

European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law

Testing and Improving the Planning tool for Inspections of Natura 2000 Sites (NIRAM) and Providing Training Material

Presentation and Tutorials for Users

Date of report: 07/02/2025

Report number: 2022(VII)WG2 Part A



IMPEL is funded by a "FRAMEWORK PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT" with European Commission DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR ENVIRONMENT - LIFE PROGRAMME (ENV.E.4/FPA/2022/001 – IMPEL)



Introduction to IMPEL

The European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law (IMPEL) is an international non-profit association of the environmental authorities of the EU Member States, acceding and candidate countries of the European Union and EEA countries. The association is registered in Belgium and its legal seat is in Brussels, Belgium.

IMPEL was set up in 1992 as an informal Network of European regulators and authorities concerned with the implementation and enforcement of environmental law. The Network's objective is to create the necessary impetus in the European Community to make progress on ensuring a more effective application of environmental legislation. The core of the IMPEL activities concerns awareness raising, capacity building and exchange of information and experiences on implementation, enforcement and international enforcement collaboration as well as promoting and supporting the practicability and enforceability of European environmental legislation.

During the previous years IMPEL has developed into a considerable, widely known organisation, being mentioned in a number of EU legislative and policy documents, e.g. the 7th Environment Action Programme and the Recommendation on Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections.

The expertise and experience of the participants within IMPEL make the network uniquely qualified to work on both technical and regulatory aspects of EU environmental legislation.

Information on the IMPEL Network is also available through its website at: www.impel.eu



Title of the report:	Number report:
Testing and improving the proposed planning tool for inspections of Natura 2000 sites (NIRAM) in IMPEL member countries and providing training material.	2022(VII)WG2 Part A
Project Manager/Authors:	Report adopted at IMPEL
Gisela Holzgraefe (DE - project manager), José Antonio Vázquez	General Assembly Meeting:
Quintela (ES), Kate Bayley (UK), Alexandra Magalhães, Patricia Silva,	Adopted by written procedure
Nuno Saavedra, Elisabete Santos (PT), Andris Sirovs (LV), Katica Bezuh (HR), Jana Urbanová (CZ), Antonina Papathanasoglou,	on 20/03/2025
Ioannis Dimitrakopoulos (GR), Petra Rosinová (SK), Frederico Lobo (PT)	Total number of pages: 104
And additional project team meeting / workshop participants:	Report: 48
Zlatko Gelemanović (HR), Tatjana Lalič Šarić (HR), Lucilia Pareira (PT), Kathleen Dethier (BE), Cristina Maroñas Lorenzo (ES), Shpat Nivikazi (RKS), Carla Sofia Lopes (PT), Slavko Mladenovic (RS), Ljubomir Malezanović (RS), Šárka Hudemová (CZ), Francisco Perez Bustos (BE), Mantė Ramanauskienė, Erika Junevičienė (PT), João Loureiro (PT).	Annexes: 56
Executive Summary	

From 2022 – 2024 the IMPEL project on providing support for inspection planning of Natura 2000 sites consisted of two parts:

Part A: Testing and improving the planning tool for inspections of Natura 2000 sites (NIRAM) and providing training material and

Part B: Roadmap for projects on invasive alien species (IAS).

This document belongs to the second part of the 2022 – 2024 project.

Planning is one of the key factors in making inspection work more transparent, systematic and effective. IMPEL projects 2018/14 and 2019/15 worked on the development of the NIRAM tool and defined criteria which would manage the frequency of inspections at nature protected sites (with focus on Natura 2000 sites).

IMPEL project VII/2 20222 made applicability tests with the NIRAM tool by using the tool at selected Natura 2000 sites in Galicia, Latvia and Czech Republic and carrying out joint inspections for cross checks. A new criterion "presence of invasive alien species" was added to the list of impact criteria.



The project team offered video conferences providing support for NIRAM coordinators and inspectors and it turned out that the interest in NIRAM increases through personal experience in working with the tool. A presentation with basic information and a quick guide for getting access to the tool were developed. The report provides information about the approaches in different organisations of different member countries (Portugal, Croatia and Greece).

The workshop on inspections in Berlin (10/11th of December 2024) revealed that the knowledge about the systematic risk- based approach for establishing inspection plans and programs, carrying out of inspections and taking follow-up measures still needs improvement in nature protection inspectorates. With the development of the NIRAM tool (based on the IMPEL Integrated Risk Assessment Method IRAM), the project documents and the results of the project series on "Doing the Right Things" (especially the "Step-by-step guidance book for planning of environmental inspections"), IMPEL provides a complete toolbox for systematic planning and carrying out inspection work in the nature protection sector. The overall objective is to improve the effectiveness of inspection activities.

IMPEL should encourage authorities to use the NIRAM tool for the risk assessment by integrating the item into conferences, regional seminars and other IMPEL communication activities. For users like coordinators, group leaders and inspectors, IMPEL should develop a short video with compact information on NIRAM, getting access to it and working with it.

A follow-up IMPEL project should test whether NIRAM fits to marine sites too (just as it is or perhaps with adaptations).

Disclaimer

This report is the result of a project within the IMPEL network. The content does not necessarily represent the view of the national administrations or the Commission.

Quotation

It shall be permissible to make quotations from an IMPEL Document which has already been available to the public on the IMPEL website, provided that their making is compatible with fair practice, and their extent does not exceed that justified by the purpose. Where use is made of works in accordance with Berne Convention, mention should be made of related IMPEL Document Name with giving publication link of the document on IMPEL Website. IMPEL has all rights under the Berne Convention.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	BACKGROUND / GENERAL INFORMATION	7
2.	OBJECTIVES	7
3.	METHODOLOGY	7
4.	PROGRESS IN THE APPLICATION OF THE TOOL	8
4.1	ADJUSTMENTS OF THE NIRAM TOOL	8
5.	NIRAM-APPLICATION IN DIFFERENT IMPEL MEMBER COUNTRIES	9
5.1	THE PORTUGUESE EXAMPLE	9
5.1.	1 ADJUSTING NIRAM TO THE NEEDS OF CCDR ALENTEJO	12
5.1.	2 NIRAM TEST - MONFURADO	14
5.2	EXAMPLE CROATIA	17
5.3	EXAMPLE GREECE - NIRAM ASSESSMENT OF EVROTAS ESTUARIES	20
5.3.	1 BASIC INFORMATION ON THE SITE	20
5.3.	2 COLLECTING DATA AND INFORMATION BEFORE THE INSPECTION	21
5.3.	3 SCORING WITH THE NIRAM TOOL	23
6.	TESTING THE NIRAM TOOL IN PRACTICE	24
6.1	EXAMPLE GALICIA (SPAIN)	24
6.1.	1 BASIC INFORMATION ON THE SITE	24
6.1.	2 THE SCORING	27



6.2	EXAMPLE LATVIA	30
6.2. [^]	1 BASIC INFORMATION IN THE SITE	30
6.2.2	2 THE SCORING WITH THE NIRAM TOOL	31
6.3	EXAMPLE CZECH REPUBLIC	34
6.3. [^]	1BASIC INFORMATION ON THE SITE	35
6.3.2	2 JOINT INSPECTIONS	35
6.3.3	3 THE SCORING WITH THE NIRAM TOOL	36
7.	SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS AND MATERIAL FOR FACILITATING THE USE OF THE TOOL	<u>=</u> 43
8.	NIRAM IN THE CONTEXT OF ENVIRONMENTAL INSPECTIONS	43
9.	BARRIERS FOR THE USE OF THE TOOL (IDENTIFIED SO FAR)	45
10.	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	46
10.1	CONCLUSIONS	46
10.2	RECOMMENDATIONS	47
11.	PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE WORK	47
ANN INSI SER	NEX I. TOR "TESTING AND IMPROVING THE PROPOSED PLANNING TOOL FOR PECTIONS OF NATURA 2000 SITES (NIRAM) AND ROADMAP FOR A PROJECT REIS ON INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES (IAS)	50
ANN	NEX II. ILLUSTRATED NIRAM QUICK GUIDE	59
	IEX III. PRESENTATION	67



1. Background / General information

Authorities / inspectorates have to plan their tasks in advance with the aim to allocate the most efforts on the most important tasks. Generally, they do this with a lack in resources and staff. These are the reasons why IMPEL wants to provide a simple and flexible tool for planning inspections. Starting point

The IMPEL <u>project 2018/14</u> 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 <u>2019</u> 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 <u>Project 2020/19</u> aimed at developing training material and providing training for NIRAM administrators, coordinators and inspectors in different IMPEL member countries. Due to the COVID situation the practical work on the project could only successfully start again in 2023. Tests and amendments of the tool were carried out during workshops in Galicia, Latvia, Romania and Czech Republic.

2. Objectives

According to the Terms of Reference (TOR) 2022 the objectives were the following:

- Develop a presentation of NIRAM, providing concise information on what has been developed so far and improve training material,
- $\circ~$ 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),
- $\circ~$ Development of tutorials for coordinators / inspectors for getting access to and using the NIRAM-IT-tool.
- Assessment of total input and preparation of draft final report.

3. Methodology

Due to the Covid situation, the timeframe for the activities and the working methods of the project had to be adjusted to the new situation. In 2022, the project team members carried out several video conferences with the aim to keep in touch and to collect information about the development in the use of the tool. The active work started again in 2023.



Further input was collected during the project team meeting in Rome (19 April 2023) with an enlarged number of participants as well as during the workshops (including joint inspections) in Galicia (13 – 15th June 2023), Latvia (24 – 26 October 2023), Romania (22 May 2024) and Czech Republic (08 – 10 October 2024).

In 2023 Portugal started the work on the systematic implementation of NIRAM assessments for setting up the inspection programs for the different inspection bodies in the country. The experience provided valuable input to the further discussions.

A presentation with basic information on the NIRAM tool was developed and used in the different events. Its purpose is to facilitate the first steps during training events.

In August and September 2024 three training videoconferences were carried out for coordinators and partly for inspectors (with participants from Germany, Portugal, Croatia, Czech Republic and Greece).

In December 2024 a workshop on general aspects of inspections was carried out. One part of the workshop covered the access to and the use of the NIRAM tool.

4. Progress in the Application of the Tool

4.1 Adjustments of the NIRAM tool

During the work on the development of a roadmap for a series of projects on invasive alien species (IAS), the project team decided to add a new criterion on the presence of IAS to the criteria of the NIRAM tool.

12 - IAS reported in the Natura 2000 site

a) This is an impact criterion.

Definition:

Regulation (EU) No. 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species sets out rules to prevent, minimize and mitigate the adverse impact on biodiversity of the introduction and spread within the Union, both intentional and unintentional, of invasive alien species. These provisions apply to all invasive alien species animals, plants, fungi or microorganisms introduced outside its natural range. Further the Regulation sets out measures for the early detection and eradication of alien species.

The Commission adopts a list of invasive alien species of Union concern, on the basis of the criteria laid down in article 4 of this Regulation and that step is being implemented: Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/1141 of 13 July 2016, Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/1263 of 12 July 2017, Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/1262 of 25 July 2019 Commission



Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1203 of 12 July 2022 adopting a list of invasive alien species of Union concern pursuant to Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

After an invasive alien species being included on the Union list, Member States shall have in place effective management measures for those invasive alien species of Union concern which the Member States have found to be widely spread on their territory, so that their impact on biodiversity, the related ecosystem services, and, where applicable, on human health or the economy are minimised.

The scoring:

Score	Criteria 12 – IAS reported in the Natura 2000 site
0	No presence IAS
1	Presence of IAS with mitigation measures
2	No current information of presence of IAS
3	Presence of IAS without mitigation measures

5. NIRAM-Application in different IMPEL Member Countries

During the course of the project, various organizations decided to test the NIRAM tool and possibly use it later for establishing their inspection plans and programs. Some examples are given here and the different approaches are described in more detail.

5.1The Portuguese Example

In 2022, a Working Group was created to address the possibility to adapt the NIRAM tool to Portugal. Not only in the mainland but also in autonomous regions of the Azores and Madeira, thus covering the entire territory of the country.

Some challenges were posed to this Working Group, as there was a need to adapt the tool's criteria to the specific circumstances of the territory and its needs, but also the national and regional laws of the archipelagos of the Azores and Madeira.

Another challenge was the need to train people to use the risk analysis tool, IRAM, previously developed by IMPEL's *Industry and Air Team*. Some workshops were held to test this tool and the necessity to develop manuals and tutorials was identified.



The needs to obtain data and information to prepare the score for each of the Natura 2000 sites, from the Standard Data Form (SDF) and other sources of information considered relevant for this work, is also a challenge.

As for the maximum time period of data relevance, in Portugal, it was decided to use the same time frame as the report of the Natura 2000 SDF: six years.

