

Annual Report 2006



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Message

from ECNC's President and Executive Director

The Annual report now in your hands or on your computer screen differs from those of previous years: it is more compact and, hopefully, more incisive. Although our past annual reports were well received, we felt that it was time to reach out to a wider range of target groups.

And that, in a nutshell, was also a priority for ECNC during 2006. We are striving to build a bridge between biodiversity interests and wider interests of society and economy.

Actually, we feel that the pillars of the bridge are already in place, because without ecology there would be no economy or people. And economy can assist people and nature to improve living conditions. This brings us to ECNC's *raison d'être*: we are the European Biodiversity Expertise Centre for sustainable development. Biodiversity for sustainable development is our focus and our motivation.

For several years ECNC's Board and staff had been anticipating 2006 as the year of change. For the first time in ECNC's existence there would be no programme subsidy from one of ECNC's most dedicated partners: the Netherlands Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality. But, well-prepared as a result of intensive discussions with Board, staff and partners about ECNC's future orientation, we met the challenges. This came at a price, with some tough decisions having to be made, but we gained strength.

ECNC generated many new activities in 2006 at the interface of science and policy, and economy and ecology. We are particularly proud of innovative projects in the field of biodiversity finance, of scenarios for the future of sustainable agriculture in Europe and of our projects on ecological networks, biodiversity monitoring, communication and support to regional and local policy processes.

ECNC is at the cutting edge of development and conservation, and is primed to be an ever more effective force in European nature and biodiversity conservation.

If you are looking for an organization that combines vision and practice into coherent, tailor-made and inspiring approaches, you need look no further than ECNC.

As always, we are both most grateful to the hard-worked staff of ECNC, whose professionalism and dedication have made these achievements possible.

Sir Brian Unwin

President

Rob Wolters

Executive Director



Sir Brian Unwin

Rob Wolters

from the Chair of the Scientific Council

All through 2006 ECNC continued and further strengthened its role as a leading organization bringing together science, society and policy on issues related to the conservation and sustainable use of Europe's nature, biodiversity and landscapes. A broad range of collaborative activities were carried out. Is it possible to think about e.g. ecological networks without thinking of the results achieved by ECNC and its partners? I think not. Have a look, for example, at the map of the ecological networks in South-East Europe, or the map of the Bialowieza Forest, and their complementary reports.

With its broad scope and holistic attitude ECNC is involved in many processes, from reducing habitat fragmentation, via regional planning, communication and stakeholder involvement, to issues such as aggregation of biodiversity indicators for scientific and policy-related purposes, and environmental impact assessment of multifunctional agriculture. All this made possible due to ECNC being a well-respected partner with broad as well as specific competence, also reflected in the large portfolio of high-quality ECNC projects.

The Scientific Council was reorganized in 2006. We monitor the scientific quality of all ECNC activities, and we advise the Board and the Secretariat on matters involving ECNC's mission and work. In our first year, in addition to monitoring the work on the annual work plan, we prioritized a major revision of the Quality Assessment Protocol. In 2007 the time may be right to look into supporting more strategic issues related to ECNC's mission.

Dr Sjur Baardsen

Chair of ECNC's Scientific Council



Dr Sjur Baardsen

1. Introduction to ECNC – What and who are we?

ECNC is an independent European Biodiversity Expertise Centre for sustainable development, based on a foundation structure.

Our mission is clear-cut: we promote the conservation and sustainable use of nature and biodiversity in Europe, because of their intrinsic values and their relevance to the economy and European culture. We seek to bridge the gap between science and policy, between economy and ecology. ECNC prefers to find common ground in interests and promotes new and effective approaches to and ways of conservation for sustainable development.

Programmes

We bring our mission alive via five Programme Areas, which generate a wide range of coherent project activities that cross-fertilize each other. These Programme Areas highlight the relationship between nature and people; address the market-based conservation and use of biodiversity; focus on connectivity of nature and land uses; monitor changes in biodiversity; and combine international and European policies with regional and local realities and approaches. ECNC also specifically addresses European landscape issues, because the landscape is a basis and a reflection of economic development, culture and resilient biodiversity.

ECNC clients, partners and alliances

ECNC provides its expertise to various levels of governments, businesses and institutions working in financing, land use and research. Among our clients are national and regional

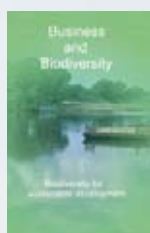
governments, and intergovernmental organizations. We work closely with the NGO community. ECNC's Network, of 45 partners in 22 European countries, is an important pool of expertise and also provides legitimacy to ECNC's scientific aspiration. ECNC, EUCC-The Coastal Union and Eurosite are working together in NatureNet Europe, whose mission is to introduce, promote and apply new insights, innovative approaches and effective tools for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in Europe. We also prioritize the cooperation in the framework of the Countdown 2010 Partnership, in which ECNC has a leading role on a European and regional level, together with IUCN - the World Conservation Union.

