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### ***Drafting a financial plan to manage the Natura 2000 network***

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#### **Abstract**

Natura 2000 network (N2K) needs financial resources in order to maintain favorable conservation status of habitats and species. National resources should be used, according to the subsidiary principle, but article 8 of the Habitat Directive (92/43/CEE) states that it is possible to use EU financing as well.

In order to finance N2K many solutions have been discussed in a specific Communication of the European Commission (EC) (COM (2004) 431 def.) such as the improvement of the LIFE+ Nature Program, the establishment of a new specific Program for N2K, the use of the ordinary financial instruments; this last option was considered by the EC.

The ordinary financial instruments can be indirect when EU funding is assigned through national and/or regional Authorities (e.g.: EAFRD, ERDF, ESF), or direct when funding is assigned directly by the Commission (e.g.: LIFE+, MED, INTERREG, ADRION, HORIZON 2020).

The objective of this paper is to present a methodology, developed within the framework of SUN LIFE+ Project (LIFE13 NAT/IT/000371), in order to select not only the kind of costs to include in the costs evaluation of the N2K network of Umbria Region (2007-2013), but also the measures/actions of regional Programs (EAFRD, ERDF, ESF) (2014-2020), that could, potentially, finance N2K.

About costs, the main issue is: what kind of costs in investments, management, conservation and restoration of sites is correct to include in the evaluation (specific costs only or costs affecting the network in a broader sense also, e.g. cycle paths)? In order to reach the objective the EU Commission guide, "Financing Natura 2000" (ENV B.2/SER/2005/0020), has been used. The guide has been created to be useful for national and regional authorities when planning the use of EU funds (EAFRD, ERDF, ESF) for N2K. In this case, the guide was used ex post, after the definition of regional programs, in order to select which measure/action of the programs can be included in the costs evaluation. The guide retrieves a list of a key articles on the fund regulation, providing a legal base for investment and annual payments in N2K. For each regional program we identified in which measures/actions the key

articles have been implemented. In this way we selected the measures/actions to investigate for N2K costs. There is a lack of knowledge about the approaches of national and sub-national policy makers to the implementation of N2K funding (Geitzenauer et al., 2017)

In order to select which measures/actions of regional Programs (2014-2020), could finance one or more of “the 25 management activities” in the N2K, “Financing Natura 2000”the guides (EU DG Environment, 2014) have been used. The first of these guides contains a list of key articles regarding the fund regulation, providing a legal base for investment and annual payments in N2K. It link every key article to one or more of the “25 management activities” in the N2K that can be financed. Taking into consideration all the regional Programs (2014-2020), we identified in which measures/actions the key articles have been implemented and, consequently, the management activities that can be funded by measures/actions of the Programs. The result is a set of matrices of the funding opportunities for the Umbrian N2K, a very useful tool to supporting decision makers to draw up the Financial Plan of N2K Umbrian Strategy, the main results of SUN LIFE+ Project.

**Keyword:** Risk preferences, ambiguity preferences, technology adoption, economic experiment

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