

# LIFE Natura 2000 Programme for Wales

## Inception Events Report

6<sup>th</sup> February 2013, Maes Y Ffynnon Conference Room, Countryside  
Council for Wales, Bangor

and

8<sup>th</sup> February 2013, Garwnant Forestry Commission Wales Visitor Centre,  
Merthyr Tydfil



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As of 1 April 2013, the Countryside Council for Wales, Environment Agency Wales and Forestry Commission Wales became Natural Resources Wales/Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru.

## Introduction

In February 2013 two events were organised to introduce the LIFE Natura 2000 Programme to relevant stakeholders and to encourage them to become involved in the project. The events were both of the same format. The first was held at the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) offices in Bangor, to cover the north Wales area and the second in the Forestry Commission Wales Visitor Centre at Garwnant, near Merthyr Tydfil, to cover the south Wales area.

The inception events were delivered as part of the LIFE Natura 2000 Programme Action 10 to “Develop and implement a communication and advocacy strategy for the project”.

## Invitations

In the second week of January 2013 the project launch was carried out. An email introducing the project was sent to CCW staff and around 350 external stakeholders. Included in this email was an invitation to the inception events.

## Programme

The agenda for the events is included in Annex A.

The events were chaired by David Parker, Director of Evidence & Advice, CCW (Bangor) and David Worrall, West Regional Director, CCW (Garwnant).

The events began with a series of presentations as follows:

- **The Wider Picture:** John Watkins, Head of Nature, Landscape & Outdoor Recreation, Welsh Government
- **Introduction to Natura 2000 in Wales and the LIFE Natura 2000 Programme:** Kathryn Hewitt, LIFE Natura 2000 Programme Manager
- **How the LIFE Natura 2000 Programme approach can help deliver conservation benefits at a local level:** Mike Willis, North Region Sites Programme Manager, Sites Team, CCW (Bangor) and Richard Jones, South Region Monmouth East Valleys Team Leader, CCW (Garwnant)

The presentations were followed by a question and answer session.

Over lunch, attendees were asked to make contributions to questions on posters, on **Themed Action Plans**, and **Strategic and Operational Questions**. The afternoon session consisted of two workshops on **Priorities for Natura 2000 in Wales** and **Funding Natura 2000 in Wales**, followed by a feedback session.

## Attendees

43 people attended the Bangor event and 44 attended the Garwnant event. A wide range of different types of organisations were represented.

The attendance list is included in Annex B.

## **Summary of Outcomes**

A full description of the feedback from the events is described from page 6.

### **Question and Answer Session**

A variety of questions were raised by attendees. One issue which came up at both events was the level of consultation that stakeholder organisations and landowners could expect - the questioners stressed the importance of close collaboration.

The need for integration with other existing commitments (such as catchment management plan actions) or objectives (such as SSSI outcomes) was highlighted.

Other questioners raised the need for new mechanisms to ensure that identified actions would be implemented effectively, such as easily-available match funding and more landowner-friendly grant schemes.

### **Themed Action Plans**

14 different topics were suggested for the creation of themed Action Plans to help ensure effective implementation. Themes mentioned by a number of delegates were: common land (4); agriculture and/or the farming community (3); burning/illegal fires (2) and the uplands (2).

### **Strategic and Operational Questions**

When asked “What information about Natura 2000 management do you need in your role to make key strategic or operational decisions?” delegates gave a wide variety of answers (17 different responses). However, many focused on implementation and delivery, such as “Who will deliver the actions?” and “What will the funding sources be?” The need for information that would enable collaborative working and sharing of best practice was also highlighted.

### **Priorities for Natura 2000 in Wales Workshop**

Delegates felt that prioritisation was necessary in order to focus effort, target funding and make the most cost effective use of time and resources. However, drawbacks of prioritising were recognised, particularly the risk that sites/issues/activities given low priority may not be delivered, allowing (perhaps irretrievable) deterioration of some features. The practical difficulties of establishing and agreeing priorities (e.g. setting robust criteria and weightings) were also stressed.

