

Newletter: 02

Econat



ECONAT Project

The Transnational Association of the ECONAT project, through mutual cooperation, aims to transfer and disseminate the results of the "NATURA-NET" project so that they can be the driving force around which a model of rural development and good practices can be disseminated.

On the other hand, the project fosters a type of training which will allow qualification, professionalization and access to employment for the most disadvantaged groups in rural areas, regarding the sustainable management of Natural Areas and the Natura 2000 Network. In this way, it contributes to solve the problems of the sector and to improve the situation of lack of professionalization and access to employment among the project target groups in those countries where the transfer will take place.

"If you want to know more about the project, visit: www.econat.info

Project objectives:

1. Transfer a new ability to access the labour market needs regarding the management of European Natural Areas and the Natura 2000 Network, using the results of the "Natura-Net" project (developed within the Leonardo da Vinci Programme).
2. Adapt the contents of the tools to be transferred to the needs and requirements of the project target groups.
3. Promote the integration of the new learning and the labour activity.
4. Carry out the transfer to new socio-cultural and linguistic contexts.
5. Enhance the involvement of all the actors in the environmental sector (training centres, non-formal education, local action groups, public and private companies...) in the development of the project.
6. Promote the principle of equal opportunities in the working areas.





Activities carried out Transnational Association

Once we started the Project, different activities have been carried out by the partners in the different impact surroundings and also within the association.

The partnership has worked led by the promoter (Espazo Ensina SL) from the beginning. The members have worked in a cooperative way in the preparation of the different products and materials related to the project.



II Transnational meeting: *Laugarás-Reykjavik 2012*

The 2nd transnational session was carried out in June in the south-western part of Iceland.

During June 5th and 6th different targets for the implementation of the project were fulfilled, as it is shown in the main bullets of the agenda:

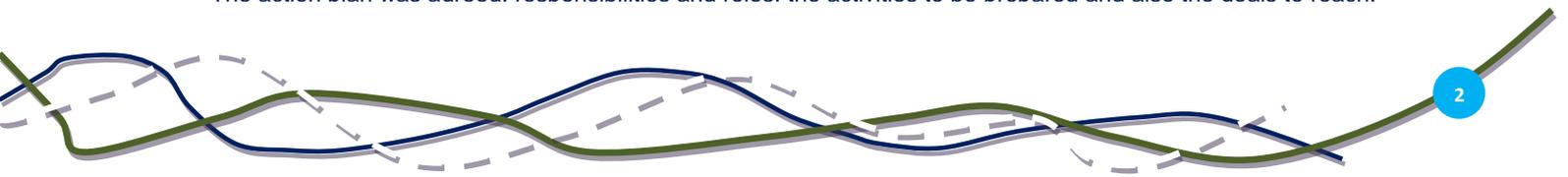
- Presenting the contents and layout of I Newsletter, approving the design of the Newsletter to be used also for the remaining project newsletters
- Presenting the project website www.econat.info and agreeing about contents development for the website
- Presentation of project information on ADAM database
- Reporting progress on signing the adhesion letters, organization of publicity and dissemination tasks
- Discussion on needed budget changes, piloting actions, and the two guides to be elaborated as end results, followed.
- The partners were informed of the work time line and the deadlines of the project.
- The action plan was agreed: responsibilities and roles. the activities to be prepared and also the goals to reach.

Partnership visit: Gullfoss and Geysir

After the meeting on first day was over, the members of the association visited the most important natural places in the surroundings: Gullfoss and Geysir.

On the second day of the meeting, partners enjoyed a study visit to Þingvellir National Park. The Golden Circle is a popular tourist route in South Iceland, covering about 300 km looping from Reykjavík into central Iceland and back.

The three primary stops on the route are the national park Þingvellir, the waterfall Gullfoss (meaning "golden falls"), and the geothermally active valley of Haukadalur, which contains the geysers Geysir and Strokkur.



