

Biodiversity Strategy of the Basque Autonomous Community

2030

and First Action Plan 2020



EUSKO JAURLARITZA



GOBIERNO VASCO

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Presentation



Ana Oregi Bastarrika

**Minister for the Environment and Territorial Policy
Basque Government**

One of the greatest challenges facing humanity is to conserve and halt the loss of biodiversity. In the Basque Country, we are aware that protecting habitats and species is currently the only guarantee to ensure the future of the planet. Biodiversity is essential as a source of food, energy, raw materials, air and water. Biodiversity is, furthermore, an important part of our cultural legacy and contributes to knowledge, health, leisure and tourism.

In the Basque Country, there are currently 55 sites in the European network of protected areas, Natura 2000. The Basque sites have a surface area of 1,500 square kilometres, which accounts for 23% of our territory and has a legal protection status. This means, for example, that 60% of the population of the Basque Country drinks quality water from Natura 2000 Network areas at a cost significantly lower than what it would cost to obtain drinking water from an artificial purification system.

Basque society is committed to the environment and has embraced the challenge to conserve and restore the natural environment. In recent decades, the Basque Country has made significant progress as regards policies to protect habitats and species, along with conserving and restoring ecosystems. However, there is still some way to go. The Basque Country is home to over 700 species of vertebrates, 1,780 invertebrates and around 7,600 plant species. Forty-six vertebrates are endangered - 21 at risk of extinction -, and 125 species of vascular flora are endangered, with 54 species at risk of extinction. Furthermore, over 75% of the habitats of interest for the Basque Country have an unfavourable conservation status.

The Basque Government has the Biodiversity Strategy of the Basque Country 2030 to address the most pressing needs of the natural environment. The Strategy has been prepared using a broad citizen participation process, in

conjunction with other ministries of the Basque Government, Provincial Councils, and with social and technical stakeholders. It has four focal points of action to halt the loss of biodiversity: protecting and restoring ecosystems; driving the Natura 2000 Network; promoting knowledge about Nature and a Nature culture; and efficiency in the management of the territory and the Natural Heritage.

Undoubtedly, this new environmental planning instrument will help the natural environment that we enjoy in the Basque Country may be a legacy for future generations in the best possible conditions.

1. Introduction



For some time now, the Basque Government, along with the rest of the public administrations, has been involved in a long and sustained effort to actively protect and manage the Basque Natural Heritage, with the work carried out in the Natura 2000 Network areas and the management of the conservation of threatened species of flora and fauna being outstanding in recent years. However, despite the progress that has been made in this environmental sector, there are still many degraded ecosystems, and there is a long journey ahead until the marine and terrestrial environments of the Basque Country achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status. In the context of this commitment it is essential to improve aspects such as inter-institutional coordination, the provision of human and financial resources, the deployment of strategic instruments or the permanent updating of technical knowledge, among others.

The Biodiversity Strategy of the Basque Autonomous Community 2030 is the instrument that establishes the priorities and commitments in terms of Natural Heritage for the year 2030. It is an initiative with a regional application but with a global vision that is aligned with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, derived from the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, the European Community Biodiversity

Strategy to 2020 and the state-level Strategic Plan for Natural Heritage and Biodiversity 2011-2017, documents that also establish a series of goals and actions to address the pressures and threats affecting biodiversity in the international arena. It is also aligned with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in 2015, Objective 15 of which is to *“Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss”*¹.

In addition, this strategy seeks to comply with the provisions of strategic Objective 1 of the IV Environmental Framework Programme of the Basque Autonomous Community 2020: *“Protecting, conserving and restoring our natural capital, by preserving the services that the ecosystems provide us with”*.

For this reason, the Basque Government set out to establish a general framework on biodiversity that would reinforce the many initiatives involving collaboration with the Provincial Councils and other relevant entities and stakeholders, giving this task to the Directorate of the Natural Environment and Environmental Planning.

¹ <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/es/biodiversity/>

a) Global, European and State-Level Environmental Context

The main milestones related to biodiversity, both at international level and in Europe, are shown in the following table:

Main international and European milestones	Description
United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity²	<p>This is the basic reference document regarding international biodiversity. It was one of the key agreements adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit) held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.</p> <p>Article 6. General Measures for Conservation and Sustainable Use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Each Contracting Party shall develop national strategies, plans or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity [...]. b) Each Contracting Party shall integrate, as far as possible and appropriate, the conservation and the sustainable use of biological diversity into relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies.
Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 - Aichi Targets³	<p>This is a framework for the establishment of national and regional objectives which promotes the coherent and effective implementation of the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity. It consists of a Vision, a Mission, Strategic Objectives and 20 Goals known as the Aichi Targets.</p> <p>The Aichi Biodiversity Target 17 requires that “By 2015, each Party has developed, adopted as a policy instrument, and has commenced implementing an effective, participatory and updated national Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan”.</p>
Sustainable Development Objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development⁴	<p>The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, approved by the world leaders in 2015, includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which came into force on 1 January 2016. The SDGs most directly related to biodiversity are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. — Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources. — Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

² <https://www.cbd.int/convention/text/>

³ <https://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/default.shtml>

⁴ <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>

(... /...)

Main international and European milestones

Description

The European Union Biodiversity Strategy to 2020⁵

This strategy is intended to guide the policies concerning nature conservation and restoration of the member states and their regions.

Vision of the EU for 2050: “Our biodiversity and the ecosystem services it provides – its Natural Capital – are protected, valued and appropriately restored for their intrinsic value and essential contribution to human well-being and economic prosperity, and so that catastrophic changes caused by the loss of biodiversity are avoided.”

Principal target of the EU for 2020: “To halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020, and restore them in so far as feasible, while stepping up the EU contribution to averting global biodiversity loss.”

* See also the Mid-term review of the EU biodiversity strategy to 2020.⁶

Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora⁷

The objective of the Directive is the protection of wild species and their habitats. It establishes an ecological network and a legal framework for the protection of wildlife.

It identifies habitats, animal and plant species of Community Interest. For these, it establishes the need for protection, demanding the adoption of measures aimed at their maintenance and restoration and the promotion of a favourable conservation status.

Council Directive 79/409/EEC of 2 April 1979 on the conservation of wild birds (repealed by art. 18 of Directive 2009/147/EC)⁸

The objective of this Directive is the conservation of all wild birds in the EU by establishing standards for their protection, management and control. It covers birds, their eggs, nests and habitats.

It proposes measures to maintain or restore populations of endangered species, to a level that corresponds to ecological, scientific and cultural requirements, taking into account economic and recreational needs. It requires measures to be taken to conserve and re-establish a sufficient diversity and area of habitats for all species of birds.

(... /...)

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/strategy/index_en.htm

⁶ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52015DC0478&from=ES>

⁷ OJEU 206 of 22 July 1992.

⁸ OJ 103 of 25 April 1979.

⁹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/?uri=URISERV%3Aev0024>

(... /...)

Main international and European milestones

Description

Natura 2000 Network¹⁰

This derives from the Habitats and Birds Directives and it is based on the creation of a coherent ecological network. It includes:

- SCI: Sites of Community Importance.
- SAC: Special Areas of Conservation.
- SPAB: Special Protection Areas for Birds.

Law 42/2007, of 13 December, on Natural Heritage and Biodiversity¹¹

This establishes the basic legal framework for the conservation, sustainable use, improvement and restoration of the Natural Heritage and biodiversity at state level, as part of the duty to conserve and with the objective of ensuring people's rights to an adequate environment for their well-being, health and development.

Royal Decree 1274/2011, of 16 September, approving the Strategic Plan for Natural Heritage and Biodiversity 2011-2017, in application of Law 42/2007, of 13 December, on Natural Heritage and Biodiversity¹²

This derives from Law 42/2007, of 13 December, on Natural Heritage and Biodiversity, and its aim is the establishment and definition of objectives, actions and criteria that promote conservation, sustainable use and the restoration of the Natural Heritage, terrestrial and marine natural resources, biodiversity and geodiversity.

¹⁰ <http://www.ingurumena.ejgv.euskadi.eus/r49-natura/es>

¹¹ BOE (Official State Gazette) 299 of 14 December 2007.

¹² BOE (Official State Gazette) 236 of 30 September 2011.

b) Basque Environmental Context

The different Basque administrations have been promoting the protection of habitats and species for more than 20 years, and as a result of this the Basque Country has seen significant progress in biodiversity policies in recent decades. In this regard, the 2014 Law of Conservation of Nature and the IV Environmental Framework Programme of the Basque Country 2020, approved the same year, are currently the cornerstone of the Natural Heritage policies in this territory.

More specifically, the general Lines of Action of this Biodiversity Strategy of the Basque Country 2030 have been set out in Strategic Objective 1 of the IV

Environmental Framework Programme of the Basque Country 2020¹³, whose lines of action are as follows:

- Effectively integrating conservation of the natural environment in sectoral policies.
- Limiting the loss of ecosystems and their services.
- Halting the occupation of land, encouraging mixed use and the regeneration and reuse of degraded areas.
- Including economic instruments in the management of the Natural Capital of the Basque Country.
- Engaging and raising the awareness among stakeholders operating in the territory regarding the importance of ecosystem services.

The IV Environmental Framework Program establishes as a Strategic Objective the halting of the deterioration of the ecosystems of the Basque Country by the year 2020; with an improvement in the status of the principal marine and terrestrial habitats and the comprehensive and systemic management, in close collaboration with the various relevant authorities, of the major problems such as the habitat fragmentation and invasive species.

In addition, the Basque Country has abundant legislation and instruments concerning the various aspects of the natural environment. Among the main instruments are:

Scope

Main regulatory and strategic instruments related to biodiversity in the Basque Country

Natural Heritage and Biodiversity

- Legislative Decree 1/2014, of 15 April, approving the consolidated text of the Law of Conservation of Nature in the Basque Country¹⁴.
- Law 3/1998, of 27 February, on the General Protection of the Environment in the Basque Country¹⁵.
- Strategy for the protection, improvement and management of biodiversity in Bizkaia (2015)¹⁶.

(... / ...)

¹³ <http://www.ingurumena.ejgv.euskadi.eus/informacion/programa-marco-ambiental-2020/r49-5832/es/>

¹⁴ BOPV (Official Gazette of the Basque Country) 130 of 29 May 2014.

¹⁵ BOPV (Official Gazette of the Basque Country) 59 of 27 March 1998.

¹⁶ [http://www.bizkaia.eus/home2/archivos/DPT09/Temas/Pdf/Patrimonio_Natural/ESTRATEGIA%20BIODIVERSIDAD/Cas_Estrategia%20Biodiversidad%20\(Para%20publicar\).pdf?idioma=CA](http://www.bizkaia.eus/home2/archivos/DPT09/Temas/Pdf/Patrimonio_Natural/ESTRATEGIA%20BIODIVERSIDAD/Cas_Estrategia%20Biodiversidad%20(Para%20publicar).pdf?idioma=CA)

(... /...)

Scope	Main regulatory and strategic instruments related to biodiversity in the Basque Country
Endangered Species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Decree 167/1996, which regulates the Basque Catalogue of Threatened Species of Wild and Marine Fauna and Flora, and its subsequent amendments. — Management Plans for Endangered Species¹⁷.
Protected Natural Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Decrees declaring the Protected Natural Spaces (SAC and SPAB) pursuant to the Birds and Habitats Directives¹⁸. — Decrees declaring the Natural Parks, Protected Biotopes and Singular Trees in the Basque Autonomous Community¹⁹. — Natural Resource Management Plans. — Decree 42/1996, of 27 February, on the organisation and operation of the Register of the Protected Natural Areas Network of the Basque Autonomous Community²⁰.
Land management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Law 4/1990, of 31 May, on Land Use Planning in the Basque Country²¹. — Decree 28/1997, of 11 February, finally approving the Land Use Planning Guidelines of the Basque Autonomous Community²², currently under revision. — Sectoral Territorial Plans (STP)²³: STP for the Management of Rivers and Streams; STP for Wetlands; STP for the Protection and Management of the Coastline; Agroforestry STP; etc. — Law 2/2006, of 30 June, on Land and Urban Planning²⁴.