The adaptation of criteria to the Portuguese reality preceded the operationalization of the risk analysis tool in Portugal. A short explanation is presented in the criteria that were adapted:

- Criterion 1 Presence of habitats and/or protected species.
- Criterion 2 Site vulnerability/Vulnerability of the habitats in the site. The information needed for this criterion is not readily available. As such, it was changed for "Threats with impact on the site", thus using the information is available in the SDF.
- Criterion 3 Gravity of offences, was maintained with the necessary changes to adapt it to the national and regional law. In Azores this criteria was changed to "Severity of offenses": light, serious and very serious environmental offense (according to the regional law). In the mainland, this criteria was changed for Validated complaints. Both criteria, regional and national, are quantified as number of offences per area, to normalize the results in all the Natura 2000 sites, independent of its size.
- Criterion 4 Conservation status of the site.
- Criterion 5 Presence of activities with likely negative impact on conservation objectives, inside the Natura 2000 sites.
- Criteria 6a/6b/6c Presence of activities outside the boundary of the Natura 2000 site which are likely to have a negative impact on the site – air/water/in combination.
- Criterion 7 Likely negative impact on conservation objectives changes in land use.
- Criterion 8 Presence of Management plan. In Azores and Madeira this criteria is not a differentiator for risk analysis, because all Natura 2000 have a Management plan in place. As such, it will only be used in the mainland and in Madeira autonomous region.
- Criterion 9 Presence of Custodian. In Azores and Madeira this criteria is not a differentiator for risk analysis, because all Natura 2000 have the same custodian: the regional nature protection authorities. As such, it will only be used in the mainland.



- Criterion 10 Presence of activities with favourable impact on conservation / Presence of activities with likely favourable impact on conservation objectives inside Natura 2000 sites (number of habitats and/or species listed in SDF chapter No. 3.1. and 3.2.).
- Criterion 11 Overlap of Natura 2000 with other national and/or international sites. In Azores this
 criteria will be adapted taking into account the different levels of protection in the regional
 protected areas.
- Criterion 12 IAS reported in the Natura 2000 site.

In Portugal, new criteria were developed:

- Criterion 13 Requests for licenses in Natura 2000 sites that had a negative response.
- Criterion 14 Groundwater drilling and abstraction licenses in Natura 2000 sites.

The Working Group in Portugal took the NIRAM tool a step forward using satellite information and other technologies, namely Copernicus' Sentinel-2 and Artificial Intelligence. Thus, the Portuguese Directorate-General for the Territory (DGT) also participated in the Working Group in order to develop an innovative new instrument to monitor continuously the vegetation cover of Portugal's territory: the Forest and Scrub Vegetation Loss Map (FSVLM).

This innovative instrument, developed by DGT in Portugal, makes it possible to identify and monitor vegetation losses in forest and scrub areas, and it is updated every two months. The bimonthly update frequency allows the organisations responsible to quickly identify areas that have suffered vegetation loss, helping to make more informed and timely decisions.

In addition, users are encouraged to provide feedback on the use of FSVLM, contributing to the continuous improvement of this service. As an experimental product, launched in mid-2024, it is currently undergoing evolutionary maintenance, which will lead to improvements and adjustments in its production methods and technical specifications.

The FSVLM will be used to provide data for "Criterion 7 – Likely negative impact on conservation objectives - changes in land use". But also, the information obtained from the FSVLM can be employed to direct inspection efforts to the identified areas on this cartographic product.

In addition, for the purpose of using satellite intelligence, namely Copernicus' Sentinel-2, a brief guide was prepared to use these images and data to promote the monitoring of Natura 2000 sites.

The Geospatial Intelligence for Environmental Damage Assessment (GIEDA) IMPEL Project can also contribute on information needs related to illegal activities affecting the environmental matrices, in producing *a posteriori* evidence of environmental damage caused by environmental incidents, violations, eco-criminal acts, etc.



In fact, as stated by the GIEDA project team, the rapid growth of geospatial techniques, like spatial statistics and earth observation remote sensing technology, as well as recent advances in artificial intelligence, has increased the ability in monitoring environmental processes. In the last decades, there has been a growing awareness that geospatial technology can monitor, inspect and assess the environment, producing the information needed by regulatory practitioners, supporting the investigation of eco-criminal acts and infringement of environmental laws.

5.1.1 Adjusting NIRAM to the Needs of CCDR Alentejo

The Alentejo Regional Coordination and Development Commission (Comissão de Coordenação e Desenvolvimento Regional do Alentejo, I.P - CCDRA), is a special public institute and part of the state's indirect administration, endowed with administrative and financial autonomy and its own assets. It is subject to the superintendence and supervision of the Deputy Minister for Territorial Cohesion.

One of its missions is to integrate and articulate the public policies that are essential to the implementation of regional development policies in the fields of the environment, cities, economy, culture, education, health, spatial planning, nature conservation, agriculture and fisheries. Another task is to provide technical support to local authorities and their associations.

The Director of the Surveillance Unit of CCDRA joined the NIRAM project in June 2023 by participating in the workshop in Galicia and after that in meetings and inspections in Riga, Bucharest and Czech Republic to test and improve the NIRAM tool. Another item was to learn about issues related to IAS in other countries and the different ways of combating them, with particular emphasis on the Natura 2000 Network.

The work also benefited from practical knowledge of field inspections as well as knowledge of other projects, such as BIOVAL, which is considered important to be adapted and be applied in Portugal.

Given that CCDR-A, I.P. was already developing an NPRI - National Peer Review Initiative - project focusing exclusively on the Natura 2000 Network, it was decided that NIRAM would have its reference in this project, as it is about applying all the best practices and technologies available to improve the effectiveness of inspections in Natura 2000 areas.

For this reason, in addition to NIRAM, reference was also made to EMERITUS, a tool for the remote detection of waste disposal. Its operation is based on RGB analysis of orthophotomaps, which makes it possible to monitor and detect waste deposited in rural and forest areas, such as the Natura 2000 areas.

In accordance with the *Terms of Reference of* the NPRI in the CCDR-A, I.P. Surveillance Unit, contacts were made with the stakeholders and it was possible to achieve a more comprehensive view of the problems related to inspection actions in Portugal, since all the country's CCDRs were present, as well as the Portuguese Environment Agency (Agência Portuguesa do Ambiente – APA – competent authority for the protection and management of water resources) and the Institute for Nature Conservation and Forests



(ICNF). It was concluded that there is a need to strengthen collaboration between everyone, promoting an environment of sharing, interoperability and harmonization of procedures.

Specifically with regard to NIRAM, the criteria were worked out to choose those that would best suit the circumstances of our territory and which, without any further constraints, would allow it to be used right away.

Of the 15 criteria available, 6 were selected (one more than those determined in 2023) with the main aim of adapting NIRAM to Portuguese needs:

• Presence of protected habitats and/or species.

The presence of protected habitats and species is the main reason for SACs and SPAs, both of which form a central part of SACs and SPAs, both of which form a central part of the Natura 2000 Network. Therefore, this criterion should guide surveillance actions in the Natura 2000 sites.

• Vulnerability of habitats in the Natura 2000 area.

The presence of protected habitats and species is based on highly fragile ecosystems. The assessment of their vulnerability makes it possible to prioritise the most relevant actions with a view to conserving the aforementioned ecosystems.

• Conservation status of the Site.

The state of conservation of a given Site or area is inversely logical to the urgency of the actions to conserve it. In other words, a poor state of conservation requires increased attention from the surveillance teams.

• Presence of activities likely to have a negative impact on conservation objectives in the Natura 2000 area.

In order to ensure that the conservation objectives of Sites or areas are met, it is essential to analyse the forestry, agricultural, industrial, other service activities present in, or near the area, whose anthropogenic effect could have a negative impact on these objectives.

• Presence of activities with a probable negative impact on conservation objectives, affecting air quality, water quality, water resources and cumulative impacts.

In order to ensure that the conservation objectives of Sites or territories are met, it is urgent to analyse the criteria for air quality/water quality and water resources, as well as cumulative impacts, so that the lowest assessments are of greater importance, with a view to carrying out enforcement actions more quickly.

• Changes in land use with a probable impact on conservation objectives.



The removal or alteration of land uses in sites or protected areas is rare, but it is very important that those that do take place are properly scrutinised.

Once these criteria had been defined, the tool was tested in collaboration with the ICNF (Annex 1), with the aim of updating the databases to operationalize the risk assessment of Natura sites.

5.1.2 NIRAM test - Monfurado

The NIRAM test was carried out in the Serra de Monfurado Natura Network area (PTCON0031), which is located near Évora and has marked particularities in terms of the biodiversity present due to the soil and climate conditions that allow for the existence of species that are not common in other Natura 2000 sites.

Monfurado site has 6310 extensive cork oak forests in a good state of conservation, most of which are cork oak, and some of which are holm oak or mixed in more restricted areas. These mixed montados are made up of cork oak and black oak, a species that has the southern limit of its distribution here. It is crossed by several streams with riparian vegetation of amaryllis and willows, communities of floating buttercups and Chara benthic vegetation.

In the understory, there are xerophytic Mediterranean grasslands with spring or summer flowering. It is in Monfurado that we find the best examples of communities of Calicotome villosa (5330), dense scrubland that in Portugal is exclusive to the Évora region.

Its fauna includes chiroptera, particularly the great mouse bat and the Moorish horseshoe bat, which are important for their diet, as well as Cabrera's mouse. This site has ideal characteristics or characteristics that could be optimised in order to promote the occurrence of Iberian lynx or allow their reintroduction in the medium to long term.

The scoring result: one inspection in six years.



Status: in use

Assessment done by	Patricia Gomes da Silva			
Inspection object	Monfurado (PTCON	ID PT0000001		
Inspection task	CCDR_Alentejo			
Date of inspection planning	18.07.2024	Date of last inspection	17.07.2024	

Address data				
Street	Evora P	ortugal		
	Lvora, r	liugai		
nput of Impact Scores				
Impact criteria				
		Maximum score	Score	(weight)
1 - Presence of habitats and/or protected specie	es	3	1	0
2 – Vulnerability of the habitats in the site		3	0	0
4 – Conservation status of the site		3	1	0
5 – Presence of activities with likely negative im	pact on	3	2	0
6 a – Presence of activities outside the boundar	ry of the	3	1	0
6 b - Presence of activities outside the boundar	y of the	3	0	0
7 – Changes in land use		3	2	0
Minimum number of Low highest score 2 cate	vest risk egory	0	Highest ris category	sk 3
Input of Operator Performance Scores				
Operator performance criteria				
		Weight of criteria	a	Score
6 c) Presence of activities outside the boundary	/ of the	1		-1



-1

Mean of operator performance

Risk Scores and Inspection Profile

Impact criteria			
	Risk profile	Inspection weight	Inspection profile
1 - Presence of habitats and/or protected species	0	1	1
2 - Vulnerability of the habitats in the site	0	1	0

4 – Conservation status of the site	0	1	1
5 – Presence of activities with likely negative impact on	1	1	2
6 a – Presence of activities outside the boundary of the	0	1	1
6 b - Presence of activities outside the boundary of the	0	1	0
7 – Changes in land use	1	1	2

Risk ranking number	1100000
Highest risk score	1
Number of highest risk scores	2
Risk category	1
Inspection frequency	6
Latest inspection date	17.01.2025
Maximum inspection effort (100%)	21
Sum of inspection profile	7
Inspection effort (percentage)	33 %
Inspection category	В
Sum of risk profile	2
Mean risk profile	 0,3



5.2 Example Croatia

The ecological network of the Republic of Croatia covers 36.73% of the land territory and 15.42% of the coastal sea and 9.81 km² of the area outside the territorial sea under national jurisdiction, and consists of 743 Areas of Conservation Important for Species and Habitat Types (SCI) and 38 Areas of conservation importance for birds (SPA)

A significant share of the Natura 2000 area (26.86%) is already protected in one of the nine national categories of protected areas according to the Nature Protection Act (Official Gazette, No. 80/13, 15/18, 14/19, 127/19, 155/23, *further in text: NPA*). Furthermore, as much as 90.80% of the total area of protected areas in national categories is located within the Natura 2000 network.

The conservation of the area of the ecological network is ensured by the implementation of the appropriate assessment procedure for the ecological network, the implementation of conservation measures, the implementation of management plans and appropriate legal, administrative and contractual measures. The basic way of managing the area of the ecological network is the implementation of conservation measures for target species and habitat types. They are incorporated into management plans for the ecological network sites, as well as sectoral plans for the management of natural resources.

According to the NPA, public institutions for managing the national park or nature park and public institutions for managing other protected areas and/or other protected parts of nature are responsible for managing areas of the ecological network and for surveillance of Natura 2000 sites. The responsibilities of public institutions that manage protected areas and ecological network areas for managing and adopting ecological network management plans are defined by the Regulation on the Ecological Network and the Competencies of Public Institutions for Managing Ecological Network Areas (Official Gazette, No. 80/19, 109/2023).

According to national regulations nature protection inspectors placed in the State Inspectorate, as well as rangers (who are employees of Public Institutions) are authorised for the supervision of Natura 2000 sites.

Taking into account the above-mentioned specificities of the Natura 2000 sites area in Croatia, the use of the NIRAM planning method by rangers seems logical. 12 criteria were chosen for the first testing and an additional IAS-criterion should be applied too.

During the past year, all relevant institutions have been introduced in the NIRAM inspection planning method based on risk assessment. Some of public institution manage only a few Natura 2000 sites, others have over 100 Natura 2000 sites. For that reason, the NIRAM method is found useful, especially for those public institutions that manage a larger number of Natura 2000 sites.

