BID-REX

THE POWER OF SHARING

INTRODUCTION

Good decision-making relies on accessing and using high quality data and information. Data underpins regional and global conventions, strategies, targets, and actions. However, there are challenges and barriers preventing the flow of data and information to support decision makers.

The Interreg Europe project 'From biodiversity data to decisions: enhancing natural value through improved regional development policies', or 'BID-REX', sets out to address the disconnects between data and decision-making in some regions of Europe, focusing on conserving natural heritage.

The BID-REX partnership brings together **nine partner organisations,** (five public authorities and four research institutions), from **seven European regions**, to exchange experiences and practices from across the data value chain and identify their potential for learning and transfer.

Through sharing knowledge and experience, BID-REX demonstrates how available and evidence-based biodiversity and environmental information can guide and improve decision-making processes. Find out more information here.
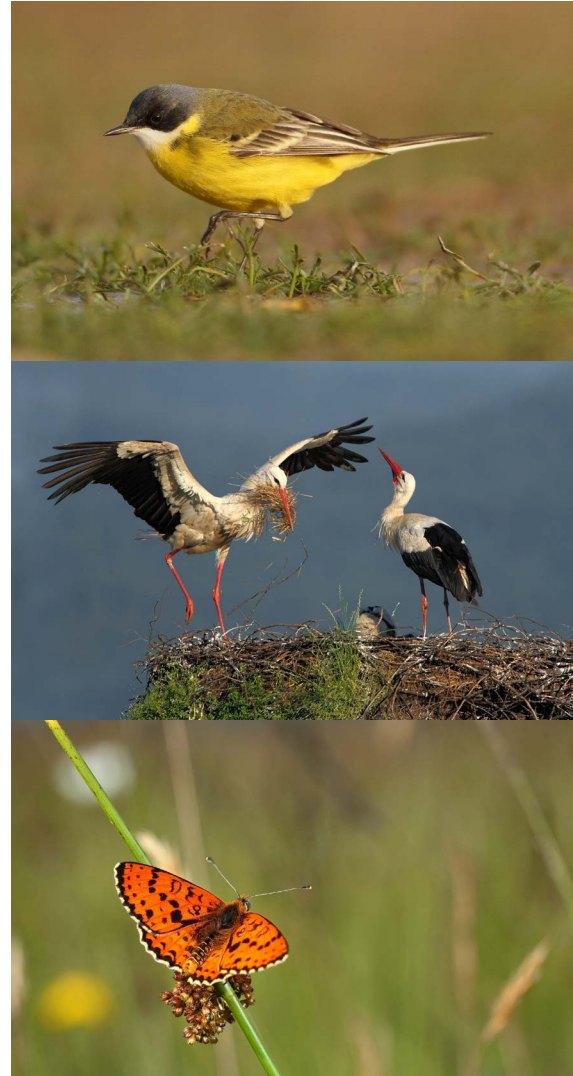
Stories of Success

The Interreg BID-REX project has led to positive results across all the project regions. Here are some snapshots of the benefits of sharing knowledge from BID-REX project partners.

1. SLOVENIA

Discussions with BID-REX partners, which identified and highlighted the key issues and problems related to biodiversity data, inspired the development of an action plan for Ljubljana Marsh Nature Park. Inspiring examples of good practice include the biodiversity database BioGeoNet, managed by the non-profit association Natagriwal in Belgium and the Basque Country's Nature Information System.

BID-REX enabled partners in Slovenia to establish a strong network of experts and carry out comprehensive inventory on existing biodiversity information that will serve as a groundwork for improved conservation approaches in the region. Further, the species audit approach developed by UK partners inspired BID-REX partners in Slovenia to establish the broader conservation scheme, including all existing biodiversity information, not only for Natura 2000 species. As a result, they have identified close to 600 species that are especially important to conserve in the region.

