CC aspects are tackled along with all the other issues, either directly or indirectly.

CC may be evaluated in the future thanks to more robust data base from **ongoing detailed monitoring of species and habitats** (www.biomonitoring.sk) and from **monitoring of measures within management plans of protected areas and management plans/rescue programmes for selected protected species.**

Additional questions

I-1_E	Please provide an indicative coverage of sites (in %) of PA network in your country which have operative management plans in place that are systematically reviewed based on monitoring data:	5 %
I-1_F	Are there species and/or habitats or protected areas for which CC effects have been already documented in your country? Please provide a list with comments as appropriate. This is a free text. Where appropriate, please add also links to any relevant publication or web-resource (preferably in English):	no

Additional comments

Total number of protected areas in Slovakia is over 1 000 (+ thousands of caves). Actual priority is elaboration/negotiation/approval and implementation **of management plans for the Natura 2000 sites. From 41 special protection areas (EU Birds Directive) 13 have their management plans approved** by the Government of the Slovak Republic. **From 642 sites of Community importance (EU Habitats Directive), cca 90 have their management plans approved (by the government or the regional office).** This includes management plans for 2 of totally 9 national parks in Slovakia. Monitoring **of caves and their microclimate conditions** (including in ice caves) is executed by the Slovak Caves Administration and it will provide some information on long-term trends and changes in these specific habitat types.

Part II. Specific account of problems and obstacles encountered in the implementation of Climate Change adaptation/mitigation measures linked with the management of protected areas

1. Please indicate (by ticking X in the corresponding box) the problems/obstacles in reaching sufficient awareness of CC in your institution. Select one or more of offered options, or describe in your own words:

II-1_A	None	<input type="checkbox"/>
II-1_B	Lack of information supporting the importance of CC for your country, or lack of knowledge where such information can be found	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
II-1_C	Information exists but there are difficulties in interpreting the evidence in a meaningful way for your country	<input type="checkbox"/>
II-1_D	There are no documented observations of negative trends of wild species and habitats in your country which can be attributed to CC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
II-1_E	Other, please specify:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments:

The following issues may be identified as the most relevant in Slovakia (related to obstacles for better implementation of “CC issue” in protected areas):

- **issue of CC has become more relevant only recently**, mainly with respect to large scale changes within forests (including those in protected areas) resulting in damages due to storms, bark-beetle outbreaks, etc. and with

⁸ Available in Slovak language:

<http://www.rokovania.sk/Rokovanie.aspx/BodRokovaniaDetail?idMaterial=24653>

respect to local floods and “local heavy storms” that are connected with CC and landscape changes;
 - **recent development of relevant strategies** – e. g. they have not been completely implemented yet in practice;
 - **lack of personal capacities** (within the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic only one person part time dealing with agenda of CC and biodiversity).
 As already mentioned, based on the strategies (as well as **via working groups/committees** of the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic established for their implementation) the **sectoral cooperation is being improved**.
 Last, but not least, there is a priority national task on **MAES (mapping of ecosystems and assessment of their services) that also considers CC aspects**.

2. Please indicate (by ticking X in the corresponding box) any obstacles in setting appropriate conservation objectives for protected areas taking into account CC. Select one or more of offered options, or describe in your own words:

II-2_A	None	<input type="checkbox"/>
II-2_B	Lack of analytical skills and experience in searching for relevant information and data interpretation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
II-2_C	Poor information on presence of species and habitats in protected areas Lack of up-to-date data	<input type="checkbox"/>
II-2_D	The procedure for setting conservation objectives for individual species and habitats for each protected area is not established	<input type="checkbox"/>
II-2_E	Other, please specify:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments:
 Slovakia has **well preserved nature** and probably also thanks to this fact, CC only starts to affect species and habitats. It is more by extremes of weather, like storm winds, long term changes in usual weather conditions, which starts to cause impacts on some species and habitats.
Conservation measures aim to maintain or achieve the favourable conservation status of “subjects of protection” in a complex way, stressing issues of management based on monitoring, cooperation with stakeholders and scientists, awareness raising, etc.

