Norfolk County Council

Project: BID-REX

Partner organisation: Norfolk County Council

Other partner organisations involved (if relevant): University of East Anglia

Country: United Kingdom

NUTS2 region: UK

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The Action Plan aims to impact:

☐ Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
☐ European Territorial Cooperation programme
☒ Other regional development policy instrument

Name of the policy instrument addressed: **European Regional Development Fund England Operational Programme (OP) 2014-2020**

Introduction

This Action Plan represents the outcome of Phase 1 of the BID-REX project and outlines the activities to be undertaken by Norfolk County Council (NCC) and University of East Anglia (UEA). These will deliver work to address the identified priority needs of decision makers with regards to biodiversity data.

The BID-REX project is an Interreg Europe funded project beginning in April 2016 and running for 5 years in two phases. An initial delivery period lasting three years, ending in March 2019, followed by a monitoring period ending in March 2021. The project will examine the delivery of biodiversity policy enacted by regional governments within the European Union (EU) with respect to the ways in which data are used to inform decision-making.

The main focus of the project is the use European Regional Development Funds (ERDF) to deliver Biodiversity policy. In particular an examination of Priority Axis 6: Preserving and Protecting the Environment and Promoting Re-source Efficiency. Within this axis Investment Priority 6d: Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and Green Infrastructure, forms the focus of an examination into the use of biodiversity data to improve the delivery of regional development policy.

The BID-REX project aims to enhance natural capital through improved regional development policies. It will do this by creating and reinforcing the link between high quality and relevant biodiversity data and conservation decision making processes. More specifically, it will help to promote the establishment of priorities in budget allocation and in monitoring the impact of the resulting actions, by feeding decision making processes with appropriate biodiversity information.

The project will lead to better prioritization of biodiversity conservation efforts using evidence based methods and available biodiversity and environmental information. This will be complemented by work promoting and improving regional forums involving key stakeholders (decision makers, NGO, practitioners, researchers, etc.) in order to integrate relevant biodiversity data to properly inform decision making by regional authorities.

Partners

The project is delivered by a partnership from across Europe. The partners are:

Forest Sciences Institute of Catalonia (Lead Partner) (Spain)

Government of Catalonia (Spain)

Marche Region Ecological Network (Italy)

University of East Anglia (UK)

Norfolk County Council (UK)

Basque Government (Spain)

National Institute of Biology (Slovenia)

University of Debrecen (Hungary)

Public Service of Wallonia - General Directorate of Agriculture, natural resources and Environment (Belgium)

Project background

BID-REX aims to enhance natural heritage protection through improved regional development policies and will create or reinforce the link between high quality biodiversity data and conservation decision making processes.

Project aims and outcomes

BID-REX aims to improve the implementation of regional development policies by better supporting the different decision making processes with biodiversity information. The lessons of the BID- REX project will be shared and extended beyond the partnership through regional influence, policy influence and through national and EU networks.

The objective of BID-REX is to contribute to the enhancement of natural heritage and support sustainable economic growth by means of facilitating the accessibility and availability of robust and structured biodiversity data both at policy and Programme management levels. The synthesis of this data into readily interpretable information aims to improve decision making and monitoring, as well as maximizing the effectiveness of regional development policies, particularly ERDF allocation.

The project aims to produce a significant improvement to the delivery of policy instruments via the successful implementation of a set of Action Plans developed during Phase 1. These improvements will result in the following:

- Identification of specific strengths and weaknesses in the current uses of biodiversity data
- Identification, exchange and implementation of best practices and techniques related to biodiversity information management and use at different stages in the decision processes
- Improved local governance by creating and improving discussion forums, and by developing synergies and coordinating exchanges among stakeholders
- Increased technical capacity to manage structured biodiversity information and data flows
- Improved data flows leading to effective decision making and prioritization to ensure better and more efficient regional development policies, particularly ERDF investment
- Enhanced credibility for the decision processes derived from the use of objective and reliable information

How?