Our outreach

Being strongly anchored in various 'worlds' – policy, science, economy, and regional and local authorities – the outreach of our work is extensive. Although we do not seek to establish ECNC as a 'brand' that is well-known to a wider public, we do reach the public with our work and by assisting our partners, including governments and intergovernmental organizations. ECNC's website attracts an average of 25,000 unique visitors per month (about 1,000 per day).

The daily keepers of the mission

The ECNC staff members in Tilburg, Paris and Budapest are the daily keepers of ECNC's mission. Together with the President, Vice-Presidents, Chair of the Scientific Council and management, they are the true 'ambassadors' of ECNC. Step into our offices, and you will see and feel this for yourself.



2. Highlights in 2006

In the past year we found ourselves the front runner in various fields, among others promoting a message of hope for Europe's natural heritage and people: 'Beautiful Europe', together with our partners in NatureNet Europe. We complemented this vision of hope with a message of reality, as reflected in the Countdown 2010 initiative: to halt the disturbing decline of Europe's biodiversity by the year 2010. ECNC's partnership with the Countdown 2010 Secretariat, the Netherlands Government and the Province of Noord-Brabant is an example of the combination of vision and down-to-earth actions. In no other European region have so many local authorities enthusiastically embraced the 2010 target and initiated local 2010 projects. For Countdown 2010, ECNC co-organized a national conference in the Netherlands on increasing commitment for the 2010 biodiversity target, and also organized various Countdown workshops and activities in the Countdown 'pilot region' Noord-Brabant in the Netherlands. ECNC also coordinates the implementation of a Countdown 2010 project for Zagreb, focusing on integrating biodiversity into urban planning and increasing citizens' awareness of the importance of biodiversity.

'ECNC and Eurosite cooperate in various partnerships, including the European House for Biodiversity and Sustainability and the Brabant&Europe Partnership, which actively promote, among others, the Countdown 2010 initiative. ECNC has contributed significantly to the progress made in raising awareness of and commitment to the target to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010.'

Gernant Magnin, Director of Eurosite

But there were many more activities which ECNC led or was strongly involved in. Here we list only a brief selection of highlights:

- ECNC had a strong presence in the Fourth 'Biodiversity in Europe' Conference in Plitvice, Croatia, and assisted in moving the monitoring, communication and ecological network agenda further;
- ECNC coordinated the implementation of the project 'Communicating Nature Conservation' in FYRO Macedonia and Croatia, including via training workshops;
- The ECNC project 'Establishing pro-biodiversity business opportunities in Bulgaria and Croatia' started, with a focus on increasing business investments and involvement in biodiversity;
- Among the achievements of the INTERREG-funded project 'LIFESCAPE – YOUR LANDSCAPE' are exchange visits of farmers and the Fifth Partner Forum, held in December, during which field projects were discussed;
- The ECNC-led Pan-European Ecological Network pilot project 'Bialowieza: A forest of hope' resulted in strong consensus on increasing the ecological coherence of this famous forest on the border of Belarus and Poland;
- The SEENET programme, focusing on tailor-made support to the development of ecological networks in South-East Europe and the Black Sea area started with a range of interregional and country-based activities;
- The large EC-supported BioScore project started; it will develop a tool for linking pressures from policy sectors to the (change in the) state of biodiversity as measured by the presence and abundance of individual species;
- Support was provided to monitoring and reporting on biodiversity, amongst others via a biodiversity monitoring project in Ukraine, the ALTER-Net project 'Aggregating biodiversity indicators for policy purposes: sense or nonsense?' and ECNC's coordination role of the SEBI2010 initiative to Streamline European Biodiversity Indicators;
- As part of the cooperation between ECNC and the Province of Noord-Brabant ECNC co-organized a workshop on landscape integration of industrial estates, resulting in consensus on further greening of industrial estates.

In conclusion, the past year saw us push on towards our goal of linking biodiversity interests with the interests of society and economy, and undertaking many new and innovative activities towards achieving that goal.

3. ECNC Programme Areas in 2006

Nature and Society

Connecting people and nature

The Nature and Society ECNC Programme Area promotes awareness of the importance of the social context of nature conservation amongst stakeholders in order to create more effective policymaking processes. The projects in this Programme Area focus on the interactions between nature and people, and the use of effective communication and capacity building to contribute to biodiversity and nature conservation policies. A true understanding of the social context of conservation requires analysis of the conflicts that can arise around the management of natural resources, and of how these conflicts are resolved. It is also important to gain insight into the different stakeholder groups and how they position themselves towards conservation initiatives. Finally, for nature and biodiversity conservation to be successful, officials working in governmental and non-governmental organizations at the local, regional, national and international levels need to be aware of the social aspects of conservation and need to have skills in communicating with the large variety of stakeholders involved.

‘Conservation of nature and biodiversity has as much to do with social structures and processes as with ecological structures and processes.’

