Managing the Natura 2000 network in the face of climate change

The EC Guidelines on Natura 2000 & Climate Change

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EUROPARC Workshop
The Value of Protected Areas for climate change & renewable energy
1 October 2014, Killarney, Ireland

Very ambitious targets for climate change and biodiversity

- Limiting global climate change to 2°C (20:20:20 objective of achieving at least 20% emission reduction compared to 1990 levels and 20% of renewables in EU by 2020)
- EU Biodiversity Strategy (2011) - Halting the loss of biodiversity & ecosystem services in EU by 2020 and restoring them as far as possible
- 7th EU Environmental Action Programme recognises challenges and need for an integrated approach

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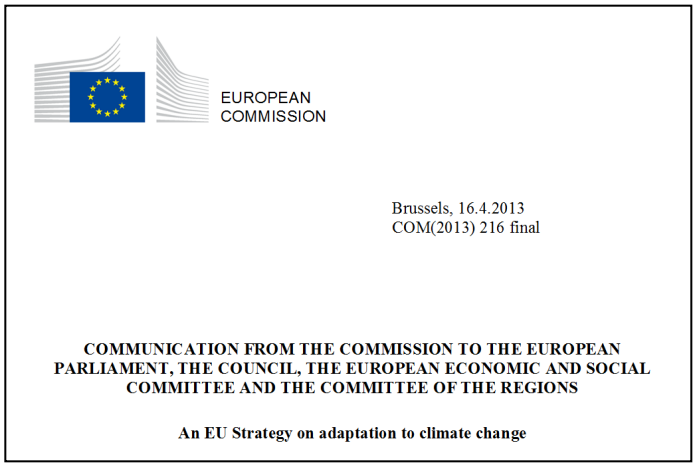
EU Adaptation Strategy (2013)

- ***Promotes action by Member States*** *to adopt comprehensive adaptation strategies*
- ***Better informed decision-making*** *by addressing gaps in knowledge (Climate-Adapt http://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/home)*
- ***Promotes adaptation in key vulnerable sectors***



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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COM(2013) 216 final

COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

An EU Strategy on adaptation to climate change

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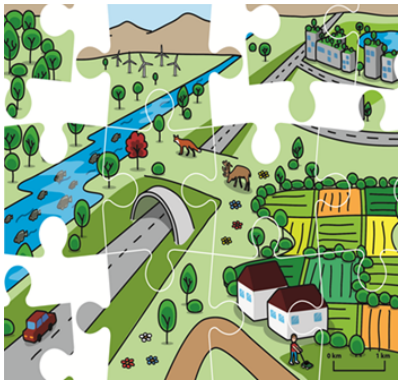
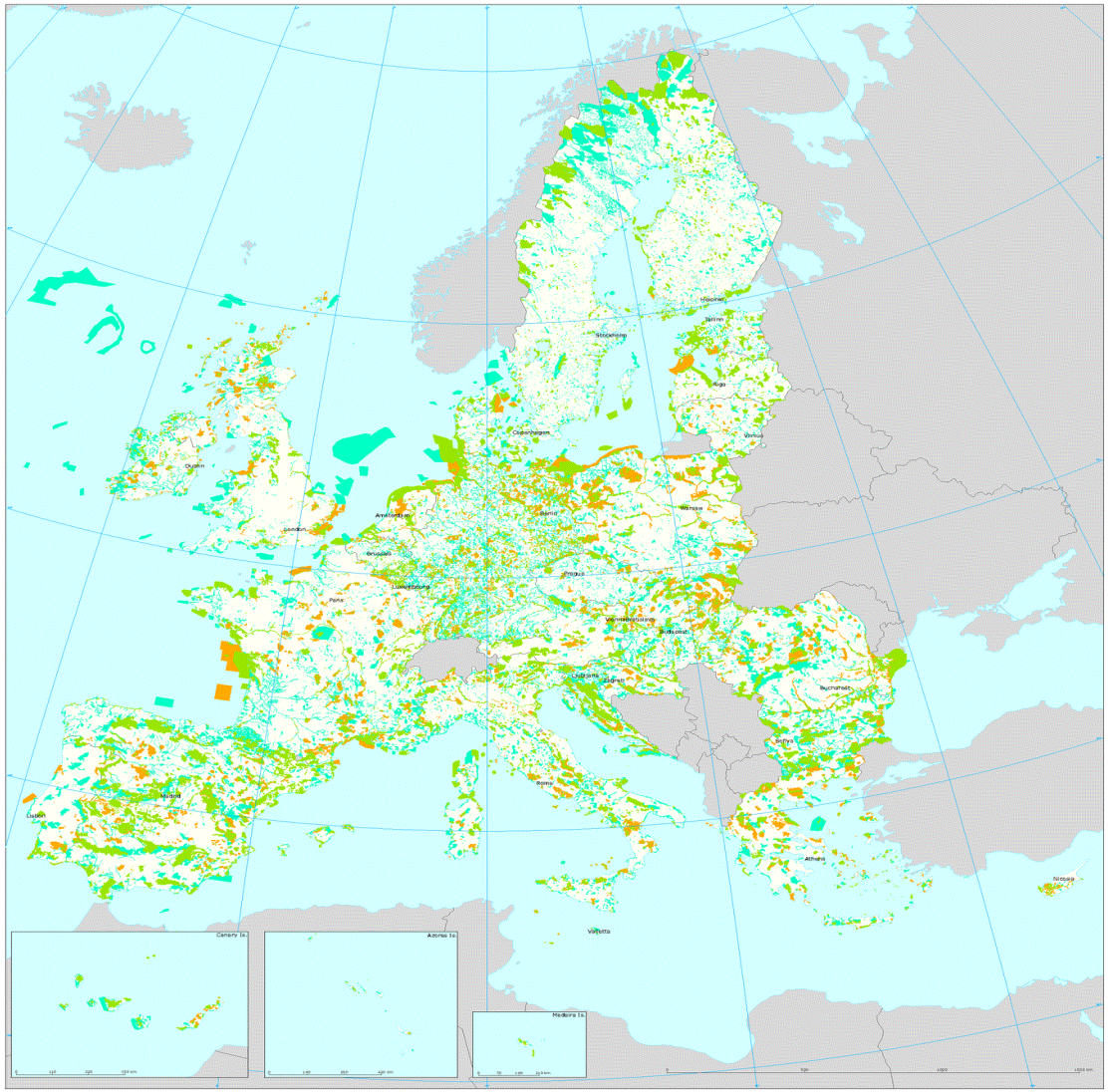
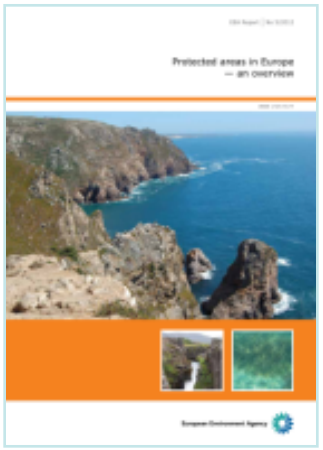
Communication on Green Infrastructure (GI) Enhancing Europe's Natural Capital (2013)