It was suggested that the concept of ‘priority’ should be replaced with that of ‘urgency’. Urgency emphasises the time element (e.g. features deemed to have high urgency will be dealt with first) but does not imply that any site or feature is of lesser importance.

There was no real consensus on what Welsh priorities may be. 29 different options were suggested and often these were incompatible. However, most support was given to prioritising:

- features/sites in the worst condition.

- sites/features/actions which would deliver multiple objectives and wider benefits e.g. ecosystem services, socio-economic, cultural and heritage benefits, rather than just Natura 2000 outcomes.
- actions which are most cost effective or best value for money.

It was recognised that prioritisation could cause disagreement and possible conflict among stakeholders. Engagement with stakeholders to establish common ground and encourage partnerships, as well as good communication were seen as key to preventing this. There is a need to develop a fair, transparent approach to the prioritisation process with clear criteria.

### **Funding Natura 2000 in Wales Workshop**

In addition to lack of funds, 26 other factors were identified by delegates that limit our ability to restore Natura 2000 features to favourable condition. Most prominent amongst these were:

- Constraints connected to land tenure, lack of control on land in private ownership and relationships with land owners/managers.
- Prevailing political and economic climate and social values.
- Lack of necessary regulation, inadequate sanctions or unwillingness to undertake enforcement.
- Funding bureaucracy. Applying for funds and meeting requirements of funders is often demanding, complex, technical and time consuming.
- Inappropriate forms of funding. E.g. short term funding is not sustainable for long term projects or ongoing management.

When asked how we could improve our ability to source funding for Natura 2000 delegates offered 30 potential solutions. There were several well-supported ideas but the prominent theme was that of better integration of Natura 2000 into other sectors (e.g. agriculture, fisheries, economic development, health, social wellbeing etc). This was not only in terms of joined up policy-making, but also improving our ability to align Natura 2000 needs with other agendas, thereby giving access to major funds associated with other sectors.



## **Presentations and Questions and Answers**

Copies of the presentation slides are included in Annex C.  
Questions following the presentations are summarised below.

### **Summary of presentations**

#### **John Watkins**

The Welsh Government is responsible for Natura 2000 in Wales. WG has affirmed its commitment to biodiversity conservation by signing up to ambitious 2020 targets to halt biodiversity loss. Given that similar 2010 targets were not met, we now need to make significant progress to ensure we deliver better integration, better planning and better outcomes for the site series.

Natura 2000 is regarded by the European Union as a key initiative for delivering biodiversity outputs and is cited as a key success. Target 2 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy is to halt degradation of ecosystems. However, Natura 2000 objectives also harmonise with Wales' own priorities, for example, as listed in the Section 42 list of species and habitats of conservation concern.

The Welsh Government is making changes to environmental governance and is adopting the integrated ecosystem approach to policy making, planning and decision making.

The Welsh Government needs adequate information and knowledge so it can make informed decisions on resource allocation. We need to provide a clear examples of how change can be achieved to justify costs. Actions for Natura 2000 need to be adequately prioritised and fit into a coherent strategy. In simple terms we need to know what the problems are, what we need to do where and how much money is required, at an all-Wales level. We need a programme which is deliverable and practical, sensible and cost effective. Better partnership working is essential to ensure views of partners are integrated.

#### **Kathryn Hewitt**

- Natura 2000 in Wales was described including number of SAC and SPAs, number of designated habitat and species features, area covered and ownership.
- The policy importance and legal aims and obligations of Natura 2000 in Europe and Wales were summarised.
- The LIFE Natura 2000 Project runs from 1 Sept 2012 – 31 Dec 2014 and is coordinated by CCW (Natural Resources Wales from 1 Apr 2013). The £1 million budget will employ 7 dedicated members of staff and contractors.
- The purpose and scope of the project was outlined and the outputs explained.