Taking into account the above-mentioned specificities of the area covered by Natura 2000 sites in Croatia, 12 criteria were chosen, 2 criteria for optional use (10. custodian and 12. favorable impact).



Impact criteria	Probability criteria
1. Presence of habitats and/or protected species	9. Management Plan (MP)
2. Vulnerability of the habitats in the site	10. Custodian (optional)
3. Degree of offence	11. Overlap of N2K with other
	national/international sites
4. Conservation status of the site	12. Activities with likely favourable impact
	(optional)
5. Activities inside with likely negative impact	13. Presence of IAS
6. Activities outside with negative impact on air	
quality	
7. Changes in land use	
8. Activities outside with negative impact on	
water	

Table XXX: scoring criteria used for testing in Croatia

At the beginning of the year the public institution "Priroda Grada Zagreba" made a theoretical test of "HR2001311 Sava nizvodno od Hrušćice".

In April 2024, the NIRAM method was presented on the annual rangers meeting which more than 100 rangers attended. There, the concrete example of the theoretical NIRAM risk assessment of the site HR5000031 "Delta Neretva" was presented.

So far, interest in the application of this method has been expressed by two other public institutions, interest from others is expected as well.

In August and September 2024 the coordinator for the NIRAM IT tool was appointed and the NIRAM form (template) was translated into the Croatian language, a few other tests of the IT tool were made. Also, tutorials in Croatian for rangers are finished and were delivered to the rangers who expressed their interest.

So far, the public institution "Virovitica Nature" expressed interest and a group of 3 rangers who are employed in the same public institution was formed. On suggestion of the rangers, the HR1000012 site "Taložnice Virovitičke šećerane" was tested theoretically. Because of its specificity the HR5000015 "Middle Stream Drava" site was also tested theoretically.



The site HR5000015 "Middle Stream Drava" covers a large area divided in 2 administrative units, and it is managed by two different public institutions what caused some dilemma and some questions are open (for example: who will carry out the risk assessment for the Natura 2000 site as a whole and whose assessment will be accepted as valid).

The Natura 2000 site HR5000015 "Middle Stream Drava" overlaps with the Mura - Drava Regional Park, and a Management Plan that includes Natura 2000 sites is established. This Management Plan represents a valuable source of data for the NIRAM risk assessment.

Furthermore, the assessment of the first criterion (presence habitat/species) showed that possibly experts (biologists) should be consulted and provide more reliable initial data for the first assessment. The input from experts (biologists) focused on the essential components (target species or habitats) could finally result in a more acceptable evaluation. This can also provide more confidence in the validity of the risk assessment to the ranger services carrying out the field surveillance and this will enable rangers to continue independently the assessment with more confidence.



Picture XXX: NIRAM tested for sites in different geographical regions



5.3 Example Greece – NIRAM Assessment of Evrotas Estuaries

In November 2024 an inspection has been carried out in the Natura sites GR 2540003 - GR2540006 (Estuary of Evrotas river – Peloponnese Lakonia) in order to test the NIRAM tool.

5.3.1 Basic information on the site

The estuary zone, the Evrotas River delta and part of the Laconian Gulf are included in the European NATURA 2000 Network as SAC-sSCI – Evrotas Estuaries, Vrontama Area and Laconian Gulf Marine Area (GR 2540003) (10,632.61 ha) and SPA – Evrotas Estuary Wetlands (GR 2540006) (2,172.76 ha).

The Evrotas River basin is considered one of the most geologically isolated parts of Greece, resulting in a large number of endemic species of fauna and flora. The Evrotas is home to populations of extremely rare fish species such as the three endemic cyprinidae of the Evrotas, Squalius keadicus (Endangered), Pelasgus laconicus (Critically Endangered) and Tropidophoxinellus spartiaticus (Vulnerable), while it hosts a significant population of the otter Lutra lutra.

In the estuarine area of the Evrotas River, **SAC-sSCI** – **Evrotas Estuaries**, **Vrontama Area and Laconian Gulf** Marine Area (GR 2540003), nine basic habitat types of Directive 92/43 are found. The largest area is occupied by the Mediterranean salt flats of Juncetalia maritimi (Code 1410) and the Thermo-Mediterranean riparian forests-galleries (Nerio-Tamaricetae) (Code 92D0), while the habitat types with the smallest area are the Moving dunes of the coastline with Ammophila arenaria (white dunes) (Code 2120), the Wet Mediterranean grasslands with tall grasses of Molinio Holoschoenion (Code 6420) and the habitats Annual vegetation between the high and low tide limits (Code 1210). The area is also a spawning ground for fish species, while at the same time it is a growth area for young sea turtles of the species Caretta caretta and Chelonia mydas, as well as a mating and breeding area for the Caretta species.

SPA area - Wetlands of Evrota Estuary (GR 2540006) with species designation the Glossy ibis Plegadis falcinellus, includes a combination of important wetland and coastal ecosystems (sand dunes, salt marshes, riparian vegetation, meadows, wet meadows and reed beds). The Evrota Estuary ecosystem is particularly important during migrations for aquatic and wading bird species, constituting a resting, feeding and breeding place for various bird species.





5.3.2 Collecting data and information before inspection

Most habitat types in the Evrotas area have either been significantly reduced or fragmented, and are now threatened with further decline. The main anthropogenic pressures on the area include pollution from wastewater from agro-industrial units scattered throughout the Evrotas basin, the extensive use of fertilizers and pesticides, and the uncontrolled disposal of waste in ravines and gorges. Pressures also include the alteration of riparian vegetation and land clearing for the purpose of expanding agricultural crops to the river banks, illegal logging, and fires. Another significant threat is prolonged droughts, due to climate variability and human interventions (extensive irrigation withdrawals) that cause negative impacts on ecosystems and biodiversity, as they create environmental conditions to which organisms are unable to adapt.

For the preparation of the NIRAM assessment, all of the aspects mentioned above were taken into account, and after communication with the Regional Department of Environment, the recording of frequent environmental offenses in the area was confirmed (illegal irrigation, modification of the hydrological flow, dumping of liquid and solid waste, uncontrolled use of pesticides, etc.). Also, data was collected from the Flood Risk Plan of the area, which again confirms the aforementioned and from the Hellenic National Centre for Marine and Fisheries Research, through the "PARNON" project: Actions to Improve the Conservation Status of the Protected Ichthyofauna Species Squalius keadicus (Endangered) and Pelasgus laconicus (Critically Endangered).





Photo by: Panos Psyxogios, Archive of the Association of Friends of the Protection of the Evrotas River "The Evrotas"

Presence of IAS: <u>Gambusia affinis</u>. A pilot program was carried out by the Hellenic National Centre for Marine and Fisheries Research with the funding and the coordination of the Natural Environment & Climate Change Agency (NECCA) to eradicate the species and enrich the endemic ones.



Photo by: <u>https://greece.inaturalist.org/taxa/101204-Gambusia-holbrooki</u>



5.3.3 The scoring with the NIRAM tool

The scoring was based on all the information mentioned above and collected in the inspection that took place in 6th November 2024 as well, and resulted in a frequency of **12** months.

Impact criteria	Score
1. Presence of habitats and/or protected species	3
2. Vulnerability of the habitats in the site	2
3. Degree of offence	2
4. Conservation status of the site	2
5. Activities inside with likely negative impact	3
6. Activities outside with negative impact on air quality	1
7. Changes in land use	3
8. Activities outside with negative impact on water	2
9. IAS reported in the Natura 2000 site	3

Probability criteria	Score
1. Management Plan (MP)	0
2. Custodian	0
3. Overlap of Natura 2000 site with other national/international sites	0
4. Activities with likely favourable impact	0



6 Testing the NIRAM Tool in Practice

6.1 Example Galicia (Spain)

In June 2023 IMPEL carried out a joint inspection of the A Limia Natura 2000 site (code ES0000436) that is part of the Biosphere Reserve Area of Allariz in Galicia.

6.1.1 Basic information on the site

In Galicia IMPEL carried out a joint inspection of the A Limia Natura 2000 site (code ES0000436) that is part of the Biosphere Reserve Area of Allariz. It is located in the province of Ourense. Basic input information on the site chosen and the Natura 2000 site (the channel, transporting the water from the sand exploitation site to the river A Limia) was provided.

The quick facts according to the standard data form are:

- Natura 2000 site_(code ES0000436)
- Under Birds Directive
- Since November 2009
- Country: Spain
- Administrative region: Galicia (ES11)
- Surface area: 69 km² (6939.28 ha)
- Located in Atlantic and Mediterranean biogeographical regions
- It protects **51** species of the Nature Directives
- It protects **10** habitat types of the Habitats Directive

Site characteristics: predominantly agricultural area, with gentle relief and presence of alluvial plains.

Quality and importance: A Limia is an area of special importance and value in Galicia for avifauna linked to the agricultural environment: white stork (Ciconia ciconia), Montagu's harrier (Circus pygargus), little bustard (Tetrax tetrax), stone curlew (Burhinus oedicnemus) and European lapwing (Vanellus vanellus). Border area between the Atlantic and Mediterranean biogeographic regions. If it would be considered to be included in the Atlantic biogeographic region, it would have a special value at the state level for the following species: little bustard (Tetrax tetrax), common curlew (Burhinus oedicnemus) and European lapwing (Vanellus vanellus).

Pressures discussed

The old Antela Lagoon was conserved with an extension of 42 km² until in the 1950s it was drained for the agricultural use of the land. This desiccation profoundly modified the hydrographic network of the middle basin of the Limia River through channelling and rectification of the river bed itself and the construction of numerous drainage channels and resulting in the loss of the original alluvial plains.

At present, the region is one of the Galician territories of greater agricultural production of crops, potato, corn, cereal, horticulture. In the last decade the livestock sector of the Comarca has become an important sector in the regional economy, due to the development of numerous farms for intensive rearing of cattle,



pigs and poultry. On the other hand, several companies started in the 70s the extraction of sand of excellent quality from the Antela Lagoon. The activity has generated new wet areas, in this case artificial.

Measures for remediation

From 2015 to 2018 the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and the Environment carried out the LIFE project "LIFE Regenera Limia" that was created with the objective of recovering the water quality of the Limia river during its passage through the region of Ourense.

The project consisted of four main activities:

- ✓ Development of a fertiliser management system through creating an integrated control system for the management of fertilisers for agricultural soils. The aim is the reduction of eutrophication with agricultural and livestock origin in the Limia river basin.
- ✓ Demonstrative development of a low-cost treatment system for waste water from pigslurry using intensive macrophyte wetlands. The installation could not be built during the project time. A guidance document for supporting of farmers in their decisions making processes has been developed based on the experiences made in the project.
- ✓ Measures for the recovery and rehabilitation of the old meander of the river Limia, reconnection of lagoon systems and a pilot project in the surroundings of the main channel of the "Lagoa de Antela".
- ✓ Measures for the recovery of and integration in the hydrological cycle of the abandoned sand ponds for the generation of a lagoon system that enhances the filtering capacity of the fluvial course.
- ✓ On top, a "Guide to Good Agricultural Practices" was developed.





Picture XXX: Connection between Canal Laguna de Antela and the two sand ponds – one of the measures carried out.

Three connections were made between both ponds and the canal: one gives way from the canal to the ponds, another between the ponds and a third to release the circulating water. The existing ecosystems have been improved by creating two platforms for progressive flooding, to promote their colonisation by hydrophilic plant communities adapted to flood periods and specialists in the retention of water nutrients. Three floating islands were installed and anchored to prevent their displacement. They were vegetated with macrophytic plant species (purification specialists) previously collected from the rafts adjacement to the channel of the Antela Lagoon.





Picture XXX: Connection between ponds

6.1.2 The scoring

Based on the knowledge from the Standard Data Form (SDF), the inspector's input on invasive species and management measures as well as files the first scoring was carried out. The result was a frequency of 36 months.

During the joint inspection, a local bird expert provided further information. Examples of the invasive plant species and eradication measures were shown. In the field a second scoring was carried out based on the input from the preparatory assessment with NIRAM Tool and the additional on-site experience. The result was again a frequency of 36 months.

This showed that good input at the beginning leads to a robust and reliable result in the scoring phase.



Status: in use

Assessment done by	Alexandra Magalhaes_Inspector			
Inspection object	La Limia		ID 25143	
Inspection task	Nature Inspectio	on (very very very new)		
Date of inspection planning	13.06.2023	Date of last inspection	13.06.2023	

Address data

Street		
Postal code	Location	Spain

Input of Impact Scores

Impact criteria			
	Maximum score	Score	Shift of score (weight)
1) Presence of habitats and/or protected species	3	1	0
2) Vulnerability of the habitats in the site	3	0	0
4) Degree of offence	3	0	0
5) Conservation status of the site	3	2	0
7) Activities inside with likely negative impact	3	3	0
8a) Activities outside with negative impact on air quality	3	3	0
9) Changes in land use	3	1	0
8 b) Activities outside with negative impact on water	3	3	o

Minimum number of highest score	4	Lowest risk category	1	Highest risk category	3
Input of Operator Perfor	mance Scores				

Operator performance criteria

Weight of criteria

Score



3) Management Plan (MP)	1	0
6) Custodian	1	-1
11) Overlap of N2K with other national/international sites	1	0
10) Activities with likely favourable impact	1	0
Mean of operator performance		0

Risk Scores and Inspection Profile

Impact criteria

	Risk profile	Inspection weight	Inspection profile
1) Presence of habitats and/or protected species	1	1	1
2) Vulnerability of the habitats in the site	0	1	0
4) Degree of offence	0	1	0
5) Conservation status of the site	2	1	2
7) Activities inside with likely negative impact	3	1	3
8a) Activities outside with negative impact on air quality	3	1	3
9) Changes in land use	1	1	1
8 b) Activities outside with negative impact on water	3	1	3

Risk ranking number	33321100
Highest risk score	3
Number of highest risk scores	3
Risk category	2
Inspection frequency	36
Latest inspection date	13.06.2026
Maximum inspection effort (100%)	24
Sum of inspection profile	13
Inspection effort (percentage)	54 %



Inspection category	С
Sum of risk profile	13
Mean of risk profile	1,6

6.2 Example Latvia

In October 2023 IMPEL carried out a joint inspection in the Nature Park Ragakapa and the incorporated Natura 2000 site in Latvia.