The BID- REX project will develop an interactive interregional learning process aimed at facilitating the exchange of approaches, tools and methods that have proven useful for bridging the gap between environmental information availability and decisions. More specifically, the work plan is designed to allow a logically planned interregional and local learning process organized around conferences, workshops and more in depth visits to explore & exchange best practices. The planning of these activities will allow for a progressive integration of the knowledge gained.

This will take place through the following activities:

Thematic workshops

Local Stakeholder Meetings

Situational Analysis

Technical documents

Key Lesson Briefs

The thematic workshops, as main exchange activities, are the principal axis of the project work plan. The definition of the topics of the exchange activities follows a clear linear and interrelated flow starting from the needs of the regions, going through the tools and methodologies and ending with the impacts on policies. There will be one conference/workshop per semester on the basis of the specific outputs delivered by the previous events. The roles and responsibilities are well balanced between regions and have been designed according to each partner interests, needs and expertise.

The workshop topics for Phase 1 are:

- Information needs of policy makers
- Matching information to needs
- Improving data flows
- Capacity building for decision makers and data providers
- The impact of the learning process on Action Plans

Following the workshops a series of technical documents will be produced detailing the outputs. Alongside these a regional situational analysis document will be produced by each partner. The technical documents and the regional situational analysis will combine to form the Regional Action Plan of the individual partners.

The UK situation

The project aims to enshrine the use of high quality biodiversity data in decision making around the use of ERDF funding relating to biodiversity. However the topics covered within the ERDF for England are of great relevance for a number of other policies related to biodiversity and so the project has the potential to deliver gains in a number of areas.

The document European Regional Development Fund England Operational Programme (OP) 2014-2020 sets out the approach that England will take to delivering the aims of the ERDF. This covers a range of activities with BID-REX focusing on Priority Axis 6: Preserving and Protecting the Environment and Promoting Resource Efficiency. Within this Priority Axis in the UK the project will focus on 2.A4 Investment Priority 6d – Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including Natura 2000 and green infrastructure.

Via Objective 6.1 the OP promotes Investment in green infrastructure (GI) and actions to support the provision of ecosystem services on which businesses and communities depend to increase local natural capital and support sustainable economic growth. Through these activities it will help reverse the decline in, restore and enhance degraded ecosystem services and halt overall biodiversity loss. The improved local environment will serve as a catalyst to local economic growth by attracting inward investment and increased visitor spend, reducing the costs of adverse environmental conditions, providing health benefits and generating employment. Targets for the policy are an increase in area of GI and surface area of habitats supported in order to attain a better conservation status.

The United Kingdom is currently below the trajectory for achieving its Biodiversity 2020 targets of 50% of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) to be in favourable condition by 2020 with a consequent impact on the condition of the Natura 2000 network. The lack of a strategic approach means there is an opportunity to improve environment protection through investments in green and blue infrastructure to develop more efficient use of natural and manmade capital in the country. There is also a problem in that there is no single metric to measure green infrastructure and the ecosystem benefits it provides.

The goal of ID 6.1 and ID C23 of the England ERDF is to increase the quality and quantity of natural capital in England. A number of opportunities are being explored to provide suitable baseline data for green infrastructure including recording connectivity and multifunctional green space via earth observation and developing national natural capital accounts. However as this is not currently available, the area of GI delivered is used as the best available measure. To address these issues better use of data can inform management of existing sites and help to target the creation of GI to mediate

impacts on and connect the existing network of Natura 2000 and SSSI. Additionally, existing data could be better used to measure the ecosystem services provided. New techniques for measuring the area and type of GI created through development can be developed to help with the existing measures and the experience in this development used to inform the development of new measures. Access to data and interpretative tools that can help site managers to make better decisions should be developed and made accessible to decision makers. A more strategic approach to GI planning should form the basis of targeted delivery through access to data and use of ecological network assessments and modelling. Better use should be made of online systems to deliver tools and services to decision makers and planners.

Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure is defined within the National Planning Policy Framework as a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. GI is particularly important as a means of mitigating the impact of development on important wildlife sites and habitats, alongside the additional benefits it gives related to promoting access to the countryside and benefits to public health.

Natura 2000 site condition

Natura 2000 is a network of nature protection areas made up of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated respectively under the Habitats Directive and Birds Directive. The network includes both terrestrial and marine sites - Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). In the UK Natura 2000 sites are designated from the SSSI network which has a target in Biodiversity 2020 of 50% of sites in favourable condition by 2020. There is also a further target of maintaining at least 95% of sites in favourable or recovering condition.

Norfolk as a case study for the UK

Norfolk County Council (NCC) is part of the BID-REX project as a host of the Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service (NBIS) a Local Environmental Records Centre. NBIS acts a central point of access for the county for biodiversity data. The data held covers species, habitats, protected sites and geodiversity with the information held being provided to a range of users and decision makers. The data comes from a variety of sources ranging from citizen scientists and local natural historians to earth observation. It is made available directly by request and also online via the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas. NBIS has been part of a number of projects aimed at investigating new ways to collect and deliver biodiversity data including Defra funded pilots to trial structured species surveillance and habitat mapping using earth observation. The latter producing a complete habitat and land-use map for the county known as the Norfolk Living Map. The first such map produced for an English county.

NCC has also worked collaboratively with the University of East Anglia (UEA) over recent years to show how biodiversity data can improve the management of designated sites through biodiversity audits of the Brecks, Broads and Fenland. These studies have shown the power of biodiversity data in assessing and positively changing management practices in order to deliver cost effective site improvements for habitats and species.

This wealth of experience in the collection and interpretation of data and in particular the partnership working used to ensure that it continues to flow to NBIS and beyond gives an opportunity for Norfolk to provide a perspective on data both locally and as a case study at national level. Close links also exist between NCC and other local and national biodiversity data organisations such as the Association of Local Environmental Records Centres (ALERC) and the NBN. This gives the opportunity to bring in additional expertise and opinion throughout the project.

NCC is also a Local Planning Authority (LPA) with responsibility for minerals, waste and major infrastructure. Through the Green Infrastructure Team it also provides advice and support on planning issues to other lower tier LPAs on development management and strategic planning matters. Recent work has included production of county level ecological network mapping, design of GI corridors, ecosystem service mapping and GI asset analysis. The team also provide information at a local level for neighbourhood and site planning.

This wide range of activity directly linked to biodiversity data and the development of Green Infrastructure in particular gives NCC an ideal opportunity to measure the way in which new actions and delivery of policy instruments are implemented.

The Norfolk context

NCC acts as data collector, manager and provider through NBIS; however as a Local Planning Authority (LPA) it is also a major data user. NCC also works closely with the District Council LPAs to deliver strategic planning of GI and mitigation of the impacts of development on protected sites especially Natura 2000. As a result NCC is currently undertaking a project to produce a series of interpreted data products to inform the development of Local Plans across the county. These Local Plans will set out the approach to housing and other development that will occur in the county over the next five years. Outputs include ecological network maps for a range of habitats, ecosystem service opportunity maps, GI asset maps and analysis of areas deficient in access to natural greenspace. This work is based on existing data holdings and is developed in partnership with consultants, Norfolk Wildlife Trust and the LPAs. The outputs will give us products addressing the need for interpreted data where we can monitor use and affect. The outputs address potential impacts on Natura 2000 sites in the county. 58% of these sites have been identified by Natural England as being

negatively impacted by recreation and public access issues. Alongside this there is a planned 16% increase (66933 new dwellings) in the number of households (currently 400000) with a recent recreational impacts study showing that without appropriate mitigation this will equate to a 14% increase in access to sensitive sites. This same study shows that the majority of users of these sites are coming from their homes and are resident in Norfolk, with dog walking and walking as the main activities taking place. "Close to home" was given as one of the main reasons for visiting a site. Therefore properly developed local plans with appropriately targeted GI can be used to mitigate the impacts of future housing and population growth. Alongside this NCC have commissioned a report detailing the way in which visitors are using these sites to understand the likely result of future growth with regards to increased access of Natura 2000 sites and where new GI is most needed.

