

Translation from Bulgarian

REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND WATER

**A. Report on the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan for
1999-2004**

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B. National Biodiversity Conservation Plan for 2005-2010

SOFIA 2005



Table of Contents

A. Report on the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan for 1999-2004.....	5
A.I. Report for the Carrying out of the Activities under the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan for 1999-2004	5
A.II. Analysis of the Carrying out of the Activities under the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan for 1999-2004	13
B. National Biodiversity Conservation Plan for 2005-2010	16
B.I. Current State of Biodiversity in Bulgaria	16
B.II. Political and Legislative Framework	19
B.III. Threats to Biodiversity.....	20
B.IV. Targets and Priorities in the Biodiversity Conservation Plan for 2005-2010	26
B.V. Measures and Approaches in Achieving Targets.....	30
B. VI. Activities and Financial Framework.....	33
B. VII. Organization of the Implementation of the Plan.....	34
B. VIII. Monitoring, Criteria and Indices for the Implementation of the Plan.....	36

ANNEXS

Commonly Used Abbreviations

АПБ	Асоциацията на парковете в България	APB	Association of Parks in Bulgaria
БАН	Българска академия на науките	BAS	Bulgarian Academy of Science
БГСК	Българска Горскостопанска Камара	BCF	Bulgarian Forestry of Chamber
БДЗП	Българско дружество за защита на птиците	BBPS	Bulgarian Bird Protection Society
БЛРС	Български ловно-рибарски съюз	BHFU	Bulgarian Hunting and Fishing Union
БР	Биологично разнообразие	BD	Biodiversity
БФБ	Българска Фондация Биоразнообразие	BBF	Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation
БФ-СУ	Биологически факултет към Софийския университет	BF-SU	Biological Faculty – Sofia University
ВЕЦ	Водоелектрическа централа	HPP	Hydroelectric Power Plant
ВСН	Клирингова къща по биобезопасността - Механизъм за обмен на информация в областта на биобезопасността	BCH	Biosafety Clearing House - Biosafety Information Exchange Mechanism established by the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety
ВУ	Висши училища	HES	Higher Education Schools
ГИС	Географски информационни системи	GIS	Geographic Information Systems
ГМО	Генномодифицирани организми	GMO	Genetically Modified Organisms
ДИИУ	Департаментът за информация и усъвършенстване на учители	DITQ	Department of Information and Teachers' Qualification
ДНП	Дирекция национален парк	NPA	National Park Administration
ЕЕС	Европейска икономическа общност	EEC	European Economic Community
ЕО	Екологична оценка	EA	Ecological Assessment
ЕС	Европейски съюз	EU	European Union
ЗБР	Закон за биологичното разнообразие	BA	Biodiversity Act
ЗЗТ	Закон за защитените територии	PAA	Protected Areas Act
ЗК	Закон за концесиите	CA	Concession Act
ЗМ	Защитена местност	PS	Protected Site
ЗООС	Закон за опазване на околната среда	EPA	Environmental Protection Act
ЗПБ	Закон за подземните богатства	OMA	Ores and Minerals Act

ЗТ	Защитена територия	PA	Protected Area
ИАОС	Изпълнителна агенция по околна среда	EEA	Executive Environmental Agency
ИАРА	Изпълнителна агенция по рибарство и аквакултури	EAFA	Executive Agency for Fishery and Aquaculture
ИАСАС	Изпълнителна агенция по сортоизпитване, апробация и семеконтрол	EAPVTASC	Executive Agency for Plant Variety Testing, Approbation and Seed Control
ИБ	Институт по ботаника	IB	Institute of Botany
ИГ	Институт за гората	IF	Institute of Forest
ИЗ-БАН	Институт по зоология	IZ	Institute of Zoology – Bulgarian Academy of Science
КБР	Конвенция за биологичното разнообразие	CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
КВС	Карта на възстановената собственост	MRP	Map of Restituted Property
КГБР	Координационна група за биологично разнообразие	BCG	Biodiversity Coordination Group
КБОУН	Конвенция за борба с опустиняването	UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
ЛТУ	Лесотехнически университет	FEU	Forest Engineering University
МЗГ	Министерство на земеделието и горите	MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forests
МК	Министерство на културата	MC	Ministry of Culture
МОН	Министерство на образованието и науката	MES	Ministry of Education and Science
МОСВ	Министерство на околната среда и водите	MEW	Ministry of Environment and Water
МРРБ	Министерство на регионалното развитие и благоустройството	MRDPW	Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works.
МФ	Министерство на финансите	MF	Ministry of Finance
НАЕП	Национална агро-екологична програма	NAEP	National Agroecology Programme
НАТУРА 2000	Общоевропейска екологична мрежа	PEEN	Pan-European Ecological Network
НДЕФ	Национален Доверителен Екофонд	NTEF	National Trust EcoFund
НЕМ	Национална екологична мрежа	NEN	National Ecological Network
ННКСБР	Национален научно-координационен съвет за биологично разнообразие	NSCCB	National Scientific Coordination Council on Biodiversity
НП	Национален парк	NP	National Park
НПМ	Национален природонаучен музей	NMNH	National Museum of Natural History
НПО	Неправителствена	NGO	Non Governmental Organization

	организация		
НПОБР	Национален план за опазване на биологичното разнообразие	NBCP	National Biodiversity Conservation Plan
НСЗП	Национална служба за защита на природата	NNPS	National Nature Protection Service
НСМБ	Национална система за мониторинг на биологичното разнообразие	NBMS	National Biodiversity Monitoring System
НУГ	Национално управление на горите	NFA	National Forest Administration
ОВОС	Оценка за въздействие върху околната среда	EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ПП	Природен парк	NP	Nature Park
ПУДООС	Предприятието за управление на дейностите по опазване на околната среда	ЕМЕРА	Enterprise for Management of the Environment Protection Activities
РИОСВ	Регионална инспекция по околна среда и води	RIEW	Regional Inspection on Environment and Water
САПАРД	“Специална програма за присъединяване в областта на земеделието и селските райони”,	SAPARD	Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development
СБЖ	Съюз на българските журналисти	UBJ	Union of Bulgarian Journalists
СЛРБ	Съюз на ловците и риболовците в България	BUHF	Bulgarian Union of Hunters and Fishermen
СУ	Софийски университет	SU	Sofia University
ЦЛОЕ	Централна лаборатория по обща екология	CLGE	Central Laboratory of General Ecology
СНМ	Механизъм за обмен на информация (Clearing-House Mechanism)	CHM	Clearing-House Mechanism
CITES	Конвенция по международна търговия със застрашени видове от дивата флора и фауна	CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
GBIF	Глобална информационна система за биоразнообразието	GBIF	Global Biodiversity Information Facility
GEF	Глобален екологичен фонд	GEF	Global Ecological Fund
МАВ	Програма “Човек и биосфера”	MAB	Man in the Biosphere Programme
WWF	Световен фонд за дивата природа	WWF	World Wild Fund for Nature
WWF-DCP	Дунавско-карпатска програма		World Wild Fund – Danube Carpathian Programme

A. Report on the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan for 1999-2004

A.I. Report for the Carrying out of the Activities under the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan for 1999-2004

In pursuance to It. 3 of the Resolution passed in conformity with Paragraph 23 of Proceedings Nr. 36 from the Session of the Council of Ministers held on August 5, 1999 for the approval of the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan, the Minister of Environment and Water shall be bound “to report the progress of its implementation at regular intervals to the Council of Ministers”. In Chapter V of the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan is specified the report interval, making reference to the fact that one of the main functions of the Minister of Environment and Water connected with the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan, is the one connected with “the submission for consideration and approval of the annual reports for the implementation of the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan, as well as its updating, if appropriate”.

The present report is for the implementation of the activities under the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan for 1999 – 2004.

The first one-year period under review covers the period from the approval of the plan in August 1999 to the end of August 2000. The first annual report was submitted to the Council of Ministers for consideration and was approved by its resolution.

Pursuant to Art.76, Par. 3 of the Environment Protection Act by Resolution Nr. 455 dated June 20, 2001 passed by the Council of Ministers, was adopted the National Strategy for the Environment, as well as an Action Plan for 2000-2006. The Minister of Environment and Water submits to the Council of Ministers a report for the implementation of the National Environmental Strategy Action Plan for the previous year. By the submission of the report for the implementation of the National Environmental Strategy Action Plan is also reported the implementation of the activities provided by other documents, as well as the implementation of the activities covered by the National Plan for the Biodiversity Conservation. According to the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan the second period under review refers to the period from September 2000 to the end of 2001, and the following periods under review are for 2002, 2003 and 2004, and coincide with the respective annual periods under review for the National Environmental Strategy Action Plan, and within the said annual periods they are submitted for consideration to the Council of Ministers and further approved by virtue of its respective resolutions. In the reports for the National Environmental Strategy Action Plan for 2001, 2002 and 2003 no financial calculations were submitted for the separate activities during the respective period, while in the report for 2004 were submitted the calculations of the expenditure for the separate activities, and the source of financing as well.

A.1.1. General Review of the Activities under the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan for 1999- 2004

The financial report for the carrying out of the activities under the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan for 1999-2004 is submitted for consideration in Annex 1 while the sources of financing for the carrying out of the activities under the National Environmental Strategy Action Plan are submitted in Annex 2.

The budget for the whole period of implementation of the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan amounts to BGN 44.355.000, while BGN 48.335.000 are already spent, e.g. 8.2% more than the planned funds. This over fulfilment is due principally to the funds amounting to 17.949.000 spent in 2004, exceeding with BGN 7.794.000 the expenditure for the same year. The most part of the funds were spent during the period under consideration for the carrying out of priority reconstruction and maintenance activities aimed at the conservation and the sustainable utilization of the biological diversity -39.1% of the funds were spent on all the activities under the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan. For the institutional strengthening of the biodiversity units were spent 32.4% out of total expenditure. The funds spent on the consolidation of the scientific basis for the biodiversity conservation are negligible - 1.8% out of total expenditure.

As one can see from the table in Enclose 2 hereunder the principle sources of financing of the activities based on the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan are the Ministry of Environment and Water -31.3% out of total expenditure, as well as the Ministry of Agriculture and Wood - 22.2% out of total expenditure. The financial security share of the other ministries for the implementation of the plan is negligible.

A crucial role for the implementation of the plan played the foreign donors, who provided BGN 18.423.000,00 of 38.1% out of total expenditure within the framework of the programmes and plans specified in Par. II of Enclose 2 hereto.

A large number of non-governmental organizations, national and international donors, as the Bulgarian Bird Protection Society, the Green Balkans Federation, the Phare Programme, the Ramsar Conventions on Wetlands and UNESCO offices, the WWF Foundation, the Le Balkan and the Avalon Foundations, the United Nations Development Programme, the BirdLife International, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), etc. have also a financial contribution to the implementation of the plan.