(... /...)

¹⁷ http://www.ingurumena.ejgv.euskadi.eus/r49-u95/es/contenidos/plan_programa_proyecto/gestion_especies/es_doc/indice.html

¹⁸ <http://www.ingurumena.ejgv.euskadi.eus/r49-natura/es>

¹⁹ <http://www.ingurumena.ejgv.euskadi.eus/r49-u95/es/u95aWar/consultaMarcosJSP/U95aSubmitMarcoProteccion.do?pkMarco=4&tipoEntidad=0&bloqueMarco=300>

²⁰ BOPV (Official Gazette of the Basque Country) 51 of 12 March 1996.

²¹ BOPV (Official Gazette of the Basque Country) 131 of 3 July 1990.

²² http://www.ingurumena.ejgv.euskadi.eus/r49-565/es/contenidos/informacion/dots/es_1165/indice_c.html

²³ http://www.ingurumena.ejgv.euskadi.eus/r49-565/es/contenidos/informacion/pts/es_1161/pts_c.html

²⁴ <https://www.euskadi.eus/bopv2/datos/2006/07/0603776a.pdf>

(... / ...)

Scope	Main regulatory and strategic instruments related to biodiversity in the Basque Country
Primary sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Law 10/1998, of 8 April, on Rural Development²⁵. — Basque Country Rural Development Programme 2015-2020²⁶. — Basque Country Strategic Plan for Fishing and Aquaculture 2020²⁷. — Basque Forest Plan 1994-2030²⁸. — Provincial Laws for forests²⁹.
Water resources³⁰	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Hydrological Plan for the Hydrographic Demarcation of the Eastern Cantabrian Basin 2015-2021. — Hydrological Plan for the Hydrographic Demarcation of the Western Cantabrian Basin 2015-2021. — Hydrological Plan for the Hydrographic Demarcation of the Ebro Basin 2015-2021. — Law 1/2006 of 23 June on Water resources.
Geodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Geodiversity Strategy of the Basque Autonomous Community 2020³¹ which includes the “Inventory of Sites of Geological Interest (SGIs) in the Basque Country”. — Order of 18 March 2011 which publicises the international designation of the Basque Coast Geopark, and its incorporation in the European Geoparks Network and the Global Network of National Geoparks assisted by UNESCO³².
Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Basque Country Climate Change Strategy 2050. Klima 2050³³.
Environmental education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Towards a commitment to education for sustainability in the Basque Country 2005-2014³⁴ (in preparation, the Basque Country Education Strategy for Sustainability 2030). — Plan for the Interpretation, Investigation, Capacity Building and Education for sustainable development in the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve³⁵.
Sustainable Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Basque Environmental Strategy for Sustainable Development 2002-2020³⁶.

²⁵ <https://www.euskadi.eus/bopv2/datos/1998/05/9801778a.pdf>

²⁶ <http://www.nasdap.ejgv.euskadi.eus/informacion/pdr-2015-2020-euskadi/r50-pdr2020/es/>

²⁷ http://www.nasdap.ejgv.euskadi.eus/plan_programa_proyecto/plan-estrategico-de-pesca-y-acuicultura-de-la-comunidad-autonoma-del-pais-vasco-2020/r50-3812/es/

²⁸ http://www.nasdap.ejgv.euskadi.eus/r50-7393/es/contenidos/plan_programa_proyecto/plan_forestal/es_9394/plan_forestal.html

²⁹ http://www.araba.eus/cs/Satellite?c=Page&cid=1193045560308&pagename=DiputacionAlava%2FPPage%2FDPA_contenidoFinal
http://www.bizkaia.eus/home2/Temas/DetalleTema.asp?Tem_Codigo=436&idioma=CA&dpto_biz=2&codpath_biz=2%7C436
<http://www4.gipuzkoa.net/ogasuna/normativa/docs/0000785c.pdf>

³⁰ <http://www.uragentzia.euskadi.eus/ambitos-de-planificacion-hidrologica-capv/u81-000331/es/>

³¹ http://www.ingurumena.ejgv.euskadi.eus/contenidos/plan_programa_proyecto/geodibertsitatearen_estrategia/es_def/adjuntos/geodivers_2020.pdf

³² BBOPV (Official Gazette of the Basque Country) 67 of 6 April 2011.

³³ http://www.euskadi.eus/contenidos/plan_programa_proyecto/klima2050/es_def/adjuntos/KLIMA2050_es.pdf

³⁴ http://www.hezkuntza.ejgv.euskadi.eus/contenidos/informacion/dig_publicaciones_innovacion/es_edu_ambi/adjuntos/800005c_compromiso_educacion_sostenibilidad_c.pdf

³⁵ http://www.ingurumena.ejgv.euskadi.eus/plan_programa_proyecto/plan-para-la-interpretacion-investigacion-capacitacion-y-educacion-para-el-desarrollo-sostenible-en-la-reserva-de-la-biosfera-de-urdaibai/r49-6172/es/

³⁶ http://www.euskadi.eus/contenidos/plan_programa_proyecto/eavds_pma/es_9688/adjuntos/pma0206.pdf

c) Diagnostic Analysis

Below is a summary of the Diagnostic Analysis of the Natural Heritage carried out for the development of the Biodiversity Strategy of the Basque Autonomous Community 2030. Since this Diagnostic Analysis is the result of an analysis of documents related to a wide range of disciplines, the information is presented here in the most synoptic manner

possible (see the complete document for more information in Annex I). The summary is structured around nine points which are the 9 *Key Ideas* which were presented at the Social Forum on Biodiversity held on 10 February 2016 and which contain the most relevant aspects of the Diagnostic Analysis. These are as follows:

1. More than 75% of the habitats of interest to the Basque Country have an unfavourable conservation status because of their decline, fragmentation or deterioration

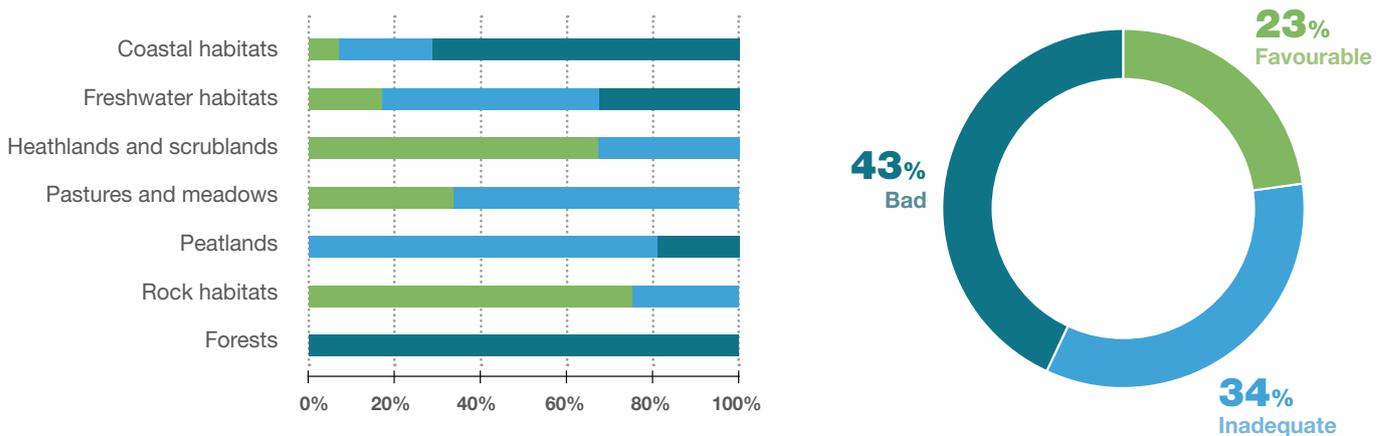
The information on the habitats of interest to the Basque Country have been established based on the Habitats of Community Interest and the Key Elements referred to in the documents defining the objectives and measures for the Natura 2000 areas.

The conservation statuses of the Habitats of Community Interest in the European Union are similar to those

seen for these habitats in the Basque Country (77% unfavourable), although the mid-term review of the European Union Biodiversity Strategy to 2020³⁷ shows that the number of habitats with a favourable conservation status has increased slightly since 2010.

In Europe, the grasslands and wetlands are the habitats with the worst conservation status.

General conservation status of the Habitats of Interest for the Basque Autonomous Community*



* Report on the main results of the surveillance under article 17 for the types of habitats in Annex I (Annex D).

³⁷ <http://www.euskadi.eus/gobierno-vasco/-/noticia/2015/revision-intermedia-de-la-estrategia-europea-de-biodiversidad-a-2020/>

Meanwhile, in the Basque Country, wetlands and peatlands are poorly conserved environments, although the coastal and forest areas present a worse state of conservation. An issue of relevance to the latter two environments, which are relatively well represented in the Basque Country, is that the reason for their poor condition is their fragmentation, poor structural and functional complexity, and in

some cases also their lack of surface area with respect to their potential. This is due mainly to the intensity of use to which they were subjected in previous decades. A significant and progressive improvement in their condition began some time ago. Among the threats or challenges they face, the effects of climate change could become relevant.

2. There is insufficient information on the conservation status of the species

In general, in the Basque Country, there is little information regarding the conservation status and trends of species because, unlike habitats, this status has not been assessed. Only the species that were assigned to the Basque Country by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment (European mink, Pyrenean desman and otter) were evaluated. This lack of information is particularly

marked in fungi, lichens, non-vascular flora and invertebrates. However, it can be said that, according to the mid-term review of the European Union Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, the number of species with a favourable conservation status has increased slightly since 2010. Nevertheless, many species with an unfavourable status continue in the same condition and for some this has even deteriorated.

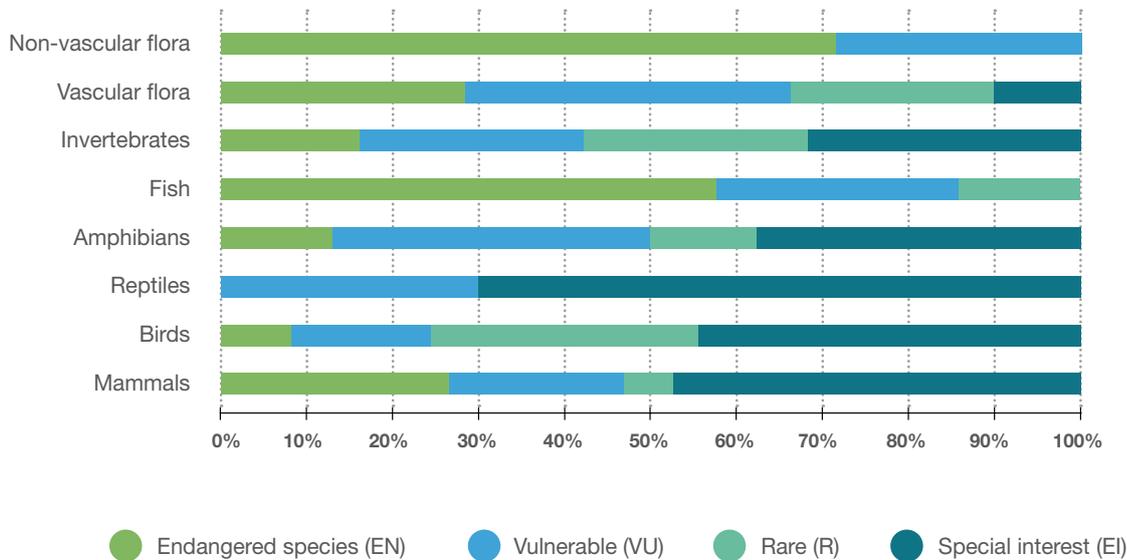
3. In the Basque Catalogue of Threatened Species there are 202 species listed in the two categories of greatest threat (87 “endangered” and 115 in the “vulnerable” category), representing 2% of those inventoried

According to the Basque Catalogue, 4% of the species recorded in the Basque Country are threatened: 87 are in the category of “Endangered”, 115 in the “Vulnerable” category, 88 “Rare” and 93 “Of Special Interest”. There are also 21 approved Management Plans for species of interest to the Basque Country, and of these 19 are concerned with taxa listed in the Basque Catalogue of Endangered Species. Although it is not included in this catalogue, there is also a Management Plan for the eel in Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa and another for the wolf in Araba/Álava.