Further implementation of the UEA biodiversity audit approach will also ensure that these sites are effectively assessed and monitored in a way that allows appropriate management for favourable conservation condition. However future work is needed to ensure that the results are widely available and easily applied by site managers. The way in which this is facilitated and the resulting adoption will be part of the monitoring of the BID-REX project. Similar techniques being implemented by Natural England will be compared and analysed alongside this to identify synergies, and increase the potential for shared learning and best practice case studies.

Conclusions

Analysis undertaken through the project has shown that there is a wealth of biodiversity data available for use by decision makers. However there are a number of issues with the discovery of, access to, format and use of these data. Often the decision makers are in need of interpreted data to answer a specific question or need. Turning the raw data into a tool or service is key to their effective use. In order to do this the role of data providers and managers needs to be developed with regard to the end-users, decision makers and the development of policy instruments. There is also a need for feedback from all parts of the process into the design of data collection systems in order to ensure that data can be collected once but used many times.

The issue of quality of data and therefore a trust in its use is also a major factor in ensuring the use of biodiversity data in decision making. Effective validation and verification mechanisms can ensure that data is of high quality, as can well designed methods of capture. Accurate and accessible metadata help to provide context to information and again can help to ensure trust in the data being used.

Action Plan Rationale

NCC and UEA have worked closely with UK and BID-REX partners to develop a Regional Action Plan based on the Regional Situational Analysis and the Technical Documents and best practice case studies developed at the workshops. This Action Plan synthesises current key work, legislation, policy and frameworks to develop a proposal on how best to use biodiversity data to deliver effective GI and to improve the condition of Natura 2000 sites in the UK. Targets from the ERDF for England and other local targets form the basis for a monitoring programme for Phase 2 of the BID-REX project running from April 2019 to March 2021.

Alongside this NCC will monitor biodiversity data use in a range of scenarios from fully open, to shared under strict licencing to see how different approaches affect the situation. The effectiveness of recent work such as development of GI corridors and ecosystem service mapping will also form a key part of the analysis.

Monitoring the effectiveness of the uptake of the Biodiversity Audit approach to site management will be used to show how effective new approaches are. This will be analysed alongside the uptake of new approaches by other local partners to give comparisons of ease of use and effectiveness.

It is likely that new ways of measuring delivery will be needed for effective monitoring and local stakeholders and partners will be engaged to ensure success.

Monitoring will culminate in a final analysis document published at the end of Phase 2 in March 2021. With the results presented at the BID-REX closing conference.

Action Plan Objective

The objective of this Action Plan is to detail how the lessons learned from the Partner cooperation and the activity in Phase 1 can inform and develop future innovation in the use of biodiversity data by decision-makers and in improving policy instruments to support the enhancement of Natural Capital in Norfolk and the wider UK.

The focus is on improving the quality and quantity of natural capital in Norfolk. To do this a series of tools will be developed to provide a more strategic approach to GI planning and to allow targeted delivery through access to data and use of ecological network assessments and modelling. A key aspect of this will be enabling better use of online systems to deliver tools and services to address the need for access to data and interpretative tools for decision makers.

These same tools will be used to increase access to the Biodiversity Audit approach for a wider range of users, such as Natura 2000 site managers, in order to ensure that local management decisions can be based on high quality data. These tools will also allow local level data to be fed back into more strategic level decision-making.

Ongoing changes to biodiversity policy in England mean that there is a need to monitor biodiversity change resulting from the planning system and the plan will develop an approach for monitoring the delivery of biodiversity Net Gain through housing and infrastructure development.

An increasing lack of taxonomic expertise has been identified by the project as a key factor in ensuring that the right sort of data is available to answer the questions we are posed. The plan will use lessons learned during the project to develop a structured approach to taxonomic training in Norfolk.