2. CATALONIA

Thanks to BID-REX, the Catalan administration learned how other regions manage their biodiversity information to facilitate its use in decision processes.
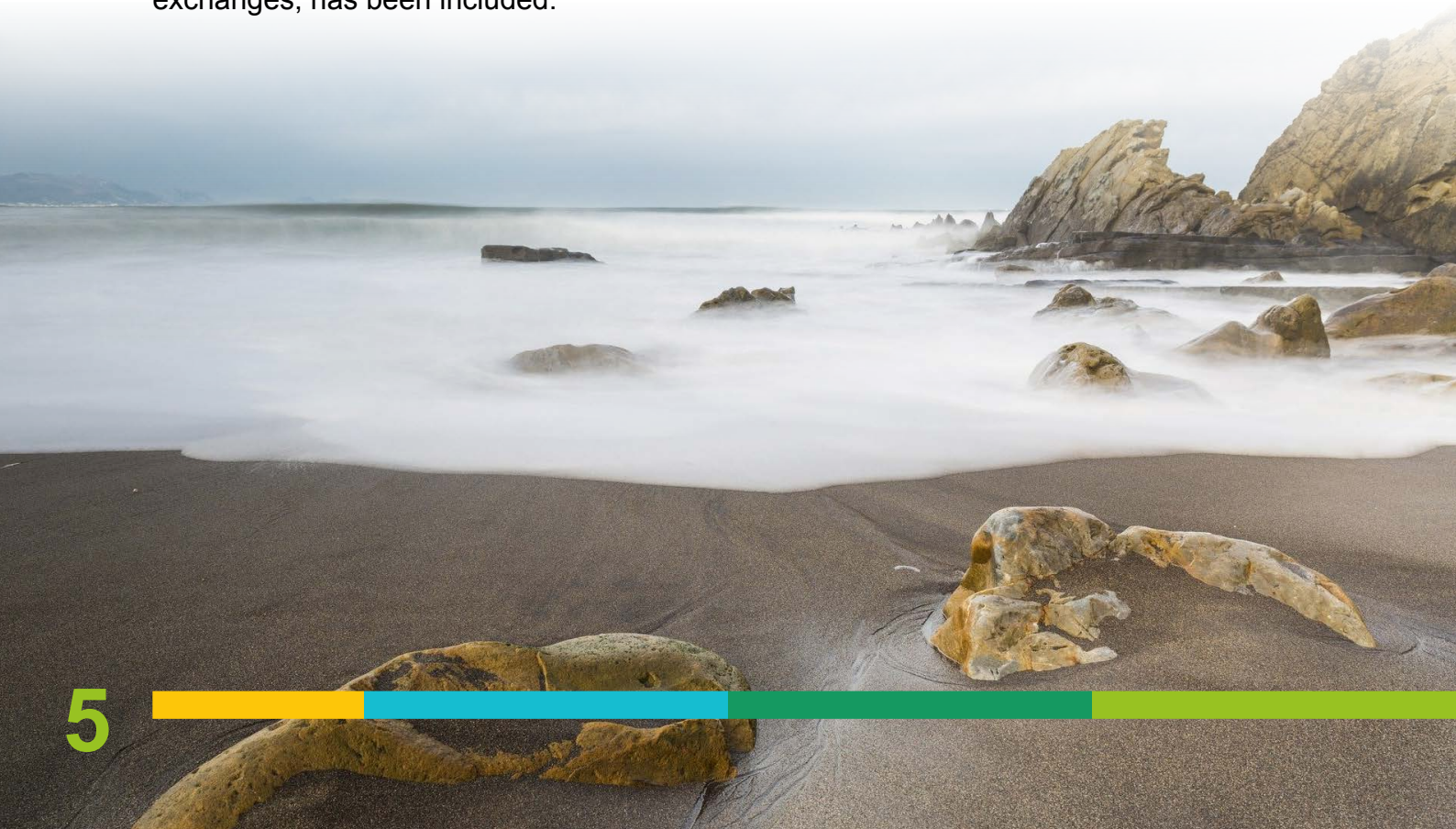
Considering the good practices identified in Norfolk (UK), Catalonia has created the new Unit of Information and Knowledge. This is a one-stop-shop were users of biodiversity information can obtain it with quality guarantees and up to date. This information provision is done thanks to new data providing agreements between the Government of Catalonia and research centres or citizen sciences projects. Catalonia is also working on the creation of the Observatory of Natural Heritage and Biodiversity of Catalonia.

3. BASQUE COUNTRY

The Basque Government works in collaboration with a large social base of volunteers in nature conservation. Exchanging experiences at BID-REX, including with partners from the UK, helped the Basque Government realise the importance of the accreditation of entities and volunteers and integration of training itineraries in the design of monitoring programs.

BID-REX has led to improvements for the region both in terms of capacity building and legislation; for example in the draft Act for the Conservation of the Natural Heritage of the Basque Country (currently in parliamentary procedure), an article on the Basque Country Knowledge Network of Nature, which is an expert knowledge network developed following the BID-REX exchanges, has been included.

4. NORTH GREAT PLAIN REGION
HUNGARY

SITxell is a multidisciplinary tool, developed by the Barcelona Provincial Council, that has improved the efficiency of the administrations of the Barcelona region in planning and managing open spaces and reducing its associated costs. The database highlights the natural and socioeconomic values of undeveloped land, including the ecosystem services. Learning about SITxell inspired BID-REX partners in Hungary in the process of the development of urban built area natural capital information.