Furthermore, there are proposals to include a number of species not yet covered by the Basque Catalogue of Endangered Species. However, neither this catalogue nor the Red Lists include fungi and lichens, and therefore the degree of threat for this group is unknown.

In addition to the Management Plans, other conservation activities are being implemented through LIFE programmes, germoplasm banks, wildlife rehabilitation centres, captive breeding programmes, repopulation, carrion bird feeders, etc.

% of species in the Basque Catalogue of Endangered Species by category and group



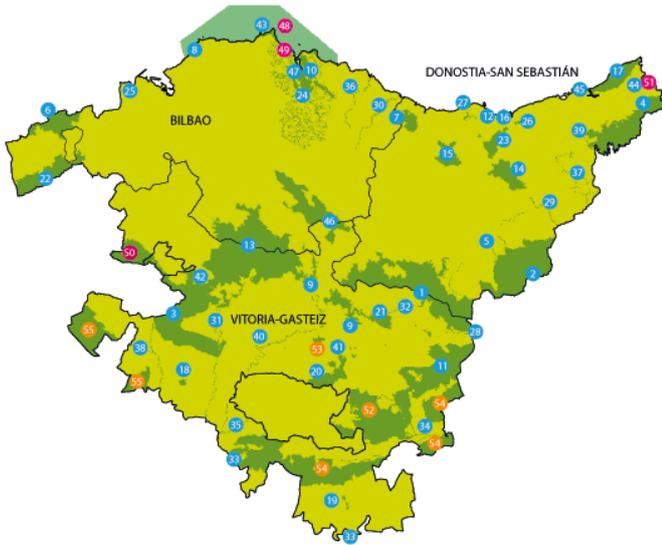
4. In the Basque Country, 23% of the surface has been declared as protected area. The Natura 2000 Network includes 20.5% of the territory

The European Natura 2000 Network is the cornerstone of European biodiversity policy. This network has been largely completed for land and river habitats in Europe, covering approximately 18% of the land area. In the Basque Country, the network of protected areas comprises 96 different locations: Natura 2000 Network, Natural Parks, Protected Biotopes and Singular trees and the SPAB/Mundaka estuary-Cape Ogoño marine area, managed at state level. Given that some terrestrial protected areas are also covered by different protection frameworks, about 23% of the surface area of the Basque Country is protected, of which 177,073 ha are areas belonging to the Natura 2000 Network. All of these areas are associated with a series of regulations and obligatory measures.

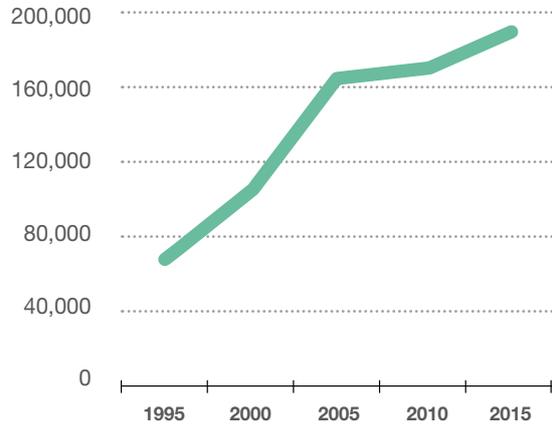
The declaration of protected areas has shown an increase in recent decades, in line also with the adoption of the mainly European legislation in this regard. It might be thought that these declarations are reaching their limit, but there may be further expansion in the future.

In any event, according to the mid-term review of the European Biodiversity Strategy, the global conservation status of habitats and species is linked to the degree of coverage or representation within the Natura 2000 Network; and in the case of habitats and species with an unfavourable status, there is no doubt that the trend in their conservation status is very closely linked to the degree of coverage by the Natura 2000 Network, given that the higher their coverage within the Network, the more positive the trend, becoming “stable” in the cases of greatest coverage and “worsening” where coverage is lower.

Network of Protected Areas in the Basque Autonomous Community



Evolution of the surface area declared as protected areas



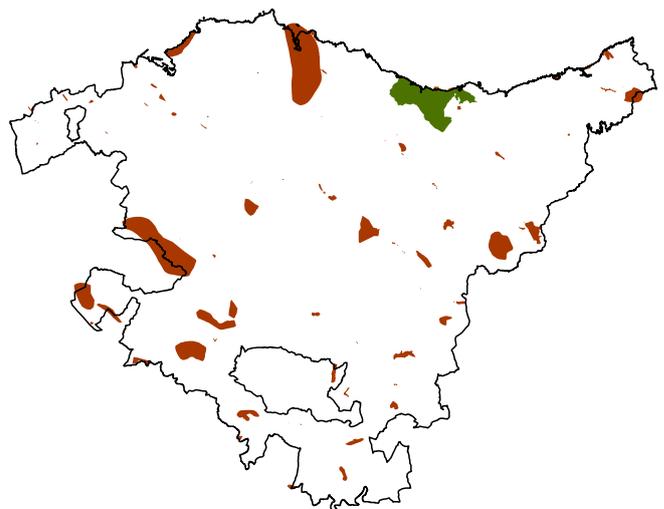
Milestones: Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve Protection and Use Act (1989). Habitats Directive (1992 and subsequent amendments). Nature Conservation Act of the Basque Country (1994 and subsequent amendments).

5. Geodiversity is taking position within the management of Natural Heritage

The Geodiversity Strategy of the Basque Country 2020 states that *geodiversity is a common good and indisputably forms part of the natural wealth of a territory given that it represents the foundation of biodiversity and conditions the development of biotic elements that have so far been the main objective of management and conservation by the public administrations.*

The Basque Country is an innovative example of protection and management in this area, treating it as a fundamental part of our Natural Heritage. In this regard, the Geodiversity Strategy of the Basque Country 2020 was approved in June 2014 and has been followed by the compilation of an inventory of Sites of Geological Interest that illustrate the importance of geodiversity in our territory. Although there are some exceptions, in general they are not

Sites of Geological Interest (SGIs) and Basque Coast Geopark



- Basque Coast Geo-park
- Sites of Geological Interest (SGI)

150 sites / 5% of the surface area of the Basque Country

regarded as valuable elements to be protected within the natural areas of the Basque Country. Meanwhile, the Basque Coast Geopark has gained widespread recognition, following the formalising by UNESCO of

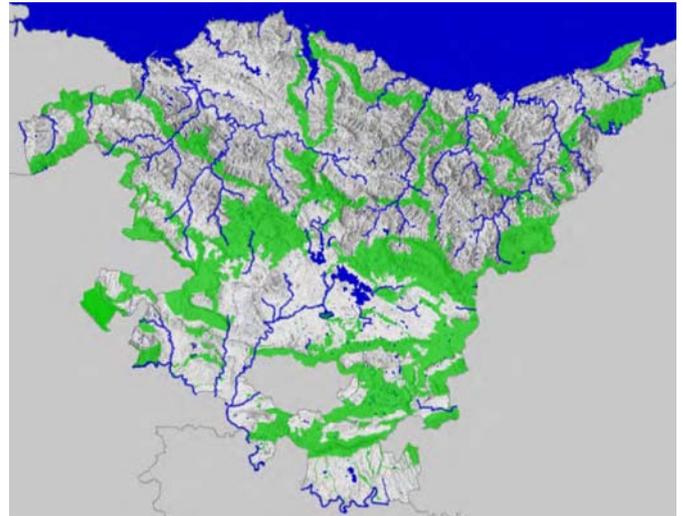
the Global Geoparks Network initiative as the Global Geoparks Programme in November 2015³⁸, which supposes a similar treatment to that of Biosphere Reserves or World Heritage sites.

6. The Land Use Planning Guidelines involve a territorial model that incorporates green infrastructure as an element and concept that provides a wide range of ecosystem services

The biodiversity policy of the European Union also promotes an approach based on ecosystem services. In this regard, the Biodiversity Strategy of the European Union includes among its objectives the creation of a green infrastructure to maintain and enhance ecosystems, promoting the connectivity of the territory and the services that these provide. Although there has been considerable progress in this regard, the Member States are required to develop and implement national and regional frameworks to promote restoration and green infrastructure.

The Basque Country has assumed responsibility for the creation of a Green Infrastructure for its territory that will allow the maintenance and improvement of the ecosystems, promoting the connectivity of the territory and the services that these provide. In order to do so, this concept is being incorporated in the new territorial model through the Land Use Planning Guidelines. The Land Use Planning Guidelines treat the focus on ecosystem services as an opportunity to incorporate issues (involving support and supply,

Green Infrastructure proposal in the Revision of the Land Planning Guidelines of the Basque Country



regulative and cultural services) in the decision-making process that up to now have received little sectoral consideration.

³⁸ <http://www.unesco.org/new/es/office-in-montevideo/ciencias-naturales/earth-sciences/geoparques/>

7. The primary sector plays a key role in preserving the natural environment and the traditional landscape of the Basque Country, preserving rural communities and maintaining the genetic richness of species and varieties

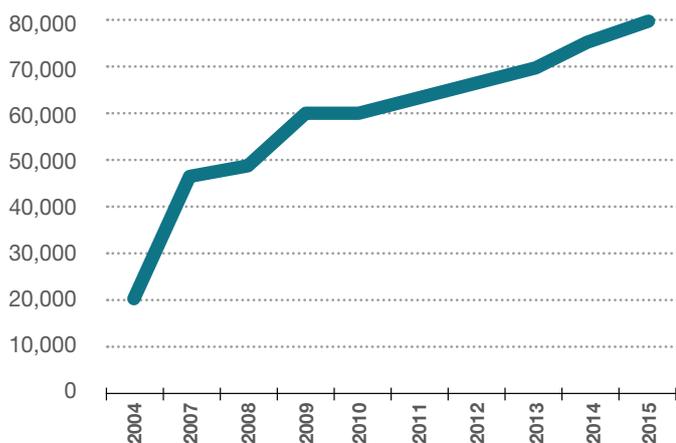
In the Basque Country, much of the surface area (81%) involves the agroforestry sector, so this has an important influence on the management of Natural Heritage. A significant proportion of the habitats and species of interest in the Basque territory is dependent on agriculture and forestry for its maintenance and conservation. The type of ecosystem most represented in the Natura 2000 Network is the montane type, where the dominant land uses are forestry and agriculture, especially pasture and scrubland areas that are used by cattle in an extensive-type regime. There is also a significant variety of animals and plants linked to agro-pastoral production. For centuries, the traditional forestry and farming methods have contributed to the biodiversity of the Basque Country, particularly in upland agricultural areas. Therefore, the conservation of biodiversity associated with rural areas cannot be addressed

without taking into account the socio-economic aspects and policies aimed at preserving and strengthening the values and processes that form the basis of these ecosystems.

Furthermore, there is a significant increase in the area devoted to organic production and integrated production. The surface area in which agri-environmental measures have been adopted has shown a slightly upward trend. There has also been a significant increase in forest area, this being the first Autonomous Community to develop a sustainable forest certification system at the regional level.

The Basque Country has taken an active role in promoting plans and policies in order to create a sector that is more respectful of the environment and to ensure sustainable development, in addition to protecting and promoting the Natural Heritage legacy.

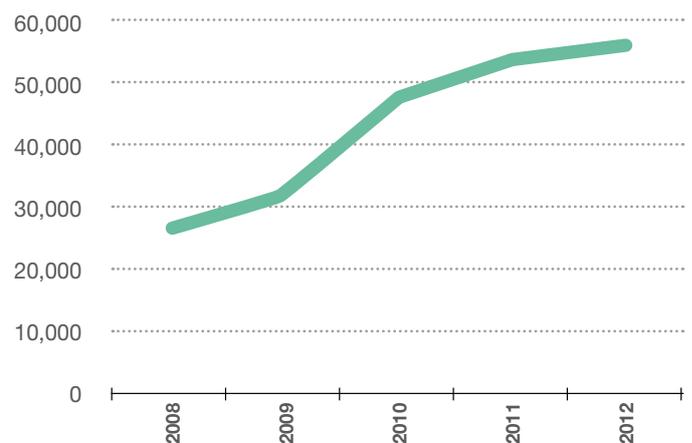
Evolution of the surface area under sustainable forestry management*



This currently represents 16% of the forest area of the Basque Country

* Surface area (ha) under the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) systems. Basalde, 2015.