Actions

Action 1

Norfolk Online Environmental Data Hub - Creation of an online system for delivering data and interpretation tools.

Rationale

Analysis undertaken through the project has shown that there is a wealth of biodiversity data available for use by decision makers. However there are a number of issues with the discovery of, access to, format, and use of these data. Often the decision makers are in need of interpreted data to answer a specific question or need. Turning the raw data into a tool or service is key to their effective use.

Regional Analysis

Work with local and national stakeholders has identified a desire for an integrated online system bringing together a range of biodiversity datasets including interpreted data such as ecological network modelling. Discussions have outlined a need for such a resource to have a public facing portal with open access to general information such as location of GI sites but also a more secure section with restricted access to more detailed and sensitive information for key decision-makers.

Workshops & Good Practice

Local Stakeholder Meetings have identified the NBN Atlas and Greenspace Information for Greater London as examples of Good Practice within the UK. Presentations at project workshops have identified Supporting information tool for the Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects (IAIA) and the SITxell project as good examples of ways to provide access to this type of information.

Current policy and ERDF

The goal of ID 6.1 and ID C23 of the England ERDF is to increase the quality and quantity of natural capital in England. The OP states that a number of opportunities are being explored to provide suitable baseline data for green infrastructure including recording connectivity and multifunctional green space via earth observation. Access to this data and interpretative tools that can help site managers to make better decisions should be developed and made accessible to decision makers. Alongside this a more strategic approach to GI planning should form the basis of targeted delivery through access to data and use of ecological network assessments and modelling. Better use should be made of online systems to deliver tools and services to decision makers and planners.

The development of an online resource for Norfolk will allow publication of the GI asset, habitat opportunity and ecological network mapping developed for use in the Local Plans of all the LPAs for Norfolk. Thus making it more available to decision makers and others. Properly targeted delivery of GI within the identified priority areas will allow achievement of the ERDF stated aim of an increase in GI for England of 1500 hectares (Programme Specific Result Indicator 6.1) by 2023.

The OP states that in determining which projects should be eligible for funding reference should be made to the relevant sections of the National Planning Policy Framework relating to the environment and Green Infrastructure; Green Infrastructure priorities set out in Local Plans; the Natural Environment White Paper (2011); Biodiversity 2020 (2011); and Natural England's Green Infrastructure Guidance.

The online system will be used to make available mapping produced for use in the Local Plans of all LPAs in Norfolk. This wider availability of maps prioritising and targeting GI will ensure that project determination can be made with reference to the best available information.

Stakeholder analysis

Discussions with stakeholders both individually and through the stakeholder group indicate the importance of providing easy online access to information. Stakeholders report challenges with accessing and interpreting information even when it is available within their local systems. There are also issues with accessing data at capture resolution via existing data portals such as the NBN Atlas. Stakeholders suggested that full access could be provided by giving access to supporting or funding partners via such an online system, with lower resolution data available for public access. In this way information is made widely available but sensitive information can be protected.

Actions

Development of an online system providing access to a range of existing biodiversity datasets including ecological network modelling, ecosystem services mapping, GI assets, species data, protected sites, and habitat opportunity maps. Alongside these datasets other relevant information will be published such as housing growth areas, infrastructure projects and historic environment assets in order to provide a comprehensive range of information for decision-makers.

Agents

Norfolk County Council

National Biodiversity Network

Norfolk Wildlife Trust

Local Planning Authorities – Breckland Council, Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk, Broadland District Council, Broads Authority, Norwich City Council, South Norfolk Council, Great Yarmouth Borough Council

Norfolk Strategic Planning Group

Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership

Timeframe

Work will begin in April 2019 to commission the work.

Portal launched April 2020.

Costs

£50000 (Euro 58500)

Financing source

NCC for development phase, ongoing costs from Service Level Agreements with partners such as LPAs

Action 2

Work to improve access to the techniques of the Biodiversity Audit approach via an online system.