In 2006 ECNC implemented an extensive range of projects geared towards meeting the aims of this Programme Area. One of these projects aimed at mobilizing the European social research potential in support of biodiversity and ecosystem management: the ‘Social Science and Biodiversity (SoBio)’ research project. It created an overview of existing knowledge in the field and assessed the relevance of social research for policymaking and policy implementation. SoBio identified the current priority needs for additional policy-relevant knowledge. These were incorporated into an international cooperative programme of social research on biodiversity and ecosystem management issues in Europe.

Conservation of nature and biodiversity has as much to do with social structures and processes as with ecological structures and processes: ultimately, the

aim of conservation policy is to influence the way in which society interacts with nature and biodiversity. Within this context, the Countdown 2010 project in Zagreb created great opportunities for the population of the Croatian capital Zagreb to learn more about biodiversity in their city and to become involved in efforts to monitor and protect it. The project involved citizens as volunteers in biodiversity monitoring, carried out an awareness-raising campaign in Zagreb on urban biodiversity and made a close link between the biodiversity of Zagreb and the wider ecological context as well as the 2010 targets.



Countdown 2010 coordination meeting in Zagreb.

Within the framework of the Countdown 2010 target to halt the loss of biodiversity, ECNC was also active in the Netherlands with the project ‘Countdown 2010 in the Dutch regions’. The project achieved a higher level of involvement of the regional authorities in the Netherlands with respect to the European 2010 target and created a basis for concrete steps for the regional level to contribute to halting the decline of biodiversity. In order to create awareness and acceptance of the process by other regions, a national seminar was held in Den Bosch in October, bringing together 150 participants and Dutch municipalities, and governmental and non-governmental organizations who committed themselves to the 2010 target by signing the Countdown 2010 declaration.

It is widely accepted that achieving a sustainable future for Europe’s nature and biodiversity depends to a considerable extent on recognition of the deeply social character of nature conservation and on mastering those aspects in the elaboration and implementation of policies. In this connection ECNC undertook a capacity-building project in Croatia and FYRO Macedonia, ‘Communicating Nature Conservation’. The project focuses on increasing



Velebit Mountain, Croatia.

the skills of policymakers, park managers, and governmental and non-governmental representatives in stakeholder involvement and strategic communication in nature conservation. ECNC's expert staff provided a series of training seminars and interactive workshops in both countries.

Communicating for nature conservation in Croatia and Macedonia

ECNC's capacity-building programme in Croatia and FYRO Macedonia focuses on increasing skills in stakeholder involvement and strategic communication in nature conservation. The first phase of the project was completed in 2006. This consisted of two intensive tailor-made training workshops on the use of strategic and interactive communication in conservation policy and action.

Business and Biodiversity

A programme of integration and investment

Europe is entering into the final stretch of a decade dedicated to halting the decline of biodiversity by 2010 – a pan-European objective proclaimed at both the EU Göteborg Council and the Fifth Ministerial Conference 'Environment for Europe'. This is also the decade of the EU's Lisbon Agenda, making Europe more competitive in a world economy that is becoming increasingly geared to a high-output, high-quality cadence of production. Yet the essential progress is to bring Europe closer to a sustainable life-style, in terms of social cohesion, economic prosperity and environmental conditions. Biodiversity is increasingly understood to go hand in hand with economy, all to the benefit of biodiversity and nature conservation.

Within this context, this Programme Area attempts to contribute to the integration of biodiversity issues in specific sectors, in particular through the use of appropriate financial instruments that are either innovative or specifically adapted to needs. The ambition is to foster awareness about the relationship between business and biodiversity at the very heart of the development of policies, programmes and strategies. This ECNC Programme Area had two orientations for 2006: sectoral integration of biodiversity, and facilitating investment in biodiversity-related business.

With rapid changes happening in the rural economy,

'Biodiversity is increasingly understood to go hand in hand with economy, all to the benefit of biodiversity and nature conservation.'

ECNC has had the opportunity to work on the measurement of impact on the environment as part of a multi-annual research endeavour, MEA-Scope: the development of micro-economic instruments for impact assessment of multifunctional agriculture as part of the EU programme to implement the European model of agriculture, in which the use of the land for food, feed, fibre and fuel can be within limits that are reasonable for the European natural heritage. ECNC contributes to the building and testing of indicators to measure the respect for these limits.

ECNC is also involved with looking forward to the perspectives for agriculture on the horizon of 2020. A scenario study on agriculture and the rural world – Scenar 2020 – was entrusted to a consortium led by ECNC. Three policy scenarios were elaborated, identifying major opportunities and challenges for



ECNC develops indicators to measure changes in land use that affect Europe's natural heritage.

agriculture and rural areas. The Scenar 2020 study will provide a valuable basis for discussions on the future of agriculture and rural regions in the EU for the coming years.

ECNC has also undertaken two new projects dealing with the role of business in maintaining and enhancing biodiversity. The first is an outcome of the work of the European Task Force on Banking, Business and Biodiversity, for which ECNC provides the Technical Secretariat. This pilot project will establish a new service for green-minded entrepreneurs in the new accession countries, starting as a pilot project in Poland, Bulgaria and Hungary. Biodiversity Technical Assistance Units (BTAUs) are being established in these three countries, and ECNC is developing the technical guidelines for the work of the BTAUs.