Evolution of the surface area under agri-environmental measures*



This currently represents 30% of the agricultural area of the Basque Country

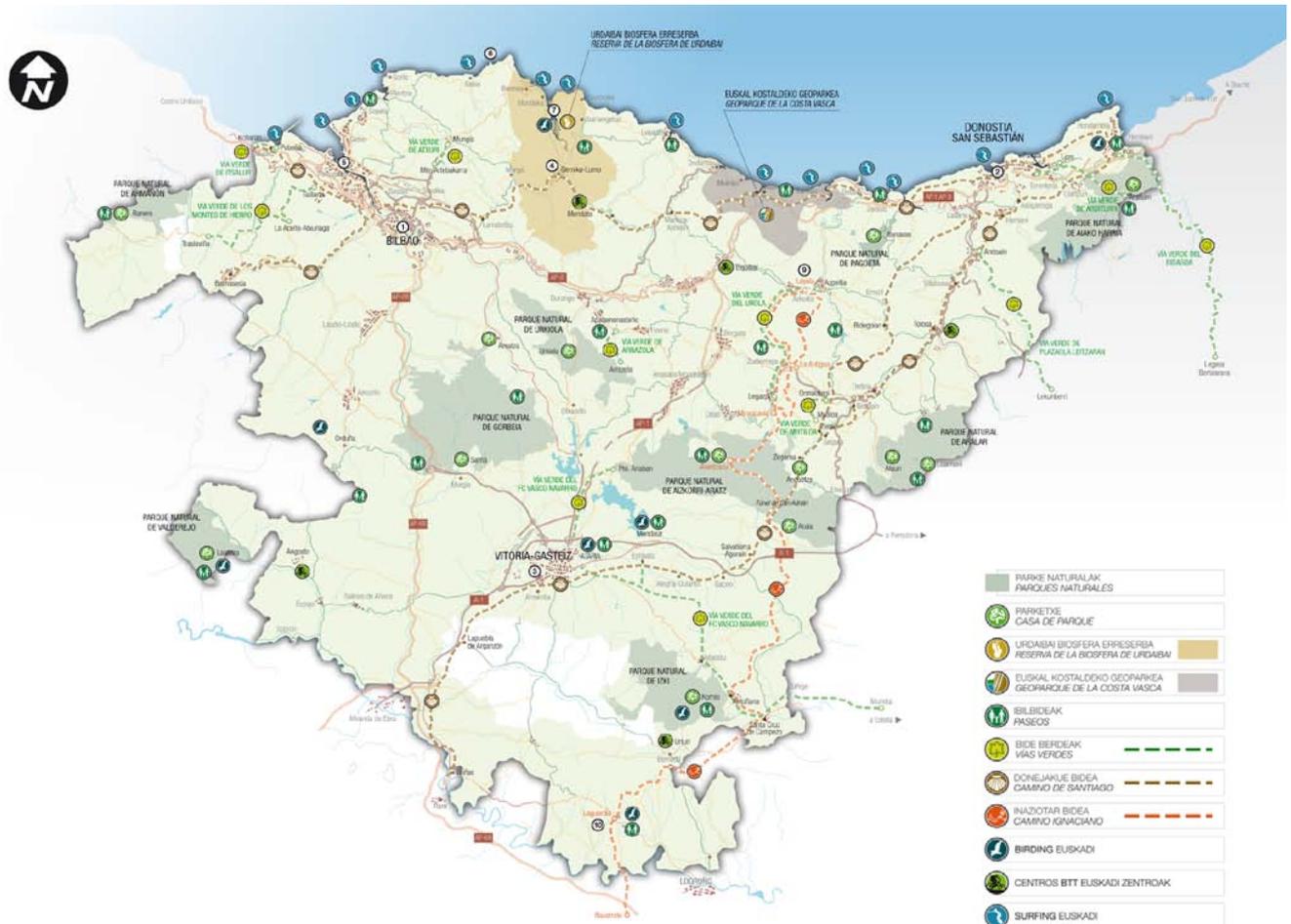
* Surface (ha) according to the monitoring of the Basque Country Rural Development Programme 2007-2014.

8. The richness and diversity of landscapes in the Basque Country offers a wide range of tourist resources linked to Nature

In addition to the actual environmental services (such as climate regulation, flood alleviation, etc.), the Natural Heritage of the Basque Country supports a wide range of economic and recreational activities, including tourism (visits to protected areas and places of geotouristic interest, bird and whale watching, etc.). Work to consolidate sustainable tourism has been ongoing in this sector for a number of years.

The landscape of the Basque Country, especially in the rural and protected areas, provides diverse socio-economic benefits from the point of view of recreation and tourism. Communicating these benefits to society allows the population to become more involved in supporting the conservation efforts. Sustainable tourism operations contribute either directly or indirectly to the conservation of biological and geological diversity thus favouring their survival and competitiveness³⁹.

Tourism resources linked to the Natural Heritage



³⁹ http://www.industria.ejgv.euskadi.eus/contenidos/informacion/planes_programas_2010/es_planes/adjuntos/plan-estrategico-turismo-vasco-2020.pdf

9. The main pressures that are causing the loss and/or degradation of Natural Heritage and ecosystem services both in Europe and in the Basque Country are the urbanisation of the land, some inadequate agri-forestry and fisheries practices, changing natural conditions, pollution, climate change and Invasive Alien Species

Most of the surface area of the Basque Country is non-developable land, open spaces and watercourses. Although in the Basque Country only 6.76% of the total area corresponds to infrastructure and urban areas, its settlement or the construction carried out has led to the considerable fragmentation of the territory. However, important steps are being taken in the field of land use planning, with the appropriate planning and design of green infrastructure to help mitigate the impacts and effects of the urbanization of the land and habitat fragmentation.

With regard to agriculture, the disappearance of the grazing systems and insufficient grazing, agri-forestry intensification with the change to farming methods, some excessive use of fertilisation and pesticides represent more frequent pressures and threats.

The modification of the natural conditions is mainly due to human activity, which among other things has introduced changes in the conditions of water bodies and reduced connectivity between different habitats.

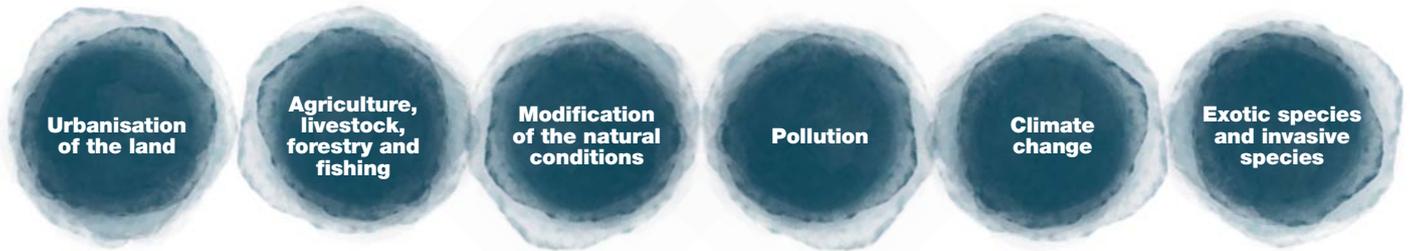
Pollution is a pressure that now has a secondary importance, given the improvements that have been achieved in all areas:

- Air quality continues to improve and the emission of air pollutants is declining.
- The Ecological status of water bodies shows a positive development, although the Ecological status is worse than the Physical-chemical status (in 2014, 52% of the bodies have a good status).
- The number and total surface area of areas of contaminated soil that have been investigated and recovered is constantly rising.

The Basque Country has a Climate Change Strategy which sets priorities for mitigation and adaptation until 2050. The energy, transport and industrial sectors are the major emitters of pollutants. Agriculture, meanwhile, plays a dual role in relation to climate change: as a source of emissions (4% of annual GHG emissions and descending) and also as an activity that generates carbon sinks.

The Basque administrations are also devoting significant efforts to the issue of Invasive Alien Species, following the guidelines for action proposed in Objective 5 of the European Biodiversity Strategy. However, no management framework currently exists in the Basque Country for the invasive alien species.

Pressures on the Natural Heritage



Effects on the Natural Heritage

Decrease/extinction of populations in vulnerable habitats

Isolation of species

Disorientation of the fauna

Phenological and life cycle changes

Modification to the fertility of the environment and organisms

Alteration of the biogeochemical cycles

Decrease in the carbon sink potential

Redistribution and migration of species

Changes in structure (dominance/composition of communities)

Bioaccumulation of toxic substances

Decline and/or extinction of native species

Displacement of species by the competition

Damage and destruction of habitats

Etc.

d) Summary of Biodiversity Management in the Basque Country

As indicated, the Basque Government, along with the rest of the public administrations, has carried out a long and sustained effort to actively protect and

manage the biodiversity of the Basque Country, and the most important achievements in recent decades have been as follows:

Date	Principal milestones in relation to the conservation of Natural Heritage in the Basque Country
1984	— Designation of the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve.
1987	— Water Control and Monitoring Network of the Basque Country.
1989	— Declaration of the first Natural Park of the Basque Country, the Urkiola Natural Park.
1990	— Law 4/1990, of 31 May, on Land Use Planning in the Basque Country.
1992	— Beginning of the promotion of the Local Agenda 21 initiatives in the Basque Country.
1993	— 1 st Basque Rural Strategic Plan (1993-1996).
1994	— Law 16/1994, of 30 June, on Nature Conservation in the Basque Country.
1996	— Decree 167/1996, of 9 July, which regulates the Basque Catalogue of Endangered Species of Wild and Marine Flora and Fauna.
1997	— Land Use Planning Guidelines of the Basque Country. — Agreement of the Government Council for the selection of areas for the Natura 2000 Network.
1998	— General Law on the Protection of the Environment in the Basque Country. — Law on Rural Development.
2002	— Udalsarea 21 Network. — Basque Environmental Strategy for Sustainable Development 2002-2020.
2004	— Approval by the European Commission of the SCI for the Atlantic biogeographical region.
2006	— Approval by the European Commission of the SCI for the Mediterranean biogeographical region. — Creation of the URA (Basque Water Agency).
2010	— Creation of the Pyrenees Climate Change Observatory within the framework of the Working Community of the Pyrenees.
2011	— Implementation of the Quality Strategy for the Protected Natural Areas Network of the Basque Country.
2012	— Completion of the designation of 25 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and 2 Special Protection Areas for Birds (SPABs).
2014	— IV Environmental Framework Programme 2020. — 1 st Geodiversity Strategy of the Basque Country 2020.
2015	— Basque Country Rural Development Programme 2015-2020. — Basque Climate Change Strategy 2050.
2016	— The designation of the 55 areas that make up the Natura 2000 Network in the Basque Country is completed: 47 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), 4 Special Protection Areas for Birds (SPABs) and 4 SAC-SPAB areas. — The Basque Country exceeds the European average in percentage of surface area protected in Natura 2000 areas. The consolidation of a network of protected areas has been one of the most outstanding achievements in the active management of the Natural Heritage of the Basque Country.

The main existing instruments for managing biodiversity in the Basque Country, which have served as tools to achieve the above milestones, are as follows:

Principal Natural Heritage management instruments in the Basque Country

- **Natural Resource Management Plan:** specific tool for the protection of natural resources which includes the determination of the general and specific limitations that must be established regarding uses and activities, depending on the conservation status of the elements that make up these areas.
- **Uses and Management Master Plan:** organises the activities to be carried out in Natural Parks, based on the provisions of Article 27 of Legislative Decree 1/2014, of 15 April, approving the revised text of the Law on Nature Conservation in the Basque Country. It therefore includes, among others, standards, guidelines and criteria for the management of Natural Parks, as well as the regulatory framework for the management of the economic and recreational activities that take place in it.
- **Instruments for the declaration and management of the SACs and SPABs:** these are documents setting out objectives and measures for the Natura 2000 areas (SACs and SPABs) based on the provisions of the Habitats Directive. They include regulations, management measures and guidelines to achieve or maintain the favourable conservation status of the habitats, species and ecological processes present in these areas.