Dissemination activities:

ECONAT Project presentation at the City Council of Reykholt

On June 6th, the presentation of the project took place at a local level by calling for a meeting the general public and main target groups from the local municipality.

The host partner explained the project to the municipality. The people presented at the meeting showed an interest in the project and are looking forward to its final results. The host partner will be cooperating with the municipality in the near future and will be keeping them updated about the progression of the project.

An interesting discussion was established among the different attendants about the tourism possibilities of the natural areas and the need of preserving them.



ADAM database www.adam-europe.eu

Information about ECONAT project can also be found on ADAM database – the project and product portal for Leonardo da Vinci.



ECONAT on project fair in Spain: EUROPE-WIDE DISSEMINATION

On March 22, 2012 ECONAT project was disseminated at an EU projects dissemination conference and project fair in Bilbao, Spain.

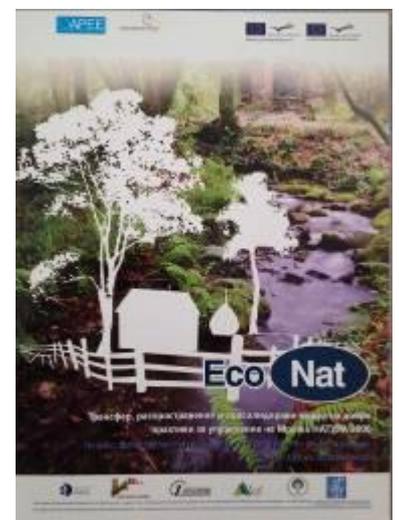
All participants of the conference received brief information about the projects that were disseminated at the fair and conference, organised by Fondo Formacion Euskadi. On behalf of ECONAT project partnership, Estonian partner Siksali Development Centre distributed project leaflet and explained about the project to those who were interested

Project brochure

Project brochure has now been finalized and it is a useful material for all the partners to disseminate the project in their own language in their own countries. It is available in English + the respective language of partner country: Spanish, Bulgarian, Romanian, Estonian and Icelandic.

Project website www.econat.info

Project website www.econat.info has been launched, and is providing information about the project, partnership, and activities. As project results emerge, they will be uploaded on the website. The site is available in all partner languages as well as English.





Interesting news within the sector

NEWS

The Minister of the Environment representing Estonia at the World Conservation Congress

The Minister of the Environment Keit Pentus-Rosimannus represented Estonia at the V World Conservation Congress taking place in South-Korea. This is a congress of the world's largest environmental and nature conservation organisation that takes place once in every four years. The main topic of the congress is nature's links to people's living environment and everyday activities.



Under this event, the Minister of the Environment Pentus-Rosimannus will deliver an opening presentation of discussion panels on two days. On September 9, the Estonian Minister of the Environment will deliver an opening presentation in a panel that will discuss concordance between economic growth and nature-friendly development. On Tuesday, September 11, the Minister of the Environment will deliver an opening presentation in a panel on cross-border nature conservation work.

Other important topics of the conference are preservation and restoration of habitats, eco system services and amenities, and sea protection issues.

International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) is the world's largest nature and environmental protection organisation that shapes the face of the world's nature conservation and determines the most important problems. In cooperation of scientists and practitioners, the Union also helps to develop measures for solving them. The Union consists of more than thousand members. The republic of Estonia has been a member of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources since 2007. In addition, the Estonian Fund for Nature also belongs to the Union.