5. MARCHE REGION

Through exchanging experiences with BID-REX partners, the Marche Region has gained knowledge on the effective use of biodiversity databases in local policies.
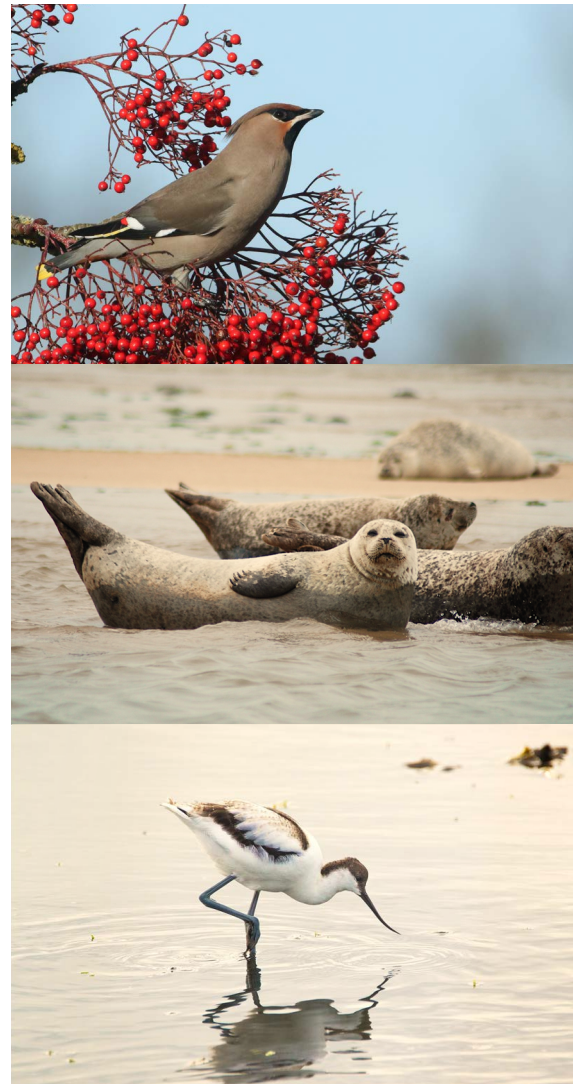
For example, synergies between the regional administration and the local authorities were started for the implementation of the Marche Regional Ecological Network in the municipalities and natural parks. This was done through a computerised platform inspired by SITxell, developed in Catalonia. Further, examples from the Walloon and Hungarian partners helped to identify models for breaking down barriers for biodiversity. The Marche Regional Ecological Network has since become a reference tool in all Strategic Environmental Assessment processes on plans and programs with an environmental impact in the region.

6. NORFOLK

The project has given BID-REX partners the chance to pose questions of each other and the space to share answers in a constructive and supportive way. For partners in Norwich, this has been of benefit in responding to a changing policy landscape in the UK following the decision to leave the EU.

Changes relating to the environment, farming, housing and infrastructure development are all requiring regional responses. Sharing knowledge through BID-REX, including good practices such as the Biodiversity Audit Approach, has provided Norwich County Council with a range of skills and approaches for ensuring that the information that guides these changes can be better gathered, managed and presented. In December 2019 Norfolk County Council adopted a new Environmental Policy produced by officers who have taken part in BID-REX, drawing on the knowledge exchange and good practice development. an environmental impact in the region.
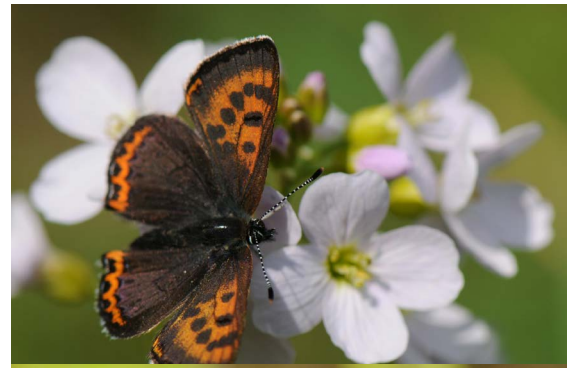
7. WALLONIA

During a BID-REX session in Ljubljana, partners from the Basque Country explained how they had partnered with the suppliers of biological data in their region and how this translated into legal regulations.

This discussion inspired Wallonia, leading to the idea of formalising the collaboration on data exchanges between the Directorate of Nature and Water and its partners. This began with Natagora, the main association for Nature conservation in Wallonia.
This agreement is a basis for protocols targeting the exchange of biological data with institutions active in data collection in Wallonia. This provides a more rigorous and organised framework for data sharing while respecting partners' activity.

THE BID-REX PROJECT INTO THE FUTURE

Through sharing knowledge and experiences, BID-REX partners from across Europe have deepened their understanding of how to bridge the gap between biodiversity data and decisions. The Interreg BID-REX project has led to numerous improvements to regional policies that relate to natural heritage.

The partnerships established through the Interreg BID-REX project make up a valuable community of learning, where partners can share their experiences of obstacles, practices and solutions on how best to use or generate data and adapt best practices from other regions to their specific realities.

The BID-REX project's final event will take place on the 29th of September 2020. However, the project's impact on policy instruments and the BID-REX community of learning will continue into the future.