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- **Sectoral Territorial Plans (STP) most directly related to the Natural Heritage:** Agro-forestry STP, STP for Wetlands, STP for the Management of the Banks of Rivers and Streams and, STP for Coastal Protection and Management.

-
- **Management Plans for Endangered Species:** derived from the Basque Catalogue of Endangered Species which may include captive breeding and repopulation programmes, in-situ and ex-situ conservation, carrion bird feeders, tracking and monitoring, etc.⁴⁰

-
- **Wildlife rehabilitation centres managed by Provincial Councils:** Mártioda, Arrano Etxea, Arizmendi and Górliz.

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- **Germoplasm banks, nurseries, botanical gardens:**
 - Gipuzkoa Plant Germplasm Bank: Fraisoro Agri-environmental Laboratory, Iturraran Botanical Garden, Arizmendi Nurseries.
 - Environmental Studies Centre (CEA-Gasteiz) Plant Germplasm Bank.
 - Neiker-Tecnalia Plant Germplasm Bank.

(... /...)

• **European programmes:**

LIFE: European Union financial instrument dedicated exclusively to the environment. Its principal objective is to contribute to sustainable development and the achievement of the objectives and goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the relevant European Union strategies and plans regarding the environment and climate, with nature and biodiversity being one of its priority areas⁴¹.

For example, LIFE+ Pro-Izki, LIFE for the Restoration of habitats of Community interest in estuaries in the Basque Country, LIFE Lutreola, LIFE Tremeal, etc.

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF): aims to strengthen socio-economic cohesion within the European Union by correcting imbalances between its regions and focuses its investments in several key priority areas, such as research, innovation, environmental protection and risk prevention.

For example, INTERREG IVC-REVERSE, POCTEFA-TXINBADIA, POCTEFA-OPCC, POCTEFA-BIDUR, POCTEFA-GURATRANS, etc.

Common Agricultural Policy (CAP): is a policy that is common to all member states of the European Union, whose objectives include improving agricultural productivity, ensuring food security, the sustainable management of natural resources and conservation of the landscape, and keeping the rural economy alive. Outstanding within the CAP is the payment for practices that are beneficial to the climate and the environment (green component or *greening*), which allows the granting of an annual payment per unit of eligible land area, linked to the right to a basic payment, provided that certain agricultural practices beneficial to the climate and the environment are respected.

- **European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF):** a fund which, under a shared management regime, finances expenditure incurred in accordance with Community law in relation to direct payments to farms, interventions in the markets of agricultural products, export refunds and measures for the promotion of agricultural products in the internal market and foreign markets.
- **European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD):** financial contribution of the European Community to support Rural Development Programmes.

Basque Country Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2015-2020: instrument of the Basque institutions for the promotion and support of policies to be carried out in the Basque countryside, priority 4 of which is to restore, preserve and improve the ecosystems related to agriculture and silviculture. For this purpose, the intention is to:

- Restore, preserve and improve the biodiversity (both in the Natura 2000 areas and in the areas with natural or other specific constraints), agricultural systems of high natural value, and also the status of European landscapes.
- Improve water management, including the management of fertilisers and pesticides.
- Prevent soil erosion and improve soil management.

(... /...)

⁴¹ <http://www.magrama.gob.es/es/ministerio/servicios/ayudas-subvenciones/programa-life/>

(... /...)

- **Environmental subsidies:**

- To private entities that carry out projects for the generation of knowledge regarding the conservation of Natural Heritage.
 - For town and city councils, local authority associations, other local organisations, local autonomous bodies, local development agencies and local commercial companies to take action that promotes sustainable development.
 - To finance activities involving the active conservation of the Natural Heritage included in land stewardship agreements.
 - To non-profit associations for environmental volunteering activities.
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- **Land stewardship agreements:** voluntary agreements between the owners or users of the land, or the holders of the usage rights of natural resources, and the stewardship organisations responsible for the conservation of the Natural Heritage.
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- **Interpretation and environmental education centres:**

- Environmental Education Centres under the Department for the Environment and Territorial Policy (Ekoetxeak):
 - Ekoetxea Azpeitia - Ingurugiro Etxea Museum.
 - Ekoetxea Meatzaldea - Peñas Negras Centre, Ortuella.
 - Ekoetxea Txingudi - Irún.
 - Ekoetxea Urdaibai - Madariaga Tower, Busturia.
 - Parketxeak, centres of education and knowledge of the natural environment of the Natural Parks managed by Provincial Councils.
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- **Communication tools:** the Basque Country Nature Information System⁴² is the tool for the integration, consultation and analysis of information, allowing data reuse and the collaboration of individuals and entities.
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⁴² <http://www.ingurumena.ejgv.euskadi.eus/informacion/sistema-de-informacion-de-la-naturaleza-de-euskadi/r49-u95/es/>

e) Perception of Biodiversity in the basque society

The importance of this Strategy is also demonstrated by the concern of the citizens: according to the Environment and Energy study (2013) by the Sociological Survey Office of the Basque Government, 72% of the population regards the protection of the environment and the fight against pollution as immediate and pressing issues. Additionally, the results of the 2011 Social Ecobarometer revealed that about six out of ten inhabitants of the Basque Country perceive that environmental factors significantly impact on their quality of life.

With respect to the area addressed by this Strategy, the loss of biodiversity and the depletion of natural resources are issues that generate a “medium” level of concern among citizens and about which the population also expresses a “medium” lack of information compared to other issues such as climate change, disasters (either natural or man-made) or water pollution. About

80% of the population believes that politicians should grant environmental policies the same importance as economic and social policies.

According to the 2011 Social Ecobarometer of the Basque Country, three out of four people have heard of the “Biodiversity” concept, although only 29% of the population claim to know what it means. Basque citizens associate the loss of biodiversity with habitat degradation and a reduced variety of species (35%), with the disappearance of certain species of animals and plants (29%) and with the danger of extinction (14%) of these species. For 30% of the population the greatest threats to biodiversity are the disasters caused by humans (oil spills, industrial accidents, etc.), while for 28% it is intensive agriculture, deforestation and overfishing, and for 15% the pollution of air and water.

Finally, it is worth noting that only 10% of Basque citizens have heard of the main instrument for nature conservation in Europe, the Natura 2000 Network.

f) Participation process for the development of the strategy

In parallel to the development of the Diagnostic Analysis of the Natural Heritage of the Basque Country, an important public participation process has been carried out, through which results have been obtained that reflect the views and concerns of the participating individuals and social and technical agents. These stakeholders, all relevant to the matter, covered many different areas and sectors, and conveyed their particular perceptions. This process has also involved the cooperation of different departments of the Basque Government and the Provincial Councils,

the municipalities and society in general through the meetings, interviews and forums that have been organised. In the case of the Provincial Councils, given the particular importance of their powers regarding the natural heritage, there has been a special emphasis in keeping them in the loop and involving them throughout the preparation of the Strategy. That did not only mean the specific invitation to take part in the different actions designed, but they were also involved in defining the thematic areas and the scope of the Diagnosis, drafting the Goals and the Lines of Action

that make up the 2030 Strategy and the Actions included in the 2020 Action Plan.

Annex III of the Strategy contains the full report of the participatory process, the most relevant data in which includes:

- 102 people participated in the process, of which 50% were women.
- The total number of hours employed during the participatory process was more than 600 hours.
- Around 300 proposals have been collected.

The principal objectives of this participatory process were as follows:

- Delimiting the scope and extent of the Biodiversity Strategy, setting priorities and ensuring coherence with other strategic plans.
- Working with other public administrations in building a common framework for action, defining shared commitments and responsibilities.
- Reporting on this new Strategy and gathering the largest possible number of opinions, proposals, contributions and suggestions from all the participating individuals and agents.

In order to achieve a high degree of involvement of people and agents in the discussion and development of the Strategy, the participation process has involved a division into five different types of action. Below is a summary of this participatory process:

Workshop with Udalsarea21 Network

During the 48th meeting of the Technical Committee of Udalsarea21 on 2 December 2015, the workshop entitled *Defining and confirming the foundations of the Biodiversity Strategy of the Basque Country 2030 from the local perspective* was held. This phase of the participatory process sought to incorporate local knowledge and perspectives in the process. The specific objectives of the workshop were:

- To find out about the main lines of action implemented by participating municipalities/supramunicipal districts in the area of biodiversity in recent years.
- To assess the work carried out, identifying successes and challenges or outstanding issues.
- To encourage municipal collaboration in the development of the Strategy based on the completion of a detailed questionnaire.

The day therefore consisted of going through the following together with the group: first, sharing the main lines of work that the 12 municipalities and district bodies carry out in this area, followed by an assessment of the work done, identifying successes and challenges or outstanding issues that the future Biodiversity Strategy of the Basque Country 2030 should resolve. This was followed by the receipt of 7 questionnaires detailing additional aspects complementing those dealt with during the day.

Interviews with Key Agents

Nine customised interviews have been carried out with key agents from different public institutions, selected for their global and transversal vision of the areas that biodiversity includes. These people belong to:

- Directorate of Territorial Planning and Town Planning of the Department for the Environment and Territorial Policy of the Basque Government.
- Directorate of Environment and Town Planning of the Provincial Council of Araba/Álava.
- Directorate General of Forestry and Natural Environment and Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development of the Provincial Council of Gipuzkoa.
- URA, the Basque Water Agency, attached to the Department for the Environment and Territorial Policy of the Basque Government.
- UNESCO Chair in Sustainable Development and Environmental Education, University of the Basque Country/Euskal Herriko Unibersitatea.
- Ihobe, the Public Society of Environmental Management attached to the Department for the Environment and Territorial Policy of the Basque Government.
- HAZI Foundation, a merger of the companies Itsasmendikoi, IKT and Fundación Kalitate, attached to the Department of Economic Development and Competitiveness of the Basque Government.

- AZTI-Tecnalia Foundation, the Basque Country Technology Centre specialised in Marine and Food Research.
- Board of trustees of the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve, a collegiate body composed of representatives of the various administrations responsible for Urdaibai and organisations and associations representing economic, social, and environmental interests.

The aim of this participation initiative was to collect and assimilate the opinions of these individuals, selected by virtue of their experience and/or the position that they hold, seeking to define/consolidate the basic strategic aspects that should shape the Biodiversity Strategy of the Basque Country 2030.

Questionnaires for technical staff

This activity involved the completing of an *online* questionnaire of 10 questions sent to technical personnel considered key figures because of their involvement in some of the areas that this strategy addresses. More specifically, it was sent to 37 agents belonging to the three Provincial Councils, Coastal Demarcation Offices, Hydrographic Confederations and the University of the Basque Country/Euskal Herriko Unibersitatea.

The aim of this consultation was to consolidate some aspects of the Diagnostic Analysis and lay the foundations for what should be the priority lines of action within the Strategy.

Celebration of the first Social Forum on Biodiversity

The Social Forum on Biodiversity, held on 10 February 2016, represents the most important milestone in terms of the process of public participation in the development of the Biodiversity Strategy. This working meeting, open to the general public and involving multidisciplinary participation, gathered together the main public institutions and organisations involved in the environmental sector in the Basque Country.

The technical objectives of the participatory forum were:

- To analyse the vision or the future scenario to which the Biodiversity Strategy of the Basque Country 2030 should aspire: its key elements.

- To define the guidelines and lines of work that should shape the strategy and should contribute to achieving the desired future scenario.

In order to address these objectives, first an Analysis and Assessment of the Natural Heritage of the Basque Country was presented and then the participants were asked to verify a proposed initial vision of what the biodiversity status should be by 2030.