6.2.1 Basic information on the site

Information on the Nature Park Ragakapa and the Natura 2000 site (LV0303300) was provided based on the SDF and experts' knowledge. Area: 150 ha, establishment of the Park: 1962.

Current activities are part of the Latvian EU LIFE Programme project "Optimising the Governance and Management of the Natura 2000 Protected Areas Network in Latvia" (LIFE19 IPE/LV/000010 LIFE-IP LatViaNature).

Ragakapa Nature Park is an important site for the protection of forest coastal dunes. There are 6 types of protected habitats of European importance on the site, which cover 98 % of the territory, as well as 10 plant species, 4 each of bird and invertebrate species, one mammal an one fungi species (of which 6 are of EU importance). The Ragakapa dunes are 12 - 15 m high and are one of the highest dunes in Latvia.





Presence of IAS: The dwarf serviceberry *Amelanchier spicata* is the most widespread on the site; the redberried elder *Sambucus racemosa*, the cotoneasters *Cotoneaster sp.*, the silverberry *Elaeagnus commutata* and the Japanese rose *Rosa rugosa* are less often found. In order to preserve the unique nature assets of the site, the eradication of these species in an area of 49 ha has been prioritised as a top management measure in the Management Plan of Nature Park "Ragakāpa" for 2019 - 2031.



Picture XXX: Eradication of IAS by using a small tractor and uprooting bushes with manual lifters

6.2.2 The scoring with the NIRAM tool

The first scoring (based on knowledge from SDF, input of the invited experts and files) was carried out. There is high pressure on the site because it is situated in a touristic area. Another threat comes from IAS that may totally change the nature of the site through input of nutrients and reducing the reproduction of the pine tree forest. The experts gave detailed input on invasive species and management measures that are being carried out on site.

<u>Scoring result</u>: one inspection every three years.

The scoring in the field was the same as it had been during the preparatory work on 24th October. The analysis by using the NIRAM tool showed a frequency of every three years and an inspector effort of 54 %.



Having experienced the situation in the field, it was decided to change the scoring for the criterion 5 (Presence of activities with likely negative impact on conservation objectives inside Natura 2000 sites) to three. The overall result remained the same.

			Status:	in use
	Alexandra Magalhasa Jaa	nostor		
Assessment done by	Alexandra Magainaes_Ins	реског		(0202200
nspection object				VU3U3300
nspection task	Nature Inspection (very ve	ery very new)		
Date of inspection plannin	g 28.10.2023 Date	28.10.2023 Date of last inspection		
Address data				
Street				
Postal code	Location Ragaka	pa		
nput of Impact Scores				
nput of Impact Scores		Maximum score	Score	Shift of scor (weight)
nput of Impact Scores Impact criteria 1) Presence of habitats an	d/or protected species	Maximum score	Score 3	Shift of scor (weight) 0
nput of Impact Scores Impact criteria 1) Presence of habitats an 2) Vulnerability of the habi	d/or protected species	Maximum score 3 3	Score 3 3	Shift of scor (weight) 0 0
nput of Impact Scores Impact criteria 1) Presence of habitats an 2) Vulnerability of the habi 4) Degree of offence	d/or protected species	Maximum score 3 3 3 3	Score 3 1	Shift of scor (weight) 0 0 0
nput of Impact Scores Impact criteria 1) Presence of habitats an 2) Vulnerability of the habi 4) Degree of offence 5) Conservation status of t	d/or protected species rats in the site he site	Maximum score 3 3 3 3 3 3	Score 3 3 1 1	Shift of scor (weight) 0 0 0 0
nput of Impact Scores Impact criteria 1) Presence of habitats an 2) Vulnerability of the habitats 4) Degree of offence 5) Conservation status of to 7) Activities inside with like	d/or protected species ats in the site he site ly negative impact	Maximum score 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3	Score 3 3 1 1 2	Shift of scor (weight) 0 0 0 0 0
nput of Impact Scores Impact criteria 1) Presence of habitats an 2) Vulnerability of the habi 4) Degree of offence 5) Conservation status of t 7) Activities inside with like 8a) Activities outside with 1	d/or protected species tats in the site he site ly negative impact negative impact on air quality	Maximum score 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3	Score 3 1 1 2 2	Shift of scor (weight) 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
nput of Impact Scores Impact criteria 1) Presence of habitats an 2) Vulnerability of the habi 4) Degree of offence 5) Conservation status of t 7) Activities inside with like 8a) Activities outside with 1 9) Changes in land use	d/or protected species ats in the site he site ly negative impact negative impact on air quality	Maximum score 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3	Score 3 3 1 1 2 2 0	Shift of scor (weight) 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0



0

3) Management Plan (MP)	1	-1
6) Custodian	1	0
11) Overlap of N2K with other national/international sites	1	1
10) Activities with likely favourable impact	1	-1

Mean of operator performance

r

Risk Scores and Inspection Profile

Impact criteria			
	Risk profile	Inspection weight	Inspection profile
1) Presence of habitats and/or protected species	3	1	3
2) Vulnerability of the habitats in the site	3	1	3
4) Degree of offence	1	1	1
5) Conservation status of the site	1	1	1
7) Activities inside with likely negative impact	2	1	2
8a) Activities outside with negative impact on air quality	2	1	2
9) Changes in land use	0	1	0
8 b) Activities outside with negative impact on water	0	1	0

Risk ranking number	3322110	0
Highest risk score	3	
Number of highest risk scores	2	
Risk category	2	
Inspection frequency	36	
Latest inspection date	27.10.20	24
Maximum inspection effort (100%)	24	
Sum of inspection profile	12	
Inspection effort (percentage)	50	%
Inspection category	В	
Sum of risk profile	12	
Mean of risk profile	1,5	
Remarks		



6.3 Example Czech Republic

In Czech Republic, the Ministry of the Environment has been responsible for the overall preparation of the Natura 2000 system and it entrusted the preparation of technical documents to the Nature and Landscape Protection Agency of the Czech Republic.

Bird areas (SPAs) of which there are 41 in the territory of the Czech Republic, were declared by the government of the Czech Republic by regulations in 2004 to 2005, in 2007 and the last two in 2009. The last change was the addition of the golden eagle as an object of protection to the bird area "Soutok – Tvrdonicko", which came into force in 2019. SCI/SAC are summarized in the so-called of the national list, which as a whole is approved by the government and published in the form of its regulation under no. 318/2013 Coll., as amended. In total, there are 1,112 locations of European importance in the territory of the Czech Republic, which represents approximately 10% of the territory of the Czech Republic. Together with the bird areas, which are defined on less than 9% of the territory of the Czech Republic, the Natura 2000 system makes up roughly 14% of the territory of the Czech Republic (SPAs and sites of European importance overlap in many places of the Czech Republic). Overall NATURA 2000 sites occupy an area of more than 1 million hectares. The system is not definitive, documents for some other territories are being prepared. For individual territories, so-called "Summaries of recommended measures" were issued, which are basic professional and conceptual materials used to maintain the favourable status of objects of protection. As majority of NATURA 2000 sites overlap with national small-scale specially protected areas, also management plans for the sites are widely available.

The competence of administration and taking care of sites of the Natura 2000 system is divided between several nature protection authorities. The Nature and Landscape Protection Agency of the Czech Republic manages 37% of the NATURA 2000 area.

Natura 2000 EC directives were incorporated into Act no. 114/1992 Coll. about nature and landscape protection. The supervision of compliance with this act is among other entities entrusted to the Czech environmental inspectorate (CEI).

The Czech Environmental Inspectorate (CEI) is an independent organization subordinate to the Ministry of the Environment and funded from the state budget. It is an expert executive body within the state administration charged primarily with supervision in the area of environmental legislation enforcement. CEI also supervises the legal compliance of administrative decisions taken by the public administration bodies in the area of the environment. Among its activities, CEI mainly carries out inspections, imposes measures to correct identified deficiencies, imposes sanctions for non-compliance with environmental laws, restricts or halts operations if they are a significant threat to the environment, seizes or confiscates illegal specimens or processes accidents records.

CEI creates annual plans for inspections (it involves routine and also specific types of controls).



The control activity of the nature and forest protection department of CEI is primarily focused on the examination of activities and entities that may be a source of serious threat to the interests of nature protection, which is also reflected in the planned activity in the form of determining routine or specific tasks. Part of the control activity also stems from obligations towards other state administration bodies or from the long-term interest of the public. An important part of the inspection plan are also controls of compliance with the measures imposed by the CEI.. In the field of general nature protection, the inspection activities focus, among other things, on control of compliance with the protection of trees growing outside the forest, significant landscape features in the sense of the Act on Nature and Landscape Protection or wild birds. Traditionally, part of the supervisory activity are specially protected parts of nature, in particular the enforcement of protective conditions for specially protected species of plants and animals, especially protected areas, NATURA 2000 sites or memorial trees.

CEI is also involved in IMPEL activities and tries to collaborate in several fields.

In October 2024 IMPEL carried out joint inspections of two Natura 2000 sites in Czech Republic: Větrušické rokle and Karlštejn-Koda.

6.3.1 Basic information on the sites

The host had selected two different Natura 2000 sites and provided detailed information about each of them:

<u>Větrušické rokle</u>, a rather small and rocky site with high pressure of IAS plant species. SCI/SAC overlaps with National nature reserve "Větrušické rokle"

<u>Karlštejn-Koda</u>, a large site with high touristic pressure due to the Karlštejn castle inside and presence of larger protected landscape area "Český kras", of which this site is a part of and which is located in the surrounding.

For 4 types of habitats this site represents the most important locality in the Czech Republic.

SCI/SAC overlaps with 3 national protected areas: National nature reserve "Karlštejn", National nature reserve "Koda" and Nature reserve "Tetínske skály".

6.3.2. Joint inspections

a) Site visit Větrušické rokle

The pressure caused by Ailanthus altissima and the result of the eradication work could clearly be seen: There were dead remains of the trees.

As the site is very rocky, the trees cannot be reached all over the site. The right method for the definite eradication is not yet known. That is, why Glyphosat was used by the Nature Conservation Agency of Czech Republic, with special treatment (herbicide injection into the wood).



b) Site visit Karlštejn-Koda

The communities try to reduce the pressure of tourism near Karlštejn Castel through reducing the areas for car and bus parking. The direct surrounding of the castle is dominated by visitors' activities.

On the other side of the site mining activities take place. Several closed quarries belong to the Natura 2000 site, two still operated sites are outside (right behind the borders of NATURA site). According to the site expert, the work with the explosives and the work as such do not have negative impact on the Natura 2000 site. He explained the management measures for the grassland on the hill above the quarries (including horses and sheep for preserving an open grassland).

6.3.3 The scoring with the NIRAM tool

For both sites the first scoring was based on the information from the Standard Data Forms (SDF), altogether with summaries of recommended measures, management plans, ortofotomaps and in cooperation with administrates, and resulted in a frequency of 72 months. There were doubts whether the result was really correct for the small site.

The second assessment was carried out after the inspections. Some changes were made. The changes in the impact criteria for Karlštejn-Koda did not produce another result. But the changes in the scoring of Větrušické rokle changed the frequency from 72 to every 36 months.

Under "Risk category", the coordinator of the inspection unit can adjust the frequency according to the needs, e.g. reduce the lowest frequency from 72 months to 36 or add more than three categories by clicking on "+" at the left side of the template.

Based on the experience with the presence of IAS in the small site, the group discussed two items:

a) Should the "presence of IAS" become an impact criterion instead of a performance criterion?

The group decided for "presence of IAS" as impact criterion and the definition given in chapter 4.1.

b) Should the "presence of IAS" become an overriding criterion for small sites (or even for all) and produce high frequencies?

