



BID-REX Basque Country

Matching information to needs



**Conclusions of the 2nd Regional Participatory Workshop with
Stakeholders**

23rd May 2017

Vitoria – Gasteiz

BID-REX BASQUE COUNTRY: INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

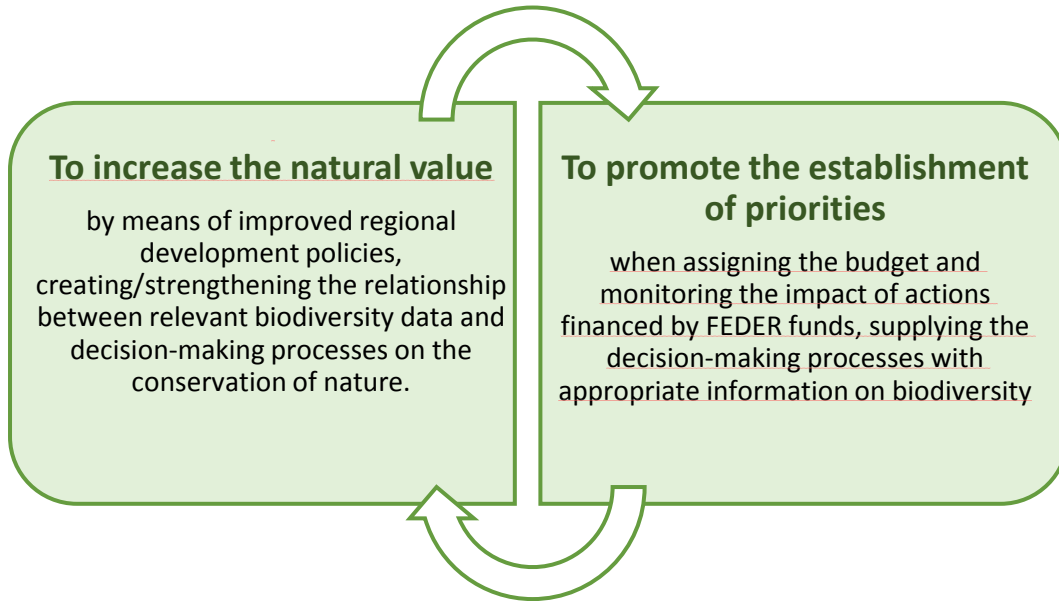
WHY DID WE LAUNCH THIS PROCESS?

Numerous organisations and initiatives contribute to generating information and scientific knowledge of biodiversity and ecosystem conservation services; all of this information is relevant for making decisions, producing regulations and defining future political strategies. This said, today there is no recognised, validated mechanism capable of collecting, summarising and analysing all of that information or which enables said decision-making.

To rectify the situation, the Basque Government Department of the Environment and Planning has joined forces with the European BIDE-REX project, seeking to **reinforce the scientific-political interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services and thereby contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, human welfare and sustainable development.**

THE PROJECT

BID-REX is a European project funded by the Interreg Europe programme, running for 5 years (April 2016-March 2021), **which pursues a double objective:**



Together with the Basque Country, another 6 regions participate in this project: Catalonia, Norfolk County (UK), Le Marche Region (Italy), Ljubljana Marsh (Slovenia), Northern Great Plain (Hungary), and Wallonia (Belgium).

This shared learning process is **focussed on achieving:**

- **Improved prioritising** of biodiversity conservation efforts, using methods based on available evidence on biodiversity and the environment
- **A guide** on how to obtain and use biodiversity data to increase impact of the funds assigned to conserving Europe's natural heritage
- As a result of this interregional exchange, the partners and players involved will improve their **biodiversity information management skills**

PARTICIPATORY SESSION: DESIGN AND CONTENTS

This document summarises the main contributions made at the **second regional participatory workshop** held on 23rd May at the Basque Government headquarters in Vitoria-Gasteiz with the participation of 24 people (see annex).