- A strategically planned and delivered network of natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services.
- incorporates high quality green spaces in urban, peri-urban and rural areas, designed and managed as a multifunctional resource, inside protected (incl. Natura 2000) and outside protected areas.
- Provides opportunity to promote ecological connectivity (Article 10 Habitats Directive)



Natura 2000: Europe's areas of high biodiversity value





- 27 308 sites
- 1 039 332 km²
- 18.4 % EU land
- ~4 % EU seas
- Largest co-ordinated PA network
- Almost complete on land
- Some additional work for marine

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Priorities for management/restoration of Natura 2000

- *Designate SCIs as SACs (6 yr deadline overdue)*
- *Define Conservation Objectives*
- *Establish Conservation Measures*
- *Develop Management Plans, Legal, statutory or contractual arrangements*
- *Full stakeholder engagement*
- *New biogeographical Seminars to share experience on management/restoration*

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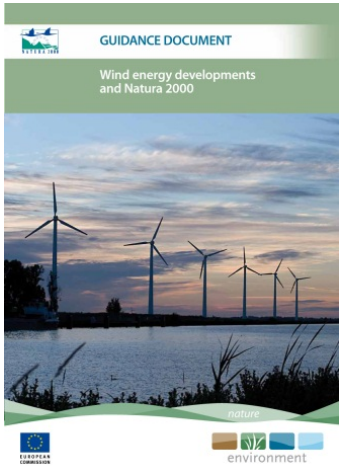
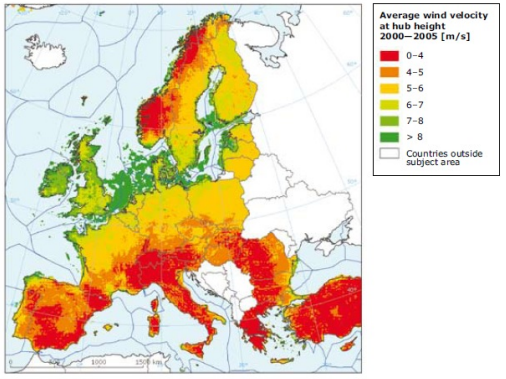
Minimising negative effect of climate change mitigation measures on Natura 2000

- *No a priori prohibition on developments – judged on case by case basis*
- *Risks from poorly planned development (wind, hydro, tidal, biofuels, grid connection etc)*
- *EU guidelines on wind energy (hydro and grid connection in prep.)*
- *Key message is need for strategic planning over a broad geographical area*
- *Need good assessment procedures, tools and standards*
- *Measure significance of effects in the context of the sites conservation objectives*





Source: EEA, 2008.