The carrying out of the activities included into the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan represents a contribution to the implementation of some of the parts of the national general and branch programmes and strategies including issues of the biological diversity conservation and sustainable utilization, as detailed below:

- National Development Plan (2000-2006) – Environment Section Programme ;
- National Strategy for Biodiversity Conservation ;
- National Plan for Priority Activities on Preserving Major Wetlands in Bulgaria;
- National Environmental Strategy and National Action Plan (2000-2006);
- National Biological Security Framework;
- Strategy for Preservation and Restoration of the Bulgarian Danube Isles Floodwoods (2001) and Action Plan for the Preservation and Restoration of the of the Bulgarian Danube Isles Floodwoods (2003-2007);
- National Ecotourism Strategy (2003);
- National Forest Policy and Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Forest Sector in Bulgaria (2003-2013);
- National Plan for Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas (2000-2006) based on the EU Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (SAPARD).

A.1.2. Activities connected with making of laws, sublaw normative acts and normative administrative documents, management plans, information and monitoring systems included

The national legislation covers the biological diversity conservation and the sustainable utilization of its components, focussing basically on the conservation rather than on the sustainable utilization. The general principles and measures for the biological diversity conservation are described in the Environmental Protection Act. The biological diversity conservation and the sustainable utilization in the country are basically regulated in the Act, as well as in the sublaw normative acts (Protected Areas Act, Medicinal Plants Act, and Biological Diversity Act).

The general regulation for conservation and utilization of the respective biological resources and the biological diversity are included in the sector acts treating the natural biological resources, as well as those cultivated by the man (Agricultural Lands Protection Act, Agricultural Lands Property and Utilization Act, New Plant Varieties and Animal Breed Protection Act, Hunting and Game Protection Act, Fisheries and Aquacultures Act, Veterinary Medical Science Act, etc.)

During the period under review were elaborated a large number of laws and sublaw normative acts and the fundamental ones are presented in Annex 3 hereto. Besides the worked out laws and sublaw normative acts and the normative documents treating the conservation and the sustainable utilization of the separate components of biological diversity, in the said Annex are presented the promulgated orders of the Minister of Environment and Water, regulating the operative and sustainable utilization of the biological diversity. The large number of elaborated and promulgated documents on national and international level during the period under review in the area of nature and environment protection is due to the intensive legislative activity in the country in the background of the recent accession of the Republic of Bulgaria to the European Union.

At the end of 2004 it could be admitted that the elaboration of the normative basis for control, conservation and utilization of the biological diversity in the country is been finalized harmonizing the correspondent European directives in Nature Direction, and the principles ones are as follows:

- Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Preservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Habitats Directive);
- Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Preservation of Wild Birds (Birds Directive);
- Council Regulation (EC) No338/97 on the Protection of Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

The international acts take a special place in the specification of the legal framework for the conservation of the biological diversity. Bulgaria is a party-member in almost all global or paneuropean ecological conventions. The country has ratified almost all the international conventions in the biological diversity field. Those conventions which have been ratified with an act by the National Assembly during the period under review are included in Annex 3.

During 1999-2004 period have been worked out 35 plans for the management of protected natural areas, as in Annex 4 is enclosed a list of the said plans, designating the protected natural areas, which shall be subject to elaboration of such plans in the future. There were elaborated plans mostly for the management of large protected natural areas.

In Annex 5 is presented a list of elaborated action plans for 35 endangered animal and vegetal species.

The basic monitoring systems connected with the determination of the condition of nature, maintained by the Ministry of Environment and Water in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Woods, are as detailed below:

- Ecological Monitoring of the Srebarna Nature Reserve;
- Monitoring and Assessment of the Polluted Air Impact on Forest Ecosystems;

The establishment of National Biological Diversity and Protected Natural Areas Monitoring System financed within the framework of a Bulgarian-Dutch Project has begun.

In 2003 was established a Biological Diversity Informational System defined as Clearing House Mechanism (CHM). The design of said system was an obligation assumed by the country under the Convention on Biological Diversity and that undertaking was highly appreciated by the Convention's Secretariat.

A.1.3. Institutional strengthening of the biodiversity units and organs of implementation of the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan

The national government represents the most important party concerned in the management of the biological diversity.

Specialized management units for the conservation and sustainable utilization of the biological diversity were established at central and regional levels in the Ministry of Environment and Water and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. Thanks to the funds provided by the state budget, as well as to the funds provided by virtue of international projects in which the said ministries have become partners of the foreign institutions, especially to the governments of the U.S.A., the Confederation of Switzerland, Denmark, Holland, Monaco, etc., those units got a firm foothold with regard to the personnel and the requisite technical assistance and equipment.

The Nature Protection National Service is a specialized department at the Ministry of Environment and Water entitled to undertake various activities connected with the biological diversity. In 2004 in this department were appointed 18 employees divided into two separate sections. The Plan for the strengthening of the administrative capacity aimed at the enforcement of the EU ecological legislation (2002) makes provision for the appointment of a minimum 4 employees in 2005 after passing the Genetically Modified Organisms Act.

The overall control on the biological diversity in the country is exercised by 15 Regional Inspections of Environment and Water through their experts' units for Protected Areas and Biological Diversity, which is involved in general with the biological diversity issues and the protected areas management as well, but which is short of transport vehicles and any other equipment.

The number of the employees in the Regional Inspections of Environment and Water and of those in the administrations of the three national parks is not sufficient either. The institutional strengthening of the system of the Ministry of Environment and Water aiming the conservation of the biological diversity in respect to the number of employees during the respective years is shown in Annex 6 hereto.

The employees appointed in the units of the Ministry of Environment and Water for the conservation of the biological diversity, used to attend qualification improvement courses and to take part in seminars, organized mainly by the Ministry of Environment and Water in respect to the international cooperation.

There have been established three main programmes for the employees involved with the conservation of the biological diversity. There were also organized courses for the training of the customs employees with regard to the implementation of the obligation of Bulgaria assumed by virtue of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

A large number of ministries, besides the Ministry of Environment and Water and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, have undertaken activities connected with the conservation of the biological diversity, included and not limited to the Ministry of Energy and Energy Efficiency, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Ministry of Education and Science, etc. There are no specialized units in those ministries, involved with the biological diversity issues. They rely on certain experts implementing their functions in these regards within their general functions' framework as per their office characteristics.

There will be expected some benefits for the population in ecotourism development area and non-wood products utilization too. Each one of the economic sectors is still at the beginning of its development. The Environment Protection Act assigns to the local authorities the establishment of the local environment action programmes.

Besides the governmental administration a large number of institutions develop activities in the biological diversity field, respectively they undertake to implement tasks included in the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan for 1999- 2004.

The system of the Bulgarian Academy of Science represents a huge institutional conglomerate of different scientific institutes - approximately 68 institutes and laboratories, and more then 30 of them are involved with researches connected with the preservation of the environment and the conservation of the biological diversity. The employees in those institutes are mainly involved with the establishment of the scientific basis for the conservation and the sustainable utilization of the biological diversity. They are also involved in the drawing up of normative documents, protected area management plans, and action plans for endangered species of wild fauna and flora. They take and active part also in the establishment and maintenance of monitoring systems for the alteration of the condition of different environmental and biodiversity components.

There is another important scientific institution group under establishment in the National Centre for Agricultural Science within the framework of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests. The scientific system of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests is in difficulties as a result of the lack of funds and modern management too.

The Universities conduct scientific researches independently. Notwithstanding that they are independent organizations, they do not apply more different approach to the science compared to the one applied in the network of the Bulgarian Academy of Science. As a matter of fact the education in biological diversity as an education in the preservation of nature (e.g. an ecological education) is not developed very well within the educational system itself.

Almost all the non-governmental organizations for the preservation of nature conduct all kinds of activities in the filed of education on their own – basically through extracurricular forms of educations. There is one private company involved with those issues (ESHNA), as well as many other companies, which are engaged with the logistic organization of

the so called “green schools” – allowing the teachers to teach lessons for a week in the nature.

The ecological non-governmental organizations have a large contribution to the implementation of the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan during the period under review. Their representatives took part independently or within larger teams in the elaboration of normative documents, scientific researches, carrying out of priority restoration and maintenance activities in the protected areas and outside them as well. The non-governmental organizations are involved in the active offer of documents aimed at the designation of new protected areas, they also take part in the establishment of plans for the management of the protected areas and action plans for the protection of the endangered species. The huge task aimed at the building of the Bulgarian part of the Pan-European Ecological Protected Areas Network (PEEN) called NATURA 2000, respectively the definition of the protected area boundaries and their characterization in standard forms was assigned to the non-governmental organizations.

A large number of physical persons and legal entities in the private sector have taken part in it, after the assignment of the tasks implementation on the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan for 1999-2004 basically in the field of maintenance and restoration activities in the protected areas and outside them, in the elaboration of management plans, action plans and monitoring systems, as well as in the Informational and Educational Activities field.

It could not be expected a strong public and media participation in the biodiversity conservation process prior to the establishment of a clear and practical link between the objectives of the biological diversity and the welfare. The present contribution of the media to the increase of the public interest in the biological diversity, is still negligible. The facts are that there is a lack of professionally trained specialists in the media. The efforts directed to the conservation of the biological diversity are handicapped due to the scarce information provided to the public with regards to the comparatively new normative regulations in this field.

A.1.4. Building and Maintenance of a National Ecological Network

The structure of the National Ecological Network was built pursuant to Art.3 of the Biological Diversity Act. The basic components of the protected area network designated by virtue of the Protected Areas and Zones Act designated by virtue of the Biological Diversity Act, since the latter are units compatible by function and structure with the Pan-European Ecological Network called NATURA 2000.

In Annex 7 hereto is shown a table for the maintenance of protected areas during 1999-2004 period. During the said period have been designated another 312 new protected areas, while another 1128 protected areas were erased from the protected area registers. The protected areas which were stricken off the protected area registers were mainly from the category of the historical places, since the historical places, having a

conservational importance, were designated as protected areas or natural sites. As a result of the process of designation/erasure from the register of the protected areas towards 2004 the total land surface of the protected areas amounts to 544394,9 hectares or 4,95% of the whole territory of the country. The said land surface is bigger with 29531,0 hectares than the protected areas land surface in 2000 and smaller with 5532,3 hectares than the protected areas land surface in 2002.

Specifying more accurately the protected area boundaries on the Restituted Property Map (RPM) during the period under review, the following activities were carried out:

- Control of the works done concerning all protected areas for the establishment of any ownership incompatibilities - as a result were found ownership incompatibilities about 1400 properties;
- Control of the works done concerning all protected areas aimed at the delineation of the protected area boundaries on the Restituted Property Map (RPM) - as a result were found incompatibilities about 150 protected areas;
- Marking on the Restituted Property Map (RPM) incompatibilities concerning 250 protected areas.

During 1998-2002 period some efforts were made to make the Pan-European Ecological Network called NATURA 2000 popular among the public and the Bulgarian institutions, as a basic means for the enforcement of the European nature protection legislation.

In 2003 started the building of the national part of the NATURA 2000 Network in Bulgaria with the good offices offered by the Government of Denmark, as well as the building of a scientific and consultative network, review of the available information, review of the lists with the species and habitats, determination of detailed boundaries of the biogeographical districts, establishment of a strategy for supplementary researches, delineation of the inventory areas, review of the species and habitats. A strategy for the Geographic Information System (GIS), as well as a national data basis for the GIS, compatible with the requirements of the European Commission, are under elaboration, and the institutional development is assisted too.

