

Appendix 2. Questions and statements for the eight focus groups in Greece and Finland.

The questions have been asked once in each country. In some cases they have been localized to better reflect the participants of focus groups. Questions are referred as follows: C: common questions, S: stakeholders questions, E: experts questions.

I. General scale-related questions.

1. a. Scale-related issues have received considerable attention the last decade. What do you consider to be the relevance of scale-related issues to biodiversity conservation? b. How would you define the concept of scale in the context of biodiversity conservation? (C)
2. a. Give one example of a conservation policy that has been very successful in taking into account scale aspects. b. If a policy is designed to take scale into account, it should also be able to address scale challenges when implemented in practice. What are the main two key constraints that such “scale sensitive” policies have to deal with during implementation? (C)
3. Which is the most important scale challenge of biodiversity conservation? (C)
4. Give one example of a policy that has been most successful in addressing scale-related challenges in practice. Is this an important factor for policy success/failure or not? (S)
5. Is scale more an objective issue or a social construction? (E)
6. How do you define a conservation policy that is sensitive to scale? What primary characteristics should such a policy have? (E)
7. a. How would you define a scale mismatch? What are the causes and consequences of such mismatches? b. Will the uncertainty and complexity involved in biodiversity conservation inevitably create scale mismatches? (E)
8. Can scale be defined in an interdisciplinary way? And if so, how? (E)
9. Is there a gap between the generalized understanding produced by formal science and the practice-based understanding produced in “traditional” ecological knowledge? (E)

II. Scale challenges of current policies and instruments driving the processes of designating and managing conservation areas.

1. Do biodiversity policies and regulations on EU, national, and regional jurisdictional scales complement each other in your region? (C)
2. Biodiversity problems emerge differently in spatial, temporal and administrative scales, and these scales are ignored in the biodiversity policy of our country. (C)
3. Cross-level institutional and policy interplay is influenced by power dynamics. (C)
4. The cost and benefits of biodiversity policies are equally distributed across scales. (C)
5. Asymmetry in access to information can be bypassed by developing cross-level networks of community-based organizations and advocacy groups. (C)
6. There is often a mismatch between conservation objectives and management jurisdictions. (C)
7. The management of Natura 2000 sites should be based on fixed and rigid rules. (C)
8. Can cross-level governance structures such as management agencies address scale challenges? (S)

9. Which stakeholders are (and should) be included in the governance and management of conservation areas? (S)
10. Has delegation of responsibilities for Natura 2000 management to regional institutions made Natura 2000 implementation sensitive to demands at local and regional levels? (S)
11. Are there time perspectives in conservation areas management? (S)
12. Do conservation area networks (e.g., Natura 2000) address the ecological complexity across jurisdictions? (S)
13. On the basis of which criteria have the boundaries of conservation areas and their zoning systems been decided? (S)
14. Does the management of conservation areas recognize the complexity, interconnectedness and dynamic characteristics of ecological and social systems? (What are the pivotal ecological processes and functions currently recognized in management? How does the present system deal with change and disruption? Is management consistent or variable across your area? Give examples). (E)

III. Scale challenges related to the relationship of conservation areas to surrounding areas and to the integration of conservation with other policies.

1. Biodiversity conservation cannot be ensured only by the designation of conservation areas without the integration of the biodiversity dimension into other policy sectors. (C)
2. In achieving integrated land management several conflicting policy goals, interests and values would have to be integrated. In this case, which should be the first priority? (C)
3. Fragmentation of institutional responsibilities is one of the main barriers in integrating conservation into other policy sectors. (C)
4. We need more coordination and cooperation between European, national and regional policies and relevant administrative bodies. Which factors are crucial for this? (C)
5. Building up a Green infrastructure as well as implementing climate change adaptation tools is essential in encouraging ecological connectivity in our country but remains a major challenge. (C)
6. The goal of management may cause mismatches if it is a purely ecological or purely social and not social-ecological. (S)
7. Is management of protected areas adjusted to the management of neighboring areas and to the wider landscape context? (S)
8. A possible way to reduce scale mismatches is to formulate management strategies and governance structures that focus on the social-ecological system and not solely on the social or the ecological system. What would be the implications of such an approach for research questions, methods, and practices? (E)