Taking the desired future scenario as a point of reference, 6 priority focal points to be addressed by the strategy were defined, and around these the following workshops were organised:

- The sustainable and equitable use of resources.
- Protection of ecosystems and active conservation.
- Culture of Nature.
- Collaboration and public-private participation.
- Coherence and transversality. Effectiveness and efficiency in management.
- Generation and sharing of knowledge.

Around these tables, the one hundred assembled representatives of public and private institutions, conservation associations, research personnel, etc. actively participated in the discussion and proposed numerous priorities and lines of action.

Driving the process forward through the Irekia web platform

Through the Irekia digital platform, enabled since the beginning of the technical work by the Basque Government, all those interested in participating in the process of drafting the Biodiversity Strategy of the Basque Country 2030 have been invited to take part. In this way the citizens have contributed all of the suggestions that they considered appropriate, based on their reflections and the documentation that has been incorporated into the platform throughout the entire process.

The methodology used in the participation process has made it possible to draw a number of conclusions reached by consensus that have guided the process of drafting the different Goals, Lines of Action and Actions of this strategic document.

2. A strategic vision



Vision 2030

The Basque Country improves the conservation status of the natural environment, halting its deterioration through the joint responsibility of all agents, while at the same time the citizens value the richness of the ecosystem services that the natural environment contributes to human well-being. This is essential to bequeath a biodiversity integrated in a resilient territory to future generations.

The vision presented here is the goal to which the Basque Country aspires, to guide the various sectoral policies and engage individuals, businesses and other public and private institutions in an effort of joint responsibility with regard to biodiversity.

This vision aims to make a qualitative leap in the biodiversity conservation policies of the Basque Country and allow a change in trend in terms of defining and establishing new development models, following in the footsteps of the most innovative European countries.

While it is true that the road ahead is still a long one, this Biodiversity Strategy is the tool that will make it possible to establish the guidelines in the area of biodiversity for the coming years.

This Vision will be achieved through the Goals, Lines of action and Actions described below, which have primarily been identified through the Diagnostic Analysis and the different phases of participation, and which outline the Biodiversity Strategy of the Basque Country 2030.

3. Biodiversity Strategy Goals and Lines of action to 2030



Vision 2030 has led to **4 Goals** that are the priority areas for action for the Biodiversity Strategy: the first two involve the conservation of Natural Heritage, the third relates to the knowledge and culture of Nature, and the last to the system of governance. These will all be carried out within a framework of effectiveness and efficiency that seeks maximum coherence of public policies that transversely impact on the natural environment.

These goals give rise to **10 Lines of action** that define where the Basque Country wants to be in 2030, each representing an ambition for the future. These Lines of action lead in turn to **40 Actions** that will set the course up to 2020, in a way that guarantees coherence and coordination in the planning of environmental policy within this time frame. These Actions have been established as priorities for 2020 following the identification of the most relevant issues and needs arising from the Diagnostic Analysis and the Participation Process.

Biodiversity Strategy of the Basque Country 2030

VISION FOR 2030



4 GOALS FOR 2030

1. Protection and restoration of the ecosystems
2. Promotion of the European Natura 2000 Network as an instrument of opportunity
3. Promotion of the knowledge of Nature and cultivating the culture of Nature
4. Effectiveness and efficiency in the management of the territory and the Natural Heritage



10 LINES OF ACTION TO 2030



ROADMAP: 40 ACTIONS TO 2020

Goal 1

Protection and restoration of the ecosystems

One of the objectives of this Strategy is to carry out actions aimed at protecting and improving the conservation status of natural and semi-natural habitats in the Basque Country, focusing particularly on those with an unfavourable status and in protected areas. Making a commitment to green infrastructure as an element that favours the connectivity of the territory and mitigates fragmentation and habitat loss will, along with other actions, help to improve the ecological quality of these and keep the different ecosystems in good condition so that they can continue providing important services to society. It should also expand the existing knowledge base on these habitats and species to help in decision-making.

At the same time, it is necessary to maintain the diversity of wild flora and fauna, focusing efforts on those whose survival is threatened in the short or medium term; improving their conservation status will require the implementation of management and recovery plans. It is also important to work with species that, although are not actually under threat, play an important role in the functioning of the ecosystems. One of the problems the Biodiversity Strategy seeks to tackle is the absence of a framework on invasive alien species, establishing priorities for action and guidelines so that public administrations, researchers, social agents and productive sectors work together with the common goal of helping to prevent and reduce this threat to the natural species and habitats.

Both urban populations, which are often managed without any concern for Nature, and also those in rural areas, which use the services provided by the natural environment more directly, must understand the importance of preserving our Natural Heritage to safeguard this common good. We must reconnect both culturally and emotionally with the living tissue of the planet in order to ensure that activities based on the natural environment respect and preserve the favourable status of the environment by promoting local practices that are compatible with the conservation of biodiversity. It is therefore a question of ensuring the reconciliation of human activities with the protection of biodiversity.

THE **LINES OF ACTION** ESTABLISHED TO ACHIEVE **GOAL 1** FOR THE YEAR 2030 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Halting the loss and degradation of habitats and species, and improving their conservation status to move towards becoming a resilient and multifunctional territory.

Making progress in the prevention and control of invasive alien species.

Promoting joint responsibility and making the uses of natural resources compatible with environmental conservation.

Goal 2

Promotion of the European Natura 2000 Network as an instrument of opportunity

The Natura 2000 Network is composed of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas for Birds (SPABs), designated under the Habitats and Birds Directives respectively, and is the European instrument which aims to protect and place value on the most important areas within the continent, with special emphasis on the protection of threatened habitats and species.

One of the main objectives established by the European Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 is the full implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directives, which involves the development and implementation of management plans or equivalent instruments that include conservation and restoration for all the Natura 2000 sites.

The mid-term review of the European Biodiversity Strategy states that more initiatives and investments are needed before 2020 to complete the Natura 2000 Network. It also regards as essential the ensuring of effective management of all the Natura 2000 areas and the establishment of adequate administrative and financial conditions in order to achieve the conservation objectives.

Natura 2000 is a network of areas, but also of people and organisations active at local and regional level. It is a network of areas protected because of their valuable biodiversity that also allows local communities to benefit from the ecosystem services they provide. It contributes to promoting the maintenance of biodiversity while at the same time taking into account the scientific, economic, social and cultural demands on the assigned areas. Working towards an effective conservation and management of the European Natura 2000 Network should help to ensure the full sustainability of the territory that it comprises.

Although this network has been widely implemented in the Basque Country, the goals and efforts should focus on the effective management of these sites and the implementation of the instruments to achieve the objectives and measures for the conservation and management of the areas that they give shape to, so that this becomes a shared objective and source of opportunities for all Basque citizens.

THE **LINES OF ACTION** ESTABLISHED TO ACHIEVE **GOAL 2** FOR THE YEAR 2030 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Ensuring the effective management of the Natura 2000 areas.

Promoting tools that support the idea of the Natura 2000 Network as an instrument of opportunity.

Goal 3

Promotion of the knowledge of Nature and cultivating the culture of Nature

This Goal seeks to achieve recognition of biodiversity as a source of benefits, both direct and indirect, for the whole society. This implies promoting, enriching and sharing a culture oriented towards a respect for Nature, placing value on ecosystem services.

The successful implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy of the Basque Country 2030 will depend on the understanding and degree of involvement of civil society, private organisations and public authorities with regard to the importance of carrying out measures aimed at protecting biodiversity. For this purpose, it is essential to improve the awareness of the socio-economic benefits that the ecosystem services provide to citizens, focusing much of the effort on the provision of updated training for the technical personnel, of both public and private bodies, in addition to dissemination and awareness-raising campaigns for the citizens.

In addition, the availability of opportunities for participation is essential to foster communication, dialogue and knowledge generation, allowing the gathering together of agents from a wide variety of sectors (research, private and public companies, associations, educational organisations, etc.).

THE **LINES OF ACTION** ESTABLISHED TO ACHIEVE **GOAL 3** FOR THE YEAR 2030 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Involving society and raising awareness within society about the importance of preserving the natural environment.

Generating and sharing knowledge.

Goal 4

Effectiveness and efficiency in the management of the territory and the Natural Heritage

In relation to the previous Goal, a good knowledge base will allow both the general public and also the technical personnel, and in particular those responsible for decision-making, to incorporate an appropriate vision with respect to improving the assessment and management of biodiversity in the plans and regulatory instruments.

Collaboration and inter-institutional cooperation on the conservation of biodiversity is essential for the joint development of the regulatory framework, the allocation of financial, human and technical resources to common projects, and the drafting of plans and projects involving shared funding aimed at conservation, etc.

Conserving biodiversity is a long-term economy that requires tax and financial-economic instruments aimed at its protection and correct management of the ecosystem services, based on the local, provincial and regional territorial dimension.

Dialogue and meetings through the creation of opportunities for participation will allow a greater involvement in the protection and conservation of biodiversity by both private agents and the business sector and the local administrations. As a starting point to build consensus it is necessary to recognise and draw attention to the role of the different agents operating in the territory.

Furthermore, the signing of cooperation agreements with social and economic stakeholders from the agricultural or forestry sectors or those involved in protecting nature to maintain ecosystems and specific ecosystem services should be encouraged. Sustaining traditional agricultural holdings that foster biodiversity conservation shall be particularly incentivised.

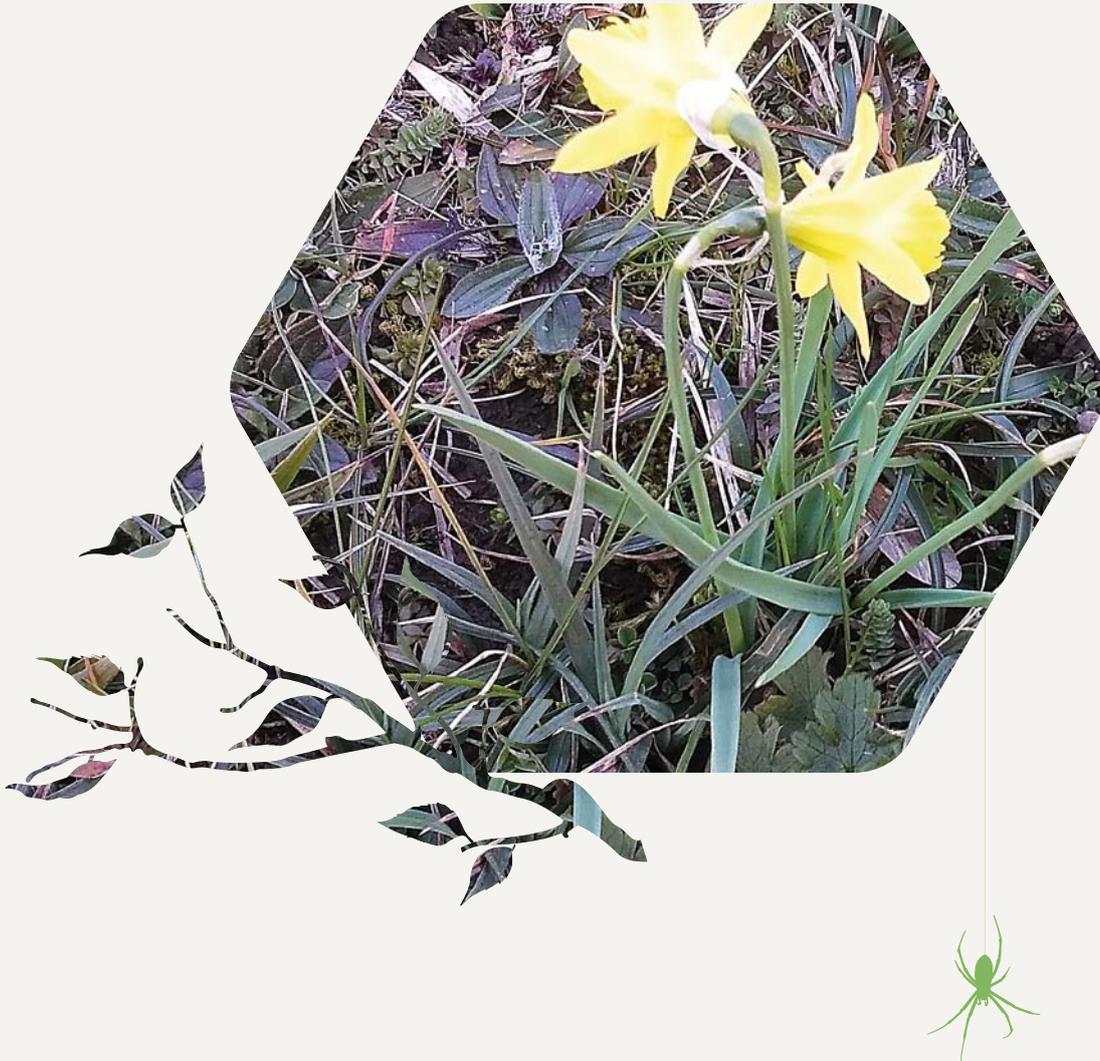
THE **LINES OF ACTION** ESTABLISHED TO ACHIEVE **GOAL 4** FOR THE YEAR 2030 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Ensuring the coherence and transversality of biodiversity policies.

