

Name of Project: Testing and improving the proposed planning tool for inspections of Natura 2000 sites (NIRAM) and Roadmap for a project series on invasive alien species (IAS)

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## TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR WORK UNDER THE AUSPICES OF IMPEL

### 1. Work type and title

#### 1.1 Identify which Expert Team this needs to go to for initial consideration

- Industry and air
- Waste and TFS
- Water and land
- Nature protection
- Cross-cutting tools and approaches

#### 1.2 Type of work you need funding for

- Exchange visits
- Peer reviews (e.g. IRI)
- Conference
- Development of tools/guidance
- Comparison studies
- Assessing legislation (checklist)
- Other, (please describe):

#### 1.3 Full name of work

- Inspection of nature protected sites - Development of an easy and flexible tool as a part of the planning of inspections of Natura 2000 sites linked to European environmental law and the RMCEI (testing and improving the proposed NIRAM-Tool in different IMPEL member countries)
- Roadmap for a project series on invasive species (IAS)

#### 1.4 Abbreviated name of work or project

- a) Testing and improving the proposed planning tool for inspections of Natura 2000 sites (NIRAM) in IMPEL member countries and providing training material.
- b) Setting up a roadmap for a project series on invasive alien species (IAS)



## 2. Outline business case (why this piece of work?)

### 2.1 Name the legislative driver(s) where they exist

- a) - Habitats Directive, Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992.
- Birds Directive, Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009.
- b) - Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats No 82/72/EEC
- Council Decision concerning the conclusion of the Convention on Biological Diversity (93/626/EEC)
- Regulation on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species (Eu) No 1143/2014

### 2.2 Link to IMPEL MASP priority work areas

1. Assist members to implement new legislation.
2. Build capacity in member organisations through the IMPEL Review Initiatives.
3. Work on 'problem areas' of implementation identified by IMPEL and the European Commission.
4. Other, (please specify):

### 2.3 Why is this work needed?

#### A. Motivations

#### Decline in EU biodiversity

The alarming decline in Europe's biodiversity has driven the adoption, by the European Union (EU) of two key pieces of legislation – **the Habitats and Birds Directives** – to conserve Europe's most valuable species and habitats across their entire natural range within the EU.

The Birds and Habitats Directives are central to achieving the EU 2020 target of halting and reversing the loss of biodiversity endorsed by Heads of State and Government. The Commission has adopted an ambitious strategy to achieve this objective, comprised of six targets. Target 1 of this Strategy is focused on "Full implementation of EU nature legislation to protect" biodiversity and requires a significant improvement in conservation status. The implementation of EU nature legislation also contributes significantly to other targets of the biodiversity strategy, including in relation to green infrastructure and restoration under Target 2.

The Action Plan for nature, people and the economy COM(2017)198 points out that key factors behind the shortcomings in the implementation of the Nature Directives are e.g. *"limited resources, weak enforcement, poor integration of nature objectives into other policy areas, insufficient knowledge and access to data."* The development of an IT tool as a part of the planning of inspections of nature protected sites will provide a systematic approach which would maximize resources into key areas of concern.



For the past 40 years The Council of Europe has been encouraging its member states to prohibit the introduction of invasive alien species (IAS) into the environment, to take precautionary measures against accidental introductions and/or to take corrective measures when necessary.

These invasive alien species may multiply and occupy the same ecological niche as native species, ultimately driving these to extinction, or at least unsettle ecosystems with unpredictable effects on biodiversity. The invasive alien species have been identified as the second cause of species extinction, after habitat deterioration or loss, at world level.

The Invasive Alien Species **Regulation (Eu) No 1143/2014** aims to prevent and minimise the adverse impact on native biodiversity posed by the introduction and spread of invasive alien species. Acc. to the Regulation, MS have to establish action plans and implement surveillance systems to enable early detection and rapid eradication. On 13/10/2021, the Commission published the first report on the application of the IAS Regulation. The overall conclusion is that progress has been made in halting the spread of invasive alien species, but challenges remain and are linked to the projected increase in global trade and travel, which together with climate change increase the risk of the spread of invasive alien species.

The report also reveals that some Member States lack sufficient funding and the administrative capacity to address IAS. This leads to insufficient implementation of the various provisions of the regulation. For instance, most Member States have not yet implemented the action plans to address the priority pathways (routes and mechanisms of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species). Furthermore, there is scope to improve both the comprehensiveness of the coverage of surveillance systems and the official control structures in many Member States. Also, knowledge gaps remain such as on the costs and benefits of addressing IAS and on methods for IAS management.

#### Part A -Development of an easy and flexible tool as a part of the planning of inspections of Natura 2000 sites linked to European environmental law and the RMCEI

##### **Background:**

The IMPEL project 2018/14 provided criteria and a scoring system for a risk-based assessment of the frequency of inspections of nature protected sites (focus: Natura 2000 sites). The project team decided to adjust the already existing IRAM-IT-Tool to the needs in this field and proposed the name NIRAM-Tool (Integrated Risk Assessment Methodology for Nature).

In 2019 the applicability of the proposed criteria and the tool were confirmed / substantiated through tests and practical work with them in Slovenia (IMPEL project 2019/15).