## **Mike Willis**

The presentation described the issues and management of the Afon Gwyrfai a Llyn Cwellyn Special Area of Conservation at a local level. Key messages were:

- effective partnerships are critical.
- a need to recognise the interconnectivity between sites – not just single instances of good environments but a chain of high quality environments, linked to each other.
- a need to plan infrastructure for the features in the area.

## **Richard Jones**

The presentation considered management of the Wye Valley Woodlands SAC at the local level. It outlined the LIFE Ravine Woodlife Project.

Problems included the costs associated with management, unsustainable deer herds and loss of canopy structure.

The LIFE project facilitated better woodland management, brought economic returns and helped make significant progress towards bringing the SAC into favourable condition.

## **Questions and Answers**

### **Bangor**

1. How will we get past the barrier of unfavourable unclassified status for features?  
We need to know the true status of each feature before we advocate/plan for improvement. (Dŵr Cymru)
  - If areas of deficiency are identified which are limiting progress on Natura 2000 sites then the LIFE Natura 2000 Programme should record these and ensure that robust actions are passed to the appropriate organisation to act on (LIFE Natura 2000 Programme).
  - CCW agrees that management decisions on features needs to be based on best available information, though it was recognised that information is not always complete and professional judgements have to be made. The Article 17 reports due out in the near future will help provide a better picture of feature status. (CCW)
  - WG would like to see a 'collect once, use often' approach with monitoring data. (WG).
2. With 67% of the area of N2K sites within private ownership, how will the LIFE Programme consult with landowners? (NFU)
  - Due to the Wales-wide and strategic nature of the work it is not possible to make a commitment to consult with every landowner on every Natura 2000 site. The

Programme can be seen as a process to identify, agree and clarify draft proposals. These may not be firmed up into action on the ground for some years and this would only be following full consultation by CCW regional staff with individual landowners in the normal way. (LIFE Natura 2000 Programme)

3. Will WG provide match funding post-programme to allow identified actions to be taken forward?
  - WG sees the EU LIFE funding programme as an important means of delivering biodiversity. However, issues in the spending review prohibit WG from giving a firm commitment to funding future work. Monies may be available through WG's Ecosystems Resilience Fund. There is a need for specificity for finance bids (i.e. what are the priorities and how much will they cost?) derived from an evidence base. (WG)
  - 'Integrated' and 'innovative' ways of working are needed. Meeting Natura 2000 targets are not optional; they are a requirement if the UK is not to face infraction proceedings from the EU. (CCW)
4. Lots of existing actions e.g. those in catchment management plans have already been identified. How can we integrate the Water Framework Directive with the Natura 2000 Programme?
  - The aim of the Programme is to build on existing information, collating data from a range of sources. We intend to integrate commitments from other agreed plans and strategies wherever possible. There are synergies and plenty of scope to work together productively. The legal requirements and timeframes need to be considered when setting priorities. (LIFE Natura 2000 Programme)

## **Garwnant**

1. Do you agree about the need to address limiting factors before implementing 'softer' management of features (e.g. control of deer in the Wye Valley Woodlands)? (Coed Cymru)
  - Yes. The need for co-operative management with local communities and enterprises should be emphasised (e.g. local restaurants serving venison as a possible part of a sustainable deer culling policy). (CCW)
2. Is the LIFE Natura 2000 project looking to cost what is required to bring all SAC/SPA features into favourable conservation status? (Wye and Usk Foundation)
  - This is one of the key aims of the programme. (LIFE Natura 2000 Programme)  
Costings have been prepared for actions on two rivers in the area and we would like to see the sharing of best practice. The issue of conflicting policy timeframes (e.g. the 2015 deadline for Good Ecological Status in the Water Framework Directive) was also highlighted. (Wye and Usk Foundation)

3. There is a need for an integrated approach. For example, will the programme be in line with SSSI conservation objectives? (Dŵr Cymru)
  - The Natura 2000 Programme will acknowledge and where possible, support, other designated features/objectives on sites but at the same time there is a need to be focused on Natura 2000 in order to deliver project outputs effectively. (LIFE Natura 2000 Programme)
  