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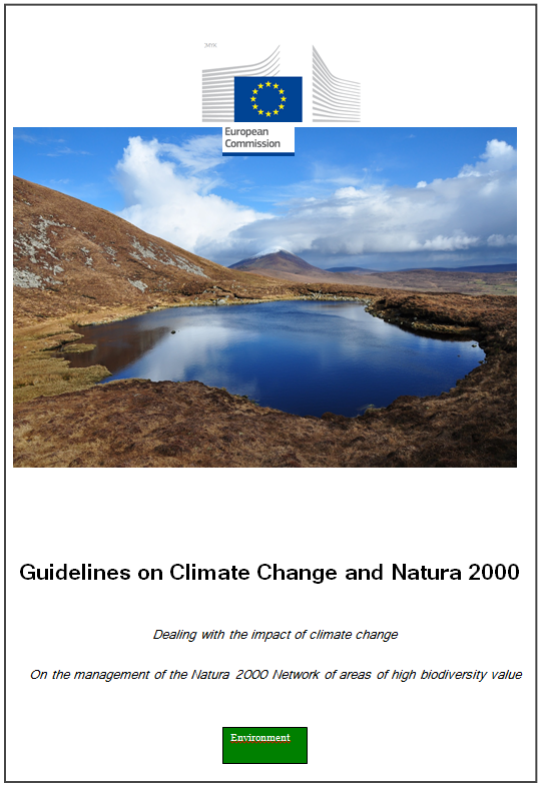
EU guidance on Natura 2000 and climate change

- *Primarily aimed at site managers and policy makers.*
- *Presents latest evidence of risk to species and habitats of EU interest*
- *Underline benefits in mitigating the impacts of climate change, reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience*
- *Provides practical advice on how to address climate change in management of Natura 2000 at site and network level*
- *Promotes good practice (case studies)*



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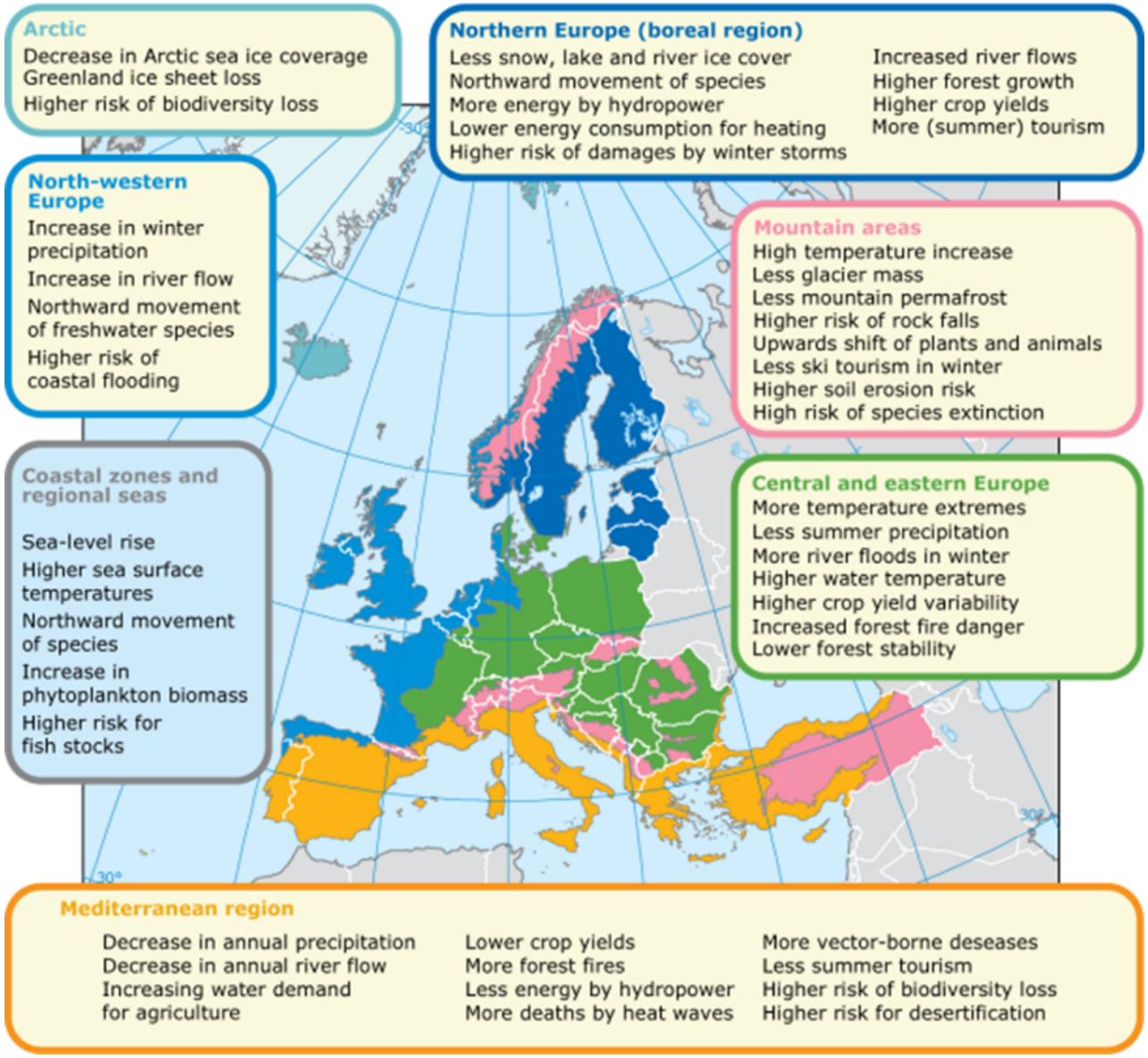
Chapter 1: intoducing climate change and Natura 2000