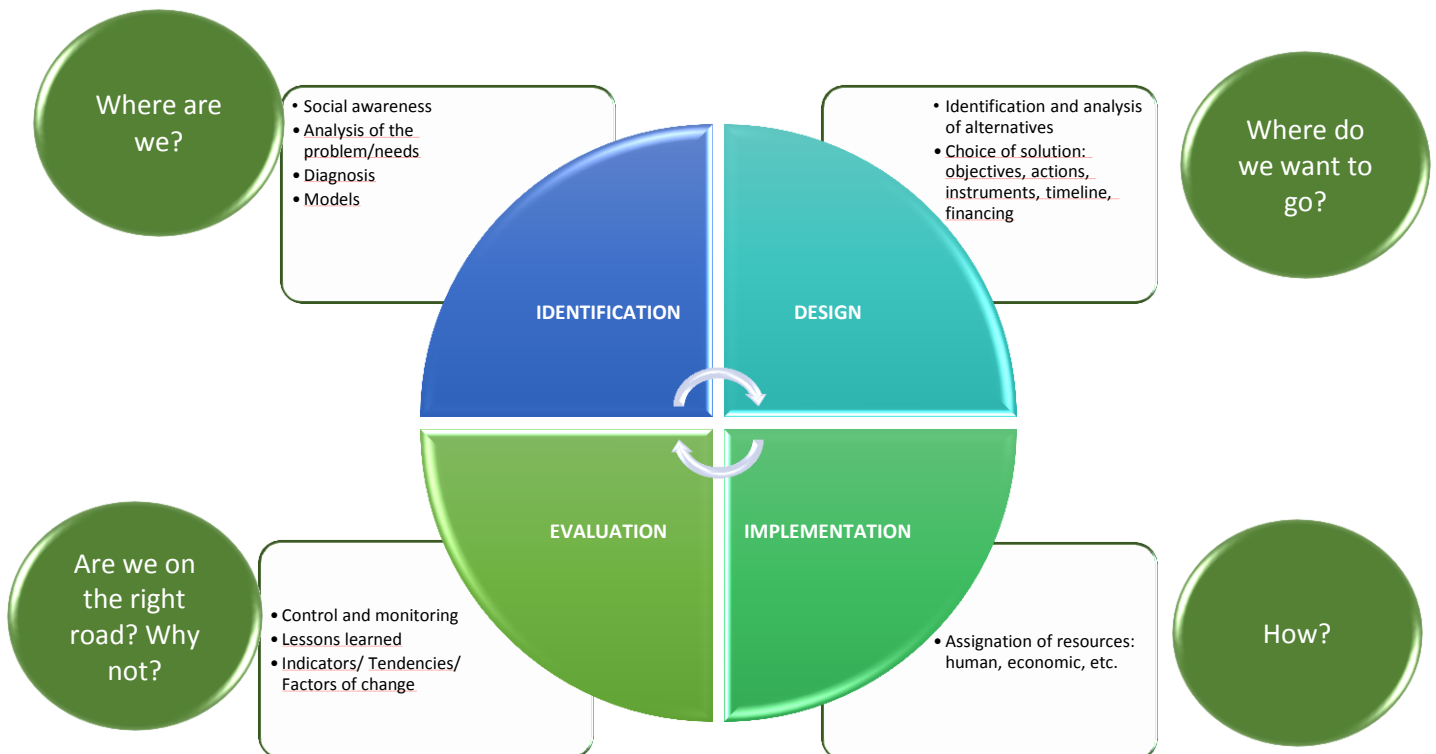
The workshop was organised by the Basque Government Department of the Environment and Planning, in collaboration with Innobasque, with a view to continuing the process launched at

regional level in February of this year which accompanies the process taking place throughout Europe.

FOCUS OF THE SESSION

In the first participatory workshop held on 6th February 2017 we addressed information needs for making decisions, also identifying the strengths and weaknesses in this area.

Having developed the state of the current situation (*Where are we?*), **the second workshop** is approached as an opportunity to **study whether or not we are on the right road and if the information generated meets our needs** (*Where do we want to go?*). We will therefore take as our reference the strengths and weaknesses and the proposals for improvement identified in the first workshop, as well as the questionnaires completed in the framework of the European project.



CONTENTS ADDRESSED IN THE SESSION

In the first place, stakeholders from the Department gave a series of explanations **setting both the project and the Administration information needs** within the framework of a double perspective (obligation and opportunity):

- The BID-REX project: conclusions of the workshops on information needs (Basque Country and Wallonia) – Marta Iturribarria, Basque Government.
- Necessary information for meeting the obligations of the Nature Directives and the Natura 2000 Network – Marta Rozas, Basque Government.
- What we can gain from the remote capture of information on the territory (cartography, satellite images, LiDAR derivatives, etc.) – Juan Carlos Barroso, Basque Government; Xabier Garitano, HAZI.