4. A problem with Special Sites Database is that actions are inputted but not checked and agreed by the organisation responsible for them and/or the landowner, so there is the risk of them not being delivered. How will you ensure actions are agreed and implemented by the owner? Do you acknowledge that this is essential and important? (Dŵr Cymru)
  - We will aim to consult organisations responsible for actions as much as possible. Landowners are also integral to the Programme, however, the project has a finite amount of time and we are not able to engage with all individual landowners, although we hope to have close links with representatives of farmers and landowners. (LIFE Natura 2000 Programme)
  
5. The plans you are making could have implications for business plans and customers, for example, of the water companies. (Dŵr Cymru)
  - It is not the intention to cause excess costs to companies and customers. The aim of the exercise is to have a costed and prioritised set of actions which we can present to funders in a coherent way, most crucially the European Union, so that we can more effectively access funds for Natura 2000. (CCW)
  
6. There is no mechanism in place to deliver small practical steps which is well suited to the needs of landowners. There is a need for simple understandable mechanisms e.g. a landowner and conservation fund. (Coed Cymru)
  - There is a need for a funding vehicle, possibly through the Axis 2 of the Rural Development Plan. There will be lag phase between intervention and achieving favourable conservation status, and this must be factored into monitoring target setting. (WG)
  - The Programme will have a role in highlighting messages such as this (providing there is general support from stakeholders) and taking them forward with decision makers (e.g. WG). (LIFE Natura 2000 Programme)

## Results of Poster Questions

Two questions were posted on the walls of the venue and participants were invited to add written responses.

### Question 1: Themed Action Plans

#### “What themes would you like to see covered and why?”

*As part of the Programme we will be creating an Action Plan for every Natura 2000 site in Wales. In addition, we will also be producing Action Plans for cross-cutting themes. The aim of the thematic Action Plan will be to facilitate effective engagement with stakeholders (including landowners and regulatory bodies). For example, an Action Plan addressing recreational access to water would only be developed if such a sectoral basis for planning, prioritising and implementing Natura 2000 management actions is considered the most effective way forward.*

#### Responses (from both events)

- Common land (x4)
- Farming community/agriculture/owners and occupiers (x3)
- Burning/illegal fires (x2)
- Uplands and agriculture/biodiversity/water capture (x2)
- Economic and other benefits of Natura sites to communities
- Appropriate grazing
- Species connectivity between Natura sites
- Illegal off-roading
- Impacts of recreation
- Common Seas
- Third party activities/damage
- Connecting woodlands
- Diffuse pollution
- Birds – seabirds, raptors, upland, chough

#### Associated comments:

- Concern that there won't be enough coordination between different themes.
- The starting point should be looking at common issues/key pressures, which should lead to options for solutions that can be themed.

## Question 2: Strategic and Operational Questions

**“What information about Natura 2000 management do you need in your role to make strategic or operational key decisions?”**

*The Programme will draw together data from many sources. This will be held in a database which will be developed to allow it to be interrogated to provide answers to a wide range of queries. What information about Natura 2000 management, which is currently not available, do you need in your role to make key decisions and produce better results? Questions may be strategic or operational. Your responses will help us design the database, and produce information which will be genuinely useful.*

### **Responses (from both events):**

- Who will deliver the action plans/actions? (x2)
- How much management is being done *outside* of SAC/SPA boundaries to help achieve favourable conservation status? (x2)
- What actions are being done on “unclassified” unfavourable sites?
- Access to information about management that is succeeding elsewhere.
- How can we really maximise the benefits?
- What will the funding source be?
- Who are the landowners of Natura 2000 sites?
- What will the funding source be for management of adjacent land, especially large projects which future proof Natura 2000 e.g. coastal squeeze?
- Easy mechanism for sharing existing work.
- Easy access to technical information/reporting etc.
- What proportion of sites are being actively managed at any given time?
- Need to make information on management requirements available as widely as possible to ensure maximum buy in and engagement.
- Impact of specific activities.
- Results of CCW’s Review of Consents.
- Where is nitrogen deposition an issue?
- Relationship between habitat (condition) and species with reference to management requirements.
- Species condition data – favourable/unfavourable/unclassified.

