



Brussels, 5.2.2009

Doc Hab 09-02/06

NOTE TO THE ATTENTION OF THE HABITATS COMMITTEE

Subject: Submitting electronic Natura 2000 data-sets via Reportnet

1. Summary

This note explains a request to Member States to send in future their electronic Natura 2000 datasets via Reportnet, an online reporting system managed by the European Environment Agency (EEA) especially designed to improve the efficiency of data-flows. The passage to Reportnet is a first step towards improving the Natura 2000 dataflow. The existing and agreed principles for the submission of Natura 2000 data will not be affected.

2. Introduction

The following existing and agreed general principles of Natura 2000 data-submission remain valid:

Principles

1. *For descriptive data, the complete dataset in electronic format has to be provided for each modification. The paper version of the Standard Data Form (SDF) has to be provided only for new or modified sites.*
2. *For spatial data, the complete dataset in electronic format has to be provided for each modification. Paper maps have to be provided for new sites or sites with modified boundaries.*
3. *Data have to be delivered in the agreed table format (structure used in the Natura 2000 software), see: http://biodiversity.eionet.europa.eu/activities/Natura_2000/build*
4. *Member States should only submit the latest updated national datasets. The consistency of data from different regions, particularly in the case of Member States with federal structure, must be ensured.*
5. *Data in digital and paper format must be rigorously identical.*
6. *Member States should always provide both descriptive and spatial datasets.*
7. *Member States should submit a single database for SPA's and SCI's.*
8. *Each submission must be accompanied by a document explaining/justifying the changes which have occurred in the datasets.*
9. *The official status of the data submitted must be confirmed by a letter of the Permanent Representation. Only then data-sets will be taken into account and validated.*

In the frame of the Expert Group of Reporting under the nature directives, one specific work-package is dealing with the revision of the Natura 2000 data-flow (WP4). The

switch to Reportnet as a way of transmitting electronic Natura 2000 data-sets is only a first step in a range of improvements which should take place over the coming months and years. These improvements are being discussed in the frame of WP 4 and (will) concern among others:

- A review / improvements of the Standard Data Form (SDF) and maps
- Improve quality assurance
- Improve technical aspects of data-flow, eg. a change of formats

So far the official electronic data-set was usually attached as a CD to the formal communication of the respective Permanent Representation, a process which had a range of disadvantages, for example:

- Possible material degradation of CDs during transport;
- Manual manipulation required by the Commission and the Member States even for digital data (uploading, etc.) a process susceptible to mistakes;
- Delays between the sending of data by Member States and its validation and integration in the Natura 2000 database;

3. The new reporting method: Transmitting Natura 2000 datasets via Reportnet

It is suggested that Member States shall from now on submit the official electronic Natura 2000 data-sets via the Central Data Repository (CDR) module of Reportnet.

A short *guidance note from EEA* on how to use Reportnet Central Data Repository (CDR); is attached as an annex to this note.

The change to the new system will consist of the following steps

- The Habitats Committee delegates notify the Commission of the names, e-mail-address and other contact details of the national Natura 2000-data-coordinator(s) by 20th February 2009. EEA will then create uploading rights for these persons; they will be informed about their login and password.
- Member States data coordinators can then access Reportnet CDR and log into their account;
- MS can then upload their electronic datasets and any other relevant material (e.g. the letter explaining the changes made since the last version) through the given interface;
- An automatic confirmation of receipt listing the files they have submitted and showing the date of submission will be generated in CDR when MS confirms that the submission is ready;
- MS will send this note together with any other material (as agreed in the past, i.e. paper SDF and maps of new or revised sites) to the Commission through their Permanent Representation;
- Once the Commission receives this note, it gives the green light to the EEA and ETC to start validation and processing of the submitted data;

The paper documents will continue for the time being to be submitted in the same manner as they have until now

As a transition period of 6 months, Member States will be able to continue to send their digital data on CD to the Commission. The Commission encourages all Member States to switch to Reportnet as soon as possible as it will become the standard repository for future reporting exercises and data submissions procedures.

The advantages of the new procedure are, among others:

- Elimination of CD's as data carrier and the flaws inherent to that medium;
- Reduced manual manipulation for the Commission;
- Transfer by post limited to paper documents;
- Possibility for Member States to follow-up their submission (better transparency);
- Easier and quicker access to data by the Commission, EEA and ETC;
- Validation reports (response) accessible via Reportnet Central Data Repository (CDR);

6. Conclusion

The passage to Reportnet is a first step towards improving the Natura 2000 dataflow. It is also part of the ongoing endeavour to optimize the use of online facilities and progress towards more integrated systems. Reviewing data formats and expanding possibilities for automation, as well as alleviating administrative procedures, are also a part of this effort. The European Commission counts on the collaboration of the Member States in attaining these objectives.

TO DO:

- *Please notify to the Commission (danny.charbonneau@ec.europa.eu) of the names, e-mail-address and other contact details of the national Natura 2000-data-coordinator(s) by 20th February 2009. These nominated contacts will have the right to upload files in the CDR of Reportnet, they will directly, via e-mail notification, be informed of any feedback stemming from the data-validation process.*
- Once the data-coordinators have received their uploading rights (login and passwords) please use Reportnet CDR for uploading any official electronic Natura 2000 data-sets in future

Enclosure: Note from EEA