This was followed by **collaborative work around two blocks of content:**

- **Information needs** of the administration: problems and opportunities
- **Opportunities of public-private collaboration** to meet these needs

Below is a **structured summary of the contributions** made at said session.

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN CONTRIBUTIONS MADE

THE INFORMATION WE NEED: CHALLENGES, SOLUTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

What data make up the necessary information?

The first step is to **decide which data (available or not) represent essential information**, since data are, by definition, infinite. Today an abundance of data exists, generating confusion in regard both to their interpretation and to deciding on which ones we should base decision-making.

What are and how do we decide what are quality and reliable data?

Data-based policy calls for **data that can be trusted** (origin, quality, reliability, methodology, etc.). **Objective criteria must be defined** and less attention paid to the opinion of *experts* when selecting data and defining optimum criteria or desirable scenarios. Scientific evidence and agreement are key to defining data indicators and involving new evaluating agents in the process (*in the event of having no appropriate protocol or information, the decision is taken using "what is available"*).

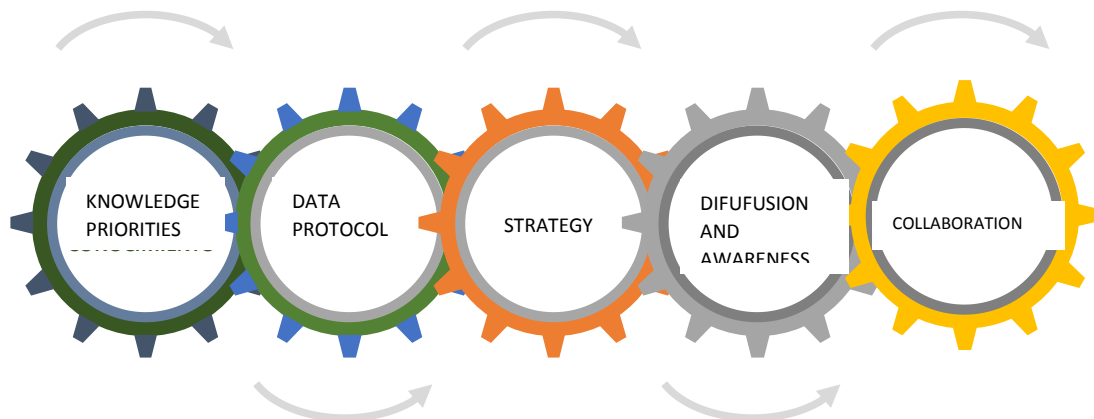
Why does this happen?

- Lack of **communication and transmission of needs** to political personnel
- Lack of data and information **filtering and prioritisation**
- Lack of intra and interinstitutional **coordination and cooperation**
- Lack of **funding and human resources**, which aggravates technical difficulties.
- Lack of identified **experts** in function of the sphere (databases not up to date)

Are the data available? Are they accessible?

The **abundance of data, combined with the lack of organisation and systemisation complicates access to said data**. Sometimes it is impossible to know if the information exists or in what format it can be accessed. Data standardisation and integration, combining different sources (e.g. data on environmental impact studies) and technologies could enable the work of data managers and users. At other times the data does not exist either due to technical or training difficulties, or to gaps in its resolution in regard to time and space, etc. We must **identify the real data gaps and solve them**.

In this scenario, **different possibilities for addressing these challenges** are considered, **as well as opportunities for obtaining the necessary data and information**. These can be grouped into **5 lines of action**:



1. Knowledge priorities

To identify knowledge priorities and constitute groups of expert people / stakeholders to help **develop quality indicators for data and to control the quality of said data**. To involve as many people and stakeholders as possible it is necessary to **lend prestige to this arbitration work** (public recognition) and to offer **mechanisms of compensation and return**.

2. Data protocol

To have **protocols on data generation and management** which guarantee access to data (e.g. data from EIAs, data from framework directives, etc.) by means of standardisation and integration processes. These protocols must establish the **bases for promoting confluence between data from different sources**.

3. Strategy

Institutional changes are generally accompanied by changes in priorities and strategies. An evidence-based policy requires **strategic plans capable of lending continuity to these processes of change beyond the political cycles**. As well as marking a sustained strategy, they serve to develop processes for monitoring the validity of other data, including the analysis of reliability and benefit-cost ratio: *(is it possible to obtain the same data at a lower cost?)*.

