



**Friends of
the Earth
Europe**



Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity Strategic plan – a first assessment in four European countries

A report for CBD COP 11, Hyderabad, India

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) strategic plan with its 20 Aichi targets is an important tool to achieve the three goals of the CBD and to considerably reduce biodiversity loss by 2020. CBD/COP/11/12 has made a first assessment of its implementation since Nagoya – but only gives an overview region by region. Friends of the Earth Europe wanted to know how countries in Europe, one of the regions particularly advocating for an ambitious strategic plan, are doing after two years – and has undertaken an assessment in four European countries: Germany, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Norway.

To undertake this assessment, the national Friends of the Earth groups reported on their situation for some selected Aichi targets using several easy-to-use indicators, and the data were completed with data from European assessments of environmental agencies and other institutions such as the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture and Forest Europe. The table (page 7) provides a compilation of the state of some of the most meaningful indicators and highlights, and the following text provides some key conclusions based on these data, first as a general overview, and then more detailed for several targets. Each of the target descriptions ends with a rating of how the four countries are performing in comparison.

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Overview

While the CBD strategic plan has been integrated into several national strategies and actions (Target 17), none of its Aichi targets have yet been achieved in any of the four countries assessed. The lack of activity towards implementing the strategy for resource mobilisation is especially striking; so is the lack of a basis for committing to any financial targets or any additional financial commitments. Incentives and subsidies harmful to biodiversity have also not yet been changed, so that there has been almost no progress towards targets 3 and 20. Land use – especially agriculture – is far from sustainable anywhere and the vast majority of habitats are still in bad shape, often as a result of this. The protected area system is also far from satisfactory. Restoration targets are still a long way from being met, and the Nagoya Protocol has yet to be ratified and implemented in all countries.

Comparing countries, Norway can boast the least fragmentation due to its low population density, but with 0.4% of its GDP it also affords the highest contributions to biodiversity. On the down side, it needs to step up its efforts for awareness raising, protected areas and ecological corridors, as well as to update its outdated NBSAP.

Switzerland has the highest percentage area of organic farming and of undisturbed forests (in part due to bad accessibility in the Alps), and it also has the newest biodiversity strategy which now is being followed by a more detailed action plan, but it also needs to create more awareness for the need to protect its biodiversity and to substantially improve its Protected Area network.

Germany is the most fragmented country, but it is doing comparatively well in terms of the state of important habitats and it also has designated all its Natura 2000 areas. Still, more efforts are needed to finance and establish Natura 2000 management and to make agriculture sustainable.

The UK is obviously moving ahead in integrating and implementing the strategic plan, but its habitats, and particularly forests, are worst off (little deadwood, over 75% are plantations), and funding is lower than anywhere else.

State of implementation for selected Aichi targets

High performance: +, mediocre performance: ~, poor performance: -

Target 1 - Public awareness

While **Germany** and the **UK** are making some efforts to raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity, such as the German Campaign for the international decade for biodiversity (www.un-dekade-biologische-vielfalt.de), no country has a comprehensive strategy aimed at increasing awareness in all sectors. Norway and Switzerland do not have any communications strategy at all, which is reflected by the poor rate of awareness that domestic biodiversity is under pressure in these countries: only 20% of the Swiss population think this is the case, while in Germany and the UK around 80% think that biodiversity loss is a serious or even very serious problem.

Germany, UK: ~, Norway, Switzerland: -

Target 3 - Elimination and redirection of damaging subsidies

While there is unanimous agreement in the biodiversity community that this is a key target with triple benefits (less pressure on biodiversity, fewer payments for taxpayers and more money for biodiversity), overall progress here leaves much to be desired. Only the **UK** has a comprehensive up-to-date **assessment** of subsidies harmful to biodiversity, and **none** have yet taken any **concrete action** to eliminate or redirect damaging subsidies. For the two EU countries, major opportunities for this are the upcoming reform of the EU policies on Agriculture (CAP), Structural policy, Fisheries Policy and the new Multiannual EU budget.

All: -

Target 5 - Reduced rate of habitat loss

EU member states have undergone a very systematic assessment of the habitats that are protected under the EU Habitats directive, the so-called Article 17 reports. According to the most recent assessment, only a small percentage of these protected habitat types (a third in Germany and a tenth in the UK) is in favourable conservation status. Fragmentation of habitats is a major problem in central Europe, with Germany being the most fragmented with over 42 meshes per 1000 km², while sparsely populated Norway only has 0.4.