In case of high presence of IAS in a site, high frequency of control is needed. This especially, when measures have been carried out and the success has to be monitored. During and short time after carrying out measures, non-routine inspections have to be planned.


oruruo, mass	Status:	in use	
--------------	---------	--------	--

Assessment done by	Jana Urbanová	Jana Urbanová		
Inspection object	Větrušické rokle	ID CZ0210729		
Inspection task	Nature Inspectio	on 24.1		
Date of inspection planning	25.09.2024	Date of last inspection	24.09.2024	

Address data

Street	Klecany			
Postal code	250 67	Location	Větrušice	

Input of Impact Scores

Impact criteria				
		Maximum score	Score	Shift of scor (weight)
1) Presence of habitats and/or pr	otected species	3	1	0
2) Vulnerability of the habitats in t	3 3 3 3 3 3	1	0	
4) Degree of offence		0 1 1 2 0	0 0 0	
5) Conservation status of the site				
7) Activities inside with likely neg				
8a) Activities outside with negativ			0	
9) Changes in land use			0	
8 b) Activities outside with negative	ve impact on water	3	3	0
Minimum number of highest score 4	Lowest risk category	1	Highest categor	risk y <u>3</u>
nput of Operator Performance S	cores			
Operator performance criteria				

Weight of criteria

Score



Status: in use

0

Assessment done by	Jana Urbanová			
Inspection object	Větrušické rokle		ID CZ0210729	
Inspection task	Nature Inspection	n 24.1		
Date of inspection planning	25.09.2024	Date of last inspection	24.09.2024	

1	-1
1	Ю
[1	-1
1	-1
1	1
	1 1 1 1 1

Mean of operator performance

Risk Scores and Inspection Profile

	Risk profile	Inspection weight	Inspection profile
1) Presence of habitats and/or protected species	1	1	1
2) Vulnerability of the habitats in the site	1	1	1
4) Degree of offence	0	1	0
5) Conservation status of the site	1	1	1
7) Activities inside with likely negative impact	1	1	1
8a) Activities outside with negative impact on air quality	2	1	2
9) Changes in land use	0	1	0
8 b) Activities outside with negative impact on water	3	1	3



Status: in use

Assessment done by	Jana Urbanová				
Inspection object	Větrušické rokle		ID CZ0210729		
Inspection task	Nature Inspection	on 24.1	22		
Date of inspection planning	25.09.2024	Date of last inspection	24.09.2024		

Risk ranking number	32111100
Highest risk score	3
Number of highest risk scores	1
Risk category	2
Inspection frequency	36
Latest inspection date	24.09.2027
Maximum inspection effort (100%)	24
Sum of inspection profile	9
Inspection effort (percentage)	38 %
Inspection category	В
Sum of risk profile	9
Mean of risk profile	1,1

Remarks



Status:	in	use

Assessment done by	Jana Urbanová		
Inspection object	Karlštejn-Koda		ID CZ0214017
Inspection task	Nature Inspectio	n 24.1	
Date of inspection planning	25.09.2024	Date of last inspection	24.09.2024

Address data

Street	Karlštejn		
Postal code	267 18	Location	Karlštejn

Input of Impact Scores

Impact criteria			
	Maximum score	Score	Shift of score (weight)
1) Presence of habitats and/or protected species	3	1	0
2) Vulnerability of the habitats in the site	3	0	0
4) Degree of offence	3	2	0
5) Conservation status of the site	3	1	0
7) Activities inside with likely negative impact	3	3	0
8a) Activities outside with negative impact on air quality	3	1	0
9) Changes in land use	3	1	0
8 b) Activities outside with negative impact on water	3	3	0
Minimum number of Lowest risk highest score 4 category	1	Highest categor	risk y 3
nput of Operator Performance Scores			
Operator performance criteria			
	Weight of criteria	3	Score



Status: in use

-1

Assessment done by	Jana Urbanová		
Inspection object	Karlštejn-Koda	ID CZ0214017	
Inspection task	Nature Inspection 2	4.1	

3) Management Plan (MP)	1	-1
6) Custodian	1	0
11) Overlap of N2K with other national/international sites	1	-1
10) Activities with likely favourable impact	1	-1
12) Presence of IAS	1	0

Mean of operator performance

Risk Scores and Inspection Profile

		Inspection	Inspection
	Risk profile	weight	profile
1) Presence of habitats and/or protected species	0	1	1
2) Vulnerability of the habitats in the site	0	1	0
4) Degree of offence	1	1	2
5) Conservation status of the site	o	1	1
7) Activities inside with likely negative impact	2	1	3
8a) Activities outside with negative impact on air quality	0	1	1
9) Changes in land use	0	1	1
8 b) Activities outside with negative impact on water	Þ	1	13



Status: in use

Assessment done by	Jana Urbanová			
Inspection object	Karlštejn-Koda	ID CZ0214017		
Inspection task	Nature Inspectio	on 24.1		
Date of inspection planning	25.09.2024	Date of last inspection	24.09.2024	

Risk ranking number	22100000
Highest risk score	2
Number of highest risk scores	2
Risk category	1
Inspection frequency	72
Latest inspection date	24.09.2030
Maximum inspection effort (100%)	24
Sum of inspection profile	12
Inspection effort (percentage)	50 %
Inspection category	В
Sum of risk profile	5
Mean of risk profile	0,6

Remarks



7 Supporting Documents and Material for Facilitating the Use of the Tool

A presentation with concise information on the purpose of NIRAM, how to get access to the tool, the possible adjustment to individual needs, carrying out the assessment and saving the results was developed. It may facilitate the preparation of training workshops. It can be used also by interested people to get first information. This includes all kind of awareness rising activities in the context of structured inspection planning.

A tutorial / Illustrated NIRAM quick guide was developed for explaining the registration for NIRAM via the IRAM platform and the tasks of the different parties – the coordinator, group administrator/team leader, the inspector.

The project team offers further training to interested parties.

8. NIRAM in the context of inspection planning

EU environmental legislation obliges Member States to carry out inspections. After the Commission had identified a wide disparity between the inspection systems in the Member States, the "Recommendation providing for minimum criteria for environmental inspections" (2001/331/EC) was adopted. It contains non-binding criteria for planning, carrying out, following up and reporting on environmental inspections. Inspection activities shall be based on a risk based approach. This means that activities or objects with the highest risk should get the highest attention and highest effort of the inspecting authority. The Recommendation itself does not include risk criteria for the inspection of Natura 2000 sites or other nature protected sites or items. In its Communication on the Review of Recommendation 2001/331/EC COM(2007)707 final the Commission highlighted the need for the development of inspection criteria in the nature protection sector as well as clarification of requirements through guidance documents. With the development of the NIRAM tool (based on the IMPEL Integrated Risk Assessment Method IRAM), the project documents and the results of the project series on "Doing the Right Things" (especially the "Step-by-step guidance book for planning of environmental inspections"), IMPEL provides a complete toolbox for systematic planning and carrying out inspection work.

According to the Recommendation all inspection activities should be planned in advance. The planning consists of two elements: the inspection plan and the programme or inspection scheme.

The plan should cover at least: a definition of the geographical area which is covered, a defined period of time, the legal background, the specific sites, the programme for routine environmental inspections including the frequency. An inspection plan for nature protected sites may provide the following information:



Possible Content of Inspection Plan for Natura 2000 sites According to No. IV of "Recommendation providing for minimum criteria for environmental inspections in the Member States" (date xx / xx / xxxx) Content 1. Introduction and geographical area of scope, competent authorities 2. General assessment of the most relevant environmental problems 2.1 Conservation status of sites 2.2 Site vulnerability 2.3 Offences 2.4 Activities with negative effect inside the boundaries of Natura 2000 sites, e.g. change of land use 2.5 Impacts from outside the boundaries 2.6 Conclusions 3. List of sites covered by the plan 4. Procedure for establishing schedules / programmes for routine inspections and competencies (based on the risk assessment) 4.1 Natura 2000 sites, overlapping sites, 4.2 Clarifications concerning non compliance 5. Procedure for routine inspections, site visits 6. Procedure for non-routine inspections 7. Assessment, reporting, information to the public 8. Cooperation of different inspecting authorities in enforcement Annexes: Annex 1: inspection programme / schedule Annex 2: systematic risk assessment Anlage 3: short version of inspection report

Establishing the annual inspection programme should be based on an assessment of the environmental risks. The NIRAM tool can be used for that purpose. The use of the NIRAM tool can contribute to a more consistent implementation and enforcement of EU environmental law. The main objective of this tool is to facilitate, support and promote the use of common criteria in IMPEL member countries.



The use of the NIRAM tool is one option. Of course, other systematic assessment approaches can be used as well.

9. Barriers for the Use of the Tool and Possibilities to overcome them

The discussions revealed that up to now there is lack of information about the tool as such and lack of supporting material. This will change after the products of this project with the presentation and the tutorials are put on the IMPEL webpage. IMPEL should offer further trainings for organisations in the starting phase of the NIRAM application.

A number of other barriers may prevent the use of NIRAM:

- experts change jobs knowledge lost, lack of willingness to use the tool for the start users have to invest time, e.g. study the description etc.
- different organisations are involved in the planning and operative phase of inspections which organisation is responsible for carrying out the assessment and ensure the results?
 lack in sharing data and important information for carrying out the assessment for the first time for a site basic information has to be collected, inspectorates may have a big range of tasks from industrial installations to nature conservation,

lack of cooperation between organisations and different units in one organisation, specificities and limitations for inspectors arising from national / regional structural organisations.

• language barrier – most of the documents are in English, ...

Possibilities to overcome the problems:

- Partly the problems can be addressed or even solved by IMPEL or IMPEL already works on solutions. For example, IMPEL offers translations of documents on demand (but depending on the budget available and the cooperation of native speakers).
- Another possibility may be the integration of the item into the communication of IMPEL representatives (chair/vice chair or expert team leaders) with high level representatives of the IMPEL member countries.
- Awareness raising at highest level of organisations inspectorates carrying out routine inspections get the opportunity to make their processes more effective and in a more objective way. They will have better arguments while reporting to the highest administrative level, politics and the public.
- Convince decision making level of organisations that structured planning of inspections has to be part of the strategic plan top down or bottom up? If project participants are involved in the process, they should take the opportunity.
- Improve communication in the organisations and between units those who want to work with the systematic planning carrying out, following up and reporting on environmental inspections can use the available reports, the presentation and the NIRAM tool for convincing their superiors and colleagues.



• Through the systematic planning, carrying out, following up and reporting on environmental inspections, resources may be saved and the procedures become transparent. This may motivate staff members for strategic planning of work and the use the risk based approach.

10. Conclusions and Recommendations

10.1 Conclusions

The expected results of the project could be achieved during the active phase in 2023 and 2024:

Progress was made in the use of the NIRAM tool as part of the planning of inspections of Natura 2000 sites. The NIRAM tool was tested in different IMPEL member countries: Portugal, Croatia, Greece, Galicia (ES), Latvia and Czech Republic. In Galicia, Latvia and Czech Republic IMPEL has carried out joint inspections. The determination of the inspection frequency was carried out by using the tool and afterwards cross checked with the results in the field. The project team added the new criterion "presence of invasive alien species" to the impact criteria because invasive alien species may represent a significant threat to the biodiversity of sites.

Portugal has established a working group for the adaptation of the proposed NIRAM tool to the needs of the mainland and the autonomous regions of the Azores and Madeira. On top, the Portuguese colleagues explored the combination of the NIRAM tool with other sources of information like satellite data and Artificial Intelligence as well as sources from other projects.

The testing showed that NIRAM is a very flexible and robust tool, it can be amended by using entities, not necessary to fill in all criteria. It is assumed to be applicable on similar types of protected sites.

According to the TOR, the project team intended to develop training material to be used by authorities and their administrators, coordinators and inspectors. For effective training of the use of the NIRAM tool the project team offers support by providing

- A presentation with general information about the context and the NIRAM tool itself,
- A quick guide for coordinators with compact information on the first steps, how to get access to the tool and how to work with it. It includes hints for group leaders and inspectors.



10.2 Recommendations

NIRAM is ready for the use in all IMPEL member countries. IMPEL has to make it better known for nature conservation authorities and practitioners. Information about it should be available on the IMPEL webpage in the "Nature Protection" section as well as in the "Tools" section.

In the "Nature Protection" section of the IMPEL webpage the reports, the quick guide and one original template should be accessible. On top national versions should occur. At least templates should be shown so that the final user – the inspectors – get an idea of the instrument and its results.

For users like coordinators, group leaders and inspectors it is highly recommended to develop a video with compact information on NIRAM, getting access to it and working with it.

It is highly recommended to use NIRAM for the risk based assessment in the development of the inspection plan and annual inspection schedule / programme.

NIRAM should be an element in further digitalisation activities in IMPEL member countries as well as linked to existing geospatial information systems (e.g. using satellite images from Copernicus Sentinel-2). In future AI might provide support for NIRAM functionalities.

IMPEL should carry out a follow-up assessment about the use and further development of the tool in the IMPEL member countries. It should include the analysis of the use in inspection planning.

IMPEL should explore whether and how the Integrated Risk Assessment Method for tasks related to nature protection (NIRAM) can be linked to the Group Competence Assessment tool for Natura 2000 Site Managers (https://conservation-cat.com/natura2000groupassessments/), an E-learning tool for capacity building for teams working in Natura 2000 sites management or local / national / regional Natura 2000 network coordination entities.

11. Proposals for Future Work

For users like coordinators, group leaders and inspectors, IMPEL should develop a short video with compact information on NIRAM, getting access to it and working with it. For that purpose resources are needed.