4. Diffusion and awareness

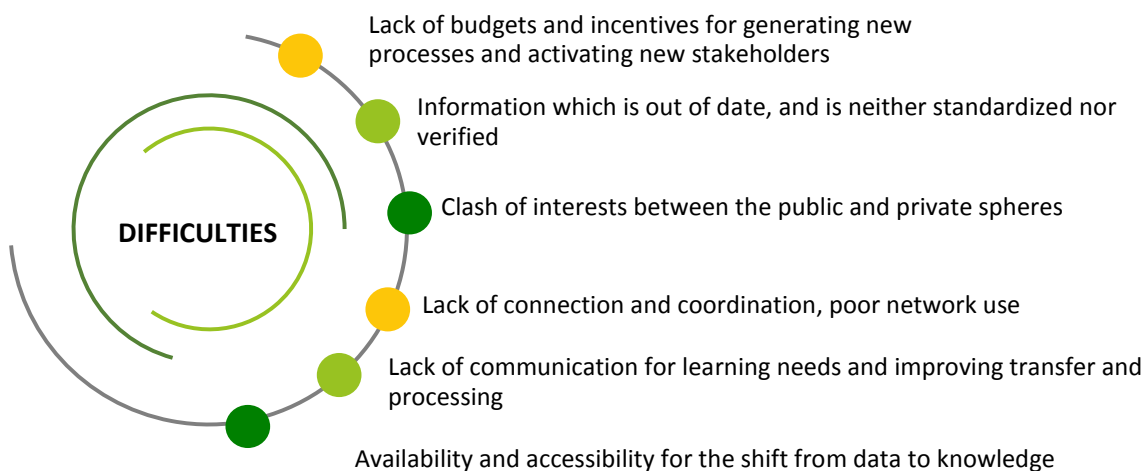
In the first place, it is necessary to give **greater diffusion to the tools** (especially technological) that already exist for sharing data between data generators and managers. The activation of meeting and work forums may be useful for increasing knowledge and promoting public-private collaboration (e.g. the forum which has emerged in the framework of the BID-Rex project itself). Lastly, efforts must be made to **raise citizen awareness in regard to the importance of the environment** in everyday life, to work with a **more local basis and to encourage citizen science**.

5. Collaboration

Collaborating means being able to **make better use of the information existing in the system** (knowledge and access), to improve **the dynamics of data transmission** and to activate **the generation of new data** (e.g. collaboration enables an increase in resolution of the ecological data network based on advances in GIS). Sharing data with other collectives, and involving them in obtaining said data, as well as reducing grey areas (areas where no data is available), permits the generation of synergies and can help in developing new projects (*knowing who has the data means that it can be accessed and given new uses*). In this respect, a closer look must be taken at the idea that **all data obtained with public funding must be available for public access**.

COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES: SHARED IDEAS FOR BUILDING FUTURE SCENARIOS

Taking a closer look at the above 5 lines of action, and based on the premise of public-private collaboration as a means of addressing them, at the session work was carried out on different strategies which would make it possible to overcome the difficulties and start to build a more effective system as listed below:



It is not always easy for the private sector to know the needs of the public sector and this means that no offers materialise to cover such needs. And, inversely, knowing the data produced and the information generated in the public sector could open the way to new opportunities for the private sector, raising the value of data. The lack of communication means that some data, and therefore information) is “lost” in a mire of stakeholders or people (*who has the information?*).

On the other hand, there is a lack of incentives to publish and update information (e.g. some of the censuses date from 15 years ago), something which is also found in cases where there is no desire to share (alleging cost, privacy, etc.). It is necessary to understand that interests (between the public and the private, the public and the public, and between the private and the private spheres) do not always concur and are even sometimes opposed to one another. There is a lack of communication and cooperation, also within the administration itself.

Often availability is also limited to viewing material, with no option to download and process it. This situation is serious when it involves public data and calls for the development of

standardisation protocols (including more simple technological tools) to improve data usefulness and reliability. The absence of a stable **budget** to generate, process and verify data and to redesign processes and tools is, together with the lack of people who are **qualified or engaged** in regard to working with data, an obstacle to be taken into account.



The reality is that, today, there are still areas for which no information is available, meaning that **planning is one of the tasks considered essential**. As a first step, the proposal is to **centralise and interconnect** information (it doesn't have to be "posted", it is enough simply to reference other websites or associations) to make it **truly accessible**, making the most of the public structure and generating a common space for incorporating data. It is also considered necessary to facilitate **connection between tool generators and users in order to improve their usefulness**.