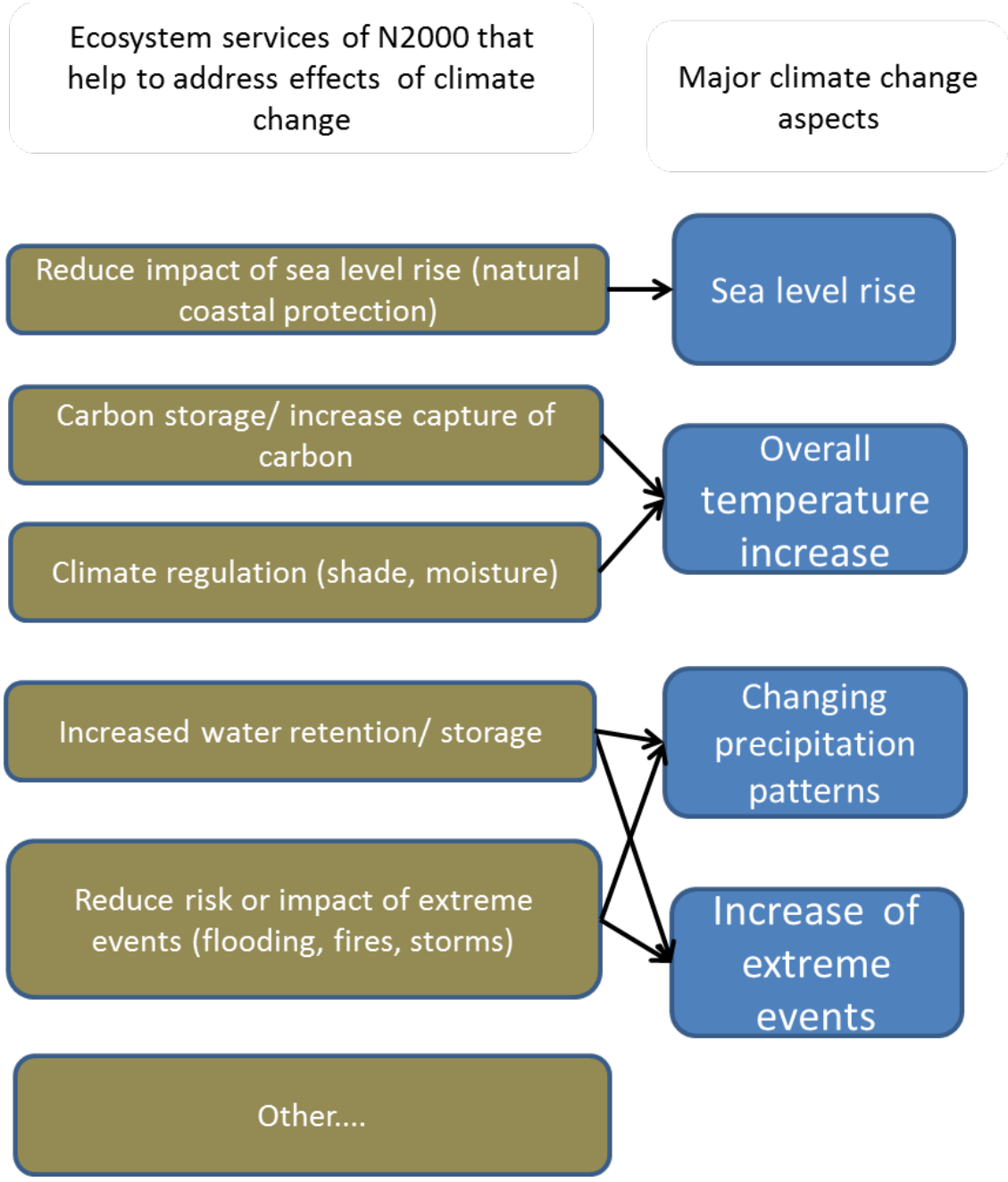
The EU is already facing *unavoidable impacts of climate change*