The results from the practical activities regarding the establishment of the protected zones national system compatible with the Pan-European Ecological Network called NATURA 2000 during the period under review were as detailed below:

- There were designated the potentially eligible sites for including into the protected zone areas by virtue of the EU Habitats Directive (approximately 34% of the territory of the country) – 500 sites (309 land surfaces, 67 linear sites and 124 point sites) and 120 sites which have been a subject to inventory (delineated boundaries and standard forms being completely filled in) -120;
- There were specified and entered into the inventory list all sites subject to inclusion into the protected areas by virtue of the EU Birds Directive too.

The activities undertaken in connection with the maintenance of the National Ecological Network are as follows:

- Establishment and maintenance of a Protected Area Departmental Register as well as a Data Basis;
- Bringing into utilization of data processing automated systems in biological diversity and protected areas – 2 systems;
- Informational insurance at a national level within respect of the protected areas through supply and disclosure of information to the National Institute of Statistics.

The existing protected areas have high nature protection value. The land surface of the virgin forests in the country amounts to 257 000 hectares making Bulgaria to rank the third place in Europe after Sweden and Finland. The Pan European valuation of the Pan Park has arrived to a conclusion that the natural processes have been well presented in the Bulgarian protected areas and for that reason there is a great potential the said parks to become high quality parks (Kun, 2002). Since 2003 it was acknowledged that the Central Balkans National Park was a Pan Park.

Based on the natural historical social and economical conditions in the country towards 2010 the protected areas and zones land surface within the framework of the National Ecological Network shall represent at least 15% of the territory of the country. The most accelerates rates for the achievement of that goal shall be in 2007 after the expected affiliation of the country to the European Union. Identified and described habitat types for Bulgaria and Europe shall be designated as NATURA 2000 Pan-European Ecological Network Units.

Notwithstanding the slow progression in the designation of the protected areas it is expected some of the big natural parks to be established in the Eastern and Western Rhodopes, Western Balkans, Belasitsa Mountain, and Vit River and its feeders valleys. In case of adoption of those proposals the total land surface of the protected areas shall exceed 15% of the territory of the country.

In Bulgaria have been designated 10 Ramsar Sites (5 of them in 2002), and 2 of them are World Natural Heritage. The country takes part in it with 17 biosphere reservations in the Man and the UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme, but it must be said that they are not in line with the modern biosphere reservation concept.

A.1.5. Priority restoration and maintenance activities

The biggest percentage (39.1%) of the utilized funds on the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan, during the period under review, have been spent on the implementation of priority restoration and maintenance activities for the conservation and the sustainable utilization of the biological diversity in the protected areas and outside them. These activities have been undertaken as follows:

- The undertaking of the sustainable and restoration activities in the protected areas, which are exclusive public property, mainly in the national parks: cultivation and sanitary works, afforestation, recultivation of damaged grounds, fire fighting activities and activities aimed to fight erosion, etc.;

- Realization of priority restoration and maintenance activities in the natural parks;
- Planting of forest shelterbelts;
- Restoration of endangered biological species habitats, former and present wetlands, forests and other important natural sites;
- Restoration of flood woods on the Bulgarian Danube islands;
- Decrease of the negative impact of the foreign species on the local flora and fauna;
- The carrying out of the activities on the action plans regarding the endangered species and habitats, and for the introduction and the reintroduction of the endangered species from the wild fauna and flora, included and not limited to the species of the Black vulture, Bearded vulture also called Ossifrage (*Gypaetus barbatus*), Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*), Royal eagle, Red-breasted goose, Ferruginous duck (*Aythya nyroca*), Sandwich tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*), Pygmy cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmeus*), Sea otter (*Enhydra lutris*), turtles, Wild goat, *Cephalanthera epipactoides*, *Fritillaria meleagroides*, *Taxus baccata*, *Ilex aquifolium*, etc. ;
- Establishment and maintenance of endangered plant species collection;
- Development and application of a pilot scheme on the assistance given to the agricultural producers in the unfavoured districts and sub districts having ecological restrictions;
- Firm financing (made by the Enterprise for Management of the Environment Protection Activities – EMEPA) of ecological agriculture and stock-breeding projects – cultivation of fruits and essential oil cultures, medicinal herbs, apiculture and milk processing;
- Keeping of Rescue Centres at the zoological gardens for endangered and confiscated by the customs authorities wild animal species (Sofia, Varna and Stara Zagora) and at the botanical gardens for endangered rare and exotic plant species (Sofia and Balchik);
- Creation and maintenance of a tourist infrastructure (ecopaths, markings, recreation sites, informational and indicative boards and signs).

A.1.6. Consolidation of the scientific basis for the conservation of the biological diversity

During the period under review at least 1.8% of the utilized funds on the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan were spent on the consolidation of the scientific basis for the conservation of the biological diversity. These activities were carried out in the fields specified below:

- Elaboration of Red Data Lists of plants, animals and habitats in conformity with the international categories of endangered species;
- Elaboration of Red Data Book of plants, animals and habitats in conformity with the international categories of endangered species;

- Development of projects for the restoration and the extension of the existing populations of protected medicinal plants on low productive and erosive land surfaces;
- Undertaking of researches and development of activities aimed at the melioration of the flood woods;
- Establishment of National Standards for Forest Certification;
- Establishment of regional agroecological schemes for sustainable land utilization and effective management of the agricultural activity in the areas of rich biological diversity.

A.1.7. Informational and educational activities, visitors' centres maintenance included.

During the period under review have been carried out several informational and educational activities, the maintenance of visitors' centres in the fields detailed below:

- Editing of protected plant and animal species book, protected plant and animal species children's book, posters on protected plant and animal species, decorative, protected areas and landscapes: 10 types of posters. Editing of depliants, brochures and other advertising materials connected with the biological diversity and wild-growing plants: 15 depliants and brochures and 1 book;
- Conducting of periodical informational campaigns, celebrations etc., connected with the preservation of the nature, and the conservation of the biological diversity respectively;
- Maintenance of the functioning of the visitors' and informational centres in the protected areas: 15 centres;
- Elaboration of educational programmes on the preservation and sustainable utilization of the genetic resources: 1 programme; and on the medicinal plants: 1 programme;
- Elaboration of a programme on interpretation and education;
- Elaboration of a programme on consultations, information and public relations.

A.II. Analysis of the Carrying out of the Activities under the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan for the Conservation of the Biodiversity for 1999-2004

A.II.1 Strong points and achievements

The National Biodiversity Conservation Plan for 1999-2004 has achieved its targets from thematic and financial point of view. The strong points and achievements connected with the implementation of the plan are as follows:

- The fulfilment of the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan represents a contribution to the maintenance of the richest biological diversity in Bulgaria. The presence of a large diversity of plant and animal species, the majority of which are endemic, is typical for Bulgaria. Almost all of the principle types of natural habitats representative for Europe, are presented in the country;
- By passing the new nature protection legislation aimed at the conservation of the biological diversity and the sustainable utilization of the biological resources, the country made a significant progress;
- Bulgaria has fulfilled the undertaking for the harmonization of the national nature protection legislation with the principal EU Nature Directives ;
- Bulgaria has ratified almost all the international conventions connected with the conservation of the biological diversity;
- A certain progress has been made in the integration of the policy for the conservation of the biological diversity in different policy' sections as the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan, the National Forest Strategy, as well as in the National Agriculture and Rural Areas Development Plan and the National Ecotourism Development Strategy in part;
- Some efforts have been made in the increase of the capacity of the State institutions – the Ministry of Environment and Water and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, bearing in mind that the rate of strengthening of the separate units, connected with the conservation and the sustainable utilization of the biological diversity, is crescent during the period of the plan too;
- The process aiming the finalization of the protected areas recategorization in pursuance to the regulations of the Protected Areas Act. At the end of 2004 the number of the protected areas in the country amounts to 858, covering a total surface land of 544394.9 hectares, representing 5 % of the territory of the country.
- It has been carried out an inspection of all protected areas by the interdepartmental committee for the establishment of any incompatibilities as a result the ownership restitution and the protected area boundaries delineation on the Restituted Property Map (RPM). The incompatibilities found with respect to 250 protected areas, have been embedded on the Restituted Property Map (RPM) too.
- The existing protected areas have got high conservational value.
- 34% of the territory of the country where will be disposed the protected areas matching with the Pan-European Ecological Network NATURA 2000 have been designated. Until the end of the 2005 is foreseen to be taken an inventory (mapping and description) of the protected areas in pursuance to the EU Birds Directive and until the end of 2006 the Council of Ministers shall adopt the list of the mapped and described protected areas by virtue of the EU Habitats Directive.
- 10 wetlands of international importance have been designated, and 5 of those sites have been designated after 2002.

- The highest percentage (39.1%) of the utilized funds on the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan during the period under review has been spent on the carrying out of the priority restoration and maintenance works aimed at the preservation and the sustainable utilization of the biological diversity in the protected areas and outside them;
- Interinstitutional coordination units (consultative councils, etc.) on conservation of the biological diversity have been formed;
- The non-governmental organizations in the conservation of the biological diversity are among the most active and efficient non-governmental organizations in the country;
- There are some good experts among the scientific society too;
- The access to information on the biological diversity has been also improved by means of the Bulgarian Clearing-House Mechanism (BCHM);
- The international prestige of the country has been enhanced through the ratification of the new conventions and the active participation of the Bulgarian representatives in the elaboration of the international documents within the conventions by means of bilateral and multilateral meetings;
- The most part of the species found in the country are designed for home consumption, home and foreign trade. The sustainable utilization of the biological resources represents a solid basis for the increase of the income and the employment as well;
- Both rich biological diversity and protected areas create great opportunities for the development of the ecotourism.

A.II.2. Problems and unused opportunities

During the thorough analysis of the fulfilment of the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan have been detected a few problems and have been studied the opportunities for the improvement of the biological diversity activities in view of the drawing up of the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan for 2005-2010 as detailed below:

- The following problems could be identified in the biological diversity legislation: some gaps in legislation, antinomies with other normative documents or missing elements; frequent amendments of the laws and their ineffective enforcement; lack of some regulations, for instance – for the fungi, etc.
- Inadequately balanced enforcement of the policy aimed at the conservation of the biological diversity and sustainable utilization of the entire front of activities, connected with the biological diversity, strengthening of the scientific basis for the conservation of the biological diversity, guarantee of the biological safety, international cooperation;
- The conservation of the biological diversity has not yet been integrated into the majority of the sector policies. The comparatively limited possibilities for financing of the biological diversity could not compensate the loss of the biological diversity, unless the investments and practices in the economic sectors do not integrate the elements of its conservation in their policy.