Under the umbrella of the Green Expert Team, IMPEL should offer training (online, video,) physical meetings (workshops) on strategic and systematic planning, carrying out, follow-up and reporting on inspection work. The workshop on inspections in Berlin (10/11th of December 2024) revealed that in nature protection inspectorates the knowledge about the systematic approach for establishing inspection plans and programs and the risk- based approach still needs improvement. The overall objective is to improve the effectiveness of inspection activities.



IMPEL should encourage authorities to use the NIRAM tool for the risk assessment by integrating the item into conferences, regional seminars and other IMPEL communication activities.

A follow-up IMPEL project should test whether NIRAM fits to marine sites too (just as it is or perhaps with adaptations).

Annexes

- Annex I: TOR "Testing and improving the proposed planning tool for inspections of Natura 2000 sites (NIRAM) and Roadmap for a project series in invasive alien species (IAS)
- Annex II: Illustrated NIRAM quick guide
- Annex III: Presentation "The planning tool concerning inspections of Natura 2000 sites (NIRAM)" (separate document)



Annexes



Annex I. TOR 2022 – VII/02

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)

ToR Reference No.: 2022-VII/02	Author(s): Gisela Holzgraefe and project team
Version: □Draft □Final ⊠Adopted	Date: 11-Mar-22

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	\boxtimes		
Cross-cutting tools and approaches			
1.2 Type of work you need funding for			
Exchange visits	\boxtimes		
Peer reviews (e.g. IRI)			
Conference			
Development of tools/guidance	\boxtimes		
Comparison studies			
Assessing legislation (checklist)			



Other, (please describe):
1.3 Full	I 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 Abb	previated 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?)

Г

2.1	l 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 Habitat	s 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 s	pread of invasive	
	alien species (Eu) No 1143/2014		
2.2	2 Link to IMPEL MASP priority work areas		
1	Assist members to implement new legislation		
1. 2	Build capacity in member organisations through the IMPEL Poview Initiatives		
2.	Build capacity in member organisations through the hyperbolic review initiatives.		
3.	work on problem areas of implementation identified by IMPEL and the		
	European Commission.	\boxtimes	
4.	Other, (please specify):		



2.3 Why is this work needed?

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 unsufficient 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 RMCEL

Background:

The IMPEL <u>project 2018/14</u> 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 <u>2019</u> 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 <u>Project 2020/19</u> 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 <u>merge the project phases 2020 and 2021</u>, 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
 - $\circ~$ 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.
 - \circ 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 <u>roadmap will identify the most urgent items / questions</u> to work on, and especially:

- 1. focus on Invasive alien Species (IAS) of Union concern (48 species); (hot points??)
- 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 <u>roadmap will identify the most urgent items / questions</u> 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

3.3 Risks

Description of the Risk	Mitigation Method	Probability	Impact
What are the potential risks for this p place to mitigate these?	roject and what actions will be put in	t in Give a score from 1 to 5. 1: Low probability/impact 5: High probability/impact	
No workshop possible because of COVID-situation	Online meeting	3	3



4. Organisation of the work

Overall responsibility:

- Project Manager: Gisela Holzgraefe, Ministry for Energy Transition, Agriculture, Environment, Nature and Digitalisation of Land Schleswig-Holstein, Germany.
- Project Co-Manager: tbd.

4.2 Project team

- Gisela Holzgraefe, Ministry for Energy Transition, Agriculture, Environment, Nature and Digitalisation of Land Schleswig-Holstein, Germany.
- Kate Bayley, Environment Agency, Warrington United Kingdom.
- José Antonio Vazquez Quintela, Regional Government of Galicia, Department Environment and Planning, Spain.
- Andris Sirovs, Nature Conservation Agency, Latvia.
- Andreja Slapnik, Inspectorate RS for the Environment and Spatial Planning, Slovenia.
- Lia Mergulhão, Institute for Nature Conservation and Forests (ICNF), Portugal.
- Alexandra Magalhães, General-Inspectorate for Agriculture, Sea, Environment and Spatial Planning (IGAMAOT), Portugal.
- Joao Loureiro, Institute for Nature Conservation and Forests (ICNF), Portugal.

4.3 Other IMPEL participants

- Invitation to be extended to all member states of IMPEL, but particularly those already involved in previous workshops (Malta, Romania, Greece, Estonia, Slovakia).
- Malta: Environment and Resources Authority.
- Greece: Hellenic Ministry for the Environment and Energy, Inspectorate of Northern Greece, Thessaloniki,
 - Natural Environment & Climate Change Agency (NECCA) Management Unit of Southern Peloponnese + Greek Ombudsman
- Estonia: Estonian Environmental Inspectorate, Parnu.
- Slovak Environmental Inspectorate, Bratislava.
- Romania: National Environmental Guard.

4.4 Other non-IMPEL participants

Possible participation of e.g. ENCA, Habitats Committee, JASPERS, others with experience in the use of different planning tools, e.g. IRAM, tbc.



Experts from the European Alien Species Information Network (EASIN) and the European Network on Invasive Alien Species (NOBANIS).

In case of doubts or questions please contact the IMPEL Secretariat.

Draft and final versions need to be sent to the IMPEL Secretariat in Word format, not in PDF.

Thank you.



Annex II. Illustrated NIRAM quick guide

Illustrated NIRAM quick guide

1 First steps

NIRAM is a sub item under the umbrella of the IRAM planning tool for inspections. That is why you have to register via the IRAM homepage to get access to the NIRAM forms.

1.1 Get the Guidance book and the descriptions from logon page

You will find the guidance book and other helpful descriptions on the login page: <u>https://iram-impel.nrw.de/lip/authenticate.do</u>

			English 🗸	easyTools * * * * *
Register Reset passwor 2. Register Integrated Risk Assess	r here, see chapter 1.3	ogon		
English: [Download Guidancebook] [Download IRAM-App-description] [Download IRAM-App-illustrated-description] [Download 2018-10-01-IRAM-new-features] Deutsch:	Please enter your login data.1. Download the files and read	ead them]
[Herunterladen IRAM-App-Beschreibung] [Herunterladen IRAM-App-bebilderte- Beschreibung] [Herunterladen 20181001_IRAM- Neuerungen] Francais: [Trelecharger la description de l'application internet IRAM]	Password Fill in your pas	ssword Log in		

1.2 Description of the team roles

The **coordinator** has the following responsibilities:

- Putting the inspectors of his administration under his coordination
- Development of forms for specific inspection tasks (e.g. waste shipment) including determination of steering parameters
- Setting up inspection groups and promoting inspectors to group leaders

The group leader is an inspector who has

- An overview of all assessment results of the assigned inspectors. On this base, he can draw up inspection programs for the next year.



- In addition, he has the right to change the risk assessments of the assigned inspectors.

The inspector has the lowest level of authority in the NIRAM tool.

His responsibility is to fill in the data into the form developed by the coordinator.

For working with the tool or testing purposes, the minimum requirement is to have a coordinator and an inspector.

1.3 Register team members

To begin with, all team members must register. To do this, click on "Register" at the top left of the home page. (You must work quickly, otherwise the "timeout during logon – please try again" line will appear in red and you will remain on the logon page.) Please complete all fields of the form that appears. So that the team can work together, it is important that all members choose the same language settings. When working in the IMPEL project, it is recommended to initially choose English.



You will then receive an e-mail with which you can complete the registration. After your coordinator has integrated you into a specific inspection group, you can work as a NIRAM inspector in the system.

1.4 Register as a coordinator

Promote to coordinator: It is recommended that a coordinator has two IDs: One as a coordinator and another as an inspector. That is no problem in NIRAM. To become a coordinator you have to register a second time. For an easy distinction of your two IDs, you should enter the word "Coordinator" as part of the identification: e.g. "CoordinatorJBond007" in the user identification field.

You get the coordinator status by sending an e-mail to Horst Büther <u>horst.buether@bezreg-koeln.nrw.de</u>. Put your name and coordinator user-id into the e-mail. After a while you will receive a confirmation.



2 Coordinator's Tasks

Work as coordinator and select the Master data section.

2.1 Putting an inspector of his administration under his coordination

😫 🗖 🖬 Bezirksregierung Köln	x + -		×
← C 🔅 https://iram-impel.nrv	κ.de/lip/content.do A [®] ★ □ t² ⊕ ٩	s	٠
	English ▼ Werner Möhring-Hüser ▼ 29:31 C Log off * * * *	ls *	_Î
in Home	Master data		
- Forms -	You are here: Master data		
Master data	Master data		. 1
Forms A-Z	Error Messages Form id: fehlermeldungen		•
Folders A-Z	Groups Administration Form id: InspectionGroupAdmin]	•
	Form id: Template_Inspection_Tasks]	
	E User Administration Form id: UserAdmin]] [
K			
Lucom Interaction Platform & Release 3.6.			
🙎 🔲 📑 Bezirksregierung Köln	x + -		×

← C ↔ https://iram-impel.nr	w.de/lip/con	tent.do			A) 🖈 C) 🗲	r 🛞 … 🖻
			English 🔻 Wer	ner Möhring-Hüser 🔻	29:54 C Log off	easyTools
Home	User A 0 records	dministration are currently selected.		1. Navigate to th a	e page with the inspec are looking for	ctor you
- Forms -	<	# 🗇 🏪 🙀	1234	5 >> >		
) Master data	Apply f	ilter	Click here to	open the selected	d record	Coordinator
Folders A-Z		1 Habighorst	Christian	BigHorst	DE	
		2 Möhring-Hüser	Werner	InspectorIMH	EN	
			Sheldon	Sheldon	EN	
2. Click here t	o select	the inspector	Alisa	tatzel	DE	
		5 de wree	kris	dewreekr	EN	
		6 Lauer	Rudolf	LauerR	DE	
		7 Lauer	Rudolf	LauerRudolf	DE	
		8 Dahlstrøm	Thor Jostein	THODAH	EN	
		9 Spaniol	Armin	lxjon	DE	
		10 Grütte	Karl-Heinz	guenter56	DE	
<<						
Lucom Interaction Platform ® Release 3.6	.3					



2	📑 Bezirksregierung Köln	(User Adm 🗙 🕂										×
\leftarrow C	https://iram-im	pel.nrw.de/lip/form/display.do?%24	context=4DB42D0A236C	9D6FEE82		A* 🖒	C	ર્⊊≡	Ē	~		•
*		A II R		Record 1 of		00%					29:54	Ċ
	3. Click here admir	to return to the user histration page		2. Click here	to save the	e record)					
		General			D	elete user						
		First name	Werner									
		Surname	Möhring-Hüser		_							
		User identification	InspectoriviH werner moehring	-	_							
		Email address	English	,								
		Add to the group			_							
		Task	1. Clic	k here to chec	k the box	J						
		Task ID Task de	scription									
		INSPECTOR ··· Inspecto	r				_					
	+											

😩 🗖 🖬 Bezirksregierung Köln	× +				– o ×
← C	rw.de/lip/content.do			A) 🆈 🗘 🗲	û ≪ … €
		🔀 English 🕶 Werr	ner Möhring-Hüser 👻	29:49 C ^I Log off 6	easyTools * * * * *
- Forms -	User Administration	n ed.	5 >> >		
Master data	2. Click here t Ap Master	o return to the data page	😫 User-id	Language Authority	Coordinator
Folders A-Z	1 Habighorst	Christian	BigHorst	DE	
	2 Möhring-Hü	ser Werner	InspectorMH	EN	Werner Möhring- Hüser
	3 MacNeil 4 Tatzel 5 de wree	Sheldon Alisa kris	Sheldon tatzel dewreekr	e that the inspector is a of the coordinator's g	a member roup
	6 Lauer	Rudolf	LauerR	DE	
	7 Lauer	Rudolf	LauerRudolf	DE	
	8 Dahlstrøm	Thor Jostein	THODAH	EN	
	9 Spaniol	Armin	lxjon	DE	
	10 Grütte	Karl-Heinz	guenter56	DE	
**					
Lucom Interaction Platform Release 3.6	6.3				



2.2 Development of forms (templates) for specific inspection tasks (e.g. nature inspection) including determination of steering parameters





2.2.1 Create a new version from an existing template

😫 🗖 📑 Bezirksregierung Köln	× +	– o ×
← C 🙃 https://iram-impel.nr	v.de/lip/content.do	A) ★ CD 🎓 🗟 … 🖬
	English 🕶 Werner Möhring-Hüser 🕶 :	29:45 C ⁴ Log off easyTools ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Home	Template Inspection records are currently selected 3. Open the selected temp	plate to edit/modify
Forms	う 増 増 � <mark>穏</mark> 檀 つ	
Aaster data	inspection inspection inspection inspection inspection inspection inspection inspection inspection inspection	highestRiskCategory
Forms A-Z	Apply filter X pature	2
Folders A-Z	1 Nature Nature Nature Nature Suitable template	find a 3
	3 Nature 3 Inspection (new) Ecran Taiex EN	3
	Alture 4 Inspection (very Nemer Möhring-Hüser EN	3
	2. Select the template you want to modify	3
	6 Inspection (very Alexandra Magalhaes EN very very new)	3
	7 Nature Inspection 24 Werner Möhring-Hüser EN	3
«	B Nature Inspection 24.1 Werner Möhring-Hüser EN	3
Lucom Interaction Platform ® Release 3.6	3	