Impacts will affect the full EU territory, with regional differences

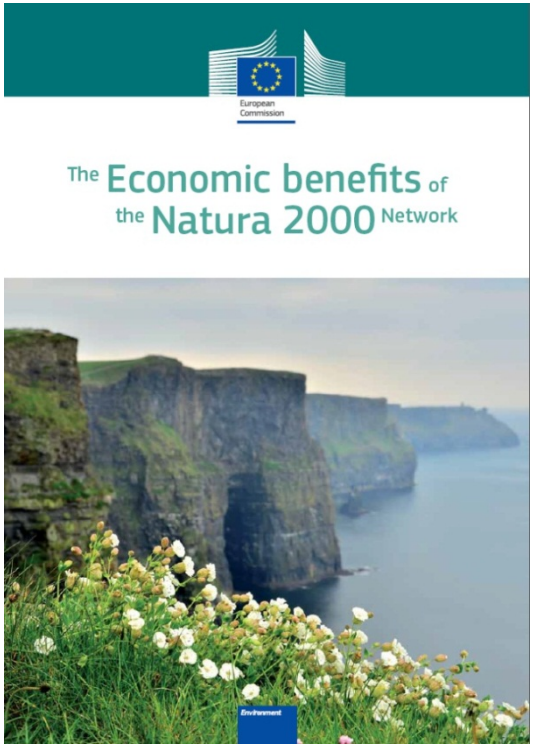


Chapter 2 Natura 2000 provides natural solutions

Managing Natura 2000 sites in ways that increase their mitigation or adaptation role, whilst at the same time delivering conservation objectives



Multiple benefits of investing in Natura 2000



- *Ecosystem services from Natura 2000 worth €200 to 300 billion/yr;*
- *Natura 2000 stores approx. 9.6 billion tonnes of carbon (equiv. 35 billion tonnes of CO2) valued at between €607 billion and €1,130 billion;*
- *Estimated between 1.2 to 2.2 billion visitor days/yr to Natura 2000 - recreational benefits € 5 - € 9 billion/yr.*
- *Study on relationship between specific conservation measures and ecosystem services provided by Natura 2000 at local scale underlines need for involving environmental economists*

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EU LIFE support for peatland restoration across Member States

Blanket bog UK

Raised bog NL

Aapa Mires FI

Raised Bog Belgium

Alkaline fen IT

Raised Bogs Latvia

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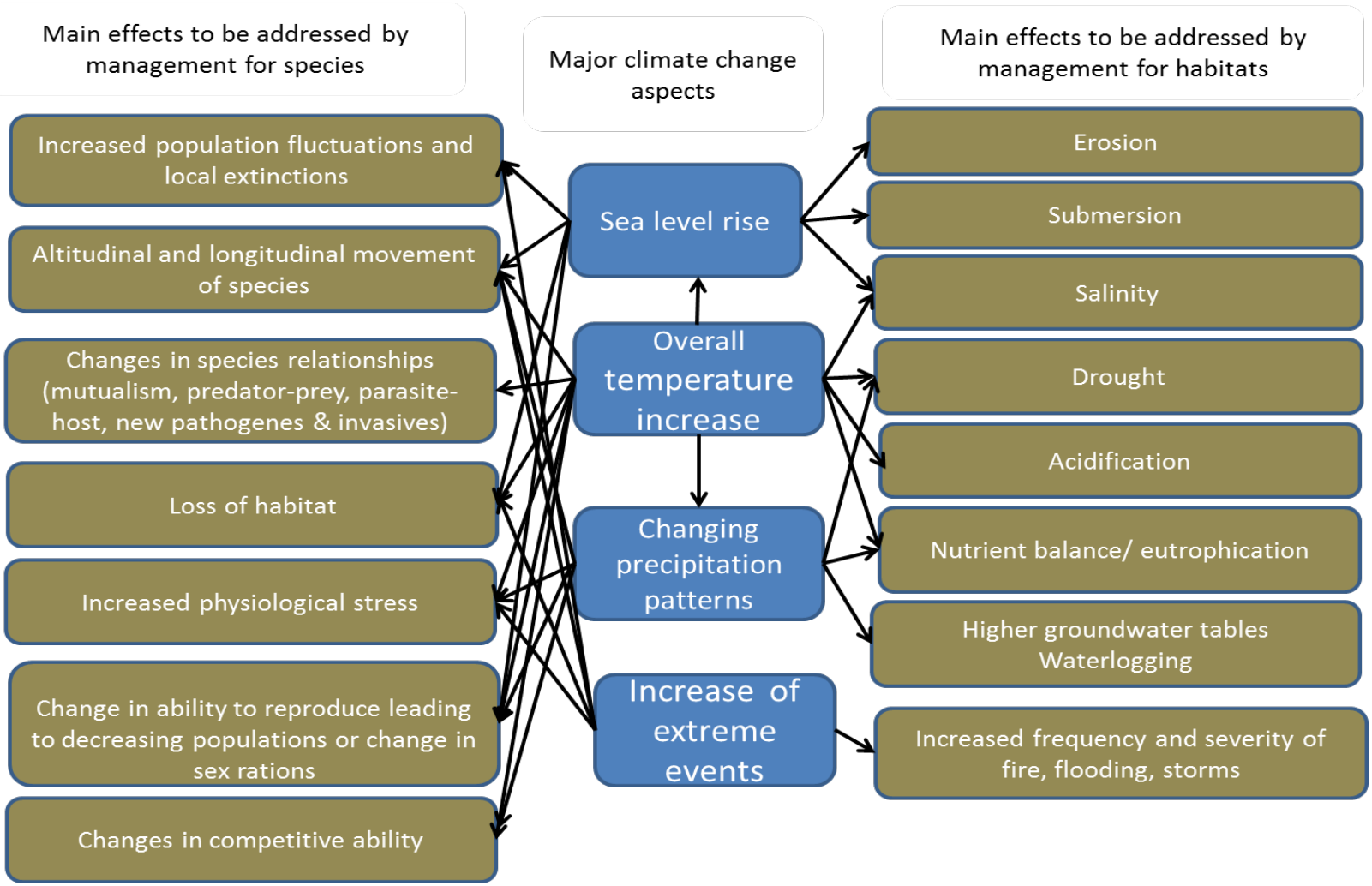
Chapter 3 describes risks to species and habitats