- Slow increase of the protected areas surface. A large part of the protected areas are situated in alpine districts and do not cover in a sufficient degree the forest ecosystems in the plains, the riversides and the Black Sea seaside ecosystems, decreasing thus the representative character of the existing protected areas network;
- Necessity for improvement of the mechanism for rendering an account for the implementation of the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan through the inclusion of additional criteria and indices besides those required for rendering an account for the implementation of the plan within the framework of the Action Plan within the National Environmental Strategy.
- There is no organizational structure on biological diversity from representatives of the interested parties able to organize the process of planning and to render an account for the fulfilment of the activities on the plan;
- Activation of the works aimed at the strengthening of the scientific basis for the conservation of the biological diversity;
- Insufficient collaboration and coordination between the different interested parties on the conservation and the sustainable utilization of the biological diversity: state institutions, non-governmental organizations, local authorities and private sector;
- Limited possibilities and funds for the financing of the biodiversity conservation;
- Ineffective utilization of the international programmes for the conservation of the biological diversity;
- We observe a significant delay in the utilization of the funds under the SAPARD Programme during the implementation of the criterion for the preparation of high quality and sufficient quantity projects for the SAPARD ecological component. Until 2003 the Programme was mainly supporting projects for intensive agriculture rather than projects for biological agriculture. The Agroecological schemes criterion is not still officially opened for project financing in Bulgaria;
- Limited powers and restricted capacity of the municipalities impeding the effective conservation of the biological diversity;
- Insufficient economic stimuli for the conservation of the biological diversity;
- Insufficient effectiveness and efficacy on the part of the State with respect to the enforcement of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

B. National Biodiversity Conservation Plan for 2005-2010

The National Biodiversity Conservation Plan for 2005-2010 was developed in pursuance to the Art. 77 of the Environment Protection Act.

B.I. Current State of the Biological Diversity in Bulgaria

Bulgaria ranks among the 5 European countries in biodiversity wealth. Notwithstanding its small total area (110,910 km²), the territory of the country includes parts of 4 biogeographic areas – alpine, Black Sea, continental, and steppe area. The varied relief, geology, specific microclimatic conditions and the millenary humane activity on the territory of the country define the rich diversity of species, communities and natural habitats, the majority of which have conservation significance. The biological diversity of Bulgaria is of inestimable value which, along with other indices, preserves the national identity of the country.

B.I.1. Biological Diversity on Species Level

The Bulgarian Biota consists of remarkable natural phenomena including:

- Fungi – 4 900 Species ;
- Lichens – 933 Species
- Algae – 3 063 Species ;
- Bryophytes – 705 Species ;
- Vascular plants (Spore and Seed plants) – 3 900 Species ;
- Invertebrates (Protozoa) – 1 606 Species ;
- Insects – 20 900
- Arachnida – 1 090 Species ;
- Acari – 1 583 Species ;
- Mollusca – 445 Species ;
- Amphibians – 17 Species ;
- Reptiles – 36 Species ;
- Fishes – 218 Species ;
- Birds – 421 Species ;
- Mammals- 100 Species ;
- Bats - 33 Species.

The biological diversity of the species is extremely large in view of the relatively small total area of the country. In some of those areas the country could make pretence to be on one of the first places in Europe by the number of species. Only Spain and Greece have such a wealthy herpetofauna, bearing in mind that from 35-36 bat species established in Europe in Bulgaria are found 33 of them. The floristic and habitat diversity is comparatively high too.

B.I.2. Conservation Significance and Nature Protection Status

Mosses

Twenty four of the species found in Bulgaria are included in the Red Data Book of European Bryophytes (1995) of the European Committee for Conservation of Bryophytes. There are 201 identified at a national level – 21 endangered species, 33 vulnerable species, 112 rare species and 35 species with insufficiently studied spreading. At present several species are included in international conventions and directives aimed at the conservation of the biological diversity world-wide and in Europe in particular.

In Annex No 2 to the Bulgarian Biological Diversity Act (2002) are included 4 Bryophytes species.

Vascular Plants

The total number of the endemic taxon vascular plants species in Bulgaria amounts to 466 species, representing 11.9% of the flora in the country. The total number of relicts on the territory of Bulgaria amounts to 200-300 species, representing 8% of the total number of vascular plants in the country.

From the vascular plant species identified in Bulgaria, 594 of them are protected under the Biodiversity Act. 102 of those vascular plant species are included in Annex No2 for the vegetal and animal species for the preservation of the habitats for which are announced the protected areas. 589 vascular plant species are included in Annex No3 for the protected wild vegetal and animal species in the whole country.

In the Bulgarian Red Data Book have been identified 158 endangered species, as well as 574 rare species. 31 vascular plant species have been identified as lost, and as a matter of fact during the last few years some of the said lost vascular plant species have been restored for the Bulgarian native flora.

Fungi

There are 125 species included in the Bulgarian Red Data Book of the fungi. The fungi have not been included in the Annexes to the Biodiversity Act.

Invertebrates

Based on the Biodiversity Act there are 13 protected species of invertebrates in total in Bulgaria. There are 8 species of invertebrates included in Annex No2, as well as 5 species of invertebrates included in Annex No4.

A large number of species have been included in several international conventions and directives, world and European lists of endangered species, aiming the conservation of the biological diversity worldwide and Europe, in particular.

Vertebrates

In the Red Data Book of the People's Republic of Bulgaria (1985), Volume 2, Animals, have been included as follows: 41 fish species, 2 amphibians species, 9 reptile species, 100 of the bird species identified in the country, as well as 19 mammalians species.

In pursuance to the **Biodiversity Act** in Bulgaria in Annex No 2 to it have been included 218 vertebrates, in Annex No 3 have been included 427 vertebrates, and in Annex No 4 have been included 49 vertebrates.

B.I.3. Biological Diversity at Cenotic Level

The wealth of communities of species and populations having different composition and structure represents an important index reflecting the character of the native vegetal world. The Natural vegetation in Bulgaria is an aggregate of arboreal, bush, semibush and herbaceous communities.

The vegetal communities identified so far refer to 1 250 associations and to 300 formations. The arboreal communities dominate by their spreading and importance. The forests in Bulgaria cover 34% (3,9 million hectares) of the native territory. Among the arboreal communities the herbaceous communities, including mainly meadows and pastures, are ranked first by territory, covering a surface area of more than 2 000 000 hectares.

The bush and the semibush communities cover a rather limited surface area. The specific and unique features of the native vegetal cover is been characterized by the habitats of dominating Bulgarian or Balkan Endemites and Tertiary Relicts.

B.I.4. Habitat Diversity

Almost all the natural habitat types presented in Europe are identified in Bulgaria as well. According to the first evaluations based on the Palaearctic Habitat Classification on the Republic of Bulgaria have been identified more than 700 habitat types and about 90 of them are typically only for the country. In pursuance to the EU regulations about 15% of the habitats are of conservation importance. No complete inventory and evaluation of the native natural habitats diversity have been made so far.

In Annex I to Council Directive 92/43/EEC for the preservation of the natural habitats have been included 70 of the identified habitats in Bulgaria. The Annex I to Council

Directive 92/43/EEC includes natural habitats of public interest whose preservation requires the announcement of special areas of conservation.

There are 106 types of native natural habitats in total included in Annex 1 to the Biodiversity Act (2002). The Annex 1 to the Biodiversity Act comprises natural habitat types which will be included in the protected zones.

B.I.5. Genetic Resources

The genetic vegetal and animal resources of Bulgaria are of substantial economic, cultural and biological importance. The Bulgarian flora comprises wild and semiwild forms and cultural plant wild relatives as well. There is a great diversity of wild and semiwild forms and cultural plant wild relatives of the fruit and nut species.

There are about 60 animal breeds identified in Bulgaria and the majority of them are very close relatives to their wild predecessors. 38 of the native breeds are endangered ones.

The genetic resources of wild and vegetal species are kept by virtue of two principal methods. Plants and animal carrier of those resources are kept in their natural environment (in situ) or „ex situ”, under controlled conditions, e.g. in vivariums, zoological or botanical gardens, dendrariums, live collections, creating banks of seeds, pollen, gametes, embryos, tissue and cell cultures as well.

B.I.6. Important Biological Resources

More than 200 species of eatable fungi in Bulgaria are of economic importance, 10 of which are of industrial or trade importance. About 750 plants of the Bulgarian flora are utilized as medicinal herbs. More than 250 of them are considered to be economically valuable species. The Bulgarian annual exportation of medicinal herbs amounts to approximately 15,5 thousand tones delineating an obvious tendency to increase the said quantity.

The forest wood resources surpass 520.000.000 m³ at an annual growth of about 12.000.000 m³. The participation percentage of the principal forest wood resources is as follows:

- Oak trees (*Quercus spp.*) - 23%;
- Beech-tree (*Fagus spp.*) - 17%;
- White pine tree (*Pinus sylvestris*)- 16%;
- Turkey Oak (*Quercus cerris*) – 9%;
- Black pine tree (*Pinus nigra*) – 9%;
- Spruce (*Picea excelsa*) – 4%; and
- Other species – 22%.

The forests average age at present is 49 years. The wood utilization and the special functions of the forests are of particular importance especially for the occupation of the population located in the mountain and semimountain native areas.

More than 20 Black Sea and freshwater fish species are of great importance for the economic fishery and amateur fishing as well.

During the last decade there is a tendency for lasting decrease of the number of the principal game species (red deer, deer, stag of a fallow deer, small game). The population of the wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) is stable, becoming more and more the principal native hunting type. The pheasant and the chukar (*Alectoris chukar*) are rather rarely found.

30 plant species are put under preservation and regulation utilization regime, 24 bird species and 30 other animal species (no birds included) are included in Annex 4 to the Biodiversity Act too.

B.II. Political and Legislative Framework

The policy for the conservation of the biological diversity is been defined on the basis of a large set of documents in cosubordination between them in a rigid hierarchic structure, including the Constitution, strategies and plans for its enforcement, acts, regulations, statutes, methods, as well as several ordinances and resolutions.

The National Environmental Strategy, the National Action Plan for 2000-2006 and the National Biodiversity Conservation Strategy define and lay down the sustainable development policy principles in the society under the conservation of the exceptional natural resources of Bulgaria. The framework delineated in them is relatively stable with regard to the different conjuncture changes and the established vision in short and long term plan as well, and what's more, becoming unbreakably connected with the European integration and the management tendencies in global scale. This framework is completed by the following strategic documents:

- National Development Plan for 2000-2006 (Environment Sector Programme);
- National Priority Activities Plan for the Preservation of the most important Wetland areas in Bulgaria;
- National Biosafety Framework;
- Strategy for the preservation and the restoration of the insular floodwoods on the Bulgarian Danube Islands (2001) and Action Plan for the preservation and the restoration of the insular floodwoods on the Bulgarian Danube Islands (2003-2007);
- National Ecotourism Strategy (2003);
- National Forest Policy and Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Forest Sector in Bulgaria (2003-2013);

- National Plan for Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas (2000-2006) based on the EU Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (SAPARD).
- National Agroecological Programme (2007-2013).

The contemporary conditions in which have been created the normative regulations of the Republic of Bulgaria, including and not limited to the environmental and biodiversity regulations, have been marked by dynamic social changes, precipitated synchronization with the European standards, low living standard of the native population, rather active and competent public sector, combined with insufficient administrative capacity of the municipal and public authorities. Therefore with the aforesaid specific conditions have been connected the advantages, as well as the disadvantages, describing the policy pursued by the Republic of Bulgaria, aiming the conservation and the preservation of the biological diversity.