😩 🗖 📑 Bezirksregierung K	ίöln (Template × +						-		×
← C ⊡ https://iram	-impel.nrw.de/lip/form/display.do?%24context=5E96	07B96B809D7C85C2		A* 🔂 🖽	ל≡	Ē	∞		۴
			Record 1 of 1	Q (100%			29	9:29 (e Î
	2. Click on the co to create a temp the new na	ppy icon 3 late with me	3. Click on t wri	he save icon to te data					
	Inspection task	Roorginator: Werner	Möhring-Hüse	er					
	Name of the inspection task	Nature Inspection (very)	new)						
	Minimum number of highest score Lowest risk category	1. Ch	nange the r	name of the insp	ectior	n task			
	Highest risk category	3							
	Show Integrated Risk Assessment Metho inspection task inactive Language	d 🗹 Linear Mean Valu	e Method						
	Impact criteria								
-	Impact criterion	1) Presence of habitats	and/or protecte	d species					
	Maximum possible score Descri 4. Make any chang additions to the temp don't forget to save r	late and egularly							•

2.2.2 Creating a new template

🔵 🗖 🖬 Bezirksregierung Köln	× +			– o ×
← C 🕆 https://iram-impel.nrv	w.de/lip/content.do		A* ★ CD	ć 🖻 🗞 … 🖻
	En	glish 👻 Werner Möhring-Hüser 👻	29:53 Ĉ' Log off	easyTools * * * * *
A Home	Template Inspection Tasks	;		
	0 records are currently selected.			
- Forms -	> = = > = = [1234		
Master data	inspection task/for	Click here to create a new	LOCALE + highes	tRiskCategory
Forms A-Z	Apply filter	empty template	≥	≥
Folders A-Z	1 Seveso establishments	Koordinator Br Köln	EN	6
	Old: IPPC and other ind installations	ustrial Koordinator Br Köln	EN	5
	Old:IPPC and other inst approach)	allations (linear Koordinator Br Köln	EN	5
	4 Simple	Koordinator Br Köln	EN	3
	5 IVU, BImSch und nicht genehmigungsbedürft.	Anlagen Koordinator Br Köln	DE	5
	6 Betriebsbereiche nach	StörfallV Koordinator Br Köln	DE	6
	7 Waste shipment	Koordinator Br Köln	EN	3
	8 Gentechnik Überwachu	ng Koordinator Br Köln	DE	3
	9 Genetic engineering ins	pections Koordinator Br Köln	EN	3
<<	10 dummy	Dummy Hielke	EN	5
Lucom Interaction Platform ® Release 3.6.				



😫 🗖 🖬 Bezirksregierung Köl	n (Template X +				-	o x
← C 🗄 https://iram-i	mpel.nrw.de/lip/form/display.do?%24context	4E22FDB2E71F9D94B10B	A 🟠 🗘	€ @	~	··· •
****	A I R R R R		100%		27:	:11 C
Complete this new	Template Inspection Tasks Inspection task Name of the inspection task template step by step:	Koordinator: Werner Möhring-Hüser				
 - impact criteria, - operator performa - risk category and - inspection category 	ance criteria, ry	ethod CLinear Mean Value Method The chosen lang CS DE EN FR to be t	uage here and e of the inspect the same	the cors has		
Don't f	Description of the criterion	HR IT MK PT SL				

2.3 Setting up inspection groups and promoting inspectors to group leaders Look into the "Illustrated description of the IRAM web application" pages 12 to 18.

3 D – Inspector's Task

Look into the "Illustrated description of the IRAM web application" pages 18 to 23.



Annex III. Presentation "The planning tool concerning inspections of Natura 2000 sites (NIRAM)"





European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law

The planning tool concerning inspections of Natura 2000 sites (NIRAM)

Result of IMPEL Projects 2018/14, 2019/15 : Development of a planning tool concerning inspection of Natura 2000 sites

and VII WG2-2022

IMPEL training material for using the NIRAM tool

Authors:

Gisela Holzgraefe (DE), Kate Bayley (UK), Alexandra Magalhães (PT)

CONTENT



1. General Background

2. IMPEL Activities Concerning Inspection

3. The Planning Tool Concerning Inspection of Natura 2000 Sites – NIRAM

1. General Background



- EU environmental legislation obliges MS to carry out inspections
- Recommendation providing minimum criteria for environmental inspections in the Member States (2001/331/EC) RMCEI sets the frame
- RMCEI contains non-binding criteria for <u>planning</u>, <u>carrying out</u>, <u>following up</u> and <u>reporting</u> on environmental inspections,
- RMCEI is focused "as a first stage" on industrial installations,
- The Recommendation does not include criteria for the inspection of Natura 2000 sites or other nature protection items.
- Commission identified sectors with possible need for specific binding inspection criteria: waste shipments, REACH sector, **nature protection**, ...
- Clarification of requirements should be provided through guidance documents,

1. General Background – RMCEI principles



The inspection process consists of the following steps:

- I. Planning
 - 1a) Description of the context
 - 1b) Setting priorities

- identifying the scope, gathering information
 risk assessment, ranking, resources
- 1c) Defining objectives and priorities
- 1d) Planning and review

- objectives and measurable targets, strategies
 - inspection plan and programme

II. Inspection and review of the plan

- 2. Execution,
- 3. Reporting,
- 4. Evaluation
- Steps1a) to1d) belong to the planning process,
- Steps 2 to 4 belong to the inspection process and provide input to the review of the plan.

CONTENT



1. General Background

2. IMPEL Activities Concerning Inspection

3. The Planning Tool Concerning Inspection of Natura 2000 Sites – NIRAM
2. IMPEL Activities Concerning Inspections related to industrial installations



- Initially, IMPEL concentrated on industrial installations
- IMPEL worked on the clarification of requirements for inspections through guidance documents
- Project series "Doing the Right Things" (DRT):
 - Doing the Right Things I (DRT I: exploring the needs)
 - DRT II: Step-by step guidance book for planning of environmental inspections (2007)
 - DRT III: Implementation of the step-by-step guidance book on planning of environmental inspections. (2008)
- **Inspections of industrial installations –** Guidance for the implementation of the Directive on Industrial Emissions (IED) in planning and execution of inspections
- Integrated Risk Assessment Method I (IRAM, 2010/2011) risk based method to determine the inspection frequency for industrial installations
- Easy Tools Risk Assessment Guidance Book (2011)
- Setting inspection targets and performance monitoring guidance book

2. IMPEL Activities Concerning Inspections – the inspection cycle – DRT II



2. IMPEL Activities Concerning Inspections – related to protected sites



- IMPEL project: Development of a planning tool concerning inspections of Natura 2000 sites (FR 2018/14)
- The report focuses on developing a planning tool for Natura 2000 site inspections. It describes the NIRAM tool, a risk-based approach to determine the inspection frequency, and its application in the Neretve Delta,
 Croatia. = Guidance
- Testing the proposed planning tool for inspections of Natura 2000 sites (NIRAM) in IMPEL member countries (<u>FR 2019/15</u>), tests on two sites in Slovenia
- Testing and Improving the Planning tool for Inspections of Natura 2000 Sites (NIRAM) and Providing Training Material (further tests, tutorial for NIRAM-coordinators and presentation)

2. IMPEL Activities Concerning Inspections – related to protected sites

- Definition of "environmental inspection" of Natura 2000 sites (FR 2018/14)
- 'Environmental inspection' of Natura 2000 sites means all actions, including site-visits, monitoring of impacts and checks of internal reports and follow-up documents, verification of monitoring, checking of the methods applied and adequacy of the environment management of the site, undertaken by or in behalf of the competent authority, to check and promote compliance of sites with their conservation objectives laid down in the standard data forms and, where necessary, to monitor the impacts and pressures on the sites to avoid breach of the concept of no deterioration and promote the development towards good conservation status.
- Definition of criteria (probability and performance)
- Development of NIRAM the IT-tool for determining the inspection frequency (testing whether IRAM fits for the purpose)
- Development of supporting material for starting the planning work with NIRAM (general presentation, tutorial for coordinators,)

CONTENT



1. General Background

2. IMPEL Activities Concerning Inspection

3. The Planning Tool Concerning Inspection of Natura 2000 Sites – NIRAM

3. The Planning Tool Concerning Inspections of Natura 2000 Sites - NIRAM



11

1. Introduction

1.1. Development of a methodology for a planning tool concerning

inspection of Natura 2000 sites

1.2. Tool options

2. Methodology

2.1. NIRAM

2.2. Criteria

2.3. Example of the NIRAM tool use

3. NIRAM tool

3.1. Manual

3.2. Training

4. Additional IMPEL activities 2023 – 2024 and future perspectives

4.1. Testing and improving the NIRAM tool

4,2 Development of training material (presentation, tutorial)

4,3 Adapting the NIRAM tool to the needs of IMPEL member countries

1. Introduction

1.1. Development of a methodology for a planning tool concerning inspection of Natura 2000 sites

- Need to develop a methodology:
 - complex reality vs. complex legislation vs. scarce resources,
 - establishing priorities in the planning of inspections;
 - resources maximization, etc.

- Existing methodology analysis Integrated Risk Assessment Method (IRAM):

- Wastewater Treatment Plants;
- Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control Industrial installations;
- Transboundary Movement of Waste;
- Seveso Directive;
- VOC Solvents Directive (at an advanced stage of development).

- Challenges in the development of a methodology for the Natura 2000 Network:

- establishment of criteria (SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely);
- information sources: Standard Data Form (SDF), inspections and existing databases;
- a flexible tool adaptable to all the regions and countries of IMPEL;
- low implementation cost;
- intuitive tool.



1. Introduction



1.2. Tool options: adapt IRAM tool or development of new tool

IRAM tool:

- Risk = Effect x Probability;
- Effect: impact criteria (adding values; classes: 0, 1, 2 e 3);
- Probability: performance criteria (multiplication of values; classes: -1, 0 e 1);

- "The Rule": the number of criteria with the maximum score determine the frequency of the inspection.

- Results: Risk profile, highest score, number of criteria with the highest score, risk category, maximum inspector effort, frequency of visit, maximum deadline for the next visit, etc.

- Three levels of permission according to user profiles: coordinator, group leader, inspector.

IRAM for Nature (NIRAM) – creating new forms in the existing IRAM Tool

(IMPEL Project: Risk assessment and Planning IRAM II)

2.1. NIRAM

- Access to NIRAM via <u>https://iram-impel.nrw.de/lip/authenticate.do</u>
- IMPEL Members have to register and can use:
 - the template proposed by IMPEL project 2018/14, or
 - adapt the template for the needs of the authority (i.e.: native language of the member state (MS), regional forms, etc.)

• Preparatory work:

- collection of relevant information for feeding the NIRAM tool (examples: SDF, existing databases, studies, judicial information, previous inspections, complaints, site's custodians, experts, etc.)

- Scoring
- Result



2.1. NIRAM

- 1. The inspection frequency is determined by the value of the highest score
- 2. The inspection frequency is reduced by one score, if the set minimum number of highest scores (called "the Rule") is not met
- 3. The inspection frequency can be changed by only one score up or down based on the probability criteria
- 4. The higher the sum of scores the shorter the inspection period (e.g. every 12 months).

It is important to point out that not applying all the criteria is allowed (for example, in cases where the data is not available), the result is unaffected by the omissions and is still viable.

More detailed information on the "Integrated Risk Assessment Method (IRAM): <u>https://www.impel.eu/tools/risk-criteria-database-iram/</u> IRAM Tool: <u>https://iram-impel.nrw.de/lip/authenticate.do</u>



2.2. Criteria

2.2.1. Impact Criteria (score: 0, 1, 2 or 3)



Score	Criteria 1 - Presence of habitats and/or protected species
0	Less than 33% of total site area covered by habitats and/or species of Community interest 1) included in Habitats and/or Birds Directives.
1	More than 33% to 67% of total site area covered by habitats and/or species of Community interest 1) included in Habitats and/or Birds Directives.
2	More than 67% of total site area covered by habitats and/or species of Community interest 1) included in Habitats and/or Birds Directives.
3	Presence of habitats and/or species of priority interest (*) included in Habitats and/or Birds Directives.

Score	Criteria 2 - Site vulnerability/Vulnerability of the habitats in the site
0	High ecological complexity, high resilience, low sensitivity.
1	High ecological complexity, medium/low resilience, medium/high sensitivity.
2	Low ecological complexity, medium/high resilience, medium/low sensitivity.
3	Low ecological complexity, low resilience, high sensitivity.

