

ECONAT Peer Exchanges 2010

Dealing with Uncertainty

Dates: 9th & 10th March 2010

Location: [Eco Innovation Centre - Peterborough, UK](#)

Accommodation: Peterborough
Arranged centrally for 9 & 10 March but paid for by participants
To be confirmed.

Lead contacts in Natural England: Philip Eckersley

Participants: Natural England (lead); RSPB; Levett-Therivel (UK based independent consultant)

Format: Desk based workshops and discussions, possibly with a site visit.
Duration: 2 days. Arrival 8th March. Depart 10th.

Scope:

The workshop will consider how uncertainty of impacts of a plan or project is made when carrying out an assessment through Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. Assessments of plans is often more difficult than assessment of projects because plans are strategic by nature with the details of the plan not being clear. Natural England has identified four broad areas of uncertainty:

1. Scientific uncertainty	...not knowing how the impacts resulting from a plan could effect the features of a European site
2. Regulatory uncertainty	...this results where there are separate plans which could have a joint impact eg a local municipality plan for housing or economic growth and a plan to develop or improve a national motorway
3. Planning hierarchy uncertainty	...National strategic plans have a high degree of uncertainty. How do we decide at what level to apply an assessment
4. Implementation uncertainty	...sometimes it will not be clear how a plan is to be implemented at the drafting and consultation stages. There may be multiple ways of implementing a plan.

Assessment and management approaches designed to ensure compatibility with the duties of the Habitats Directive will be compared through the presentation and discussion of case studies.

Audience: The exchange is for participants who deal with Habitats Directive assessments or Strategic Environmental Assessments at the expert practitioner level either as regulatory bodies, policy makers, or consultants. Participants who have experience of assessing uncertainty on projects are also very welcome.

Numbers: Maximum of 12 participants

Result: The peer exchange will contribute to and help refine a document highlighting some key principles dealing with uncertainty when considering appropriate assessment.

All participants should be prepared to present a case study and engage in specialist discussions. There will also be a requirement to contribute to the production of a written briefing on the findings of the exchange, and volunteers will be needed to present their findings at the ECONAT annual seminar in Germany in June 2010.