3. Please indicate (by ticking X in the corresponding box) why appropriate conservation measures for CC adaptation/mitigation are not either fully or partly implemented. Select one or more of offered options, or describe in your own words:

II-3_A	None	<input type="checkbox"/>
II-3_B	Lack of knowledge/experience about appropriate management techniques	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
II-3_C	Difficulties to act in private land and to involve landowners	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
II-3_D	Lack of cross-sectoral cooperation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
II-3_E	Lack of funding	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
II-3_F	Other, please specify:	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments:

4. Please indicate (by ticking X in the corresponding box) the obstacles/problems in monitoring management results and sharing such information at national and/or international level. Select one or more of offered options, or describe in your own words:		
II-4_A	None	<input type="checkbox"/>
II-4_B	Lack of general monitoring scheme for PAs	<input type="checkbox"/>
II-4_C	Lack of sufficiently qualified staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
II-4_D	Information exists but the importance of sharing it is not recognised	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
II-4_E	Other, please specify:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Additional comments: The State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic has developed a very detailed information/monitoring system on protected species and natural habitats . These data were among others used for reporting on the conservation status of habitats and species of Community interest (6 year period, actual reporting period 2013-2018). These data will also bring information on trends and expected causes. Such an analyses along with monitoring management plan implementation (annually, 5-year, 10 year period) will be the basis for other action (including CC mitigation and adaptation). Remaining challenge is sharing of information within different sectors , for example in agricultural or forestry sectors, where the results of the measures of the Common Agricultural Policy – CAP are not available for the nature protection purposes (despite the fact that CAP supports implementation of many activities of the management plans).		

Part III. Ideas and suggestions on how the Bern Convention Secretariat could assist Contracting Parties to improve the implementation of Climate Change adaptation/mitigation measures associated with management of protected areas

1. Please indicate (by ticking X in the corresponding box) possible suggestions for improving awareness of CC in your institution. Select one or more of offered options, or describe in your own words:		
III-1_A	Demonstrate (through seminars and study visits) how the experience from Natura 2000 can be transferred to the Emerald Network	<input type="checkbox"/>
III-1_B	Provide positive examples to show that many adaptation/mitigation measures “work in real life” and in some cases do not even require a lot of resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
III-1_C	Showcase examples of working organisational structures at national level and strategic policy documents supporting the awareness of CC at institutional level	<input type="checkbox"/>
III-1_D	Other, please specify:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Additional comments:		

2. Please indicate (by ticking X in the corresponding box) suggestions which could support the setting up of conservation objectives for protected areas taking into account CC. Select one or more of offered options, or describe in your own words:		
III-2_A	Training seminars on practical setting of conservation objectives at site level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
III-2_B	Training on how to find, use and interpret data on the vulnerability of ecosystems / species / habitats to CC and how they relate to site- and country-specific contexts	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
III-2_C	Other, please specify: better cooperation with sectors, including research.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Additional comments: As mention above, within national strategies there are tasks to undertake several projects involving national or relevant EU scientists, especially with the Slovak Academy of Science. It would be mainly work on methodology for sensitivity of species and habitats to CC, relations between the present protected areas and their possible future changes related to CC, etc. The Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic together with the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic and the Slovak Academy of Sciences have to set up common research plans in the near future .		

3. Please indicate (by ticking X in the corresponding box) suggestions which could support the implementation of conservation measures for CC adaptation/mitigation. Select one or more of offered options, or describe in your own words:		
III-3_A	Study tours to sites which already implement conservation measures for CC adaptation/mitigation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
III-3_B	Launch of an international knowledge exchange on site management similar to the “new bio-geographical process” in the EU ⁹ [This also relates to all other points in this section]	<input type="checkbox"/>
III-3_C	Provide guidance on where to find published materials on adequate management techniques	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
III-3_D	Other, please specify:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Additional comments: Slovak experts meet with other EU or international experts on CC within existing expert groups (including the one under the Bern Convention) , it is important to better use their experiences also on the national level. Within the CBD and UNFCCC documents, there are several materials, which could be used – unfortunately, there are too many of them and analysis of all of them would need more experts and their time to go through and use/translate the most relevant would be useful for our experts.		

4. Please indicate (by ticking X in the corresponding box) suggestions which could support the monitoring of management results and the sharing of this information at national and/or international level. Select one or more of offered options, or describe in your own words:		
III-4_A	Seminars aimed to foster the development of monitoring systems of species and habitats	<input type="checkbox"/>
III-4_B	Training on adaptive management planning: how to use monitoring results to review conservation objectives	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
III-4_C	Other, please specify:	<input type="checkbox"/>

⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/seminars_en.htm

Additional comments:

Trainings and expert workshops on adaptive management planning would be useful for both the experts dealing with nature protection, as well as for climate change experts – most important is the relationship/interlinkage between these 2 topics. For the time being, we are looking at both topics rather separately, but the connection is missing.