- *A supplement to Guide provides an indication of vulnerability and adaptation potential of different Natura 2000 species and habitats*

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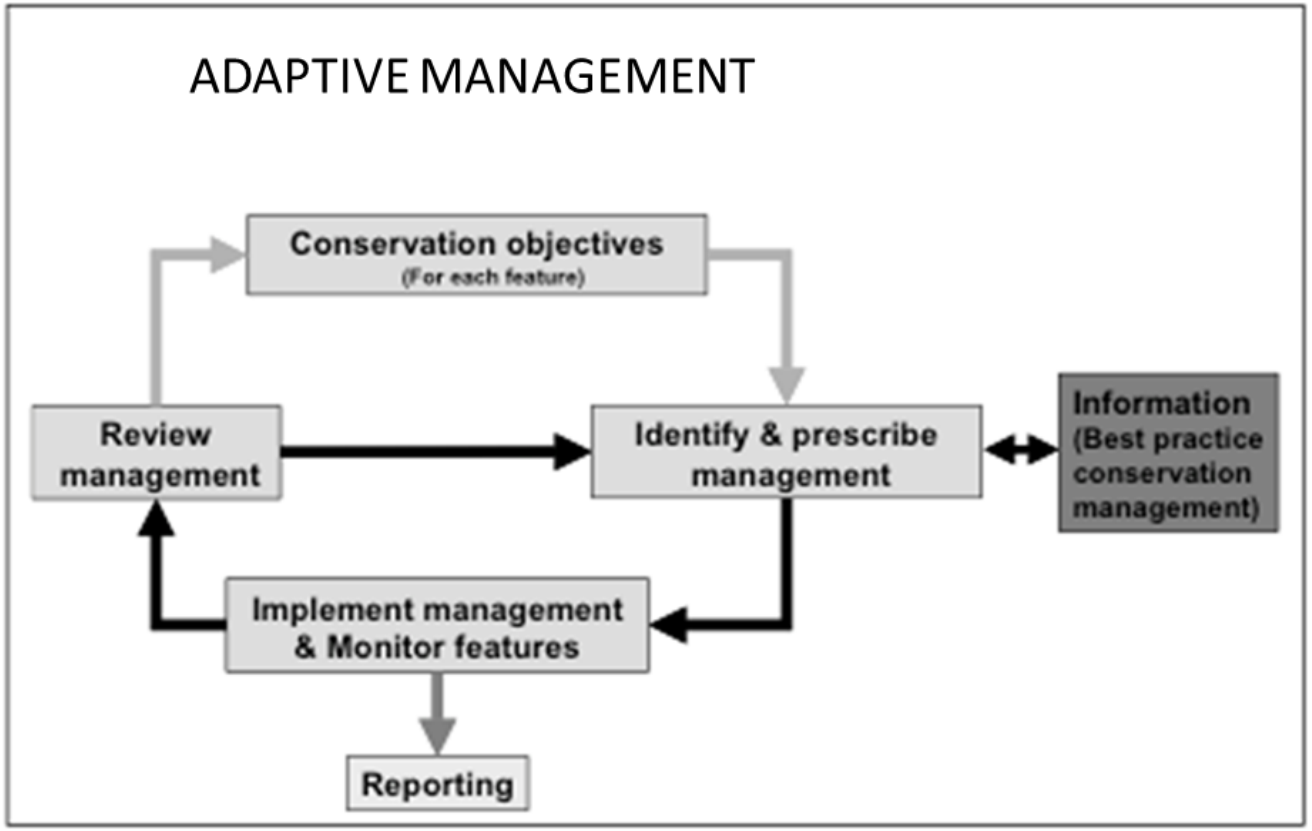
Chapter 4 introduces the concept of adaptive management