Rationale

The Biodiversity Audit approach has shown that robust analysis of high quality biodiversity data can provide insights into the effectiveness of management of protected wildlife sites such as Natura 2000. However at present there is a disconnection between this analysis and the site managers who need to implement the results. Work to provide better access and interpretation of the approach at a local level is needed.

Regional Analysis

A Local Stakeholder Meeting focussed on site managers has confirmed a desire for access to the approach developed by UEA with a presumption that this be online. The ability to more easily submit data collected on site to such a system was also requested.

Workshops & Good Practice

SISEBIO. Global Monitoring Program of Biodiversity in Catalonia

Biodiversity Audit approach

Current policy and ERDF

The England ERDF states that access to data and interpretative tools that can help site managers to make better decisions should be developed and made accessible. The OP also provides a target for surface area of habitats supported in order to attain a better conservation status (Output Indicator ID C23) of 2113 hectares.

Being able to identify measures that can be taken to implement appropriate management on Natura 2000 sites in Norfolk gives site managers more ability to deliver the improvements in conservation status required to meet this target.

Measures identified in this way can provide the necessary evidence to better allocate funds for more efficient delivery of the objectives of the OP.

Stakeholder analysis

A survey undertaken prior to further workshop discussions has provided good evidence of the needs and wants of site managers when it comes to biodiversity data. This has been used to assess the form and methods for making this information available.

Actions

Interpreted data such as species density maps related to the outputs of the Biodiversity Approach will be made available via local and national online systems. The species assemblage analysis tools developed will be made available via the NBIS online enquiry system enabling users to request relevant data in the way that they can currently with other national and international species designations.

Agents

NCC

University of East Anglia

National Biodiversity Network Atlas

Timeframe

Online tools available September 2019

Maps published to NBN Atlas by September 2019

Costs

Covered by existing staff time

Financing source

Norfolk County Council

University of East Anglia

Action 3

Design and delivery of a monitoring system for biodiversity Net Gain

Rationale

Alongside the presentation of data and tools for effectively targeting the delivery of GI there is a need for a robust mechanism for recording and monitoring this. Recent policy changes at a national level have also prioritised the principle of Net Gain for biodiversity in the planning system. There is therefore a need to develop a system for identifying and recording any loss or gain of biodiversity and GI.

Regional Analysis

Whilst Net Gain as a concept is quite recent with regards to the planning system the ERDF has a target for increase in GI and so discussions throughout the project have focussed on how we can effectively monitor this. Recent work to develop GI asset maps in Norfolk have shown the current deficiencies in recording of work delivered through the planning system. It has also shown that there are a diverse range of data sources that need to be consulted to provide the required data.

Workshops & Good Practice

Throughout the workshops many examples of systems to synthesise different and complex datasets have been provided. Of particular reference to the concept of monitoring changes in biodiversity is SISEBIO. Global Monitoring Program of Biodiversity in Catalonia. It is likely that this approach can also provide a way in which long-term access to data for the Biodiversity Audit approach can be secured.

Current policy and ERDF

The goal of ID 6.1 and ID C23 of the England ERDF is to increase the quality and quantity of natural capital in England. Currently the area of GI delivered is used as the best available measure. New techniques for measuring the area and type of GI created through housing and infrastructure development can be designed to help with monitoring the existing measures. The experience gained through this work can be used to inform the identification of new measures.

Recent changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and consultation on a new 25 year plan for the Environment are embedding the principle of biodiversity Net Gain into housing and infrastructure development. This gives further impetus to the need to develop a way of effectively measuring any increase in GI as required by the England ERDF.

A consultation on the national approach to Net Gain including monitoring and metrics for assessment was completed in February 2019 with results to be published later in the year. The results will be used as part of the development of the system.

Effective monitoring of the delivery of GI and gains in biodiversity will provide a means of assessing the achievement of targets within the OP. However perhaps more importantly it can also offer a mechanism for identifying areas where more effective targeting of funds can help to mitigate the impacts of development. 2.8% of the funds within the England ERDF are set aside for Priority 6d. Better targeting of this will help to achieve cost effective distribution of these resources.