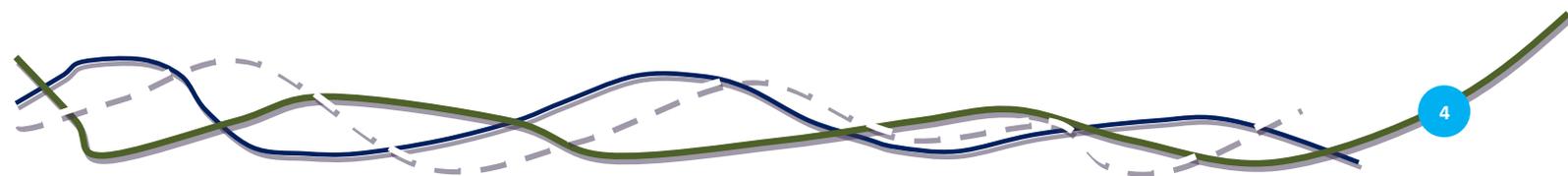
All world's nature conservation agreements have grown out of the IUCN, for example, conventions on biodiversity, trading in endangered species, and wetlands. One of the most well-known activity of the Union is undoubtedly issuing the red books of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, renewed every year.

The Estonian delegation also includes Hanno Zingel, Adviser on Nature Conservation, Taimo Aasma, Head of the Nature Conservation Department, and Annikky Lamp, Adviser of the Minister.

08.09.2012

<http://www.envir.ee/1189371>

Source: website: Ministry of the Environment



The population considers the status of the environment in Estonia to be good

The Ministry of the Environment introduced a survey on environmental awareness among Estonian population. 85 per cent of the population has provided good or very good assessment to the status of the environment in Estonia.

The recent research indicated how the people are assessing the Estonian environment, which problems do they see, and what are their priorities in the field of energy.



The highest assessment was provided to the possibilities to study nature both on nature tracks and independently. Availability of clean drinking water, waste management and care of natural values were also considered rather good.

According to the Minister of the Environment Keit Pentus, nature conservation may often bring about opposed opinions, therefore feedback was asked from the participants in the survey on what they considered essential in nature conservation. 98 % of the respondents find that nature conservation is beneficial, while 77 % completely or rather agree that in case of two options – preservation of natural environment or development of economically profitable activities – the natural environment should not be sacrificed. "This proves that although Estonians have been considered very pragmatic, certain values and their preservation are still more important to us. It is also worth noting that for most people, nature conservation is not something forced upon them from outside. 81 % agrees that the status of the environment is directly related to the quality of life of the people," the Minister of the Environment Keit Pentus said.

Estonian people are most critical in the fields of major industrial pollution, cleanliness of the sea and planning of new mines. In this issue, there is a clear difference between various regions of Estonia. The inhabitants of Tallinn are most critical towards cleanliness of air and sea water, while the people of Ida-Viru County worry about clean drinking water and quality of air.

The survey showed that Estonian people generally consider themselves environmentally aware. Compared to the 2010 survey, the assessment on the environmental awareness of the society has risen. Relaxation and sporting possibilities in nature offered by hiking and study tracks are still popular. More than half of the respondents (61 %) have visited different nature tracks in the last 12 months.

Availability of environmental information about Estonia has constantly improved – 64 % of the population found that it is completely or rather available. Only 3 % stated the opposite. The survey was conducted among the people in the age of 15-74 years. The number of respondents was 1005 and the results can be extended to relevant population of Estonia. The survey was ordered by the Ministry of the Environment and conducted by Turu-uuringute AS.

02.08.2012

<http://www.envir.ee/1188164>

Source: website: Ministry of the Environment



Nature Conservation Development Plan was approved after a long preparation in Estonia

At the end of July, the Government approved the Nature Conservation Development Plan until 2020 submitted by the Minister of the Environment Keit Pentus, which specifies the major development lines in the fields related to nature conservation. In the coming years, the most important aspects in the field of the environment will be environmental education, protection of biodiversity and more sustainable use of natural resources.

"The stage in Estonian nature conservation where the only possibility for nature conservation and management was to organise the field with national orders and restrictions and establishment of strict conservation areas, will soon be history. By now, almost one fifth of the territory of Estonia is covered with various conservation areas and instead of their additional establishment, we will concentrate on ensuring that these areas would be well managed. The attitude that nature should be protected not only at the conservation areas, but outside their borders as well, should become essential," explained the Minister of the Environment Keit Pentus. "Our nature is very rich, including well preserved raised bogs, primeval forests, coastal and wooded meadows with their characteristic species, which have become very rare elsewhere," she added.