- *A structured, iterative process of optimal management decision-making in the face of uncertainty, based on systems monitoring*
- *Applicable at different scales (site, surrounding, biogeographical, and network levels)*



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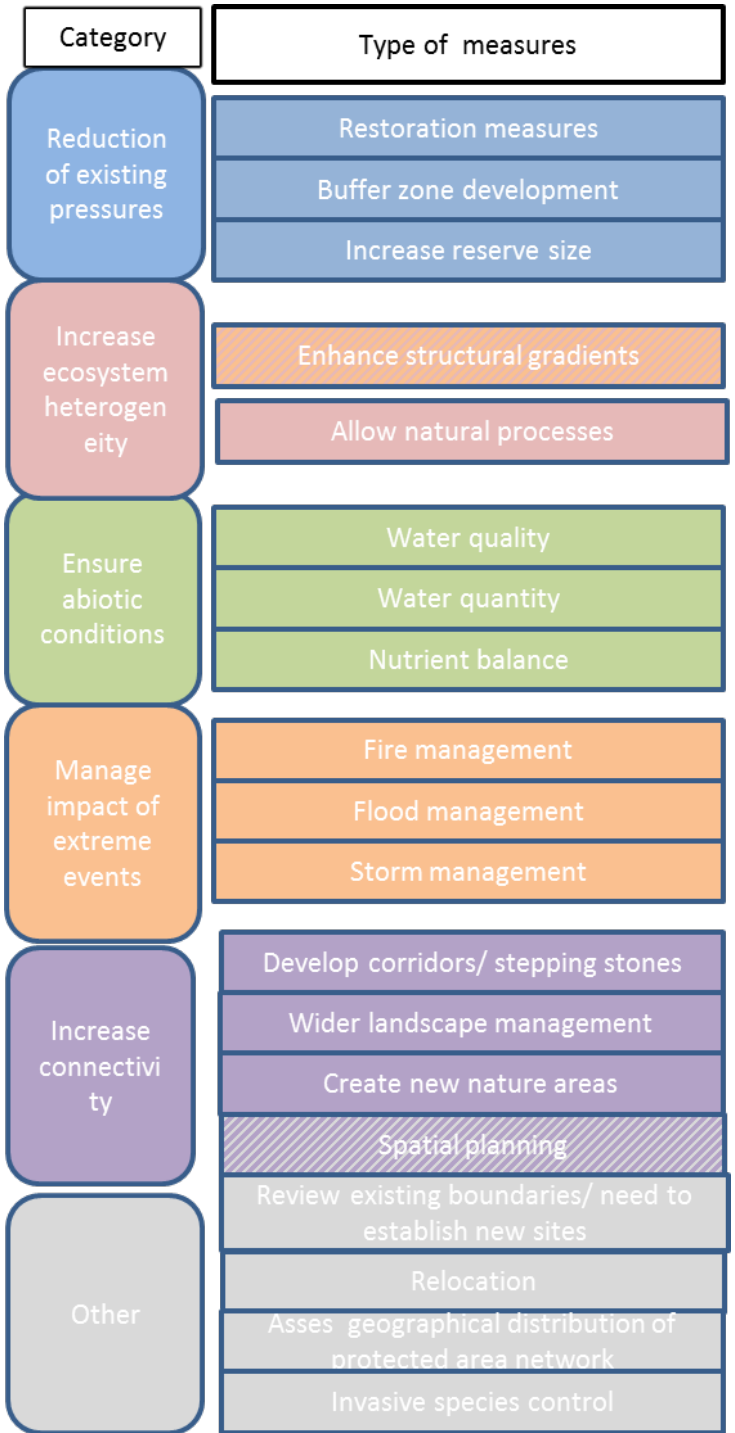
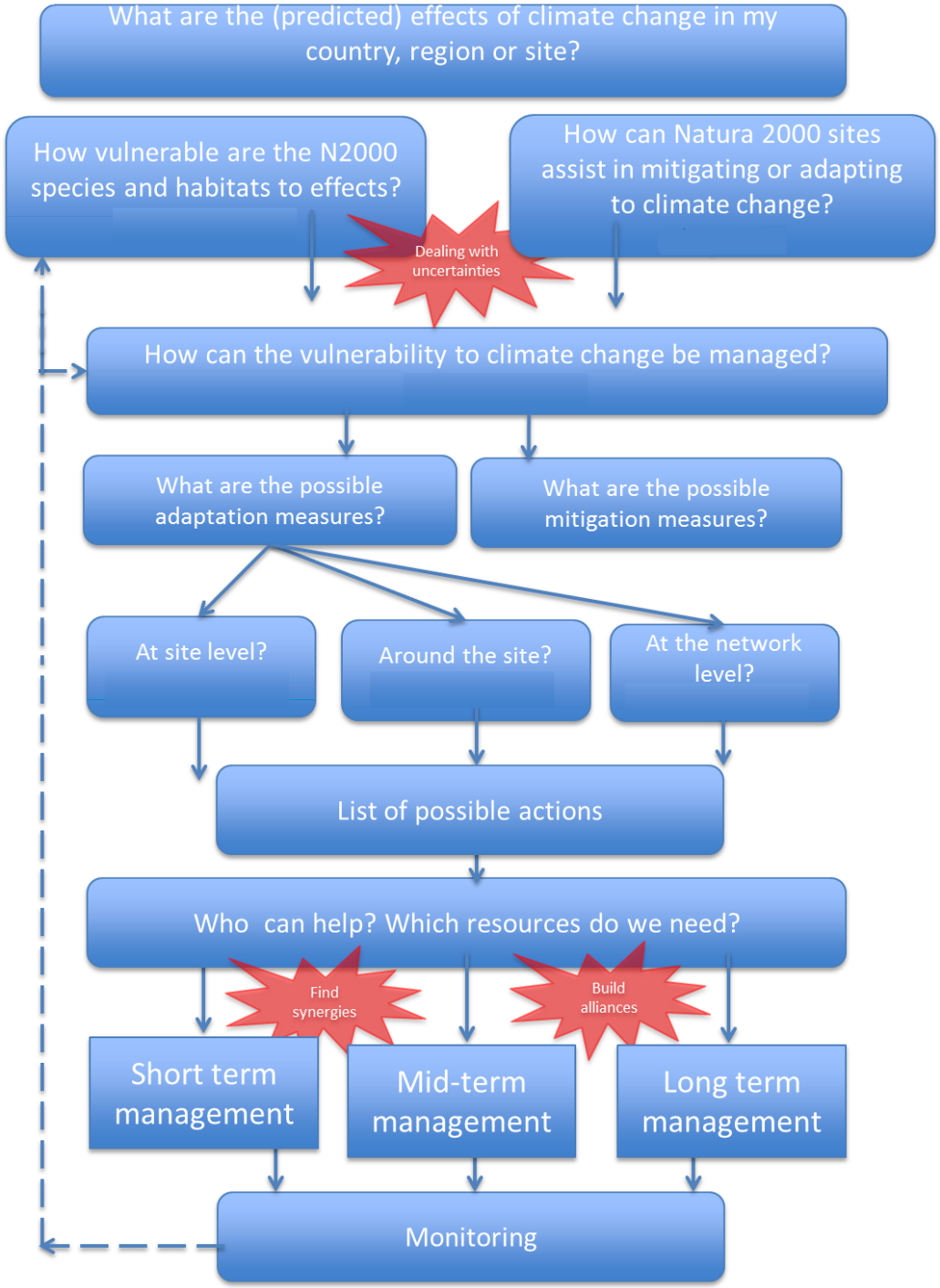
Chapter 5 examines adaptation measures for Natura 2000