In the second project, in Bulgaria and Croatia ECNC is promoting biodiversity-related investment by working with entrepreneurs located in areas of high natural value, as well as with the financial intermediaries who secure financing for these business opportunities. The task here is to understand the precise difficulties that need to be overcome in order to accelerate market development, and to find the financial modalities that are best adapted to encourage start-ups.

The prospect of developing strong financial resources for promoting investment depends primarily on the attitude of the financial sector, and here ECNC has been active in setting up a professional capacity-development seminar oriented towards the specific operating environment of the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. In 2006 a first ECNC seminar was hosted in Zagreb by UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and HBOR (a Croatian investment bank).



The long-term project 'LIFESCAPE – YOUR LANDSCAPE' is establishing 20 subprojects in seven regions of five countries that all depend upon the link between landscape identity and economic development. LIFESCAPE, which is led by the Province of Noord-Brabant, is a flagship project in many ways. ECNC plays a role both as technical coordinator and as active partner, bringing its project management capacities and its professional expertise in biodiversity

and social dynamics to bear on the favourable evolution of this bottom-up exercise in local development.

Landscapes as a source of identity, inspiration and economic power

LIFESCAPE – YOUR LANDSCAPE is about using landscape to bring people together. Activities undertaken in 2006 include the development of a landscape marketing and branding guide, and exchange visits of volunteers and farmers to various countries. These visits allowed participants to learn from each other and develop ideas that can be used in future activities.

European Ecological Network

Shaping the European Ecological Network

This ECNC Programme Area supports the establishment of the European Ecological Network through the development of regional networks in Europe and by analysing the threats and opportunities arising from sectors other than nature conservation. The development of this Network is based on common objectives adopted by European states, and builds on the implementation of nature conservation instruments in Europe. For over a decade ECNC has been involved in the process of designing and promoting the European Ecological Network approach. This approach requires networking on three fronts, in line with the Appeal of the European Nature Conference in Apeldoorn: connecting people, connecting nature, and connecting practice with policy. The European Ecological Network provides stability and resilience to Europe's biodiversity and accommodates for ecological impacts of climate change.

In 2006 ECNC was active on all the above-mentioned fronts. ECNC sees the crucial importance of involving various stakeholders in biodiversity conservation processes, such as ecological networks. ECNC connects people who are active in the field – such as site managers, planners and regional or local authorities – with people who provide knowledge and expertise and with people who make decisions at

European and national levels. Especially in a process that in the longer run has an impact on people's lives, it is essential that people and stakeholder groups are consulted and involved. Connecting natural areas makes their surroundings more beautiful and diverse.

'The European Ecological Network provides stability and resilience to Europe's biodiversity and accommodates for ecological impacts of climate change.'

The SEENET programme that started in 2006 is an illustration of this interactive approach. Aimed at involvement of all relevant stakeholder groups and specifically including non-conservation stakeholders, it facilitates the establishment of the Pan-European Ecological Network in South-East Europe and the Black Sea area. This capacity-building programme assists nature conservation and non-conservation stakeholders in finding information about ecological networks, in finding partners for developing ecological network-related projects and funding opportunities. The programme provides the possibility to organize national or trans-boundary meetings on relevant ecological network-related topics and supports the participation of regional experts at relevant ecological network-related events to represent the region's interests and needs. Through training and seminars the programme brings stakeholders together to learn about the relation between spatial planning and ecological networks and about funding sources for ecological networks.



In 2006 the indicative map of the Pan-European Ecological Network (PEEN) for South-East Europe saw the light, together with an accompanying report. ECNC coordinated this three-year project, which involved over 20 partners and resulted in depicting the potential location of core nature areas and

corridors in an area stretching from the Triglav Mountains in the north-west of Slovenia to Hakkari in south-east Turkey. The map, produced under the auspices of the Council of Europe's Committee of Experts for the Establishment of the PEEN, provides a unique communication instrument in the process of establishing ecological networks in the South-East European region.

'ECNC plays an important role in the development and implementation of the Pan-European Ecological Network. Different projects are facilitated and coordinated by ECNC to stimulate the involvement of European countries and stakeholders in activities in support of the PEEN. The SEENET project is a very good example. It is a great pleasure to work with ECNC on biological diversity in Europe.'

Jan-Willem Sneep, President of the Group of Experts for the Development of the Pan-European Ecological Network (Council of Europe)

As part of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy, ECNC led the editing of the European policy review report that assesses the actual implementation of the PEEN. This assessment report is a major contribution to the Sixth Ministerial Conference 'Environment for Europe' (Belgrade, Serbia, October 2007). The report concluded that the concept of ecological networks has established itself widely as a framework to ensure ecological connectivity and has proven to be applicable at different geographical levels. However, with respect to the establishment of ecological networks in Europe, the involvement of non-conservation stakeholders from sectors such as agriculture, water management, transport and infrastructure, and spatial planning needs to be strengthened.