Making progress in the collaboration and participation of the various public and private agents for the management of the Natural Heritage.

Continuously improving the management of Protected Natural Areas.

4. Actions to 2020. Action Plan for Improving the Natural Heritage of the Basque Country



The Vision and Lines of action defined in this Strategy seek to set an ultimate goal to be attained in a still distant time horizon (year 2030). To reach this point it is necessary to specify the short to medium-term actions, which may be updated as new scientific and technical advances occur. Thus, the Vision defined for 2030 will have an intermediate milestone for 2020, at which point the actions to be carried out in the following years will be updated.

The first of these periods of development of the Biodiversity Strategy will therefore run up to 2020, in line with the commitments established in the “European Union Biodiversity Strategy to 2020”.

Therefore, with this time frame in mind, this section specifies a set of actions that represent the first steps towards the Vision and Lines of Action established up to 2030. As explained below in the section on the Management model, it will be necessary to review and update these actions in 2020 and thus ensure the adaptability of the Strategy to new requirements, identifying the concrete actions up to 2030.

All the contributions received during the participation process have served to draft Priority Actions, forming a roadmap up to 2020, so that progress can be made in achieving the established goals.

Goal 1

Protection and restoration of the ecosystems

Line of action:

Halting the loss and degradation of habitats and species, and improving their conservation status to move towards becoming a resilient and multifunctional territory

1. Developing a system of evaluation and monitoring of the Natural Heritage of the Basque Country which includes the Natura 2000 Network.
2. Reviewing the Basque Catalogue of Endangered Species.
3. Promoting the development and approval of management plans for species included in the Basque Catalogue of Endangered Species.
4. Designing a green infrastructure as a network of interconnected multifunctional areas within the framework of land use planning.
5. Including geodiversity as an element to consider in the new planning and management instruments for the Protected Natural Areas.
6. Developing and adopting codes of good practice in the conservation of the Natural Heritage in the different sectoral uses of the territory.
7. Preparing a document of guidelines and criteria for setting priorities for the restoration of habitats and ecosystems.
8. Promoting a Network of Marine Protected Areas.
9. Encouraging the resilience of the ecosystems, integrating the climate change variable in the management of the natural environment.

Line of action:**Making progress in the prevention and control of invasive alien species**

10. Conducting a risk analysis of invasive alien species, defining the prioritisation of species and areas.
-
11. Developing an early warning system for the early detection of new areas of expansion of invasive alien species.
-
12. Diagnostic analysis and proposals for action to address the issue of trade in invasive alien species.
-
13. Developing a framework that addresses the practices for controlling the priority invasive alien species in a coordinated and ecosystem-based way.
-

Line of action:**Promoting joint responsibility and making the uses of natural resources compatible with environmental conservation**

14. Disseminating good practices that contribute to the conservation of biodiversity and integrating the economic, social and environmental variables in the productive sectors.
-
15. Encouraging an increase in the surface area where the agri-environmental and forestry-environmental measures of the Rural Development Programme relating to the protection of biodiversity are adopted.
-

Goal 2
**Promotion of the European Natura 2000 Network
 as an instrument of opportunity**

Line of action:

Ensuring the effective management of the Natura 2000 areas

16. Promoting the Natura 2000 Network through the implementation and application of the documents covering the conservation objectives and measures of the areas included in this Network.

17. Creating the main framework of the Natura 2000 Network in the Basque Country that includes the technical, administrative and governance aspects of its development, and in particular the role of the different agents of Natura 2000.

18. 18. Creating the network for the monitoring and surveillance of the Natura 2000 Network in the Basque Country to assess the conservation status of habitats and species and the contribution of the Natura 2000 Network to improving biodiversity and geodiversity.

Line of action:

**Promoting tools that support the idea of the Natura 2000 Network
 as an instrument of opportunity**

19. Analysing and defining the economic model of the Natura 2000 Network and implementing tax and financial-economic instruments to achieve the objectives of the network.

20. Evaluating the effort and the socio-economic results associated with the Natura 2000 Network.

21. Developing a catalogue of good practices that showcases the results of the Natura 2000 Network, that acknowledges these actions and that is aligned with the existing EU network.

22. Establishing Payments for Environmental Services to promote compatible uses or to contribute to the protection of the natural environment.

Goal 3

Promotion of the knowledge of Nature and cultivating the culture of Nature

Line of action:

Involving society and raising awareness within society about the importance of preserving the natural environment

23. Assessing public concern and raising the awareness of the citizens with regard to biodiversity (ecosystem services, Natura 2000, wild flora and fauna, invasive alien species, etc.).
24. Highlighting the socio-economic, environmental and cultural benefits that the Natural Heritage provides, primarily through the creation of a network of interpretation and environmental education centres.
25. Promoting urban biodiversity through green infrastructure, approaching this from the perspective of the citizens.
26. Creating the Social Forum on Biodiversity as an annual participatory opportunity for meeting together and for dialogue between the different agents.
27. Developing a communication and awareness-raising programme about the Natura 2000 Network.
28. Developing the Environmental Profile, with headline indicators relating to the biodiversity of the Basque Country.

Line of action:

Generating and sharing knowledge

29. Organising training courses for the technical personnel of the public administrations to update knowledge about biodiversity.
30. Promoting and strengthening the Basque Country Nature Information System.
31. Maintaining and promoting citizen science programmes related to Natural Heritage.
32. Creating a Scientific Committee for the Biodiversity of the Basque Country with the participation of the University and centres of reference, among others, to carry out analysis and propose lines of research on the subject.

Goal 4
**Effectiveness and efficiency in the management
of the territory and the Natural Heritage**

Line of action:

Ensuring the coherence and transversality of biodiversity policies

33. Integrating the biodiversity variable into the plans, programmes and projects of the sectoral policies, through its active participation in the IV Environmental Framework Programme 2020.
34. Setting up a technical and political work sub-committee for coordination about biodiversity policy within Naturzaintza with the participation of the Basque Government's Ministries of the Environment and of the Primary Sector and of the Provincial Councils.
35. Analysing the environmental taxation potential with regard to the Natural Heritage.

Line of action:

Making progress in the collaboration and participation of the various public and private agents for the management of the Natural Heritage

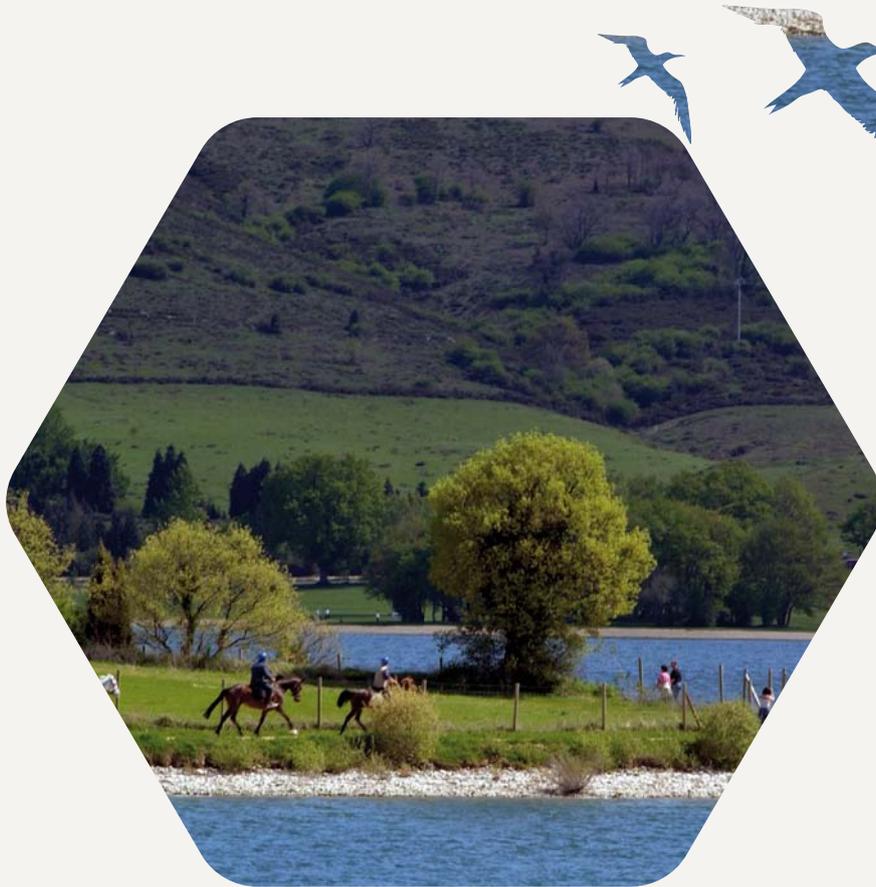
36. Promoting land stewardship agreements and other instruments that recognise and encourage the involvement of society in the conservation of biodiversity.
37. Developing Nature-Based Solutions in the urban environment, promoting the active role of municipalities through the Udalsarea 21 Network of Municipalities.
38. Promoting and creating sustainable and effective partnerships between business, society and government for the protection and conservation of biodiversity.

Line of action:**Continuously improving the management of Protected Natural Areas.**

39. Improving the quality of the management in the areas of conservation, public use and socio-economic development.

40. Improving the effectiveness of the management structures of the Protected Natural Areas and their evaluation.

5. Management model: governance, economic analysis and monitoring



a) Governance

The original Birds Directive (Directive 79/409/EEC), adopted 37 years ago, is the oldest EU legislative text concerning nature, although it has been updated through Directive 2009/147/EC, the change being basically in its form. Meanwhile, the Habitats Directive (which created the Natura 2000 Network), approved 24 years ago, is still in force in its original format (Directive 92/43/EEC), except for some specific aspects that were the subject of a subsequent amendment. It is very significant that the recent (2011) “EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020: our life insurance, our natural capital”, which is still in force, establishes as its first objective <<the full implementation of the Habitats and Birds Directives>>, which is a clear indication of the difficulty of implementation of both Directives. Similarly, the fact that they are still in force after 37 and 24 years, respectively, since their adoption demonstrates the wisdom and ambition with which the rules for the conservation and protection of biodiversity were formulated. Finally, it indicates a peculiarity of biodiversity policy compared with other public policies: it has a rhythm and inertia of its own, these being slower, and therefore harder to synchronise with and assess within legislative cycles and/or programming cycles of four years.

The biodiversity policy of the Basque Country shares these characteristics with that of the European Union. The principle of the “Protection of nature and biodiversity, a unique value to foster” was already established in Goal 3 of the Basque Environmental Strategy for Sustainable Development 2002-2020, whose actions, both with regard to conservation and the protection of areas and species and also the other issues addressed (restoration of ecosystems, network of ecological corridors, biodiversity research, etc.) are still strongly in force, since the regulatory and strategic framework has remained largely unchanged since its publication.

However, in recent years focuses that are complementary to the protection of nature have emerged that have given weight to arguments of a more pragmatic or instrumental nature, of scientific, aesthetic,

recreational or educational value, or direct use value; approaches that take into account the contribution of ecosystems to the quality of life and well-being of human societies. In this regard, it is essential to integrate criteria for the protection and improvement of biodiversity and Natural Heritage in other policies, such as those related to agriculture, forestry and land use.