According to the words of the Minister, contemporary nature conservation is concentrating in addition to traditional nature management also on promotion of environmental awareness of people and sustainable use of natural resources. "The environmental education has an essential role here, because we can manage and protect nature better if we are familiar it," Pentus said. The completed Nature Conservation Development Plan is a strategic document, the objective of which is to ensure systematic planning of national nature conservation activities, balanced use of natural resources and preservation of species and habitats. The Nature Conservation Development Plan includes classical nature conservation as well as other fields related to protection of nature. The Development Plan will provide input for the planning of financial resources and will form the basis for improvement of the National Environmental Action Plan of Estonia 2007-2013.

Some examples of the activities of the Development Plan are raising of environmental awareness of the people through environmental education on all levels of education development of nature conservation research, organisation of sustainable environmental tourism, ensuring of favourable condition of species and habitats and versatility of natural landscapes, organisation of the protection of natural objects, compensation of nature conservation restrictions and supporting of nature conservation activities. Essential activities in the field of use of natural resources are, for example, taking account of the value of the services of ecosystem in use of the environment, mitigation of the versatility reducing impact of mining and management of renewable energy sources, ensuring of biological safety and mitigation of negative transport impact.

For example, by 2020, the area of managed cultural biotopes such as alvars and coastal and wooded meadows would be increased by almost twice. The cultural communities developed with the human impact are extremely valuable for preservation of the diversity of species and landscape. Recovery of swamps and raised bogs is also planned to be increased to up to 10,000 hectares. The measures facilitating the

improvement of environmental education and awareness would be a broader use of IT solutions (such as practical i-applications for smartphones) and increase of the possibilities of outdoor studies.

26.07.2012

<http://www.envir.ee/1188164>

Source: website: Ministry of the Environment

"Vocational Training, qualification & employment creation concerning the sustainable management of the Natura 2000 Network"

NATURE GUIDES' TRAINING COURSE

course for nature guides, funded by European Union Social Fund. 13 people graduated from the course and 10 of them became certified local guides, which will enable them after one year has passed to apply for the qualification of a national guide. Now a new training course, organised by Tartu University, is about to begin, targeting elderly people (50 – 74-yrs old) and young unemployed (16-24 yrs old). The course is organised as an additional training and re-training course, with total 14 training days, and in addition to this exams (160 hours total). Topics to be covered during the course include:

- Nature interpretation
- Tourism service (tourist – environment communication)
- Sustainable moving in nature
- Bird tourism and ethics of a nature guide
- Relations between humans and nature
- Safety during hikes (giving first aid)
- System of protection areas management
- Organising a hike

The course will not be directly targeted at teaching about nature, but rather about different methods of nature and heritage landscapes interpretation and environmental awareness raising among participants. Additional information can be obtained from: kristina.gudinas@ut.ee



Evaluation and Impact

ECONAT Project

The different actions carried out by the partners have been so far:

1. Signing of adhesion letters with different public entities.
2. Presentations in Schools, Associations, local municipalities and other stakeholders.
3. Creation of the project website and dissemination of it.
4. Elaboration of project brochure
5. Links of the project website to the partner's different websites and vice versa
6. Information of the project included in the Adam database of the LLP programme.
7. Sending newsletters of the project to stakeholders, including online discussion groups.
8. Dissemination in national and international conferences and events.
9. Information on the ECONAT project included on the projects leaflet distributed in different national and international events.
10. Elaboration of publicity materials and actions.
11. Starting of the adaptation of the New Curricular Design and Work-linked Practice Guide and the General Good Practice Guide Natura 2000 Network.

After the internal evaluations of the Transnational sessions, the results are positive and encouraging. Partners agree that we will be able to achieve the set goals and deliver the agreed results.