ECNC also produced another map, showing the national ecological networks in Europe, as an input to the pan-European Intergovernmental Conference 'Biodiversity in Europe' in Croatia, February 2006. The map informs ministers and policymakers in all European countries about the state of affairs

of national ecological networks in the European countries. The work shows that more and more countries work on a national level with a national ecological network approach, but that the approach varies and is sometimes difficult to compare. In only a few countries is the ecological network concept incorporated in policies or legislation.

ECNC is also active 'on the ground' in assisting in the realization of ecological networks. Two cases in point are discussed below.

Firstly, in 2006 ECNC continued its assistance to Croatia and FYRO Macedonia in implementing an ecological network approach via seminars, training and tailor-made expertise, among others as part of the 'Communicating Nature Conservation' project described on page 5.

Secondly, in 2006 ECNC, together with Vereniging Natuurmonumenten, coordinated the Pan-European Ecological Network pilot project 'Bialowieza – A forest of hope'. The project aimed to enhance the ecological and social coherence of the famous Bialowieza Forest on the border of Poland and Belarus. It resulted in consensus about the cross-border ecological network and on priority activities in the fields of hydrology, tourism, forestry and ecological connectivity.

The project was carried out together with Bialowieza National Park in Poland and Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park in Belarus, together with a wide range of other organizations, including foresters and local people. As part of the project an international workshop 'Bialowieza - A forest of hope' was organized. This resulted in the Bialowieza – Forest of Hope Appeal 2006, in which broad expert agreement was reflected on i.a. establishing a cross-border ecological network as part of the European Ecological Network, including testing the establishment of cross-border ecological gateways at two locations in the border fence that currently divides the forest in two. The ecological network and the gateways would allow species such as the European bison, elk, wolves and lynx to migrate between the two parts of the forest. The workshop concurred on joint principles for forest management and hydrology on both sides of the border.

The Bialowieza project was inspired by the success of the PEEN cross-border cooperation between Kopacki Rit Nature Park and the Duna Dráva National Park, another down-to-earth pilot project that finished at the end of 2005.

State of European Nature and Biodiversity

Monitoring the achievement of policy targets

This ECNC Programme Area deals with all aspects of relevance to reporting the state of nature in Europe, from indicators and data collection, monitoring and assessments, to reporting and user feedback. A focus in this Programme Area is on helping to coordinate the many ongoing initiatives in Europe in order to join efforts in reporting progress and helping to achieve the target to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010. Much of Europe's attention in 2006 was drawn to the European Commission's communication 'Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 ... and beyond'. Since the start of the millennium the political target of



Ecological networks help species such as wolves and lynx to move between areas.

Indicative map is a step forward in conservation efforts in South-East Europe

With the map indicating the possible location of the Pan-European Ecological Network in South-East Europe, ECNC has completed another piece of the European jigsaw puzzle. The map provides an essential communication tool to support the involvement of all relevant parties in the conservation of biodiversity in the region.

halting biodiversity loss by 2010 has triggered an array of initiatives to help achieve this target. The EC Communication is a culmination and compilation of much of this attention, in addition to the global and pan-European efforts in this respect.

In order to be able to answer the question whether this target has been reached, a yardstick is needed to measure progress. Such a yardstick is provided through the European headline biodiversity indicators. Together with the European Environment Agency and the United Nations Environment Programme, ECNC coordinates the process to develop and underpin these indicators in the SEBI2010 project – Streamlining European 2010 Biodiversity Indicators. In 2006 much work was undertaken to collect documentation on each of the 16 European indicators. The collected documentation was reviewed and discussed during a large workshop held at the EEA in November. Through its role as consortium partner of the European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity, ECNC helped coordinate this workshop. ECNC also developed initial documentation on the indicators for ‘public participation and awareness’ and for ‘financing biodiversity’.

‘I appreciate ECNC’s involvement in SEBI2010 on indicators and monitoring, as it helps to ensure a pan-European perspective in this important coordination project.’

Ivonne Higuero, UNEP Coordinator for the PEBLDS Joint Secretariat, UNEP Regional Office for Europe

ECNC also supported the SEBI2010 process by holding a training session on biodiversity indicators and monitoring for the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. A two-day training workshop in Kyiv, Ukraine, brought together participants from the region and ensured linkages between their work and the pan-European processes. Following on from the outcome of this workshop ECNC started a project in Ukraine to strengthen public involvement in a national biodiversity monitoring network. This two-year project will analyse existing monitoring initiatives in Ukraine and propose a mechanism to develop a national biodiversity monitoring programme with full involvement from the

relevant actors, specifically the interested public. Involving the public and linking to policy are crucial aspects of any biodiversity monitoring activity and the above examples illustrate ECNC’s involvement in these. However, monitoring has to be scientifically sound. ECNC has therefore started the coordination of a three-year project to develop a tool to assess European Community impacts on biodiversity. This project, BioScore, brings together scientific knowledge and modelling skills with respect to species distribution and ecological preferences. ECNC believes that these preferences, or life history traits, may provide the key component to quantify the impact of individual pressures on species distribution and habitat composition in Europe, and therefore on biodiversity and the ecosystem services it provides.



