

UK nature conservation agencies' response to the European Commission's Biodiversity Communication on Annex 1: Road Map to 2010

General

Although many targets are time-bound, the UK nature conservation agencies (hereafter referred to as the "Agencies") have concerns that some of the actions are too generic to be effective and are therefore difficult to report against and monitor. Examples of this include: 10.1.1, 10.1.3, B1.2.2, B3.1, B4.3.1, B4.3.2, B4.3.5, B4.4.2. It would be helpful therefore if the Commission could be explicit as to whether there are any specific programmes within these actions that could be used to help in their implementation.

The goal of biodiversity loss will only be met if action is taken by Member States, both individually and in partnership (e.g. to address trans-national problems such as climate change and invasive alien species). The Agencies therefore thought that the original Road Map was helpful in identifying, at a glance, where action lay in terms of implementation, i.e. Commission or Member States. In order to clearly identify responsibilities, the Agencies would therefore like the Community and Member States' level action columns to be added to the table.

A1.3 No priority species in worsening conservation status by 2010; majority of priority species in, or moving towards, favourable conservation status by 2013

Work is currently being carried out in the UK on Favourable Reference Values for habitats and species to inform the Agencies understanding of Favourable Conservation Status under Article 1(e) (habitats) and 1.1) (species) of the Habitats Directive. This aims to for example determine the level of populations of species and total surface area of habitats that is the minimum necessary to ensure their long-term viability. A common understanding of the conservation purpose will help to gain consensus between the EC, Member State Governments and other stakeholders as to the values that can be attributed to FRVs and, in turn, to appreciate a level that constitutes a "Favourable Conservation Status" for any species or habitat. *The Agencies would therefore recommend an action on the Commission to develop an action plan to establish FRVs for Habitats Directive habitats and species to achieve a consensus of definitions across Member States.*

A5 Supporting Biodiversity Adaptation to Climate Change

There should be another action on the Commission to establish a Task Force to review existing measures and consider new approaches to climate change, and act as an advisory panel on developing adaptation measures for biodiversity at European level.

Additional action on the Commission to establish a framework whereby the European Union policies embed an obligation to integrate adaptation to climate change into Member State policies and plans for land and water management so that biodiversity and ecosystem resilience are sustained.

B5 Measure: Evaluation and Review

The mid-term review should be carried out in 2008 in order to be consistent with paragraph 6.6 of the Communication. The Agencies presume the results will be sent and discussed with the Environment Council.

It is advisable that a new Road Map should cover a longer time period, say for the period of 2014-2030, as effective conservation of the natural environment needs to be planned over a longer-term period.

2 February 2006