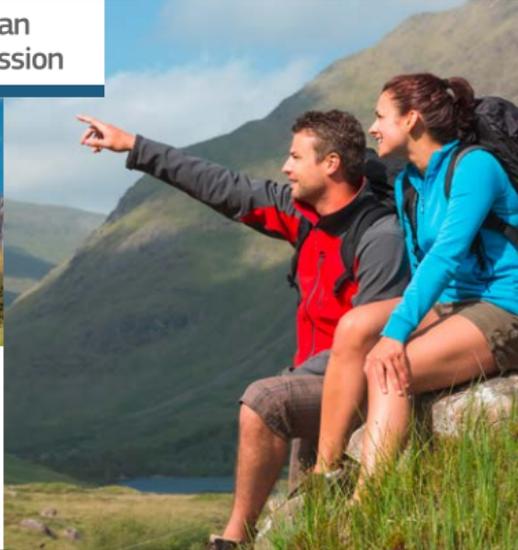




European
Commission



**European Natura
2000 Award**
Get the recognition
you deserve!



Environment

The Natura 2000 network

Natura 2000 is an EU-wide ecological network of conservation areas covering an enormous variety of different sites across the continent. It preserves and enhances Europe's habitats and species, safeguarding them for future generations. It also provides a wide range of benefits to society and the economy.



© Nature Park Maas-Swalm-Nette

Facts and figures about Natura 2000

Despite its small size, the EU contains an amazing diversity of wild plants, animals and landscapes, many of which are found nowhere else in the world.

Europe's biodiversity is however under threat — Natura 2000 plays an essential role in the aim to halt biodiversity loss in the EU.

The aim of the network is to assure the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species.

The network is founded on two pioneering pieces of EU legislation: the 1979 Birds Directive and the 1992 Habitats Directive.

The Natura 2000 network consists of over 27 000 terrestrial and marine sites, covering around 20 % of the land area and substantial parts of the surrounding seas, across nine biogeographic regions.

Around 4.4 million jobs are directly dependent on the maintenance of healthy ecosystems, a significant proportion of which are located within Natura 2000 sites.

The economic benefits of the Natura 2000 network have been estimated to be in the region of €200 to €300 billion per year.

Additional information on Natura 2000 is available at:

[ⓘ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature)

European Natura 2000 Award

This pan-European Award recognises excellence in the management of Natura 2000 sites and conservation achievements, showcasing the added value for local economies, and increasing public awareness of Europe's valuable natural heritage.

Despite the benefits provided by the Natura 2000 network, many people have never even heard of it. This is why, in 2014, the European Commission launched the annual European Natura 2000 Award. The aim of the award is to demonstrate what the network is, what it does to preserve Europe's biodiversity, and how it benefits all of us.

Anyone directly involved in Natura 2000 — businesses, authorities, NGOs, volunteers, land owners, educational institutions and individuals — can apply for the award. Applications are assessed by a team of independent experts. The winners are decided upon by a high-level jury including representatives from the EU Institutions and other organisations active in the field of nature conservation. In addition, the EU public can vote on the finalists thus selecting the winner of the EU Citizens' Award.

The finalists are invited to a high-level ceremony in Brussels when the five category winners as well as the winner of the EU Citizens' Award are announced and receive their trophies.

The Award application period normally occurs over the winter months (December to January) but please check the Award website for exact dates. The Award Ceremony takes place on Natura 2000 Day each year: 21 May.



Awards

Winners of the European Natura 2000 Award are selected from five different categories, showcasing the best success stories in preserving Europe's stunning nature.

Conservation

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This award recognises achievements that have improved the conservation status of a particular natural habitat type and / or species. Targeted habitat types or species must be in the Habitats Directive Annex I or II or Birds Directive Annex I, or be a regularly occurring migratory bird. Applications presenting successes in created or improved connections and corridors between sites in the Natura 2000 network are welcome, as they respond to an important concern for the implementation of Natura 2000.

Communication

This award recognises communication achievements that have led to increased awareness about Natura 2000, and which have brought lasting positive changes in attitudes or behaviour towards the network. Applications in this category must be targeted at specific Natura 2000 sites. If an application addresses multiple sites or the whole Natura 2000 network by targeting a whole interest group or the general public, it must nevertheless show a tangible positive impact on at least one Natura 2000 site.



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Socio-economic benefits

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This award recognises the creation of socio-economic benefits for local stakeholders that have come about as a result of activities linked to a Natura 2000 site or project. Examples of such achievements could include introduction of the Natura 2000 label which supported local producers in using the natural resources of the site to create a niche market or obtain better prices, nature-based tourism activities which have been developed around a Natura 2000 site, etc.

Reconciling interests / perceptions

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This category rewards successful conflict-resolution efforts that have brought together different socio-economic or political forces, or land or resource users, in a way that has benefitted Natura 2000. Applications should focus on an evolution from a polarised situation to an honourable compromise, with mechanisms in place for the various stakeholders to work together.

Cross-border cooperation and networking

This category concerns the establishment of effective partnerships between stakeholders involved in the management / conservation of Natura 2000 sites that are aimed at resolving Natura 2000 issues more constructively than would have been the case if the partners had operated individually.



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Two types of partnerships are covered by this category:

1. Cross-border collaboration in order to achieve the better conservation of a species / habitat type whose geographic distribution requires such an approach. Cross-border cooperation may be between countries or self-governing regions in a federal state (such as Germany, Belgium, Austria, Spain). It can also include the transfer of knowledge / best practice in the explicit framework of a biogeographic region.
2. Networking among structures with similar thematic targets (e.g., wetland Natura 2000 sites, managers of Natura 2000 sites) within the same country (or same region for federal countries).

Citizens' Award

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In addition to the five category winners, the public has the chance to vote online for their favourite finalist application. The finalist receiving the most votes is rewarded with the "European Citizens' Award".

Further information on the Natura 2000 Award

Please visit the website:

 <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/awards/>

and sign up for the newsletter.

The Natura 2000 Award Secretariat is operated by adelphi, STELLA Consulting and Tipik Communication Agency on behalf of the European Commission, DG Environment. For further information, please contact:

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Publications Office