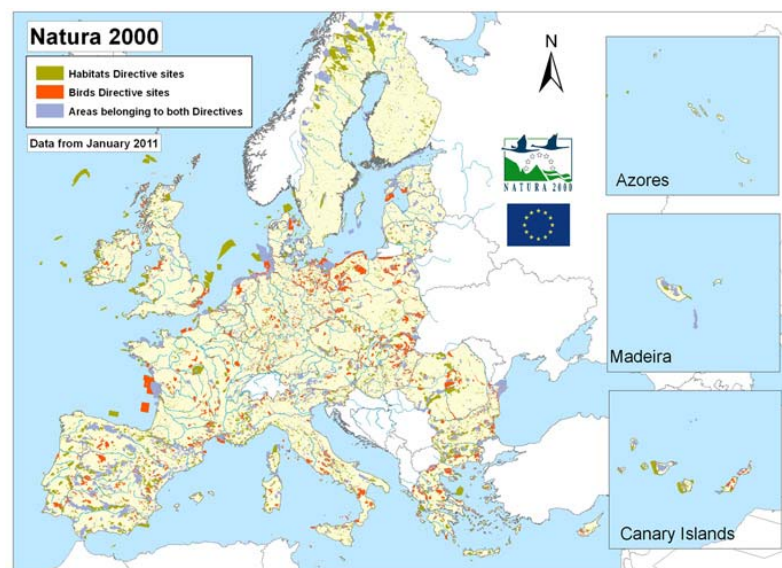# Natura 2000 sites management in Italy: an exploratory study on stakeholders' opinions
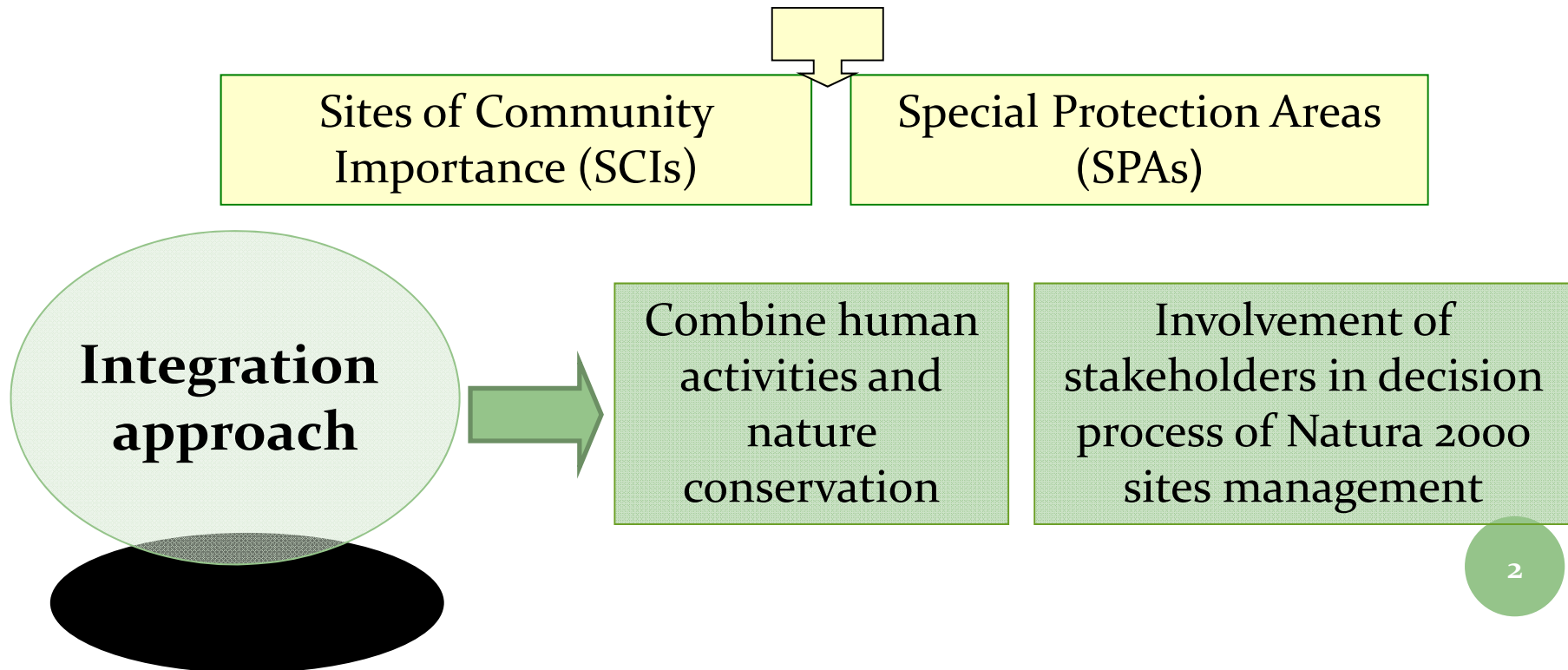
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Natura 2000 network in Europe

- Council Directive 92/43/EEC "Habitats Directive"

- HD establishes a network of protected areas (Natura 2000 network) finalized to ensure the long-term protection of endangered species in their habitats.

