



January 2007, Tilburg
**Pan-European Ecological Network
Fact sheet VIII – The Mapping exercise**

Indicative maps for CEE and SEE, Visegrád countries 4 + 2, Baltic countries

In parts of Europe, the Pan-European Ecological Network has literally been put on the map. Some examples are described below.

Indicative map of PEEN for Central and Eastern Europe

This 3 years project focused on the development of a map indicating the location of the European Ecological Network for Central and Eastern Europe. It was carried out by the European Centre for Nature Conservation (ECNC) and the Council of Europe under the auspices of the Committee of Experts for the establishment of the PEEN.

The Indicative map of PEEN for CEE was completed and published along with the accompanying scientific report describing the methodology in 2002 and a brochure highlighting the main results to policy makers and other stakeholders.

The importance of the map is on the one hand that it is a technical means to indicate the location of vital elements of the Pan-European Ecological Network, and on the other hand that it is a strong communication tool to promote nature conservation towards economic, land use and financial sectors. The project also addressed the elaboration of the methodology and identification of gaps in scientific knowledge, which is necessary to identify the network. The map was prepared using GIS based mapping techniques.

The map provides information to land use and economic sectors on the indicative location of nature values of European importance, which they could take into account in the development and implementation of their policies and activities. Within the project special attention was given to the consultation of various organizations in 40 countries involved in the process of the establishment of the PEEN. Activities were carried out by ECNC and Alterra, together with the Council of Europe, and many other organizations and countries.

The project was finalized and presented to the PEEN committee meeting in Riga, 2002, and was strongly welcomed. The map was formally presented to the 5th Environment of Europe Conference in Kyiv as well.

Indicative map for South-Eastern Europe

From 2003 to 2006, ECNC–European Centre for Nature Conservation coordinated a project aimed at outlining the contours of the Pan-European Ecological Network in South-Eastern Europe, in particular including Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, FYR Macedonia, Serbia-Montenegro, Slovenia and Turkey. In this project ECNC cooperated closely with research institutes, NGOs and government agencies in the region. The project was made possible due to the generous financial support of the Netherlands Ministries of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, and Foreign Affairs (BBI-MATRA fund), the Council of Europe and the Swiss Federal Office of the Environment.

The indicative map of the Pan-European Ecological Network for the South-Eastern European countries shows areas that are vital for biodiversity in Europe. It indicates possibilities to reinforce the safe and long-term existence and possible return of internationally important species following the strategy of a coherent and robust network. It summarizes insights and data in a manner that is meant to be readily understandable, useful and inspiring for policymakers responsible for nature protection and land-use planning.

The project resulted in an indicative map of PEEN which identifies the core nature areas of European importance, existing corridors between these areas, and where new corridors could and should be established to meet the connectivity requirements of key species.

The map illustrates the relevance of national and regional biodiversity within a European context; it communicates the concept of nature as a coherent entity, rather than an agglomerate of individual sites and species. The map also draws attention to the changes in land use and infrastructure development

that can have an impact on biodiversity, even when core nature areas are not directly affected. As such, the indicative map of the Pan-European Ecological Network in South-Eastern Europe is a powerful communication and education instrument.

Regional Ecological Network Mapping in Visegrad 4 + 2

The environment ministers of the Visegrad 4 countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia) at their regular meeting in 2001 decided to develop a regional ecological network map indicating the potential location of Pan European Ecological Network (PEEN) within their countries through the compilation of their national network maps. Later Croatia and Ukraine joined to the project.

The Hungarian Ministry of Environment and within it the Authority for Nature Conservation took the lead in the project, and during 2002 and 2003 organized a series of meetings where experts from the concerned countries discussed the joint methodology and scale to be applied during the mapping exercise. One of the most important outcomes of the process was that at a regional scale (in this case 1: 1,5 million) due to the different approaches to the interpretation of ecological networks and the differences between protected area systems applied in different countries, it is almost impossible to depict the two systems within one map.

That is why the project resulted in two separate maps, one showing the protected area systems, the other the regional ecological network. Comparing the two maps the overlaps are obvious e.g. large or important protected areas are overlapping with ecological network core areas. The project is of special value when selecting sites close to country borders, since continuous populations or habitats may be cut in half by political borders resulting in an underestimated European significance of the given site when looking at population sizes or area extensions of one country only.

Discontinuous sites may also gain significance when evaluated as ecological stepping stones in relations to sites nearby, which are on the territory of neighbouring countries. At the same time an important lesson to learn is that there is a need to overview the different protected area systems applied in different European countries and try to harmonise these systems, otherwise it will be very difficult to use a common language. This is valid also to the interpretation of ecological networks. The map is under final revision. ECNC acted as advisor to the project based on its knowledge accumulated during the PEEN for CEE mapping process.

Development of National Ecological Networks in the Baltic countries

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were among the first countries that developed an ecological network in the early seventies. IUCN, the World Conservation Union conducted a synthesis aimed at comparing the three countries' national reports on their ecological networks as a continuation of the work IUCN started to design and develop national ecological networks in Hungary, Czech and Slovak Republic and Poland in 1993.

In each country a pilot project took place to demonstrate the implementation of the networks on local (county) level. Several meetings with spatial planning offices on various levels were conducted to adapt criteria and "language" to translate the needs of an ecological network to the spatial planning processes. As a result, in some cases the European Ecological Network concept became adopted and reflected in national nature conservation law, e.g. Estonia.