## Workshops

Attendees participated in workshops in the afternoon in groups of around nine. They discussed the two subjects described below for 30 minutes each. Responses were recorded on flip chart sheets. These have been collated and summarised into the lists below. Similar points have been grouped together and the number of times they were raised was noted (e.g. x2 means that the point was recorded twice). In some cases wording has been modified to aid understanding/readability. A response may be reported here under a different question than it was originally recorded under if that is more logical.

At the end of the workshops, for each question, every group was asked to feed back one or two key points. They are noted here as \*B (Bangor session) and \*G (Garwnant session). A direct transcription of the flip chart sheets is included in Annex D.

### Workshop 1: Prioritizing for Natura 2000

*“With limited financial and other resources, it is essential that we prioritise when managing and restoring Natura 2000 sites and features, so that effort is concentrated where the need is greatest.”*

#### 1. **What are the advantages and disadvantages of prioritising?**

##### Advantages

- Most cost effective use of time and resources. Focuses effort and aids effective implementation. Helps deploy resources where they will make most difference/best use. (\*B, \*G, x9)
- Justifies action and spending. Provides structure, focus and clarity for targeting funding and other resources (can act as showroom). (\*B, \*G, x1)
- Can plan timing of action and allows us to forecast what we need in the future. (\*B, x1)
- Helps form partnerships which provide support. (\*B, x1)
- Way to focus on worst cases to show maximum change and generate best publicity. Lifeline for a site/feature that is under threat. (\*B, x1)
- Eases and focuses communication to government, EC and others. (\*B, x1)
- Helps to ensure we have delivery of favourable conservation status for all Natura 2000 sites and features. (x2)
- Easier to manage complex challenges. (\*G)
- Way of managing risk. (\*G)
- Way to focus on easy wins and demonstrate action to EC. (\*G)

## Disadvantages

- Relegates some issues/activities to low priority so they may never be delivered. Allows further deterioration of features. Some features may not be recoverable by the time we focus on them. (\*G, \*B, x7)
- There will be different opinions on priorities and possible conflicts between stakeholders/objectives. (\*B, x3)
- All Natura 2000 sites are equally important; need to meet favourable conservation status for *all* features, so prioritisation may be challenged legally. (\*B, x3)
- Prioritisation can restrict funding and other opportunities, for example, by reducing the ability to be opportunistic. (\*B, x2)
- May encourage prioritisation of 'easy-wins' so major difficulties are ignored. (\*G, \*B, x1)
- Who makes final decision? Whose voice counts? Risk that organisations with the loudest voice/most power get their interests prioritised. (x4)
- Misses out large landscape issues. (\*G, x1)
- Risk of spending too much time working out priorities, and not delivering. (\*B, x1)
- Criteria may be such that certain important sites/features/actions do not get flagged as high priority even though they are, e.g. because the criteria oversimplify or the project is small scale. (\*B, x1)
- External variables (e.g. climate change) may mean that priorities become irrelevant (\*B).
- May be difficult to get criteria right. (\*G)
- Risk of focusing resources on progress (outputs) and not the outcome.
- Prioritisation may be on political grounds rather than environmental need.
- Prioritisation criteria are not yet established.
- Prioritisation criteria may be poorly or wrongly applied.
- Nature conservation organisations have a poor track record of prioritising.
- Promotes a narrow focus and failure to look at the larger picture.
- Personal bias may come into play.
- Current status of some features is unknown, therefore they may not fit into the prioritisation criteria.
- Risk of sidelining non-European features.

## Point to note

The term 'priority' raises difficulties as it implies that some sites, features or issues are of a lesser importance. An alternative term to use would be 'urgency'. This emphasises the time element, implying that features, issues or sites with a low level of urgency would be dealt with later, but not that they are less important.