In pursuance to the Environmental Protection Frame Act several special acts have been made, among them are the Biodiversity Act, Protected Areas Act; Medicinal Plants Act, Genetically Modified Organisms Act, Forestry Act, Hunting and Game Protection Act, Fisheries and Aquacultures Act, which concern the biological diversity in particular. The acts which are not directly connected with the biological diversity, but which are related to its utilization and conservation, are as the Agricultural Lands Protection Act, Agricultural Lands Property and Utilization Act, New Plant Varieties and Animal Breed Protection Act, Veterinary Medical Science Act, Ores and Minerals Act, Water Act, Waste Management Act, etc.

The normative frame is under construction and completion, including more than 100 statutes, regulations and methods made in support of the respective acts.

The normative order assumes some issues, which are created and/or could not be solved by it. The basic and characteristic disadvantages which have to be settled as demonstrated below, such as: the exercise of control and imposition of fines and sanctions through the improvement of the interaction between the institutions and the increase of the efficiency; the strengthening of the administrative capacity of the public local and municipal authorities and the surmounting of the lack of coordination. The undefined obligations and the responsibilities at that level too. Those problems shall be surmounted through the improvement of the management methods, the course of action, as well as through the perfection of the management of the financial resources. The solution to problems due to vacuum in legislation as well as to discrepancy between the separate normative acts shall be sought in the amendment of the existing acts and subnormative acts and the adoptions of new laws too.

B.III. Threats to the Biodiversity

The rich biological diversity in Bulgaria is subject to impact of a large spectrum of threats as a result of human activity and due to natural processes running in the ecosystems. The threats, independently or in combination, affect at different degree the separate

native organism groups and habitats. They could influence directly the different species, communities and natural habitats or have an indirect impact on them as well.

The principal threats to the biological diversity in Bulgaria are as detailed below:

B.III.1. Degradation, Fragmentations and Habitat Loss due to Human Activities

The destruction of the habitats represents a serious threat to the native biological diversity. It affects the water, as well as the earth habitats, and is due to activities in various sectors of economy. The construction activities and the infrastructure projects cause serious damages to the habitats. They include the transport corridor constructions – highways, gas-mains, Danube deepening for transport purposes.

The human activities (development of economics, infrastructure, tourism, agrarian and forestry activities) cause not only direct loss and destruction of habitats, but also affect the conditions in them. As a result of the said activities the natural massifs and habitats are fragmented forming obstacles and hindrances, impeding thus the connection between the separate individuals.

An increasing threat to the habitats represents the construction of the big tourist complexes and facilities on the Black Sea seaside (the most critical areas are the seaside on the south of Sozopol, Silistar, Irakly, etc.) and in the mountains (Pirin, Rila, Balkan mountains). The construction undertaken in the seaside and mountain areas affects in particular the most sensitive and difficult to restore sand dunes, alpine pastures and meadows, and forest communities as well. The tourist stream was intensively growing during the last few years and the prognosis was showing the preservation of the said tendencies which could have a negative impact on the environment and the biological diversity in case of improper management of the tourist activities and facilities.

The drainage and the destruction of the wetlands areas, the extraction of inert material from the river beds, the bed correction and the construction of channels, as well as the construction of hydroelectric power plants and wind electric generators represent another threat causing the loss or the degradation of the habitats.

In the agricultural field the intensification as well as the extensification of the agricultural activities represents a serious threat leading to changes and losses of habitats. In the first case the agricultural lands in the flat country are mainly affected, due to the breaking up of the ground and to its transformation into fields, vineyards, orchards and other agricultural lands. In the mountain and the semimountain areas could be observed the opposite process – decrease or suspension of the traditional agricultural activities connected with the stock-breeding, leading to the loss of the habitats and decrease of the biological diversity too.

The illegal logging, the forest conflagration as well as the improper restitution of the forests during 1992-2002 have caused serious damages leading to the demolition of 15% of the forests in Bulgaria, causing an adverse effect especially on the floodwoods.

B.III.2. Environment Pollution

The environment pollution leads to degradation and loss of habitats and could be considered as a part of this global threat.

The biological diversity in Bulgaria has been affected at a different degree by different forms of pollution – e.g. soil pollution due to agricultural and industrial activity; ground water pollution (pesticides and chemical pollution; industrial pollution, oil spill, etc.), domestic solid wastes pollution.

In the National Environmental Strategy for 2005-2014 was rendered an account concerning the insufficient collection and treatment of wastewaters in order to satisfy the European requirements. It was noted also that the share of the wastewaters, debouching into the surface waters without preliminary treatment, has been increased, compared to the total quantity of produced wastewaters. In almost all surface waters located outside the settlements and not having their own wastewater purification plants, could be measured high values of nitrogen forms and phosphates, especially in periods of shallowness.

In certain areas in the ground and surface waters have been steadily registered relatively higher and even dangerous concentrations of harmful substances and heavy metals in particular. It refers to the sections of Topolnitsa River next to the town of Pirdop (Cu, As, etc.), at the Timok River debouchment into the Danube (heavy metals of transboundary origin), at the Lesnovska River next to the Dolni Bogrov town (phenols, cyanides etc.)

It was identified a general oil pollution but the tendency to decrease it, revealed during the past years, did not mark any steadiness at all.

There were identified some agricultural area localities having a constant value of nitrate in the ground waters. The high nitrate levels are most frequently due to the poor agricultural practices. The risk of eutrophication of some maritime lakes or sections of the littoral area does not decrease to the desired level.

The fly-tipping of the generated domestic wastes and the building of illegal dump sites within settlement limits represent a serious and increasing threat. The deponation of the wastes is the basic method for waste disposal in the country, while the possibility to apply second hand use, recycling and utilization of non-treated refuse is not well studied and/or put into practice yet. From native industrial waste generation point of view the power engineering has the biggest share – e.g. up to 65% from all the production wastes are generated in this branch.

B.III.3. Direct Extermination and Exploitation

The direct extermination of animals and plants in the most part of the cases is as a result of the direct exploitation of the biological resources, affecting at a different degree ecosystems, habitats and taxons.

In this category enters the excessive and/or irregular collection of medicinal plants, decorative plants, eatable fungi, snails, forest fruits. A special attention has to be paid to the use of the fungi resources, provided that there are no adequate normative regulations, because they have not been included in the Biodiversity Act as organism group and thus they have been left beyond the scope of this law.

The excessive fishing of precious fish species for the native economically in the Black Sea represents a serious threat leading mainly to the decrease of the resources of turbot, belted bonito (*Palamis sarda*), goby (*Gobio Gobius*), sprat, etc.

The poaching and the sport fishing lead to the direct extermination, thus causing strongest impact on the populations of the large mammals and birds (especially red deer, wild goat, bear, red-breasted goose, etc.). Some species of rare plants, birds, amphibians and reptiles have become a target of demand for exportation and sale leading to their direct extermination.

During several agricultural activities there are also cases of direct extermination of some wild animals (e.g. mowing, harvest, etc.), as well as during road accidents, but the impact of those threats is not very well expressed.

B.III.4. Genetic Erosion and the Introduction of Unnative Species

In Bulgaria in a natural way and/or as a result of human activity have been diffused and are diffusing unnative species and thus they have become a serious threat to the genetic purity of the native populations and/or have deteriorated the characteristics of the natural habitats. Even though this problem has already been identified, it still remains unstudied to a sufficient degree as it concerns the animal and the plant species as well. As forest cultures are spread few alien tree species, e.g. the larch (*Larix europaea*), douglas (*Pseudotsuga douglasii* Vir.), redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*), weymouth pine (*Pinus strobus* L.), few poplar (*Populus*) species, etc. They form a small part of the native forests but nevertheless there are preconditions for genetic pollution of the native species and genetic erosion threat too.

The introduction of unnative species at a regional level could represent the substitution of the natural broad leaved forest ecosystems with artificial plantations mostly of coniferous and other species, which are not typical of the respective habitats. The afforestation with unsuitable plant species leads to the change of the communities and the microclimate, which could lead to the disappearing of stenotype taxon plants and animals having high conservation significance. Among them are the most part of the

snails, all the amphibians, the Aesculapian Snake (*Elaphe longissima*). The natural reproduction places are destroyed as well as the hunting habitats of the bats, etc.

Among the hybridization animals the wild cat and the wolf are potentially threatened. The planting of rivers and lakes with alien fish species, as the rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and the brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*), which are not typical for the ichthyofauna of Bulgaria, represents a threat to the native fish species, concurring and replacing the native Balkan trout.

In Bulgaria the practice of use of genetically modified organisms is rather limited. Nevertheless their uncontrolled use represents a threat to the biological diversity. The administrative capacity is still very low, impeding to enforce the pertinent procedures, connected with the recently adopted Genetically Modified Organisms Act.

B.III.5. Global Climate Changes

The air pollution and the global climate change effect have been identified on the territory of Bulgaria. The country belongs to the drought area. The total precipitation quantity and the river flow are going down having characteristics for minimums every 4-5 years, especially marked in the Black Sea District Basin Administration Area.

That fact has an unfavourable impact on the hygrophile plants, aquatic and ombrogenous animals and on habitats common in riversides, lakesides, peat sites, swampy areas and other wetlands as a whole. The changes in the plant cover are definitely the most typical ones, manifested by marked increase of the areas of drought-resistant species. Thus the process leads to the worsening of the situation in the ecosystems, consisting of cold-resistant and ombrogenous species. The further warm spell and drought would have an extremely unfavourable impact on the species and habitat diversity in Bulgaria.

B.III.6. Natural Vulnerability of Species and Habitats

The range of threats to the biological diversity includes some natural processes which in several cases lead to the loss of species populations, communities and habitats, restricted opportunities for spread and colonization; poor reproductiveness; high mortality rate among young individuals; inbreeding; natural disasters, etc.

Some species have a restricted reproductive potential and for those natural reasons their population size is rather small, and by those reasons the said species are highly vulnerable to human impact. The poor reproductiveness is typical for some plant species, invertebrates, some larger rapacious birds - Golden Eagle (*Aquila Chrysaetus*), Short-toed Eagle (*Circaetus Gallicus*), Lanner Falcon (*Falco biarmicus*), etc., some large breeds Galliformes – Grouse Capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*), Rock Partridge (*Alectoris graeca*), bats, bear. From the species adaptable to habitats with strictly specific features, the most typical ones are as follows: wild goat (*Rupicapra rupicapra*), Aesculapian Snake (*Elaphe longissima* or *Zamenis longissimus*), as well as the most part of the

endemic and relict species, such as the peat flora devoted to the high acidity levels in the environment.

The natural conflagration, windthrow, snowbreak, avalanches are among the natural calamities having the most serious impact on the biological diversity.

B.III.7. Insufficiently Effective Enforcement of the Nature Protection Legislation and Affiliation of the Biodiversity Conservation to the Sector Policies

The National Plan for the consolidation of the administrative capacity for the enforcement of the EU legislation has identified 10 main capacity restrictions: lack of normative grounds; lack of structure units; lack of employees; insufficiently trained employees as a result of the new laws; scarce equipment; low consumables, fuels, etc. for the operative activities, lack of information; poor coordination between the units, skills and learning deficit among the population and the companies involved with the undertaking of activities in pursuance to the legislation enforcement; lack of effective pains and penalties as an instrument of the pertinent authorities aiming the enforcement of the legislation.