Stakeholder analysis

Discussions with LPAs in Norfolk have shown that there is a requirement for high quality information on the current GI assets within the county. Both as a resource for recreation but also as means of mitigating for impacts of access on Natura 2000 sites.

 Actions

Develop a monitoring system for recording changes in the area of GI and priority habitat within Norfolk. The system should be built with reference to any national system that is developed following recent government consultations on Net Gain and the 25 year plan for the environment.

Agents

NCC

NBN Atlas

ALERC

LPAs

Defra

Timeframe

Work to begin September 2019

Monitoring system launched September 2020

Costs

£20000 (Euro 23400)

Financing sources

NCC

Action 4

Delivery of a structured approach to taxonomic training in Norfolk

Rationale

An increasing lack of taxonomic expertise has been identified by the project as a key factor in ensuring that the right sort of data is available to answer the questions we are posed. Many taxonomic experts are elderly and there is a lack of younger experts to take their place. This is, in part, due to a lack of formal study opportunities in schools and universities for younger people, but also because often there is no informal network of support for those wishing to develop their skills.

To address this there is a need to encourage identification, promote the importance of taxonomy, look to citizen scientists and work with recording groups. In particular we will attempt to work schools and universities to emphasise the importance of taxonomy and the role it plays for government and decision makers, and that it creates employment opportunities. There will also be an emphasis on explaining the essential nature of taxonomy within ecology and conservation.

Regional Analysis

Norfolk suffers from the same issues with retaining and building taxonomic expertise as identified during the project. NCC has a good record of supporting local recording through NBIS, including the use of a small grant scheme, however a more structured approach is needed. There are good existing links with the local university (UEA) and with local schools through a number of projects delivered by NCC Environment Team. NCC is also a Local Education Authority with potential for developing resource for the schools under its management.

Workshops & Good Practice

Discussion at multiple workshops has given good insight into the issue of lack of taxonomic expertise and its causes and impacts. This learning will be used to develop an approach to increasing the capacity in Norfolk in particular the development of a support network and "career path" for recorders.

The Field Studies Council (FSC) BioLinks project gives a model that could be implemented in Norfolk with suitable resource and support.

Current policy and ERDF

Access to good biodiversity information is needed to underpin the policy and decision making. Ensuring that high quality data continues to be collected and verified into the future is a key concern of the BID-REX project.

The England ERDF states that access to data and interpretative tools that can help site managers to make better decisions should be developed and made accessible to decision makers.

Development of the tools as outlined in Action 2 will require a sustainable provision of high quality biodiversity data particularly species records. Maintaining this through an increased capacity of taxonomic expertise will ensure the delivery of the ERDF OP as outlined above. This action will particularly work to deliver against ID C23 providing the evidence needed to effectively target management measures on Natura 2000 sites. This will provide the potential for more efficient use of ERDF funds to deliver against these targets.

Stakeholder analysis

A survey undertaken prior to further workshop discussions has provided good evidence of the needs and wants of site managers when it comes to biodiversity data. Discussions during the project have provided information on the gaps in taxonomic expertise and ways of addressing this

Actions

Using models such as FSC BioLinks and existing approaches in Norfolk combined with lessons learnt through previous project work a strategic approach to taxonomic training in Norfolk will be developed. The aim will be to develop a way of working with local experts, UEA, local schools, colleges and youth groups to foster an interest in taxonomy and to develop a multi-level approach to training.

The output will be used to develop a funding bid to implement the approach in Norfolk.

NCC

UEA

Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society

Local schools and colleges

Field Studies Council

Timeframe

Work to begin April 2019

Workshops in Semester 8 & 9

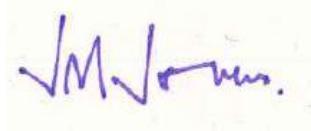Proposed approach published October 2020.

Costs

£10000 (Euros 11700)

Financing sources

NCC

UEA

Date: 13/6/2019

Signature:

John Jones **Head of Environment**