ECNC contributes to various initiatives studying how biodiversity data and monitoring efforts can best be used.

ECNC continued its involvement in the ALTER-Net ‘Network of Excellence’. This long-term biodiversity, ecosystem and awareness research network entered its third year in 2006 and is beginning to bear the fruits of the years of preparation. The interaction between the ALTER-Net science and European Community policy is an ongoing challenge that ECNC is addressing by a package of tools to support this integration. A key element in this is the development of a hotline that will allow policymakers to pose questions to which the ALTER-Net community will respond.



ECNC leads the ALTER-Net work package to develop a Science-Policy Interface to improve information exchange on biodiversity assessment – a necessity if policymakers are to be reached.

Monitoring the state of biodiversity

ECNC has reviewed a whole suite of EC policy instruments and how they relate to pressures on Europe's biodiversity. This knowledge forms an important basis for the biodiversity impact assessment tool being developed in BioScore. Indicator species will show how biodiversity reacts to Community policy measures.

Communicating biodiversity

It is generally agreed that communication is essential if we want to reach the 2010 target. Indicators are designed to make communication about biodiversity easier. An ECNC study under ALTER-Net revealed the advantages and disadvantages of aggregating indicators to indexes in order to inform policymakers and trigger action. If only indicators had a smell... (see www.ecnc.org).

Support to International, National and Subnational Biodiversity Processes

Keeping biodiversity policy commitments alive

By providing practical, tailor-made support to the implementation of the priority targets of pan-European, EU and national policies and action plans, this ECNC Programme Area promotes synergy between global and European actions on nature and biodiversity and also provides support to international, national and regional processes and organizations. The European Biodiversity 2010 target to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010 was also at the centre of ECNC's European policy support in 2006.

In 2006 ECNC continued its involvement in the discussions concerning the future of the pan-European cooperation on biodiversity, and the

biodiversity input into the Sixth Ministerial Conference 'Environment for Europe' (October 2007, Belgrade, Serbia). ECNC provided substantial input into the preparations for the Fourth Intergovernmental Conference 'Biodiversity in Europe', in Croatia, as well as to the Conference itself. This took the form of speeches and involvement in conference forum meetings on communication, ecological networks, and reporting and monitoring. The Conference noted that, despite positive developments, the loss of biological diversity continues to increase rapidly throughout Europe. It concluded that in order to address the continuing challenge of halting the loss of biodiversity in Europe, regional cooperation should be increased and partnerships with the forestry, agriculture and other economics-driven sectors need to be strengthened. The Conference also welcomed the Apeldoorn Appeal, which resulted from the European Nature Conference in Apeldoorn, September 2005. ECNC was one of the organizers of this conference.

'I was also very impressed by the results of the Apeldoorn Conference to which your organization contributed and by the Apeldoorn Appeal calling for more integrated approaches in nature protection.'

Stavros Dimas, European Commissioner for the Environment, from a letter to ECNC President, Sir Brian Unwin



The Fourth 'Biodiversity in Europe' Conference stressed the need to inform people of the economic benefits of biodiversity and landscape.

NatureNet Europe – an alliance of ECNC, EUCC-The Coastal Union and Eurosite – continued with its ‘Beautiful Europe’ initiative, through discussions with i.a.:

- EAZA (European Association of Zoos and Aquaria) about an EAZA European campaign in 2008/2009;
- ANWB, a Dutch tourist organization of 3.9 million members, about linking European nature sites with information on tourist destinations and sustainable local entrepreneurs;
- the European Commission on a new vision of nature and biodiversity conservation.

‘Beautiful Europe’ initiative

Through the ‘Beautiful Europe’ initiative, NatureNet Europe aims to impart a great impulse to cooperation towards a resilient European nature and biodiversity, while promoting a situation in which more citizens, politicians and other stakeholders are proud of European nature and landscapes. ‘Beautiful Europe’ will build bridges between Europe and the daily life of its citizens and will thus also contribute to increased understanding and support for EU integration.

‘Over the last couple of years ECNC has been exceptionally productive in developing innovative approaches to European nature conservation. It is a team player with every other NGO and GO that is open to collaboration and synergies. Within NatureNet Europe, ECNC did groundbreaking work in developing the ‘Beautiful Europe’ concept.’

Albert Salman, Director of EUCC-The Coastal Union

ECNC provided input into the meetings of the EC Biodiversity Expert Group, also bringing views of other NGOs to these meetings and providing ideas for the EC’s Communication ‘Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 ... and beyond’.