Being able to count on a **fixed annual budget** and on **already existing public subsidies** could help, not only in **transferring and raising appreciation** of information, but also in **generating material for its dissemination** and **for collaborating more openly** (e.g. through platforms) **with citizens and raising awareness on the social value** of natural resources.

It is considered necessary to develop **networks which will generate knowledge and return** that information to the people who generate it if the idea is to advance towards a **steady collaboration network**. **Data funded with public resources must always be public**, and their contribution to the system should be legally mandatory (without having to wait for approval from the administration to publish it).

In the event of this contribution being voluntary (information obtained through private resources), it must be **publicly recognised**.

Here emphasis is placed on the importance of **renewing expert committees and attracting people with the potential** to develop this work (often an expert is a person who “knows something because nobody else knows”, while at other times the opportunity is lost to incorporate people who have a great deal of knowledge as well as profiles complementary to this type of committees).

Learning about other practices and communities and international experiences, and making the connection with international excellence networks is considered essential in cases where challenges are shared in order not to “reinvent the wheel” (e.g. an ALTER-NET platform).

Lastly, it is necessary to promote **public-private meeting and discussion forums** (such as the one created as a result of this project, or more ambitious, like a biodiversity cluster), where in addition to meeting, the participants can share information, discover data flows and sources, detect gaps in the system and define strategies.

BID-REX PROJECT

The BID-REX project is at the diagnostic stage which will result in a medium-term plan of action. Meanwhile, the needs or possible uses (e.g. for the tools presented at the meeting) detected during the participatory process can be conveyed to the Department and articulated by means of bilateral meetings (or meetings between the participating private stakeholders, with no intervention by the Administration when it is not necessary).

The project has a community – the Natura Community – for sharing concerns on information needs and a newsletter connected to the project which can be sent to any person interested in the process.

RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO PARTICIPANTS PRIOR TO THE PARTICIPATORY WORKSHOP

Prior to the workshop, all of those registered in the Department database were sent a framework document for the session and a questionnaire pursuing two objectives:

- To discover the extent of knowledge regarding the information needs of the Basque Administration in order to fulfil its obligations
- To identify lines of collaboration for a more efficient decision-making process

The questionnaire included the following questions divided into two blocks of content:

INFORMATION NEEDS OF THE ADMINISTRATION	1) Do you know what basic information is required by the Administration in order to develop an evidence-based policy on nature conservation?
	If you don't, what difficulties do you encounter when trying to find such information?
	If you do, what do you consider to be the priority needs?
	2) Which spheres do you think must be strengthened most in order to meet the information needs of the Administration?
PUBLIC-PRIVATE COLLABORATION FOR MEETING THESE NEEDS	3) Where do you consider that your participation as an active stakeholder is most relevant? Suggested answers: <i>Data production; Enabling access to non-accessible information (grey literature and other confined information); Identification of spheres that do not have the necessary information for decision-making; Definition of criteria (favourable conservation states, reference values, etc); Validation and verification of data quality; Others</i>
	4) Taking your previous answers into account, and in the aspects you have highlighted as critical, what could you contribute (resources, knowledge, capacities, etc.) to make this information available to the Administration in its policies?
	5) What could the Administration do to foster this contribution?

A total of **17 questionnaires** were completed and returned to us; their answers are summarised in structured format below:

The extent of knowledge of the information needs of the Administration is irregular:

- Approximately half of those who answered the questionnaire say that they are aware of them, and the other half that they are not.
- This answer is largely conditioned by whether or not they are specialised stakeholders in the field; the extent of knowledge of these needs is greater in stakeholders who are actively involved in conserving diversity.

The main difficulties for obtaining greater knowledge identified in the questionnaire are:

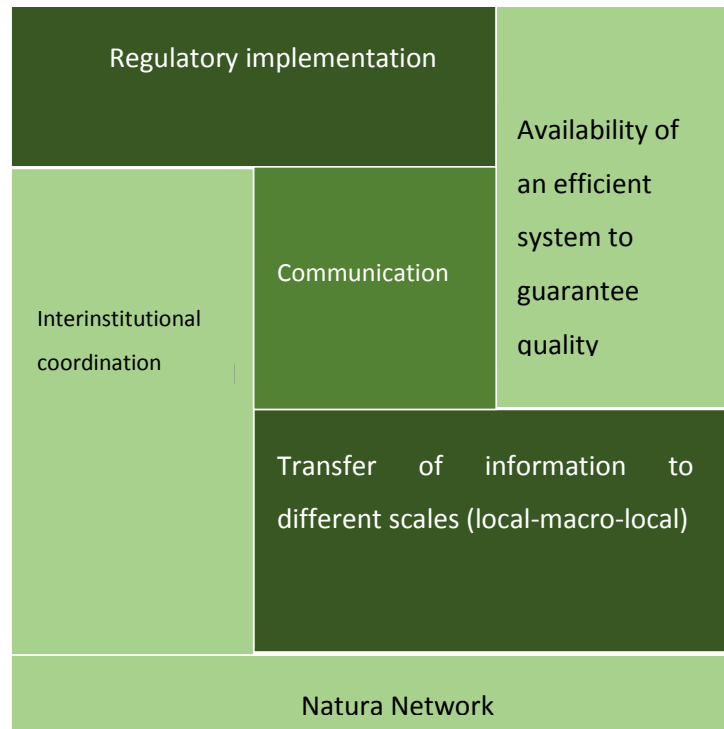
- **Non-specialist: coming from a different field or** only knowledge arising from relations with the Department – not direct or “sought”.
- **Access to information:** does not reach user level, making understanding difficult. There is also a lack of active information and ignorance of where to find information.
- **Type of available information:** there is no adaptation to local scale and the lack of homogenisation and protocols complicate its reading. There is also a lack of detailed information on the current situation and the evolution of certain populations (for example, bird populations in winter), there is a lack of impact/relationship to other variables (such as knowing how climate change affects species).

The people who answered that they were aware of the basic information needs of the Administration were also asked to identify **the priority needs**.

The answers in this section are grouped into four blocks of information:

<p>Wild populations / threatened species</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed knowledge of the population trends of wild populations in all of their taxons, analysed regularly and over short periods of time. • Knowledge of the quality and fragility of the habitats in which they live. • Developing existing regulations. Particularly the Basque catalogue of threatened species.
<p>Safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including fauna management and air safety and becoming involved in managing their risks • In aeronautics, introducing and developing ecological methods to prevent risks involving fauna in and around airports.
<p>Birds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study of overwintering bird populations. It is necessary to launch the <i>Sacin</i> and an atlas of overwintering birds in order to have the same information as is now being obtained for bird populations in springtime. • On the other hand, it would also be interesting to have information on bird mortality for different reasons, such as for example the list of dangerous electricity lines requiring modification and which are causing the proven death of birds.
<p>General (objectives and instruments)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserving the natural heritage by maintaining, revitalising and promoting activities to favour the quality of life and enjoyment of each and every one of the people who live in the Basque Country. • Awareness and communication • Taking a closer look at existing gaps in regard to the knowledge and updating of data • The carrying out of demonstrative activities – practical cases • Involvement of the local administrations • Launching a programme of climate change bioindicators (for example, related to birds and the climate)

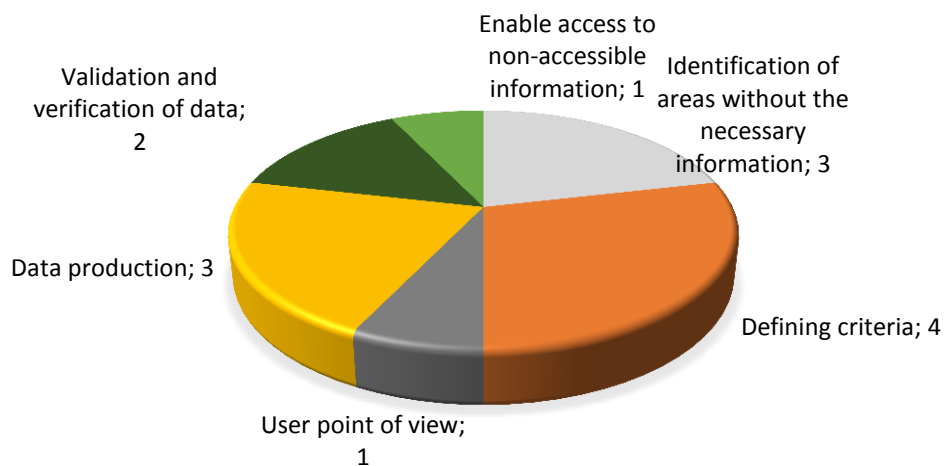
Regarding **areas to be strengthened** in order to meet the information needs of the **Administration**, the following were mentioned:



- **Regulatory implementation:** what information and how to enable it (for example, to fill gaps like fish, invertebrates, chiroptera, certain groups of birds or mammals, invasive species, etc.)
 - Investment in the carrying out of more projects, in subsidies for the equipment of these activities
- **Having an efficient system to guarantee the quality** of the data/information obtained and its availability for public and private entities.
 - Development of easy-to-use tools (with the open data philosophy, with interoperable data, etc.).
 - Access to data, fast and updated
 - Distribution in space and time of birds potentially dangerous for air traffic
 - Updating of the state of conservation of habitats and the promotion of studies to learn more about populations of wild species of fauna.