## **Question 2. How should we go about prioritising?**

What we are prioritising? – sites, features, issues, actions etc:

- Need to prioritise on actions and issues rather than/not just features. Need to focus on big drivers e.g. fisheries. (\*B, x2)
- May be more practical and preferable to prioritise sites as opposed to features. (\*G, \*B, x1)
- Prioritise on geographical area (e.g. uplands/marine).

The process of prioritising:

- Stakeholder engagement is essential. Prioritise with different organisations/partners. Look what other people are doing. (x2)
- Need a good framework (context and focus) before prioritising. (x2)
- Need a sound business case. (\*B)
- Need to define “prioritising”.
- Need to set criteria to prioritise against.
- Need a clear, transparent approach to prioritisation.
- Allow different priorities in different areas, or at different levels.

Suggested priorities:

- Features/sites in worst condition, which are declining or in unfavourable or critically deteriorated state. This gives maximum conservation and publicity gains. (\*B, x7).
- Sites/features/actions which deliver multiple objectives/wider benefits e.g. ecosystem services, socio-economic, cultural and heritage benefits, not just narrow Natura 2000 outcomes. Double badging. (\*G, \*B, x6)
- Actions with best value for money/cost effectiveness/cost benefit - most “bang for your buck”. Likelihood of success vs. importance of resource. But benefits would need to be valued/monetised and would need to define the term ‘value’. (\*B, x5)
- Features which are already prioritised elsewhere, especially internationally e.g. Habitats Directive priority features, other international classifications, S42. (\*B, x5)
- Pre-existing external factors, e.g. statutory requirements and non-negotiable deadlines e.g. Water Framework Directive, health and safety requirements. (\*G, x5)
- Easy targets/quick wins or biggest opportunities for gain, to build momentum and provide evidence of progress (but to be part of long term strategies). (\*G, x4)
- Features which are most vulnerable or most at risk e.g. of being affected by climate change. Carry out risk assessments and prioritise based on the outcome. Can use criteria like climate vulnerability index (ADAS UK). (x4)
- Group of sites/features within coherent geographical area/ecosystem/catchment area which will produce ecosystem-wide or landscape scale benefits. These make good showcase projects. (x4)

- Actions which offer benefits beyond sites, e.g. via a catchment approach. Do not ignore issues and actions outside site boundaries, e.g. upstream effects on rivers, buffers, landscape context. (\*B, x3)
- Popular features with public appeal. They will help justify public spending and give good publicity. (\*G, x2)
- Urgency. Where there is an imminent risk of deterioration or a problem could be 'nipped in the bud' (e.g. invasive species). (\*G, x2)
- Achievability/likelihood of success – what can be realistically delivered for reasonable cost. Actions which are practical and do-able. Features where we can realistically deliver favourable conservation status in a reasonable timescale. (\*G, x2)
- Where there are multiple wildlife benefits (e.g. SSSI, NNR features, S.42 features, other wildlife). (\*G, \*B)
- Key issues/threats that are common across the network, throughout Wales. (x2)
- Showcase/demonstration/flagship projects which will help to secure future support. (\*G, x1)
- Action that has already been started or has funding in place (or must be applied for in a certain timescale) and support to deliver/finalise. (x2)
- Actions which align with the ecosystem approach and other current policy drivers. (x2)
- Rarity of feature within the wider network (natural ranges of species).
- Features that we don't know enough about.
- Features which attract funding over and above LIFE funding, so we can obtain match funding and thereby guarantee action will happen.
- Features/sites/issues where few other resources are available/there are gaps in provision e.g. few volunteers.
- Prioritise by ownership, e.g. those with cooperative owners or those where the relationship needs to be developed.
- Actions which fit into existing initiatives and projects (not necessarily nature conservation ones, could be projects with socio-economic aims).
- Actions where mechanisms are already in place for delivery.
- Self sustaining actions.
- Need to ensure that all sites get resources.