- Natura 2000 network includes:

Sites of Community Importance (SCIs)	Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

Integration approach →

| Combine human activities and nature conservation	Involvement of stakeholders in decision process of Natura 2000 sites management

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Natura 2000 network in Europe

EI Teide Declaration (2002): "*the success of Natura 2000 will require the support of European citizens, especially of local people and landowners, and their participation in the decisions on the implementation of the conservation and management of the areas involved*".

No specific recommendations about participation

Restriction on landowners

Delays and lack of information
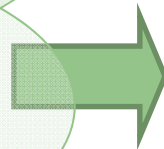
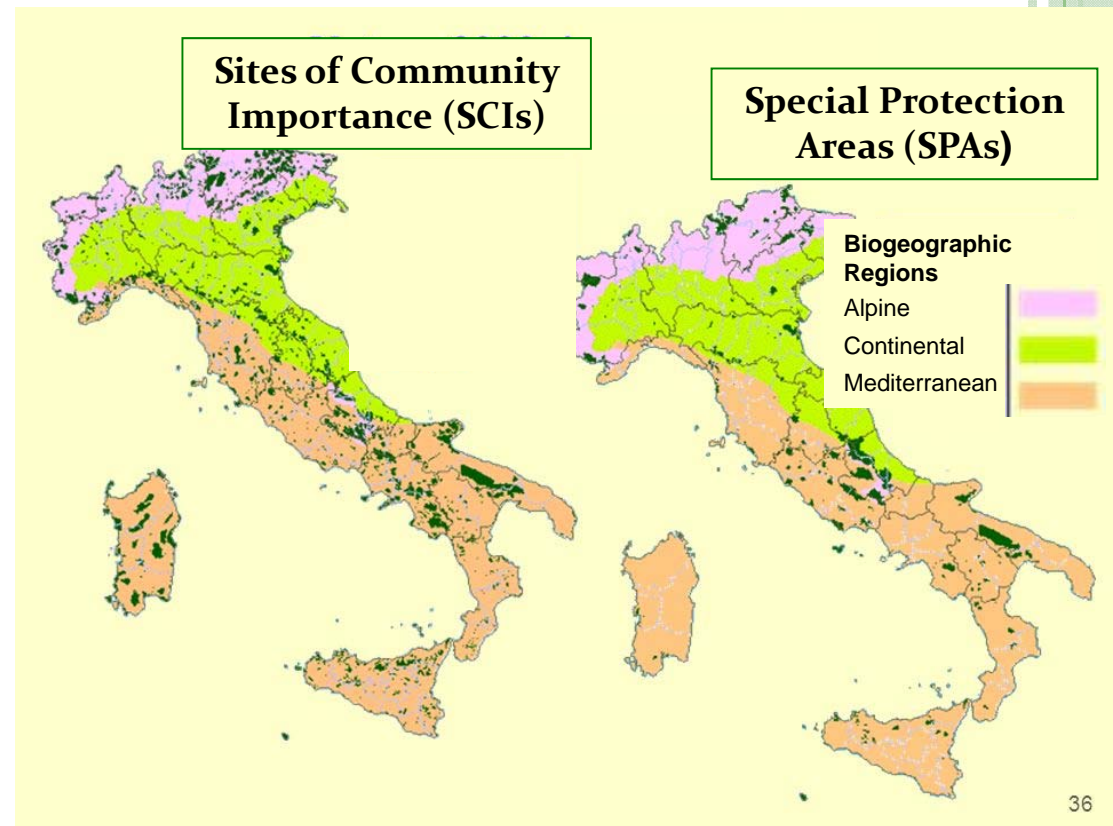✓**Opposition from stakeholders**

✓**Conflicts among users**

3

Natura 2000 network in Italy

✓ 2,288 SCIs total area of 45,309 km2

✓ 597 SPAs total area 43,777 km2

✓ area devoted to nature conservation increased from 11% to 20%

Sites of Community Importance (SCIs)

Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

Biogeographic Regions
Alpine
Continental
Mediterranean

36

Areas with a large number of species previously unprotected by the Italian national legislation are included in the network of protected areas

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Natura 2000 network in Italy

o **The HD was transposed in the Italian national legislation with Decree 357 of 8th September 1997.**

o **The 21 Regions and Autonomous Provinces implemented HD and identified the Natura 2000 sites through a process of consultation with other local governments**

The Ministry of Environment Land and Sea Protection assigned the sites' management to the Regions and Autonomous Provinces establishing harmonizing guidelines
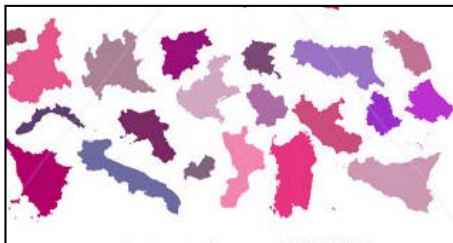
Each Region has adopted a strategy for the preparation of Natura 2000 site management plans, the monitoring of the progress, and the stakeholders' involvement in the decision-making process.