- **Communication:**
 - Awareness at local level (simple, easy to understand messages) to understand the importance of the Administration having said information.
 - Transparent communication with efficient feedback.
 - Fluid dialogue between data generators and needs.
- **Interinstitutional coordination**
- How to **transfer information at different scales**, from local to macro and macro to local (“translation” of that information and its application)
- All factors which in some way or another **modify the natural conditions of the Natural Heritage** (contamination, climate change, invasive species, etc.).
- **Natura network**

In regard to their **PARTICIPATION as active stakeholders** they consider that they could **contribute greater value to three areas** (answers pre-defined in the questionnaire): **data production, identification of spheres that do not have the necessary information and definition of criteria for assessment** (see distribution of the 17 answers received)



Within this collaboration framework, people identified the following **resources and necessary actions** to be contributed or developed from the private and public sphere:

What can the private sphere share?

Knowledge and criteria

- To identify information needs
- Knowledge to manage natural spaces that guarantee both economic and cultural benefits
- To define reference criteria
- Specific knowledge, generation and standardisation of biodiversity geodatabases, biodiversity management software and plans of action
- Knowledge in the area of preventing the risks affecting fauna in airports

Capacities for generating relevant information

- Techniques based on knowledge acquired by carrying out works
- Companies have technical resources and people who, in going about their activity, can supply an important amount of quality information
- Time

Be a “local network” to disseminate and communicate

- Could propose specific local and regional actions: dissemination of practical experiences, awareness, etc.
- Capacity for communication and dissemination between the citizens of the future (our students)
- Contact and coordination with others

What can the Administration do to make this happen?

Enable and inform

- Enable access to contacts, knowledge of experiences, information, links, bibliography, etc.
- Inform on steps taken and enable access to relevant information
- Programmes to raise awareness among citizens of the importance of the environment

Create and develop

- Data exchanging tools
- Actions to fill data gaps, joint search or proposals by each side taking account of the information contained in the reports
- Economic subsidies enabling the carrying out of interesting works
- Programmes of greater volume or scale to increase their impact (for example, monitoring of continental waters)

Participate and collaborate

- On local committees on risks with fauna
- Promote framework agreements
- Promote associations
- Foster the importance of the municipality and groups of municipalities as the main promoters of environmental protection.

ANNEXES

- ✓ **The workshop in pictures**
- ✓ **What the workshop participants thought of the event**

ANNEX I - THE PARTICIPATORY WORKSHOP IN PICTURES



Medioambiente
@IngurumenEJGV Seguir

#BIDREX Euskadi Matching information to needs

RETWEET 1 ME GUSTA 1

Goizalde Atxutegi
@Goiz... Seguir

#BIDREX @IngurumenEJGV sharing information needs & opportunities with local agents in the Basque Country

RETWEETS 2 ME GUSTA 2

elhuyar
@Elhuyar Seguir

Europako **#BidRex** proiektuan **#partaidetza** saioa: ingurumen-politiketarako datuen sorkuntzaz eta erabileraz **@IngurumenEJGV @Innobasque**

RETWEETS 4 ME GUSTA 2

Lucía Peña
@LuciaSEOvaskad Seguir





ADAPTACIÓN DE LA INFORMACIÓN A LAS NECESIDADES **#BIDREX** y la importancia de la **#cienciaciudadana @IngurumenEJGV @SEO_BirdLife**

RETWEETS 2 ME GUSTA 1

ANNEX II – APPRAISAL OF THE WORKSHOP

To round off the 2nd Basque Country Regional Workshop, an appraisal was made of the organisation, development and content of the event (see questionnaire model).