### **Point to note**

Prioritisation may bring up difficult decisions. It may highlight issues that we can never realistically resolve or features that we cannot save. (\*G)

### ***How can we resolve any disagreement about priorities?***

- Engage well with stakeholders/willing partners, encourage partnerships, and establish common goals. (x6)
- Set clear, effective, robust criteria, scoring/rating system with appropriate weighting, which should be scientifically reviewed, practical to implement, not overly complex and implemented properly. (x5)
- Good communication and information explaining importance of chosen priorities. (x4)
- Compromise and common sense. (x3)
- Transparency in decision making and scoring system. (x2)
- If you prioritise issues or actions which impact on lots of organisations and sites e.g. invasive species, or those that deliver a wide variety of benefits then everyone feels that they are getting a slice of the cake and not being excluded. (x2)
- Use committees, with facilitators. (x2)
- Clear presentation e.g. maps with filters.
- Ensure priorities can be revised/updated at a later date.
- Obtain formal agreement/sign up from partners and agreement to deliver the actions first.
- Make it clear that the prioritisation refers to the 'icing on the cake' funding, it does not mean that 'day job' funding will be cut or work will decline.
- Use best practice.
- Benign dictatorship!
- External drivers over which we have little influence may guide most of our priorities.
- Integration of delivery mechanisms and partners.

### **Workshop 2: Funding of Natura 2000**

*"In order to restore Natura 2000 species and habitats into favourable condition significantly more funds will be required than are currently available."*

#### **1. Does the group agree that the problem is lack of money or are there any other factors at play?**

- Constraints connected to land tenure, lack of control on land in private ownership, land owner constraints, relationships with land owners/managers. (\*B, x6)
- Prevailing political dimension and social values (e.g. are we willing to have higher food prices?). Prevailing economic climate. Cultural change may be required before N2K can expect more support. (\*B, x5)
- Lack of necessary regulation or unwillingness to undertake enforcement; sanctions may be inadequate. (\*B, \*G, x5)

- Funding bureaucracy. Applying for funds and meeting requirements of funders is often demanding, complex, technical and time consuming, especially European funds. This can detract from delivery. (\*B, x5)
- The form of funding is inappropriate, e.g. short term funding is not sustainable for long term project or ongoing management. Often there is lack of continuity of funds and staff. Long term core funding is harder to obtain. (x5)
- Lack of match funding. (\*B, x3)
- Inadequate leadership and co-ordination. Lack of joined-up thinking and strategic planning so resources are not being used to best effect. (\*B, x2)
- Tenure constraints on commons, difficulty obtaining agreements and obtaining funds for common land (may be viewed as double funding). (\*B, x2)
- Evidence gaps. Inadequate evidence or insufficient confidence in data for a site or feature to justify action or know the best course of action. (x3)
- Sectors are not integrated and may be working against one another (policy conflict – funds are used to repair damage enabled by other public funds). (x3)
- Conflict of interests e.g. from intensive forestry or agriculture. Inadequate advocacy of Natura 2000 requirements. Inadequate engagement with other sectors. (x3)
- Reluctance to address difficult issues, e.g. should we allow fishing of species not in favourable conservation status? (\*B, x1)
- Natura 2000 sites have internal and external constraints which limit progress. (\*B, x1)
- Favourable conservation status is not always defined or easy to understand. (\*B, x1)
- Lack of understanding of importance/relevance of Natura sites to wider public. (\*B, x1)
- May not have capacity to deliver, including knowledge, expertise, experienced staff etc. (\*B, x1)
- Economic incentives and markets may not support conservation objectives. (x2)
- Institutional barriers, e.g. framework for agricultural support - CAP / RDP.
- In some cases the work may not be sustainable.
- Sometimes the site or feature does justify expensive action, e.g. the extent and condition of the feature was overestimated when designated.
- Lack of information about how much the action will cost.
- Climate change may prevent us achieving targets.
- Lack of professional fundraisers.
- Missed funding opportunities or failed funding applications.
- Perceived challenges may prevent action.
- Proper agricultural practice may not be in place.

