



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

IS EUROPE CAPTURING THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF NATURE?

An analysis of Biodiversity Funding within the EU Budget review



A recent WWF report (commissioned to the Institute for European Environmental Policy, IEEP) shows that continued and increased EU funding for biodiversity is fundamental to protect biodiversity and related ecosystem services in the EU.

At this moment, neither sufficient budget nor efficient financing mechanisms are in place to ensure that existing opportunities deliver the necessary level of protection.

WWF therefore recommends covering the core costs of biodiversity through a specific biodiversity fund and to provide complementary funding sources via other EU funds which need to become obligatory. Overall it has to be ensured, that spending within all EU funds does not harm biodiversity.

Biodiversity, i.e. the variety of species, habitats and ecosystems across the EU, forms an invaluable part of our natural heritage. In addition, it is also increasingly apparent that biodiversity and living nature underpin the natural capital crucial for the Union's economy and for the wellbeing of EU citizens¹. However, the threats facing biodiversity are escalating and there are increasing losses of both biodiversity and related ecosystem services, with significant implications at the EU level. It is also evident that this biodiversity challenge cannot be addressed by Member States alone but continued Community actions are needed to reach the agreed EU goals. Therefore it is crucial and also **justified to continue utilising Community resources to support the conservation of biodiversity in the EU**.

The estimated financial allocations for 2007-2013 clearly indicate that **conservation of biodiversity is not among the core areas currently supported by the EU budget**. The available budget specifically for biodiversity conservation is very limited (LIFE + Nature & Biodiversity component includes approximately 120 million € per year, less than 0,1% of the total EU budget). Furthermore, the uptake of biodiversity related funding possibilities in the Member States under other Community funds remains limited.

There is a need to ensure that **the amount of funding provided by the EU budget is sufficient to deliver real benefits for biodiversity**. In addition, national funding is also needed to complement Community support and to help to bridge the existing funding gap for biodiversity. In return, adequate investment in biodiversity will also help to protect and restore the natural capital underpinning EU's socio-economic welfare. For example, biodiversity, ecosystems and the services they provide can play an important role in maintaining food security, mitigating environmental risks and helping adaptation to climate change.

¹ TEEB. 2008. The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity – interim report. The European Commission. 64 pp.
TEEB. 2009. The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity – the report for international and national policy makers (to be published).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Furthermore we need to **improve and monitor the effectiveness of the EU funding model for biodiversity**. The uptake of the existing possibilities at the Member State level still leaves much to be desired and further efforts are needed to reinforce the integration of biodiversity issues into national funding priorities. Support is also needed to ensure stakeholders' capacity to make full use of the available opportunities. It is also necessary to better monitor the biodiversity benefits (and costs) of the EU funds. This will help establish and measure the outcomes of Community investment, in order to ensure that effective funding instruments are developed and re-designed. This will guarantee the needed political and public support for continued EU funding in the long-run.

For further information:

Andreas Baumueller
Biodiversity Policy Officer
WWF European Policy Office
Tel: +32 2 740 09 21
E-mail: abaumueller@wwfepo.org

Peter Torkler
WWF-Germany
EU Policy Officer
Tel: +49 30 30 87 42 15
E-mail: torkler@wwf.de