As part of the cooperation between ECNC and the Dutch Province of Noord-Brabant various activities took place in 2006, including:

- a seminar on landscape integration of industrial estates, resulting in recommendations to improve landscape and biodiversity qualities of these estates;
- seminars on biodiversity 2010 and the role of local authorities, resulting in increased awareness and the identification of practical local opportunities to contribute to the 2010 target;
- promoting the Countdown 2010 initiative towards a wide range of stakeholders in the region, resulting in many cities and towns joining Countdown 2010;
- presenting an overview of European and international interregional cooperation forums in which issues on sustainable development and biodiversity could be promoted;
- assisting the Province of Noord-Brabant in the preparation of the international conference ‘European regions as champions for biodiversity 2010’ (held in Oisterwijk, the Netherlands, in February 2007).

Promising developments in the Netherlands

In 2006 the cooperation between ECNC and the Dutch Province of Noord-Brabant was extremely productive. It resulted in more and more local stakeholders joining the cooperation on the 2010 biodiversity target. Various local communities were inspired to set up local biodiversity initiatives, for instance in Boxtel, Tilburg, Oisterwijk, Waalwijk, Den Bosch, Breda and Woudrichem. The results were presented to European audiences and appreciated by many.

4. Resources and communication

Social report

Over 2006 ECNC employed a total of 19 staff (17 in the Netherlands, one in Hungary and one in France). ECNC also continued to maintain its relationship with six associated partners (based in the United Kingdom, Canada, USA, the Netherlands and Hungary). In 2006 ECNC implemented the final set of decisions resulting from the strategic midterm orientation process, which was a joint effort of ECNC management, staff and Board, and reviewed the structure and functioning of the Secretariat, Board and Scientific Council. 2006 saw the completion of the reorganization started in the Secretariat in 2005, which resulted in a slimmed-down management structure and an organization better focused on programme issues and fundraising. This process, combined with 'natural causes', resulted in high staff turnover in 2006. The ECNC Board and Scientific Council provided guidance and advice to the ECNC management in implementing the decisions made in the framework of the midterm orientation process. The Scientific Council recommended ways to further increase the potential of ECNC's human capital; these recommendations will be taken up in 2007 and beyond. As in 2005, volunteers provided support to the ECNC Secretariat in the areas of communication, ICT, information and the library. ECNC supported the other international partners of the European House for Biodiversity and Sustainability in human resource and office tasks and facilities; they, in turn, provided support to ECNC.

Information, communication and media

ECNC's information and corporate communication activities in 2006 highlighted ECNC's products in more appealing ways and introduced new ECNC leaflets and posters. The number of visitors to ECNC's website further increased to about one thousand unique visitors a day (an average of 25,000 unique visitors per month).

Media coverage of ECNC increased substantially in 2006. ECNC management and staff were interviewed by several journals and magazines, including national newspapers and magazines of site management

organizations, and were quoted in press releases. ECNC provided regular contributions to the International Press Centre for Biodiversity Research. ECNC also contributed to the website of NatureNet Europe. EUCC leads on this website, which can be found at www.natureneteurope.org. The website of the Brabant&Europe Partnership for Sustainability (B&E Partnership) was further developed (see www.ecnc.org/bep/index.html). ECNC continued to maintain the PEBLDS Strategy Guide (<http://www.strategyguide.org>) until the end of 2006, when it was decided to discontinue involvement in this site because of lack of resources for quality maintenance. Several project sites came on line in 2006, most notably the SEENET programme website: <http://www.seenet.info>

Details of reports and other publications published in 2006 can be found on <http://annualreport.ecnc.org>

ECNC's presence at conferences

2006 was a busy year as regards ECNC input to and presentations at conferences and seminars. ECNC staff were frequently requested to deliver speeches at international conferences or to facilitate workshops. For further details see <http://annualreport.ecnc.org>



ECNC was present at many national and international conferences in 2006.

5. ECNC in person

ECNC Board and Bureau members

Board members

President

31 December 2006

Sir Brian Unwin KCB, United Kingdom

First Vice-President

Dr J. Tardy, Hungary

Second Vice-President

Mr R.H. Loudon, the Netherlands

Treasurer

Prof. Dr J. Rammeloo, Belgium

Secretary

Mr A.R. Wolters, Executive Director ECNC

Other members

Mr M. Castroviejo, Spain (until November)

Mr C. Martin-Novella, Spain (from November)

Dr G. Krepetz, Russian Federation

Mr G. Silvestrini, Council of Europe (until November)

Mr E. Fernández-Galiano, Council of Europe (from November)

Dr S. Baardsen, Norway, Chair of ECNC's Scientific Council (from March)

Prof. Dr P.A. Gerakis, Greece

Ms I. Higuero, UNEP/ROE

Mr E. Idle, United Kingdom

Mr B.J. Krouwel, the Netherlands

Mr R. Lamb, Switzerland

Prof. Dr M. Niekisch, representative of IUCN – The World Conservation Union

Mr G.B. Raaphorst, the Netherlands, (Deputy: Mr J. Bakker, the Netherlands)

Mr G. Szilágyi, Hungary

Dr Z. Witkowski, Poland

Honorary Board members

Prof. Dr A. Machado (former ECNC President), on personal title, Spain

Ms N. Goulandris-Kefala (former ECNC Vice-President), on personal title, Greece

Observer

Dr P. Buckley, Ireland

Bureau members

Chair

31 December 2006

Sir Brian Unwin

Other members

Mr E. Idle

Mr R.H. Loudon

Prof. Dr J. Rammeloo

Dr J. Tardy

Dr S. Baardsen (from March)

Mr A.R. Wolters

ECNC Scientific Council 31 December 2006



Dr Sjur Baardsen,
Chair.