2.2. Criteria





Score	Criteria 3 - Gravity of offences
0	No offences
1	Low offences (To be defined by MS)
2	High offences (To be defined by MS)
3	Criminal offences (To be defined by MS)

Score	Criteria 4 - Conservation status of the site
0	favourable
1	unfavourable - Inadequate when the conservation status of the site is unfavourable up to 25% of the area
2	unfavourable - bad when the conservation status of the site is unfavourable in more than 25% of the area
3	There is no information available

2.2. Criteria



2.2.1. Impact Criteria (score: 0, 1, 2 or 3)

Score	Criteria 5 - Presence of activities with likely negative impact on conservation objectives, inside the Natura 2000 sites
0	Potential impact but no quantifiable threat.
1	Indirect impact with quantifiable threat to long term impact.
2	Mid-term impact and/or cumulative pressure.
3	Direct impact and/or current pressure.
Score	Criteria 6a - Presence of activities outside the houndary of the Natura 2000 site which are likely to have a

Score	negative impact on the site – air quality. Distance from Natura 2000 site boundary (km).
0	15 to 10
1	10 to 2
2	2 to 0,5
3	<0,5

2. Methodology 2.2. Criteria 2.2.1. Impact Criteria (score: 0, 1, 2 or 3)

3



Score	Criteria 6b - Presence of activities outside the boundary of the Natura 2000 site which are likely to have a negative impact on the site – water quality and water resources. Distance from Natura 2000 site boundary (km).
0	5 to 2
1	2 to 1
2	1 to 0,5
3	<0,5
Score	Criteria 7 - Likely negative impact on conservation objectives changes in land use
0	There are no changes in land use (inside the Natura 2000 site and on the buffer zone).
1	The change of land use is nearby Natura 2000, inside the buffer zone, inside the Natura 2000 site but not on habitats of interest.
2	The change of land use is inside Natura 2000 site on areas of habitats of Community interest and/or habitats for species of Community interest.

The change of land use is inside Natura 2000 site on areas of priority habitats (*) of Community interest and/or habitats for priority species (*) of Community interest.

Future IMPEL Project: Geospatial Intelligence for Environmental Damage Assessment/GIEDA Coastal Zones Change 2012-2018: <u>https://land.copernicus.eu/local/coastal-zones/coastal-zones-change-2012-2018?tab=mapview</u>

2.2.2. Probability Criteria (score: -1, 0 or +1)



Score	Criteria 6c - Likelihood of activities with in combination impacts/Presence of activities outside the boundary of the Natura 2000 site which are likely to have a negative impact on the site – in combination
- 1	No other activities within greatest emission distance.
0	Other activities that have no likely negative effect on objectives.
+ 1	Other activities within greatest emission distance which could have likely negative effect on objectives.

Score	Criteria 8 - Presence of management plan (MP)
- 1	Site specific MP in place and the requirements of MP are followed.
0	General MP in place or under development and the requirements of MP are followed.
+ 1	No site specific plan or general MP or MP in place but requirements are not followed.

Score	Criteria 9 - Presence of custodian
- 1	The custodian activities positively effect the site.
	(The -1 is also used when it is determined that no custodian is required for the site).
0	The custodian activities have no effect on the site.
+ 1	The custodian activities negatively effect the site.
	(The +1 is also used when it is determined that a custodian is required for the site but is not in place).

2.2.2. Probability Criteria (score: -1, 0 or +1)



Score	Criteria 10 - Presence of activities with favourable impact on conservation/Presence of activities with likely favourable impact on conservation objectives inside Natura 2000 sites (number of habitats and/or species listed in SDF chapter No. 3.1. and 3.2.)
- 1	Likely favourable impact on habitats and/or species.
0	No favourable impact on habitats and/or species.
+ 1	Not applicable.

Score	Criteria 11a - Overlap Natura 2000 sites with national or other international sites overlap of N2K with other national sites means more protection of the N2K site
- 1	Bigger than 67 % to 100 % overlap of N2K with other national and/or international sites
0	67% to 33 % overlap of N2K with other national and/or international sites
+ 1	Smaller than 33 % to 0 % overlap of N2K with other national and/or international sites

Score	Criteria 11b - Overlap Natura 2000 sites with national or other international sites overlap of N2K with other national sites means less protection of the N2K site
- 1	Smaller than 33 % to 0 % overlap of N2K with other national and/or international sites
0	67% to 33 % overlap of N2K with other national and/or international sites
+ 1	Bigger than 67 % to 100 % overlap of N2K with other national and/or international sites

2. Methodology 2.2. Criteria 2.2.1. Impact Criteria (score: 0, 1, 2 or 3)



Score	Criteria 12 - Invasive Alien Species (IAS) reported in the Natura 2000 site.
0	No presence of IAS
1	Presence of IAS with mitigation measures
2	No current information of presence of IAS
3	Presence of iAS without mitigation measures



2.3. Example of the NIRAM tool use

Each of the selected sites was scored three times:

1. Before site inspection (scoring based on publicly available information in SDF)

2. During site inspection (scoring based on theoretical knowledge and data

from the field, presented by experts from Nature Protection Institute and Kozjansko Regional Park)

3. After site inspection (scoring based on theoretical knowledge, data from the field and final evaluation).

2. Methodology 2.3. Example of the NIRAM tool use Assessment of inspection frequency – example Volceke, Slovenia (1/6)

• small site, 104 ha



- close proximity to urban environment with heavy industrial zone (IED installation, landfields, highway, fish farms)
- within the site agriculture is very intensive, many small fields, intensive orchards, permanent grasslands, overgrown land, trees and shrubs, unused agricultural land, some forests and built-up land and small stream Vzhodna Ložnica
- overlaping with national protected area
- for the site small natural habitats areas and small populations for butterflies are characteristic. Most of the grasslands are not moved properly (mowing ban from June to August to give butterfly species enough time to reproduce). Conversion of grasslands to fields is often noticed.



Methodology Example of the NIRAM tool use

Assessment of inspection frequency – example Volceke, Slovenia (2/6) Habitat types:

- 6510 Lowland hay meadows (*Alopecurus pratensis, Sanguisorba officinalis*)
- 6410 Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae*)

Species:

- 1059 *Maculinea teleius -* scarce large blue *(*butterfly)
- 1060 *Lycaena dispar* dusky large blue (butterfly)
- 1061 *Maculinea nausithous* large copper (butterfly)
- 1032 Unio crassus thick shelled river mussel





2. Methodology 2.3. Example of the NIRAM tool use Assessment of inspection frequency – example Volceke, Slovenia (3/6)



Template Inspection Task	s		Tem	plate Inspection Task
Inspection task		Koordinator: Werner Möhring-Hüser		
Name of the inspection tas	sk	Nature Inspection (Report number: 2018/14)		
Minimum number of highe	st score	4		Description of the
Lowest risk category		1		Value
Highest risk category		3		
Show Integrated Risk Asse	essment Method	Linear Mean Value Method		
inspection task inactive		EN .		
Language		EN		
Impact criteria				
Impact criterion		1) Presence of habitats and/or protected species		Value
Maximum possible score		3		Description of the
Description of the criterior	n			
Description of the	Less than 33%	of total site area covered by habitats and/or species		Value Description of the value
value	included in Hat	itats and/or Birds Directives.		Value
Value	0		Shi	ift of score (weight)
		-	Ins	pection weight

nalate Increation Tech	
inplate inspection rask	3
Description of the value	More than 33% to 67% of total site area covered by habitats and/or species included in Habitats and/or Birds Directives.
Value	1
Description of the value	More than 67% of total site area covered by habitats and/or species included in Habitats and/or Birds Directives.
Value	2
Description of the value	Presence of habitats and/or species of priority interest included in Habitats and/or Birds Directives.
Value	3
hift of score (weight)	lo l
and of Score (weight)	<u>1</u>
spection weight	L <u> </u>

2. Methodology 2.3. Example of the NIRAM tool use Assessment of inspection frequency – example Volceke, Slovenia (4/6)



Assessment done by	Horst Büther			
Inspection object	Volceke	ID SI-3000213		
Inspection task	Nature Inspection	n (new)		
Date of inspection planning	26.09.2019	Date of last inspection	28.08.2019	

Input of Performance Scores

ght of criteria	Score
	1
	0
	-1
	0

Address data

Street	
Postal code	Location

Input of Impact Scores

Impact criteria			
	Maximum score	Score	Shift of score (weight)
1) Presence of habitats and/or protected species	3	D	0
2) Vulnerability of the habitats in the site	3	3	0
4) Degree of offence	3	1	0
5) Conservation status of the site	3	2	0
7) Activities inside with likely negative impact	3	Þ	D
8a) Activities outside with negative impact on air quality	3	1	0
9) Changes in land use	3	D	0
8 b) Activities outside with negative impact on water	3	3	0

Minimum number of highest score Lowest risk category Highest risk category

3

Mean of operator performance Risk Scores and inspection Profile

Impact criteria			
	Risk profile	inspection weight	Inspection profile
1) Presence of habitals and/or protected species	0	1	0
2) Vuinerability of the habitats in the site	3	1	3
4) Degree of offence	1	1	1
5) Conservation status of the site	2	1	2
7) Activities inside with likely negative impact	0	1	0
8a) Activities outside with negative impact on air quality	1	1	1
9) Changes in land use	0	1	0
8 b) Activities outside with negative impact on water	3	1	3

Methodology Section 2.3. Example of the NIRAM tool use Assessment of inspection frequency – example Volceke, Slovenia (5/6)



Assessment done by	Horst Büther			
Inspection object	Volceke	ID SI-3000213		
Inspection task	Nature Inspectio	n (new)		
Date of inspection planning	26.09.2019	Date of last inspection	28.08.2019	

Risk ranking number	33211000
Highest risk score	3
Number of highest risk scores	2
Risk category	 2
Inspection frequency	36
Latest Inspection date	28.08.2022
Maximum Inspection effort (100%)	24
Sum of Inspection profile	10
Inspection effort (percentage)	41 %
Inspection category	в
Sum of risk profile	10
Mean of risk profile	1,3
Demote	

Result: inspection frequency 36 month (three years)

Remarks



2.3. Example of the NIRAM tool use Assessment of inspection frequency – example Volceke, Slovenia (6/6)

The final result of scoring with NIRAM tool: inspection site visit once every three years, reflects the actual needs, according to national experts.







3. NIRAM tool 3.1. Manual 3.2. Training



3. NIRAM tool 3.1. Manual 3.2. Training

3.1 NIRAM Manual / Guidance

• So far, the report of IMPEL project: Development of a planning tool concerning inspections of Natura 2000 sites (<u>FR 2018/14</u>) may serve as guidance document.

3.2 Training

- Individual NIRAM training can be based on the project reports on IRAM and NIRAM, this presentation and the "Illustrated NIRAM quick guide"
- The item of inspection planning and the use of the NIRAM planning tool will remain an element of IMPEL workshops that include joint inspections of Natura 2000 sites.
- Sharing of experiences on adapting and use of the NIRAM tool by different IMPEL members
- Project team members offer to provide support.



3.3 Additional IMPEL activities 2023 – 2024 and future perspectives

> Testing and improving the NIRAM tool

took place during workshops in Galicia, Latvia, Romania and Czech Republic

> Development of training material (presentation, quick guide)

- this presentation
- tutorial for users \rightarrow how to get access to NIRAM, how to administrate groups, how to create templates, how to work with the tool (see next slides)
- If possible, IMPEL will provide material for online training

> Adapting the NIRAM tool to the needs of IMPEL member countries:

regions in Portugal, Greece (NECCA), Croatia are currently working on it

3.3 Training material - Illustrated NIRAM quick guide - extract



- First steps
- NIRAM is a sub item under the umbrella of the IRAM planning tool for inspections. That is why you have to register via the IRAM homepage to get access to the NIRAM forms.

- Get the Guidance book and the descriptions from logon page
- You will find the guidance book and other supporting descriptions on the login page: <u>https://iram-impel.nrw.de/lip/authenticate.do</u>

3.3 Illustrated NIRAM quick guide - extract





3.3 Illustrated NIRAM quick guide - extract



> Description of the team roles

- The coordinator has the following responsibilities:
- Putting the inspectors of his administration under his coordination.
- Development of forms for specific inspection tasks (e.g. waste shipment) including determination of steering parameters.
- Setting up inspection groups and promoting inspectors to group leaders.
- The group leader is an inspector who has
- An overview of all assessment results of the assigned inspectors. On this base, he can draw up inspection programmes for the next year.
- In addition, he has the right to change the risk assessments of the assigned inspectors.
- The **inspector** has the lowest level of authority in the NIRAM tool.
- His responsibility is to fill in the data into the form developed by the coordinator.
- For working with the tool or for testing purposes, the minimum requirement is to have a coordinator and an inspector.



Previous reports and present ToR:

Development Nature Protection Planning Tool (2018): https://www.impel.eu/actions/download-file/files/78866dae-4152-4102-8689-65fb1fd2b6b3/2018-14-Development-Nature-Protection-Planning-Tool.pdf

Report NIRAM Tool (2019): <u>https://www.impel.eu/en/projects/inspection-planning-tool-of-nature-protected-sites#:~:text=Report%20NIRAM%20Tool%20(2019)</u>

ToRs 2022-24: https://www.impel.eu/actions/download-file/files/03347c19-2b2c-4bad-8df8-28d2ddbaad3d/ToR%20%28VII%29%20NP%20-%20WG2%20NIRAM%20training%20material%20and%20Roadmap%20%28W%29.p df





European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law

The planning tool concerning inspections of Natura 2000 sites (NIRAM)

Result of IMPEL Projects 2018/14, 2019/15, 2022: Implementation of Art. 6(3) of the Habitats Directive – Development of a risk based tool for planning inspections

(VII) NP - WG2 NIRAM training material for using the NIRAM tool

Authors:

Gisela Holzgraefe (DE), Kate Bayley (UK)

Alexandra Magalhães (PT)