The Project 2020/19 aimed at developing training material and providing training for NIRAM administrators, coordinators and inspectors in different IMPEL member countries. Due to the COVID situation it could not yet be finalised and the project team proposed a follow-up for 2021.



If possible, the project should have explored whether the tool can be combined with a possibility to store data collected through inspections over the long term in order to be used by inspection authorities for the purposes of evidence and long term trends in nature protected sites change.

In 2021 the project team decided to merge the project phases 2020 and 2021, developed training material and planned carrying out training sessions via videoconferences. This turned out to be difficult.

- Project 2022 will:
  - Develop a presentation of NIRAM, providing concise information on what has been developed so far and improve training material
  - Gather feedback from NIRAM users and identify needs for improvement and further recommendations for the tool.
  - Provide further training for NIRAM administrators, coordinators and inspectors in different IMPEL member countries.
  - Carry out one training workshop (presence or – depending on the situation - video conferences)
  - Assessment of total input and preparation of draft final report.

**Part B:** Setting up a roadmap for a project series on invasive alien species (IAS)

As IAS are a priority item of the Commission (see above), IMPEL will set up a roadmap for projects on the item in 2022. The project team will benefit from the experience of countries which dealt with that item at a very early stage (e.g. PT) and from those which carried out projects in that field (e.g. LV). As the item is complex (66 different species / 36 plant and 30 animal species), the project team thinks that it is a good bases to work with a step by step approach.

The roadmap will identify the most urgent items / questions to work on, and especially:

1. focus on Invasive alien Species (IAS) of Union concern (48 species); (hot points??)
2. work on EU regulation implementation in national legal acts - member states (MS) experience - who are responsible (environmental inspectors; other inspectors); competence of Nature Conservation Agencies in combating of IAS in MS;
3. identify best practice in combating IAS in MS;
4. seek consultation and cooperation with Neobanis;
5. work on awareness rising – best practice in MS - initiatives, projects;
6. carry out joint inspections; sharing of know-how in combating of IAS...

The roadmap will define:

- the activities and objectives for 2023
- the involved parties
- the expected outcomes
- the products expected for the 2023 phase
  
- the activities and objectives for 2024
- the involved parties



- the expected outcomes
- the products expected for the 2024 phase.

Interim reports of progress, key successes and failures will be provided at the end of each project year and a final report at the end highlighting successes, failures, feedback and lessons learned.

## 2.4 Desired outcome of the work

- **Part A:**  
Making progress in the use of the NIRAM IT tool as a part of the planning of inspections of Natura 2000 sites. It provides a systematic approach which would maximize resources into key areas of concern.  
Further development and finalisation of training material that can be used by authorities and their administrators, coordinators and inspectors in different IMPEL member countries. (Simple and easy to understand so that organisations can independently work with it.)
- **Part B:**  
A roadmap with defined work packages for a series of projects on invasive alien species to be carried out from 2023 on.

The roadmap will identify the most urgent items / questions to work on (see under 2.3) and define:

- the activities and objectives for 2023
- the involved parties
- the expected outcomes
- the products expected for the 2023 phase
  
- the activities and objectives for 2024
- the involved parties
- the expected outcomes
- the products expected for the 2024 phase.

## 2.5 Does this project link to any previous or current IMPEL projects?

- Part A:**
  - **2017/18:** Nature protection in permitting and inspection: Implementation of Art. 6(3) of the HD – inspection of non-energy extractive industry (quarries and open cast mining), and Roadmap for a planning tool concerning inspection of Natura 2000 sites (including the option of using the IRAM-Tool).
  - **2018/14:** Development of a planning tool for inspections of nature protected sites with focus on Natura 2000 sites.
  - **2019/15:** Development of a planning tool for inspections of nature protected sites with focus on Natura 2000 sites – application on different sites in Slovenia.



- **2020/19:** Development of a planning tool for inspections of nature protected sites with focus on Natura 2000 sites - training for NIRAM administrators, coordinators and inspectors in different IMPEL member countries
- **2021/10:** Development of a planning tool for inspections of nature protected sites with focus on Natura 2000 sites - training on using the NIRAM tool

### 3. Structure of the proposed activity

#### 3.1 Describe the activities of the proposal

##### Part A

Working with a core team for the preparation of the project activities, like preparing a presentation with information on NIRAM and providing information that has been developed so far.

Development of a short questionnaire to be sent to MS (concerning further needs of users).

Sending of the questionnaire to MS (to be decided, t.b.d.).

Invitation of experts concerning inspection of Natura 2000 sites.

Preparation of the documents (outputs).

##### Part B

In parallel discussion and development of the roadmap for a series of projects on invasive alien species to be carried out from 2023 on.

Activities 2023: will be defined in detail in the roadmap

Activities 2024 will be defined in detail in the roadmap.

#### 3.2 Describe the products of the proposal

##### Part A

Documents and presentation on how to work with the NIRAM tool (providing information for administrators, coordinators and inspectors).

Final Report

##### Part B

Roadmap with defined steps and milestones for a series of projects on invasive alien species to be carried out from 2023 on.

Interim report: end of 2023 and Final Report: end of 2024