Prof. Dr Ruslan
Butovsky.

Dr Mark Felton.

Prof. Dr Jozef
Keulartz.

Dr Julius Oszlányi. Mr Carlos Sunyer.

ECNC Network partners 31 December 2006

Network partner organization	Country	Contact person
Agency for Nature Conservation and Landscape Protection	Czech Republic	Dr J. Plesnik
Agricultural Economics Research Institute	The Netherlands	Dr F.M. Brouwer
All-Russian Research Institute for Nature Protection	Russian Federation	Dr R.O. Butovsky
Autonomous University of Madrid	Spain	Prof. Dr B. Peco
Biodiversity Conservation Centre	Russian Federation	Dr V. Kuznetsov
Caucasus Nature Conservancy	Georgia	Mr E. van Maanen
Centre for Agricultural Landscape and Land Use Research	Germany	Dr U. Stachow
Centre for Cartography of Fauna and Flora	Slovenia	Ms K. Pobljsaj
Central European University	Hungary	Prof. Dr R. Mnatsakanian
Centre for Environmental Research of the Province of Madrid	Spain	Mrs P. Fernández Sañudo
Centre for Environmental Science	The Netherlands	Prof. Dr G. de Snoo
Complutense University of Madrid	Spain	Prof. Dr F.D. Pineda
Debrecen University	Hungary	Dr Z. Karácsonyi
EUCC-The Coastal Union	International	Dr A. Pickaver
Forest Research Institute	Poland	Dr P. Lech
Goulandris Natural History Museum – Greek Biotope/Wetland Centre	Greece	Prof. Dr P.A. Gerakis
Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature	Greece	Mr D. Matthews
Institute for Ecological and Regional Development	Germany	Prof. Dr B. Müller
Institute for the Protection of Nature of Serbia	Serbia & Montenegro	Ms J. Krajačić
Institute of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Estonian University of Life Sciences	Estonia	Prof. Dr K. Sepp
Institute of Biology of the Southern Seas	Ukraine	Dr N. Shalovenkov
Institute of Environmental Protection	Poland	Dr Z. Pisarski
Institute of Nature Conservation	Poland	Prof. Dr Z. Witkowski

Network partner organization	Country	Contact person
Institute of Sustainable Technology, Tallinn University of Technology	Estonia	Dr M. Klvik
Jzsef Attila University	Hungary	Prof. Dr L. Gall
Knowledge Directorate, Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality	The Netherlands	Mr A.J.F.M. van Opstal
National Research Council	Italy	Dr G. Amori
Natural England (formerly English Nature)	United Kingdom	Mr R. Leafe
Natural History Museum	United Kingdom	Dr P. Williams
Nomos + Physis	Greece	Dr P. Patronos
Norwegian Institute for Nature Research	Norway	Dr E. Framstad
Plant Research International	The Netherlands	Ir H.G. van der Meer
Slovak Academy of Sciences	Slovakia	Prof. Dr L. Mikls
Stichting Recreatie	The Netherlands	Ir R.F.A. Berkers
TERRA - centro para la poltica ambiental	Spain	Mr C. Sunyer
Terra Cypria	Cyprus	Dr A. Yiordamli
Telos/Tilburg University	The Netherlands	Mr M.J.H. Oldenhof & Prof. Dr J.T. Mommaas
UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre	International	Mr J. Harrison
University College Cork	Ireland	Ms V. Cummins
University of Antwerp	Belgium	Prof. Dr P. Meire
University of Bucharest	Romania	Prof. Dr A. Vadineanu
University of Tartu, Institute of Geography	Estonia	Prof. Dr . Mander
University of the Aegean	Greece	Prof. Dr A. Troumbis
University of Zagreb - Dept of Botany	Croatia	Dr T. Nikolic
Wageningen Agricultural University	The Netherlands	Prof. Dr F. Berendse

ECNC Staff



From left to right; front row: Ben Delbaere, Ad Vlems, Willem Bakker; 2nd row: Gillian Heslop, Natasja Hulst, Rob Wolters; 3rd row: Aysegul Cil, Hanneke Wijnja, Rob Vinke; 4th row: Ana Nieto, Sunny Morrison; 5th row: Ágnes Bruszik, Yuca Waarts, Peter von Meijenfheldt; back row: Glynis van Uden, Frans Ghering, Peter Nowicki.



Andrew Schrauwen &
Dzintra Ailte



Astrid van Hemert &
Lawrence Jones-Walters



Ronald Busio



Vineta Goba



Grégoire Lois



Sandra Rientjes

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European Commission, Directorate-General Environment

European Commission, Directorate-General Research, Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development

European Environment Agency, European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity

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