These are all issues that condition the management model and the governance of biodiversity policy in the Basque Country, and a further challenge that must be addressed is that both the Basque Government and Provincial Councils and also town and city councils have responsibilities in this area, and that citizens themselves are also key agents in the care and protection of biodiversity. For all these reasons, a transversal and participatory system of governance, where all parties are actively involved in achieving the proposed goals, is essential.

The long-standing commitment of the Basque Country to the management and conservation of nature has meant the establishment of organizations whose actions must be coordinated to achieve management efficiency:

- **Naturzaintza**, created in 1994 by the Law on Nature Conservation in the Basque Country, is a consultative and cooperative collegiate body concerned with the protected natural areas. This advisory board is composed of representatives of the Basque Government (Department for the Environment and Territorial Policy and Department of Economic Development and Competitiveness), the three Provincial Councils, EUDEL representing the municipalities, the university, the agricultural unions, conservation and forestry associations and also renowned experts. Its main functions involve the management of natural resources and nature conservation through the preparation of reports, opinions and proposals on its own initiative or at the request of Parliament, the Basque Government or the Provincial Councils; but it is also responsible for promoting and supporting coordination between the various administrations

with responsibility for land management to achieve greater protection of resources, as well as education for nature conservation, scientific research, and promotion.

- **Environmental Commission of the Basque Country**, created in 1998 and whose functions cover all environmental areas, with special emphasis on reporting on plans and programmes developed to implement the Environmental Framework Programme and to promote coordination and carry out monitoring work relating to all those actions in the area of environment that are implemented either by the institutions represented in the Commission – the Basque Government Department of Education, Linguistic Policy and Culture, the Department of Safety, the Department of Economic Development and Competitiveness, the Department of Health; the Department for the Environment and Territorial Policy, the Provincial Councils and the Association of Basque Municipalities, EUDEL. It is also a function of this Commission to report on the catalogues of environmental resources.
- **Environmental Advisory Council**, also created in 1998, is an advisory and proactive body in the area of environmental policy, plans and programmes which is responsible for proposing measures that link environmental policies with job creation, sustainable development, coordination of public and private economic initiatives and participation and raising the awareness of the citizens in relation to environmental matters. Is also a function of the Council to encourage the participation of universities and research centres in environmental policy. The composition is similar to that of the Environmental Commission of the Basque Country but without the presence of the Department of Safety⁴³, and including representatives of citizens' associations or movements representing environmental sectors at regional level; organisations of consumers and users; business organisations and clusters; trade unions with the greatest representation within the autonomous community; technology centres related to the environment; research centres related to the environment; the University of the Basque Country/Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea and

a person who is a renowned expert in environmental matters.

- **Landaberri**, was established under Law 10/1998, of 8 April, on Rural Development as an organ of collaboration and coordination on rural development and agriculture. It is made up of representatives of the Basque Government in the areas of Land Use Planning and Industry, the Provincial Councils and the municipalities of the autonomous community, and reports on plans with a territorial impact, including Natural Resource Management Plans, Uses and Management Master Plan and Natura 2000.

The Department for the Environment and Territorial Policy, through its Environment Vice-Department, is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy through its Action Plan 2020, although for this purpose it requires the participation of other government departments. Similarly, the execution of the Strategy cannot be carried out without the involvement of the Provincial Councils and local councils. The Directorate of the Natural Environment and Environmental Planning is responsible for the coordination of the evaluation and monitoring of the policy through the scorecard indicators.

To ensure the active involvement of all the agents involved in the protection and care of biodiversity and the efficient use of resources for this purpose, as stated in Action 34, **a coordination work sub-committee for the action regarding biodiversity will be set up within Naturzaintza** with the participation of the Departments of the Environment and the primary sector of the Basque Government and the Provincial Councils. The mission of this body will be to serve as a meeting point between those responsible for the development of policies and instruments for the management of biodiversity from the institutions represented, generating synergies between them to increase the efficiency of the management and to coordinate the addressing of the alerts that have a general relevance for the whole community. This sub-committee will not mean any increase to the existing administrative structure.

⁴³ In the case of the Environmental Advisory Council Departments, representation of the departments is at the level of Director while for the Environmental Commission it is at the level of Deputy Minister.

b) Economic resources of the Biodiversity Strategy

The Biodiversity Strategy has a time horizon of 2030, i.e. implementation over a period of 14 years, which will be carried out through 3 Action Plans. The first of these will start with the adoption of the Strategy and will run until 2020, and the remaining two will cover the periods 2021-2025 and 2026-2030. At the end of each of the Action Plans the degree of implementation of the Strategy and its contribution to the Goals of the Strategy will be evaluated, and the next Action Plan will be designed on the basis of this evaluation.

The economic trend in the Basque Country, in line with its European context, shows signs of an economic recovery that is still weak and with a high degree of uncertainty, but suggesting a more or less sustained growth that for 2016 will be around 2.5%⁴⁴, although

it is expected to be somewhat lower in 2017. If we add to this the distant time horizon of the Strategy itself it is advisable to adopt conservative principles with regard to estimating the budgetary expenditure.

In this context, the relevant budgetary framework is set out in the 2016 budgets under the Environment Vice-Department, and in particular in the items related to biodiversity in its Strategic Objectives numbers 1 “Preserve ecosystems” and 4 “Public-private and citizens’ joint responsibility”. Based on this budgetary framework, where the operating budget allocation⁴⁵ is slightly more than €3,800,000, the budgetary resources required for the implementation of the actions planned for 2017 are:

Strategic Biodiversity Goals	Budget Requirements	Percentage
G1. Protection and restoration of the ecosystems	€1,076,000	26.91%
2. Promotion of the Natura 2000 Network as an instrument of opportunity	€1,837,000	45.93%
3. Promotion of the knowledge of Nature and cultivating the culture of Nature	€761,000	19.03%
4. Effectiveness and efficiency in the management of the territory and the Natural Heritage	€325,000	8.13%
TOTAL	€3,999,000	100%

⁴⁴ http://www.ogasun.ejgv.euskadi.eus/contenidos/informacion/informe_trimestral/es_def/adjuntos/previsiones.pdf

⁴⁵ Within the operational budget allocation we exclude both the cost of personnel and costs not associated with any specific action, i.e. those considered as structural costs.

Biodiversity Strategy of the Basque Autonomous Community 2030

This budget estimate would mean an increase over the 2016 budget of 3%. It should be noted, however, that in the base year of 2016, considered as a reference, the activities of the Basque Water Agency (URA) related to biodiversity have not been included in the budget⁴⁶.

Furthermore, in addition to the budgetary resources of the Directorate of the Natural Environment and Environmental Planning, it must be borne in mind that the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy also depends on the involvement of other agents of the Basque Government such as the Vice-Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Policy and the Directorate of Territorial Planning, as well as other institutions such as the Provincial Councils. In this regard, there are likely to be additional budgets for these agents associated with the implementation of this Strategy.

The uncertainty associated with the budget estimate increases as we move forward in the time frame of the first Action Plan, and we therefore assume an average budget increase of 2% per year to allow continuity in the action contained in the Strategy, based on the expectation that the recovery of the economy and the employment situation remain stable. Thus the anticipated levels of spending are shown in the following table.

Thus, the operating budget under the Environment Vice-Department for the development of the first Action Plan of the Biodiversity Strategy is around 16.500.000 euros spread over the 4 years during which this will be implemented. Regardless of the budget estimates, the level of activity in each of the years of the first Action Plan of the Strategy will be subject to the budgetary mandates set by the Basque Parliament and the formal processing of the instruments required for the implementation of the Strategy.

Strategic Biodiversity Goals	2017	2018	2019	2020
G1. Protection and restoration of the ecosystems	€1,076,000	€1,097,520	€1,119,470	€1,141,860
G2. Promotion of the Natura 2000 Network as an instrument of opportunity	€1,837,000	€1,873,740	€1,911,215	€1,949,439
G3. Promotion of the knowledge of Nature and cultivating the culture of Nature	€761,000	€776,220	€791,744	€807,579
G4. Effectiveness and efficiency in the management of the territory and the Natural Heritage	€325,000	€331.500	€338,130	€344,893
TOTAL	€3,999,000	€4,078,980	€4,160,560	€4,243,771

⁴⁶ The URA (Basque Water Agency) budgets associated with biodiversity estimate an average of more than €1,400,000 per year in activities related to the elimination of invasive species and restoration.

c) Monitoring and evaluation

The Environmental Statuses, Environmental Indicators and the Social and Industrial Ecobarometers are valuable, existing tools that allow us to assess our current situation and environmental evolution. However, the adoption of the Strategy and the implementation of its actions must be monitored and evaluated. For this purpose, action and evaluation mechanisms have been drawn up for the Strategy:

- **Action Plans:** defining the actions to be taken in periods of 5 years, the first adopting the Strategy itself as the Action Plan 2020. Thus a new Action Plan 2025 will later be developed, followed by the last plan running up to 2030.
- **Biennial monitoring reports:** reporting on the progress of the proposed actions in each Action Plan. The first will be compiled in 2018.

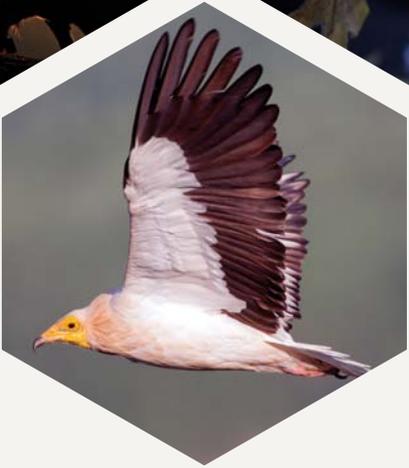
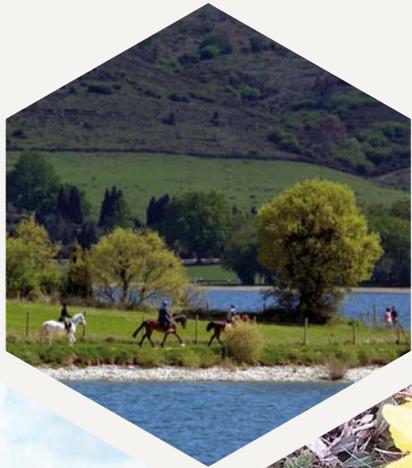
— **Action Plan Evaluation Reports:** these reports will be prepared in the last year of each Action Plan and together with the biennial monitoring report will from the basis of the following action plan. This report will be produced by an external and independent body based on the criteria of transparency, participation and collaboration and will include the evolution of the scorecard indicators.

All information generated in the monitoring and evaluation of the Biodiversity Strategy of the Basque Country 2030 will be available for consultation and participation through the website of the Department of the Environment of the Basque Government: www.ingurumena.eus

The system for measuring the degree of fulfilment of the Biodiversity Strategy of the Basque Country 2030 and its results is shown below:

Balanced Scorecard for the Biodiversity Strategy of the Basque Country 2030

Result indicators	Objective 2020	Objective 2030
Conservation status of the Habitats of Community Interest with an unfavourable status	≤ 75% 77% by the year 2012	≤ 65%
Number of ha under agri-environmental measures	60,000 ha 55,600 ha by the year 2012	95,000 has.
Number of ha under sustainable forestry management	100,000 ha 77,992 ha by the year 2015	150,000 has.
Number of ha under forestry-environmental measures	100 ha	1,500 has.
Basque citizens' knowledge of the Natura 2000 Network	20% 10% by the year 2011	30%
Action Plan management indicators	Objective	
Level of implementation of the Action Plan 2020	100% (Intermediate objective ≥ 50%)	
Production of the Action Plan monitoring Reports	Biennial (Starting in 2018)	
Production of evaluation Reports	2020, 2025 and 2030	



Biodiversity Strategy of the Basque Autonomous Community

2030

and First Action Plan 2020

EUSKO JAURLARITZA



GOBIERNO VASCO