Norway: ~, UK, Switzerland, Germany: -

Target 7 - Sustainable agriculture and forestry

This is a target of key importance: only sustainable land use will enable biodiversity to exist outside of protected areas in the long term. Organic agriculture is in many ways more sustainable for biodiversity than conventional agriculture. It covers only 3-11% of agricultural area in each country, with **Switzerland** leading – but there is still a lot of potential for further expansion. It also boasts the highest percentage of deadwood per hectare, important for many forest-dwelling animals such as woodpeckers and many rare species of beetle. More

than 3% of its forests are undisturbed, while neither Germany nor the UK has any such forest at all; the UK classes over 75% of its forests as plantations.

Switzerland: ~, Germany, UK, Norway: -

Target 11 - Protected areas

All European countries have committed to establishing a system of protected areas to safeguard their biodiversity. This is called the Natura 2000 system inside the EU, and is named the Emerald network elsewhere. As the EU Commission enforces implementation quite rigorously on the basis of binding legislation and financial sanctions in cases of non-compliance, area designation is completed in **Germany** and almost so in the **UK**. The Emerald network, on the other hand, is based on the good intentions of signatory states. Although it has already identified many sites, none have so far been officially designated. Switzerland's 37 sites will be the very first ones the Berne Convention will adopt in November. Management plans exist for all sites in the UK and are on their way in Germany. Funding is far from sufficient to enforce protection and pay for adequate management everywhere; a study commissioned by the EU Commission found out that roughly five times as much money was needed as is at present available. There are geographically precise plans for ecological corridors in all of these countries except Norway, but they are only implemented to a small extent.

Germany, UK: ~; Switzerland, Norway:-

Target 15 - Ecosystem resilience

The **UK** and **Norway** have clear national restoration targets, Germany and Switzerland don't or only partly. None of them have yet been achieved,

UK, Norway: ~; Germany, Switzerland: -

Target 16 - Nagoya Protocol on ABS

All countries have signed the Nagoya Protocol, none have ratified it yet. Switzerland plans to ratify the protocol by 2013, the EU end of 2014.

All: -

Target 17 - National biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs)

UK and **Switzerland** have a biodiversity strategy adopted after 2010 which reflects the CBD strategic plan; Germany's outcome-oriented and participatory national biodiversity strategy dates from 2007 and that of Norway is from 1997 and needs updating. While Germany and the UK are actively implementing their strategies and Switzerland will launch an Action plan with broad participation on this in November, Norway yet has to fulfil its Environment minister's promise to update its strategy.

UK: +, Germany, Switzerland: ~, Norway:-

Target 20 - Financial Resources

No country has as yet committed to increasing their biodiversity spending, or is set to agree on new targets at COP 11 in Hyderabad. Switzerland, Norway and the UK have made clear assessments of biodiversity spending both internationally and domestically, while Germany still lacks the latter. Biodiversity spending is in the range of over 0,026% (Germany, incomplete assessment) to 0,4% (Norway), which is far from sufficient, according to the High-Level Panel's assessment (CBD/COP/11/14/Add.2). Germany has committed to pay €500m annually from 2013.

All: -

Table of target performance

Target/Indicator(s)	Germany	Switzerland	UK	Norway
Target 1 (Awareness)				
Aw. raising strategy exists	partly	no	partly	no
Seriousness of loss (%)	87	20	79	n.a.
Target 3 (Subsidies)				
Identified	partly	partly	yes	partly
Phased out	no	no	no	no
Target 5 (Habitats)				
% in good status	34	n.a.	12	n.a.
Fragmentation	42	13	4	0.4
Target 7 (Sustainable Use)				
Organic Farming	5.93%	11.37%	4.34%	5.53%
Deadwood (m ³ /ha)	15	21	4	n.a.
Forest undisturbed	0%	3.05%	0%	1.38%
Target 11 (Protected Areas)				
Complete PA network	yes	no	partly	no
Management plans	partly	no	yes	no
Sufficient funding	no	no	no	no
Corridors	partly	partly	partly	no
Target 15 (Restoration targets)				
Targets exist	partly	no	yes	yes
Target 16 (ABS)				
Protocol signed	yes	yes	yes	yes
Protocol ratified	no	partly	no	no
Target 17 (NBSAP)				
Reflects CBD SP	partly	yes	yes	no
Implemented	yes	no	yes	no
Target 20 (Finance)				
Spending assessment	partly	yes	yes	yes
BS spending (% of GDP)	> 0.026%	0.20%	0.03%	0.40%



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