Notwithstanding the well elaborated normative basis in the biodiversity conservation sphere, there are some restrictions and threats to its enforcement. The governmental institutions suffer from poor efficiency and capacity for the enforcement of the nature protection legislation, as well as the slow spread of the network of protected areas (included and not limited to the announcement of the Nature parks in the Eastern and Western Rhodopes, Western Balkans, etc., and the delayed endorsement of the action plans for the protected area control.

There are also some difficulties as it concerns the enforcement of the Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the preservation of natural habitats and wild fauna and flora (Habitats Directive) and the implementation and building of the Natura 2000 Network in Bulgaria, which is a priority for the country in view of its affiliation to the European Union in 2007.

- There is no manual for the assessment of the types of habitats identified in Bulgaria, compatible with the Natura 2000 manual.
- There is neither national map for the natural habitats, nor cadastre and/or informational system for the areas identified and designated for inclusion in the Natura 2000 Network;
- There is poor activity aimed at the identification of the types of habitats typical for Bulgaria for inclusion in the list of the Council Habitats Directive;
- The capacity of the public administration is scarce regarding the implementation and the building of the Natura 2000 Network in the country.
- There is no transparency with regard to the pertinent preventive measures for the preservation of the future Natura 2000 areas, as well as for the procedures on the preventive measures for the preservation of the future Natura 2000 areas, as well

as for the procedures on the compensation of the land owners in the areas within the European funds network.

The gaps and the contradictions in the legislation impede the effective conservation of the biological diversity and the sustainable utilization of the resources.

The conservation of the biological diversity is not yet sufficiently integrated in the most part of the sector policies, strategies and plans. It leads to scarce cooperation and coordination in that area among the different interested parties and institutions. The restricted powers and capacity of the municipalities also impede the efficient preservation at a regional level.

B.III.8. Problems arising during the Enforcement of Preventive Instruments aimed at the Conservation of the Biodiversity

The basic preventive measures aimed at the conservation of the biodiversity underlaid in the normative acts represent an Environmental Impact Assessment, as well as an Ecological Assessment. It is observed a delay in the process involved with the implementation of the assessment and the investment projection due to the insufficiently good quality of the reports for the Environmental Impact Assessment. The delayed notification of the competent environmental authorities by the investors for their investment offer is rather frequent occurrence. In several cases is ascertained the ignorance of the normative environmental regulations by the competent authorities involved with final endorsement/ratification of the project leading to delayed resolutions concerning the submitted investment intentions.

The public participation in the process of environment decision making concerning the Environmental Impact Assessment, as well as in the Ecological Assessment is variable from significant interest to apparent lack of interest. The basic factors in the compulsory public discussions touching protected areas issues are regularly the Non Governmental Organizations in case they have focussed their efforts on specific issues and/or they have the capacity to do it. The municipalities are also involved in the said process focussing their efforts mainly in the local development rather than on the local environment protection.

B.III.9. Problems with Informing and Drawing Public Attention to the Biodiversity Conservation and Ecological Education

The public support for the conservation of the biological diversity and the sustainable utilization of the biological resources is insufficient. This is due to a whole bunch of reasons. As a matter of fact the influence and the possibilities offered by the mass media aimed at the increase of the public interest to the biological diversity are not sufficiently used. The fact is that the mass media are short of professionally oriented journalists in the field of the biological diversity conservation. The achievement of the goals in that field is further impeded by the fact that the public and the business circles

are not sufficiently informed about the normative regulations at a national and international level too.

The public registers established on the basis of the ecological laws are not yet used by the public and the business circles at a satisfactory level. It is also observed an insufficient experience in the management of biological diversity information among the parties interested and the institutions as a whole, as well as an insufficiently developed capacity for the supply of environmental information at a regional level.

The environmental preservation education (ecological education) does not meet the needs adequately enough. The integration of the biodiversity conservation issues suffers from slow development on all educational levels and forms of study.

B.III.10. Restrictions on the Financing of the Biodiversity Conservation Activities

There are still scarce possibilities and insufficient funds for the financing of the biodiversity conservation at a national level as a whole, provided that in the same time the pertinent international programmes are yet ineffectively used.

The economic stimuli for the business involved with the biodiversity conservation are not still well developed and they are yet to begin developing and inculcating in that field.

As a matter of fact the scientific institutions in the field of the biodiversity conservation suffer from low financing, decreasing thus the chances for the enforcement of the European and national requirements and the decision making by virtue of the results obtained as a result of the modern scientific researches.

The general control over the biodiversity is exercised by the 15 Regional Inspections on Environment and Water and the pertinent administrations of the three national parks having enough personnel, but the control is still hindered by a lack of resources for transport and equipment

B.III.11. Gaps in Cognition and Outdated Equipment for Scientific Research

The adequate scientific basis for the biological diversity in Bulgaria represents one of the prerequisites for its conservation. Notwithstanding the accumulation of huge amounts of data there are still several gaps in cognition including and not limited to incomplete information for the types of wealth, the opulence and the spreading of whole organism groups and communities; incomplete data for the biology and the ecology of the different taxons; no coordination and harmonization with the European achievements in several research areas as the phytocenology (vegetation classification); gaps with regard to the level of study aiming the reaction against the threats to biodiversity, etc.

There are also certain problems in the scientific data exchange between the institutions in the country, as well as between the related intuitions abroad. There are not enough resources for the organization and the publication of the scientific data. A large number of scientific institutes have neither up-to-date scientific equipment, nor the necessary financial resources to supply it.

B.IV. Targets and Priorities in the Biodiversity Conservation Plan for 2005 – 2010

B.IV.1. Targets of the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan

B.IV.1.1. Long-term Strategic Target:

Conservation, restoration and sustainable management of the native biological diversity aiming the establishment of optimal conditions, surroundings and prospects for the people's life.

B.IV.1.2. Strategic Target of the Plan

Diminution of the biodiversity loss until 2010.

B.IV.1.3. Operative Targets:

B.IV.1.3.1. Preservation and restoration of the Species, Habitats, Ecosystems and Landscapes. Biodiversity Conservation.

- (a) Evaluation of threats and study of mechanisms for the diminution/elimination of their impact;
- (b) Development, strengthening and sustainable control of the National Ecological Network (NEN) based on the applying of the ecosystem approach and integration of the National Ecological Network (NEN) in the global ecological network through the announcement of the transboundary protected areas, zones and corridors.
- (c) Financial security of the activity for the conservation and the sustainable utilization of the biological diversity, as well as the optimization of the management and control over the provided financial resources.
- (d) Support to the programmes for *ex situ* biodiversity conservation and the application of the good practices in that field.

- (e) Carrying out of monitoring of the species, habitats, ecosystems and landscapes, applying the EU standard indicators and methods, and harmonization of the lists of EU priority species and habitats in Bulgaria.
- (f) Improvement of informativity level and increase of the public activity aimed at the conservation of the biological diversity.
- (g) Establishment of conditions for more efficient training and education aimed at the conservation of the biological diversity.
- (h) Identification of alien invasive species and establishment of measures for the restriction of their impact on the native species, ecosystems and human health as well.
- (i) Finalization of the transportation of the European legislation with regard to the work with genetically modified organisms (GMO) under controlled conditions, their release in the environment and putting on the market in pursuance to the sublaw normative acts.
- (j) Securing access to public information for the utilization of genetically modified organisms (GMO) and biological security.

B.IV.1.3.2. Maximal Integration of the Biodiversity Problems in the National Ecological and Sector Legislation and the National Policies and Programmes.

- (a) Integration of the biodiversity problems in the development and enforcement of nature protection legislation regarding water, soils, hazardous chemical substances and genetically modified organisms (GMO), forests, hunting, medicinal plants, fishery and aquacultures, maritime resources control, ecolabelling, Environmental Impact Assessment and Ecological Assessment, Orhus Convention enforcement.
- (b) Review of the principal and resource biodiversity acts aimed at their updating and achievement of more efficient biodiversity conservation.
- (c) Integration of the problems of the conservation and the sustainable utilization of the biodiversity in the regional development and planning policy.
- (d) Normative definition of the participation of the branch organizations in the sharing of the rights and the responsibilities with the state regarding the problems of the conservation and the sustainable utilization of the biological resources.
- (e) Introduction and optimization of the compensatory and reimbursing mechanisms aimed at the enhancement of the economic entities and the Non Governmental Organizations for the sustainable control and utilization of the biological resources.
- (f) Securing of scientific grounds in the establishment of policy and decision making on natural resources preservation and control.

B.IV.1.3.3. Sustainable Utilization of the Biological Resources. Integration of the Biodiversity Problems in the Agricultural Sector.

- (a) Introduction and application of good agricultural practices and preservation of the traditional agricultural practices in agricultural lands biodiversity the conservation.
- (b) Approval and application of an agroecological plan containing measures for the long-term biodiversity conservation.
- (c) Consolidation and enlargement of biological agriculture.
- (d) Enhancement of the informativeness of the agricultural sector personnel regarding the biodiversity conservation and sustainable utilization, as well as about the opportunities for the agroecological measures application.

Biodiversity Conservation through Sustainable Forest Control

- (e) Enforcement of the Birds Directive and Habitats Directive in the forestry policy and the forestry legislation as well.
- (f) Application of priority measures aimed at the biodiversity conservation in old natural forests.
- (g) Diminution of the volume and surface affected by the illegal and unauthorized logging in the forest fund and enhancement of control.
- (h) Application of modern afforestation practices based on the scientific researches and ecosystematic approach.
- (i) Achievement of a balance between the public forest utilization interests, including regarding the hunting and other non-timber biological resources, as well as the biodiversity conservation.
- (j) Biodiversity monitoring in the forests.

Fish Resources Preservation and Sustainable Utilization

- (k) Introduction and utilization of the structure funds in fishery and fish-breeding for investments in the development of ecological management control practices.
- (l) Securing of an optimal conservational status of the maritime habitats and species not subject to economic exploitation.
- (m) Limitation of the quantity and composition of the species concomitant the fishery and preventing benthic injury.
- (n) Assessment and restraint of the adverse impact of the aquacultures and fishery on the environment and biodiversity.
- (o) Enhancement of the informativeness and stimulation of the interested parties' participation in the fishery and aquacultures development.
- (p) Monitoring of the fish stocks condition, their exploitation and aquacultures ecological development.

Optimization of the Bulgarian Policy of with regard to the International Trade with Biological Resources

- (q) Identification of the discrepancies and the problems in the national legislation on the (international) trade with biological resources and tracing out measures aimed to limit the adverse impact.
- (r) Increase of the control efficiency in the trade with species in pursuance to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and other species subject to a regulated regime of utilization.
- (s) Monitoring of the trade with biological resources.