QUESTIONNAIRE MODEL

BILERAREN BALORAZIO-ORRIA HOJA DE VALORACIÓN DE LA REUNIÓN				
BALORAZIOA VALORACIÓN				
BILERAREN ORDUTEGIA ETA IRAUPENA EGOKIAK IZAN DIRA EL HORARIO Y LA DURACIÓN DE LA REUNIÓN HAN SIDO ADECUADOS				
GAIAK LANTZEKO MODUA GUSTATU ZAIT ME HA GUSTADO LA MANERA DE ABORDAR LOS TEMAS				
GIRDA ATSEGINA IZAN DA EL AMBIENTE DE TRABAJO HA SIDO AGRADABLE				
BILERAN EGON DIREN ERAGILEEN ANIZTASUNA GUSTATU ZAIT ME HA GUSTADO LA PLURALIDAD DE AGENTES QUE HAN PARTICIPADO EN LA REUNIÓN				
EGINDAKO LANA BALIAGARRIA IZAN DA / EMAITZAREKIN GUSTURA GERATU NAIZ EL TRABAJO REALIZADO ME HA SIDO VÁLIDO / ME HE QUEDADO SATISFECHA/O CON EL RESULTADO				
EGIN NAHI DITUZUN OHARRAK: COMENTARIOS QUE QUIERAS REALIZAR:				

The aspects most highly valued were the meeting times and the work atmosphere. The diversity of profiles among attendees was also greatly appreciated.

While the overall consideration was good, a number of aspects for improvement were mentioned, both in regard to the work methodology and to how the participants perceived the usefulness of the work done.

In any event, organising this kind of forums was considered to be positive, provided that it is attended by a broad selection of stakeholders and the time dedicated is adapted to the effort required to participate.

Below we give a detailed breakdown of the answers received:

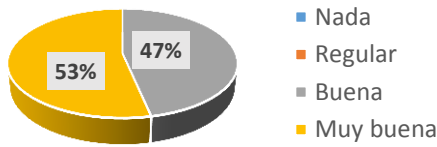
Nada: Unsatisfied

Regular: Slightly satisfied

Buena: Satisfied

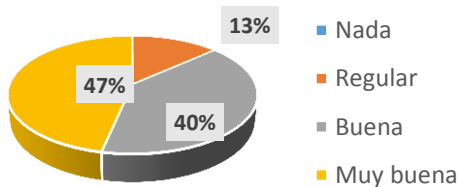
Muy buena: Very satisfied

MEETING TIMES AND DURATION



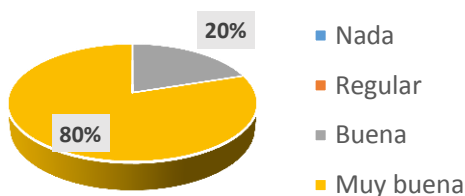
All of the questionnaire respondents were positively satisfied with both the meeting times and the duration (Answers: Unsatisfied-0 //Slightly satisfied-0 //Satisfied-7 //Very satisfied-8).

METHODOLOGY AND FOCUS



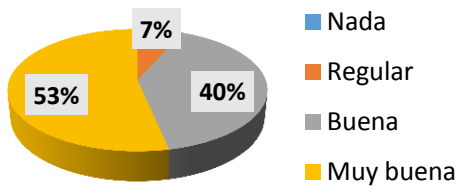
The vast majority were satisfied or very satisfied with the way the issues were addressed, in comparison to 13% who were only slightly satisfied with the dynamics (Answers: Unsatisfied-0//Slightly satisfied-2//Satisfied-6//Very satisfied-7)

WORK ATMOSPHERE



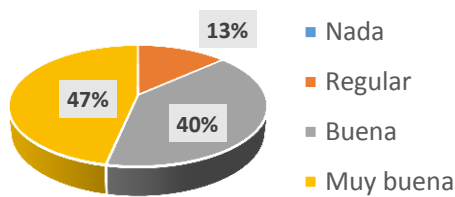
Satisfaction with the working atmosphere of the session received the highest appraisal (80%). The other participants also positively valued the experience (Answers: Unsatisfied-0//Slightly satisfied-0//Satisfied-3//Very satisfied-12).

DIVERSITY OF PARTICIPATING STAKEHOLDERS



Almost all of the respondents (93%) consider that the diversity of stakeholders participating in the workshop was assured (*Answers: Unsatisfied-0 //Slightly satisfied-1 //Satisfied-6// Very satisfied- 8*).

USEFULNESS OF THE WORK CARRIED OUT (SATISFACTION)



13% of all questionnaire respondents consider that the work carried out at the workshop was average, compared with 87% who considered it to be satisfactory (*Answers: Unsatisfied-0//Slightly satisfied-2//Satisfied-6//Very satisfied- 7*).