- *6 categories of measures*
- *Can be applied on-site, in surroundings or at network level*
- *At greater scales need for landscape spatial perspective and development of green infrastructure*
- *Spatial planning an important policy tool*



Chapter 6: Decision making framework

- *A tool to facilitate decision making*
- *A list of questions to be addressed in deciding which actions are required*



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Chapter 7 advice & recommendations for site managers & policy makers

Site managers

- *Reduce existing pressures on sites*
- *Identify knowledge gaps*
- *Assess vulnerability of site features*
- *Develop adaptive management plans*
- *Seek experience from others*
- *Work with stakeholders in other sectors*
- *Ensure local participation*

Policy Makers

- *Collaborate (eg biogeographical process)*
- *Public private partnerships*
- *Integrate nature in relevant cross sectoral policies*
- *Embed Natura 2000 in GI*
- *Biodiversity Monitoring in non-environmental sectors*
- *Develop international / transboundary climate zones*
- *Ensure communication actions for locals/ stakeholders*

Some concluding thoughts

- *Natura 2000 sites are critical “space for nature”*
- *Core of EU’s "green infrastructure", including strengthening ecological connectivity (Article 10 HD)*
- *Climate change risks but "dynamic nature" - losses & gains*
- *Reduce non-climate pressures & increase resilience to climate change*
- *Monitor to distinguish between natural & climate effects & management failures*
- *Natura 2000 provides natural solutions for mitigating and adapting to climate change*
- *EU funds provide opportunities to strengthen synergies in action for biodiversity and climate change*
- *EU guidance is tool for site managers/policy makers*

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For more information, please consult:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/index_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/environment