Sustainable Development of Tourism

- (t) Development of forms of tourism sparing the biological diversity
- (u) Establishment of suitable background for the protected area management under developing tourism conditions.
- (v) Preservation of high recreation capacity of the ecosystems and the landscape.
- (w) Monitoring of the impact of the different tourism forms on the biological diversity.

B.IV.1.3.4. Prevention and/or Decrease of the Negative Impact on the Biodiversity due to the Climate Change and Adaptation to it.

- (a) Study of the consequences due to the climate change on the biodiversity and undertaking of appropriate measures to limit them.
- (b) Assessment of the impact on the desertification and soil degradation on the biological diversity and the limitation of consequences due to them.

B.IV.2. National Plan Priorities

B.IV.2.1. Gathering of information, establishment and use of fundamental measures, approaches and systems for the conservation, preservation, maintenance and sustainable management of the biological diversity and the natural resources as detailed below:

- Establishment of Natura 2000 Network in Bulgaria;
- Introduction and implementation of the Agroecological measure;
- Forest sector reform.

B.IV.2.2. Improvement, strengthening and optimization of the normative basis and capacity of the institutions establishing it, as detailed below:

- Adoption of legislative changes package;
- Establishment of Personnel Education System and securing of its functioning;
- Revising the inclusion of the subject considering the biodiversity conservation in Bulgaria in the university and high school curriculum.

B.IV.2.3. Conservation of the biological diversity through long-term observation and assessment of change tendencies for the adoption of preventive measures:

- Working out and maintenance of National Biodiversity Monitoring System. Separation of the responsibilities between the interested parties;
- Working out of the indicators of the National Biodiversity Monitoring System for reporting on EU Leading Indicators and Target 2010 fulfillment;
- Working out of the indicators for the assessment of the integration of the principles for the biodiversity conservation and sustainable utilization in the native sector policy;
- Protected areas management monitoring and wetlands monitoring;

B.IV.2.4. Working out and enlargement of mechanisms, instruments and measures of control

- Securing of sufficient financial resources and optimization of their control;
- Working out and application of preventive measures, as well as pertinent compensatory and stimulating mechanisms aimed at the biodiversity conservation;
- Enlargement of the rights and responsibilities pertaining to the Non Governmental Organizations, business, local authorities and Branch organisations working within the biodiversity sector;
- Integration of the policies and activities on the biodiversity conservation in the different economic sectors;
- Support of the local, regional and transboundary initiatives included.

B.IV.2.5. Establishment of good informational and scientific basis for the effective biological diversity management:

- Establishment of scientific bases for the natural resources management in pursuance to the enforcement of the directives and conventions connected with the biological diversity conservation to which Bulgaria is a party;
- Working out of scientific applied systems, methods and practices for the application of the ecosystem approach in Bulgaria in pursuance to the Biodiversity Convention;
- Carrying out of extensive researches as well as establishment, enlargement and maintenance of data bases regarding the biodiversity at species, ecosystem, genetics and landscape levels;

- Maintenance and utilization of accessible and well structured National Biodiversity Data Basis

B.IV.2.6. Enhancement the public informativeness and involvement in the decision making process as detailed below:

- To undertake legislation changes aimed at the deepening of the procedure democratization and the opening out of the administration towards the particular individual and economic subjects;
- Establishment of regular public campaign system for working with the local population, public and public feelings and expectations.

B.V. Measures and approaches in achieving targets

Different measures, each one of them including several activities, have to be applied for achieving the long-term strategic objective of the plan and operative objectives aimed at the conservation of the biological diversity resulting from them. The measures for the conservation and sustainable utilization of the biological diversity have been presented in sectors including the activities specified in accordance with the plan (Annex 8), as detailed herein below:

B.V.1. Working out of the biodiversity conservation legislative basis

- Making of laws and sublaw normative acts; Making amendments to the existing acts;
- Integration of the biodiversity conservation and sustainable utilization issues in the respective sector and/or transsector plans, programmes and policies;
- Introduction of suitable procedures requiring the assessment of the impact on the environment regarding plans, programmes and investment intentions, having an eventual significant adverse impact on the biological diversity with a view to avoid and/or minimize such impact – enlargement of the range of the Environmental Impact Assessment and the Ecological Assessment as well;
- Application of suitable measures aimed to secure the opportune identification of the ecological effects due to programmes and policies, which could have significant hazardous impact on the biological diversity;
- Support of the national reaction measures in case of natural disaster or anthropogenic effects representing a serious and direct threat to the biological diversity and encouragement of joint emergency action plans.

B.V.2. National Strategies, Plans, Programmes and Methods

The elaboration of national strategies, plans or programmes for biodiversity conservation and sustainable utilization, reflects the policy of the state and secures its durability and permanence, defines the normative and institutional framework, as well as the needed interaction between the participating institutions and other interested parties.

- The long-term strategies and action plans for the conservation and the sustainable utilization of the biological resources;
- Application of the National Agroecology Programme measures. The main objective of the National Agroecology Programme is to encourage the introduction and the constant use of ecological agricultural production methods protecting or improving the natural environment, and contributing to the achievement of a sustainable land control model, preserving the reach natural inheritance of Bulgaria and improving the quality of life of the people through the application of 7 (seven) measures: biological agriculture; control of the agricultural land having high natural value; maintenance and restoration of the landscape characteristics; support of the soil and water protection; traditional stock-breeding production; establishment of corridors for the preservation of the wild animals; measure for training and demonstration.
- Prevention of the introduction of foreign species endangering the ecosystems, habitats or species, as well as control and destruction of those species.
- Support of the local population aiming the working out and the application of health activities in regions with degraded nature where the biological diversity has decreased.
- Stimulation of the cooperation between the governmental institutions and the private sector through the elaboration of methods for sustainable utilization of the biological resources.
- Pannational methods for the assessment of the condition of the particular elements of the biological diversity, the hazards and the impact factors as well.

B.V.3. Increase of Capacity of the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan Enforcement

- Establishment of new units – Genetically Modified Organisms, Biodiversity monitoring;

- Consolidation of the units personnel and securing of the materials and technical equipment;
- Training of the employees in the existing structures.

B.V.4. Development and Control of the National Ecological Network

- Development and maintenance of the protected areas network, as well as the announcement of protected maritime areas;
- Establishment and maintenance of protected areas system, meeting the requirements of the Habitats Directive and Birds Directive as a national section of the Natura 2000 European Ecological Network;
- Conservation, regulation or control of the biological resources in the protected areas and zones through the drawing up of plans for the control of the protected areas and zones, and for the implementation of the activities thereunder as well.
- Consolidation, capitalization and development of the Protected Areas Fund within National Trust EcoFund (NTEF).

B.V.5. Biodiversity Monitoring

- Identification of the components of the Biodiversity substantial for its conservation and sustainable utilization.
- Working out of specialized monitoring programmes depending on the target kept under observance and the territorial peculiarities;
- Identification and monitoring of activities having a significant impact on the biological diversity
- Maintenance and organization of a monitoring data basis
- Securing of biological diversity monitoring and assessment in the agricultural fund and effectiveness of the measures undertaken in this area.

B.V.6. Development of the Scientific Basis for the Biodiversity Conservation

- Working out and maintenance of programmes of scientific and technical training and practice on the adoption of measures aimed at the determination, conservation and sustainable utilization of the biodiversity and the sustainable utilization of its components;
- Full inventory of the Bulgarian flora, fauna and mycota;
- Red Data Books and Red Lists publishing in conformity with the international categories;
- Stimulation of the interdisciplinary researches;
- Application of the ecosystem approach in biodiversity conservation;
- Researches aimed at the biodiversity conservation and sustainable utilization;

- Stimulation and cooperation in view of the utilization of the scientific progress achievements in the biodiversity researches, aimed at the development of methods of the biological resources conservation and sustainable utilization;
- Application of knowledge of science, discoveries and practical experience gathered by the local population with a traditional life style, compatible with the biological resources conservation and sustainable utilization;

B.V.7. Restoration and Maintenance Activities

- Preservation of ecosystems and natural habitats and maintenance of viable populations and species in their natural environment;
- Working out and implementation of action plans for rare and endangered plant and animal species;
- Restoration of degraded ecosystems and habitats, and support of the endangered species restoration;
- Establishment and maintenance of equipment for *ex situ* preservation;
- Restoration of endangered species and reintroduction in their natural habitats;
- Application of agroecological measures;
- Application of *in situ* measures aimed at the preservation of the genetic resources and *in situ* preservation of varieties, breeds and races, paying a special attention to the local ones;
- Identification of the areas of high conservation significance in the agricultural fund threatened by losing their biological diversity. Tracing out measures aimed to remove or limit threat.

B.V.8. Training and Public Informativeness Enhancement

The informativeness and the training of the public could be achieved through official educational institutions at all levels as well as through carrying out of educational campaigns and programmes.

The public awareness regarding the importance of the biological diversity and the benefits of its components represents a substantial prerequisite for the effective conservation and sustainable utilization. Without such public awareness could neither be won the pertinent public backing of the governmental policy, nor be taken an effective part in putting into practice and observing the normative requirements.

- Support and stimulation of the public awareness on the conservation of the biological diversity and the undertaking of the suitable measures, as well as their popularization through the mass media and the inclusion of the subject into the relevant educational programmes.
- Overall publishing and advertising activity, carrying out of informational campaigns through the mass media at regular basis, in the informational centres, etc. for the importance of the biological diversity.



B.V.9. Information Systems and Data Bases

- Securing and/or facilitating of the access to or the transfer of technologies, material to the conservation and the sustainable utilization of the biological diversity, or the utilization of the genetic resources;
- Facilitation of the networked information exchange;
- Dissemination to the public of the appropriate information on biodiversity through the Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM);
- Exchange of information on biological security

B. VI. Activities and Financial Framework

The specific activities on the realization of the measures specified in Chapter V as shown in details in Annex 8.

For covering the expenses for the carrying out the activities during the 5-year period of operation of the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan are needed BGN 119.015.000, allotted into relatively equal shares during all the years in the period. The Ministry of Environment and Water is the responsible institution for providing the largest amount of financial resources in accordance with the plan – e.g. BGN 79.769.000 (67.0%), followed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry - BGN 25.021.000 (21.0%), the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works.- BGN 11.600.000 (9.8%), the Ministry of Education and Science – 2.025.000 (1.7%) and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism – BGN 600.000 (0.5%).

BGN 29.621.000 or 24.9% of the necessary financial resources are expected to be provided by foreign finance sources.

The method of financing of the activities within the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan depends on the rules and regulations established by the source of financing. The responsible institutions are considered as a source of financing regarding the respective activities within the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan, except for the activities for which have been shown another source of financing in Table 8.