## **2. What can we do to secure higher levels of funding for Natura 2000?**

- Better integration of Natura 2000 needs with other sectors (joined up thinking). Ensure WG departments for agriculture, fisheries and environment work together. Need to influence departments/policies within WG, other than those for which nature conservation is the primary remit. Ensure there is a stronger input into policy. (\*G, x6)
- Integrate Natura 2000 needs into other agendas and align with requirements of their associated (larger) funding schemes/budgets which will be spent anyway ('programme bending') e.g. fisheries, agriculture, water quality, flood defence. Include the health and social wellbeing agenda. Tap into funds for skills training, unemployment. Need to understand what proportion of Natura 2000 fit into what sector/category and how that influences funding. (x5)
- Incentivising through the tax breaks (e.g. no council tax for those with bats in houses) and other means. Market proofing. But make sure it works. (\*G, x4)
- Need more information on the costs of site management, including ongoing maintenance as well as restoration. Need to know how much to spend to maximise the project. Understand the cost of not managing Natura 2000. (\*G, x4)
- Invest resources in the money chasing process, for example, set up a co-ordinated, central body to facilitate funding. Forge partnerships between smaller organisations and bigger agencies with expertise in applications. Develop expertise in making applications. (\*B, x3)
- Ensure projects deliver economic and social benefits as well as wildlife benefits and highlight these e.g. ecosystem services such as flood alleviation. (\*G, x3)
- Work more closely with communities and volunteers. Need to have a community-based approach, involving stakeholders from the local community. Set up local forums for all sites. Set up Commons Councils where relevant. Communities can tap into funds not otherwise available. (x4)
- Plan better and in partnership, improve networking and avoid duplication. Pull together similar projects to improve access to funding. (x4)
- Develop innovative financial instruments/approaches. Make use of economic drivers through the private sector e.g. S.106 agreements, carbon trading, payment for carbon sinks, carbon offsets, funding from insurance firms. (x4)
- Need more evidence/analysis on the economic benefit of ecosystem services provided by Natura 2000 features. Cf. Dŵr Cymru's work on the economic value of fisheries. Develop a valuation for ecosystem services. Devise a means of collecting payment for ecosystem services. (x4)
- Tap into business sector and private sector funders. (\*B, x1)
- Bring in business/marketing consultants to build our "product" to tap new markets. Need to be much more business focused – what funding can be

generated, what can be an economic by-product of what we are doing?  
(\*G, x1)

- Social research on public attitudes and awareness is needed. (\*G, x1)
- Look more seriously at other funding pots not currently well-used. Make connections with other opportunities, including in kind potential. (\*G, x1)
- Learn from successes/failures of other projects. (\*B, x1)
- Improved education of decision makers on importance of Natura 2000. (\*G, x1)
- Demonstrate progress and achievement, use case studies. (x2)
- Improve access to match funding – more certainty about its availability. Allowing Glastir to be used for match-funding. (x2)
- Make funding application process simpler and more flexible and so it is more accessible. (x2)
- Need improved awareness of funding opportunities and better resource planning to make applications. Funding sources need to be clarified. (x2)
- Communicate with funders in the right way, may need to use an appropriate spokesperson/intermediary. (\*G)
- Use Heritage Lottery Fund more widely.
- Secure LIFE funding at Wales level e.g. for the seven SAC rivers, bats etc.
- Identify a list of products which can be delivered by Natura 2000 sites and integrate them across projects.
- Need robust exit strategies for projects on sites.
- Core needs should be funded first for stability and continuity.
- Should piggy back on existing initiatives, such as Living Landscapes initiatives. Incorporate actions.
- Foster greater sense of responsibility with landowners.
- Be practical - not too aspirational.
- Need outcome-led measures.
- Need to demonstrate benefits of Natura 2000 sites to farming, e.g. high premium food products, say from salt marshes.
- Implement the ecosystems approach.
- Work better with private owners of Natura 2000 sites. Help stimulate access to small grants. Provide better education/advice to help them help themselves, not necessarily funding-driven.
- Make sure projects are financially sustainable.
- Need unbiased “middle men” to bring in to aid negotiation in difficult situations.