The Ministry of Environment and Water provides for the funds requisite for the implementation of the activities for which ones the Ministry is considered to be a responsible institution, provided that the said activities are within the framework of the ratified annual budgets. The Ministry of Environment and Water is also financing some of the activities pertaining to the units on central control level of the Ministry of Environment and Water in the following directions: Development of the normative basis in the biodiversity conservation field; Establishment of national strategies, plans, programmes and methods; Increase of the capacity for the enforcement of the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan, etc. The Ministry of Environment and Water finances

from the ratified budget the other activities, the majority of which are reconstructing and maintaining ones, and further assigns their implementation to the regional authorities in conformity with the planning and reporting control plan process, established within the framework of the Ministry. The Ministry of Environment and Water shall finance and shall further assign the implementation of large number of activities included within the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan to recruited external assignees. The list with the activities subject to assignment by the Ministry of Environment and Water during the respective year shall be published in the beginning of each year on the electronic page of the Ministry of Environment and Water. In the said list shall be included also the activities, whose implementation ways and means shall be provided by other sources of financing in conformity with agreements contracted by the Ministry of Environment and Water.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Culture are financing several activities under the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan, provided that the said activities are within the framework of the ratified annual budgets.

B. VII. Organization of the Plan Implementation

By the approval of the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan for 2005-2010 by the Council of Ministers the activities with their specifics for the respective years included in the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan shall be included in the thematic and financial plan of the responsible institutions for the same period of years.

The updating of the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan is made when necessary and consists of the inclusion of new activities in it, the exclusion or the alteration of the characteristics of the activities included in the plan. The updating is at annual basis. The proposal for the updating of the National Plan before the Council of Ministers is made by the Minister of Environment and Water. The offers to the Minister aiming alterations in the plan could be made by any physical person and/or legal entity, as well as by municipalities and public institutions. The procedures for the updating of the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan are the same as the ones aiming the approval of a new plan.

The main functions of the units and the participants in the administration, as well as the implementation of the activities under the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan are as detailed herein below:

The Minister of Environment and Water is bound to:

- present the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan (as an integral part to the Action Plan Implementation Report for 2005-2009 to the National Environmental Strategy) for consideration and adoption by the Council of Ministers, as well as his revised version, if appropriate;

- propose the inclusion in the State Budget of the financial resources necessary for the annual implementation of those activities under the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan on which the Ministry of Environment and Water is a responsible institution;
- issue an order for the nomination of the Biodiversity Coordination Group in coordination with the directors of the institutions, whose representatives shall take part into the Coordination Group;
- coordinate the implementation of the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan.

The Directors of the Responsible Institutions:

The Directors of the Responsible Institutions are bound to:

- ratify the departmental plans of the respective institution;
- nominate the administrative employees from the respective institution in charge of the plan;
- propose the inclusion in the National Budget the financial resources necessary for the annual implementation of those activities under the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan for which the said institution is responsible;
- adopt the annual reports on the implementation of the activities under the institution plans.

Biodiversity Coordination Group

The Biodiversity Coordination Group is gathered by virtue of an order of the Minister of Environment and Water, concerted in advance with the directors of the other interested institutions having their representatives in the Biodiversity Coordination Group. In the composition of the Biodiversity Coordination Group are included the representatives of several ministries, scientific and educational institutions, Non Governmental Organizations and other interested parties. The Deputy Minister of Environment and Water is nominated to be the Chairman of the Biodiversity Coordination Group. In the Biodiversity Coordination Group take part the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan Coordinator and a Secretary as well. The members of the Biodiversity Coordination Group shall be summoned for a session at least once a year.

The Biodiversity Coordination Group

- considers proposals for the updating of the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan and further submits them to the Minister of Environment and Water;
- submits proposals to the Minister of Environment and Water aimed at the establishment of strategies and programmes for the conservation and the maintenance of the biodiversity in the assignment of activities to international and internal assignees, etc.
- ratifies the annual report under the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan for the previous year until the end of February of the current year.

National Biodiversity Conservation Plan Coordinator

The Director of the National Nature Protection Service (Ministry of Environment and Water) is appointed to be the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan Coordinator.

On drawing up a new of the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan or updating it, the National Plan Coordinator shall be bound to:

- circulate the Plan Draft into the Ministry of Environment and Water Electronic Network and to make record of the expedient remarks on the Plan made by any physical person and/or legal entity;
- submit the Plan for consideration and adoption by the Collegium of the Ministry of Environment and Water and make record of the remarks made by the Collegium members;
- submit the Plan for interdepartmental coordination;
- make record of the remarks made during the interdepartmental coordination, prepare the documentation for the submission of the Plan to the Council of Ministers;

While making the annual report on the implementation of the activities under the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan, the Coordinator shall be bound to:

- undertake the operative coordination of the implementation of the activities on the biodiversity conservation with the Ministry of Environment and Water;
- undertake the coordination of the activities of the administrative employees in charge of the plan during the drawing up of the departmental reports, producing the form of the departmental reports, the terms for their drawing up etc.;
- draw up general conclusions from the annual reports on the departmental plans and submit them to the Biodiversity Coordination Group for the approval of the summarized report;
- submit the summarized report to the Director of Strategy, European Integration and International Collaboration Department at the Ministry of Environment and Water.

Director of Strategy, European Integration and International Collaboration Department (Ministry of Environment and Water)

The Director of Strategy, European Integration and International Collaboration Department (Ministry of Environment and Water) shall be bound to:

- include the Annual Report adopted by the Biodiversity Coordination Group on the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan into the Implementation Report on the Action Plan for 2005-2009 to the National Environmental Strategy and further to take action on the procedures aimed at the submission of the said report to the

Council of Ministers, as a part of the Implementation Report on the Action Plan for 2005-2009 under the National Environmental Strategy.

Administrative Employees in Charge of the Plan:

The administrative employees in charge of the plan shall be bound to:

- undertake the operative coordination of the implementation of the activities on the biodiversity conservation in their administrations;
- draw up the annual reports on the administration plans and to submit them to the respective chiefs of the responsible institutions for approval;
- submit the approved annual reports to the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan Coordinator for summarizing.

B. VIII. Monitoring, Criteria and Indices for the Implementation of the Plan

We could judge of the efficiency of the implementation of the activities under the National Plan from the native biodiversity condition. A monitoring within the framework of the National Biodiversity and Protected Area Monitoring System, which is presently under elaboration, is foreseen for establishing the said condition, as well as for determining the type and degree of impact on the biological species and ecosystems,.

The data, connected with the annual evaluation of the implementation of the Ministry of Environment and Water Programme Budget under the Programme for the Conservation, Preservation and Restoration of the Wild Plant and Animal Species and their Genetic Resources, Habitats and Dead Nature Sights (PROGRAMME) shall be used for establishing and utilization of the National Biodiversity and Protected Area Monitoring System, and assessment of the impact on the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan implementation as well.

We could judge of the advantage (effect) of the PROGRAMME implementation as a whole from the indices values detailed below:

- Enlargement of the protected area surfaces compared to the whole territory of the country;
- Conservation and preservation of the types of habitats, which are representative of Bulgaria and Europe;
- Conservation and preservation of the endangered plant species;
- Conservation and preservation of the endangered animal species;
- Increase of the number of Dead Nature Sights included into the protected areas and zones;
- Increase of the number of protected areas having elaborated plans of control.

Individual products and/or services offered and/or rendered by the Ministry of Environment and Water under the PROGRAMME, as well as the indices on which basis

we could judge of the quality and quantity of implementation of the said offered and/or rendered products and/or services, as follows:

Elaboration of Policy and Procedures aimed at the Biodiversity Conservation;

- Elaboration of new laws and amendment to the existing ecological acts, number;
- Elaboration of sublaw normative acts, number;
- Elaboration of protected area control plans, number.

Building, Maintenance and Control of the Protected Area and Zone National Ecological Network

- Surface of the guarded protected areas and wetlands, exclusive public property, in hectares;
- Surface of the sanitary condition maintaining forest activities, tree growing and logging, as well as selective (sanitary) logging for maintaining forests included, in hectares;
- Quantity of the concomitant wood production in logging activities for maintaining forests, collecting dry and fallen wood-pulp in m³;
- Preventive activities and forest fires extinction, in BGN;
- Quantity of the concomitant wood production in logging activities for maintaining forests, collecting dry and fallen wood-pulp in m³;
- Construction and repair of the infrastructure, technical consolidation aimed to prevent erosion, in BGN;
- Monitoring of the condition of the selected forest ecosystems, ecosystems number;
- Monitoring of the condition of the plant species, number;
- Monitoring of the condition of the animal species, number;
- Number of the scientific researches (publications);
- Mapping and inventory of potentially protected zones, number of zones;
- Keeping of protected area registers, number;
- Elaboration of special protected area map, number.

Sustainable Utilization of the Biological Resources through restrictive, permitting and regulatory regimes, licenses and concessions

- Number of the issued pasture permits;
- Number of the issued hay production permits;
- Number of the issued mushroom permits;
- Number of the issued medicinal herb gathering permits;
- Number of the certified licences for importation and reexportation of wild-growing plants and parts of them (medicinal herbs, lichens, mosses) cultivated species included;

- Number of the certified licences for exportation of wild animals and parts of them (mussels, snails, frogs), cultivated species Included, as well as importation of foreign aquarium fishes;
- Number of the certified licences for importation of alien for the fauna in the Republic of Bulgaria animals species;
- Number of the certified licences for importation of species under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES);
- Number of the issued licences for importation/exportation and reexportation of animals and plants under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES);
- Number of the issued licences for reservation visits and maintained reservations;
- Number of the issued coordination positions for search and study of mineral wealth in pursuance to the Ores and Minerals Act Art. 26;
- Number of the issued coordination positions for granting concessions in pursuance to the Concession Act Art. 2 and Art.7;
- Number of the signed concession agreements;
- Number of the issued licences for working with genetically modified organisms;
- Number of the issued licences for release in nature of genetically modified organisms;

Control

- Number of the controls on the activity of the regional organs on the protected areas and biodiversity conservation;
- Number of the controls on the activities of owners, users, physical persons and legal entities, undertaking in forests, lands and water surfaces in the protected territories;
- Number of the controls on the activities of owners, users, physical persons and legal entities, undertaking in the buffer zones;
- Number of the controls on the activities of owners, users, physical persons and legal entities, connected with the protected plants;
- Number of the controls on the activities of owners, users, physical persons and legal entities, connected with the protected animals;
- Number of the controls on the activities of owners, users, physical persons and legal entities, connected with medicinal herbs under special conservation and utilization regime;
- Number of the controls on the activities of owners, users, physical persons and legal entities, connected with animal species (fishes not included) under special conservation and utilization regime;
- Number of the controls on the activities of owners, users, physical persons and legal entities, connected with fish species or fish industry carrying out;
- Number of the controls on the activities of owners and users of zoos and zoo shops;
- Number of the controls on the activities of owners and users of stuff laboratories ;

- Number of the controls on the activities of owners and users in the medicinal herb preparation centres;
- Number of the controls on the activities of owners, users, physical persons and legal entities, connected with the protected trees conservation;
- Number of the controls on the activities of owners, users, physical persons and legal entities, connected with the species under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES);
- Number of the controls on the activities of visitors and users in the caves;

Annual values of the indices characterizing the PROGRAMME as a whole, as well as the annual values of the indices according to individual products (services) provided by the Ministry of Environment and Water under the said PROGRAMME and kept with the Ministry, so that we could judge from their specific values and changes of the said values during the implementation of the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan for 2005-2010 for the condition of the native biological diversity, the progress in the implementation of the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan.

ANNEXS