Aim and steps of the research

The aim of the study is to analyse stakeholders' opinions for different human activities in the Italian Natura 2000 sites and to investigate participation process in Natura 2000 implementation

Stakeholders' preferences are analysed considering four groups of stakeholders (public administrations, environmental NGOs, private consultancy companies, and Universities and research institutes) characterized by different needs and objectives.

| STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4
Stakeholders' analysis Preliminary list of stakeholders created basing on expert information and online investigation	**Survey** 48 respondents interviewed trough email questionnaire and phone interviews	**Indicators set up** List of indicators concerning Natura 2000 perception and level of involvement	**Data Analysis** Data have been analysed and first results discussed

Survey Features

|	
Survey period	Autumn-Winter 2015-2016
Target	•Public administrations •Environmental NGOs •Private consultancy companies •Universities and Research institutes
Administration system	Phone interview Email questionnaire
Questionnaire	Semi-structured questionnaire: •Single-choice questions •Open-ended questions •Multiple-choice questions •Yes or no questions •Pairwise comparison questions •Likert scale questions
Respondents	48 stakeholders
Sampling method	Snowball sampling

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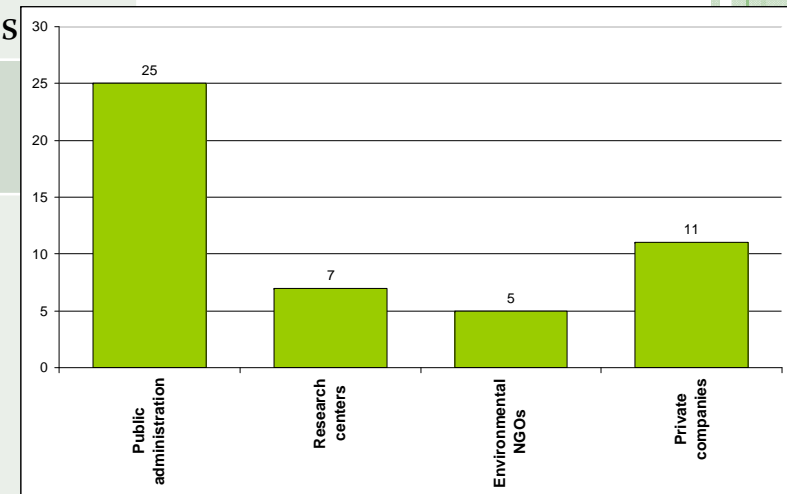
Questionnaire

Phone interviews

Email interviews

Phone interview 15%

E-mail questionnaire 85%
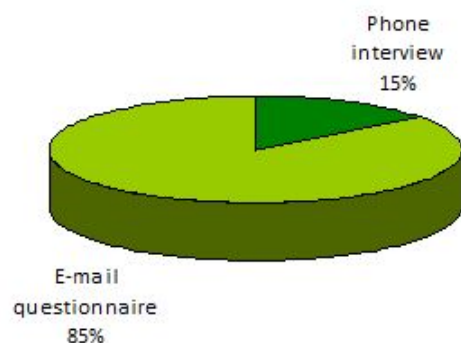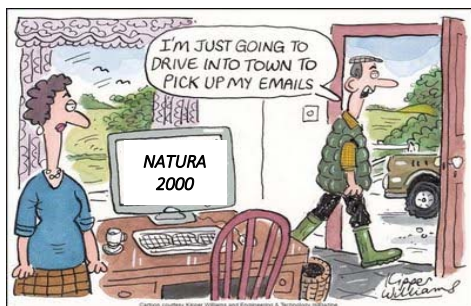
Phone interview ■ E-mail questionnaire

THREE THEMATIC SECTIONS:

Section 1 - Personal information
Name, Organization, Role, Years of work

Section 2 - Natura 2000 network perceptions
- Respondents' knowledge about Natura 2000 network
- Opinions about obstacles and opportunities of the network
- Importance of human activities in the network

Section 3 - Public participation in the implementation of Natura 2000
- Level and phase of involvement in the process
- Social actors involved
- Participatory techniques and communication tools
- Transparency of the process
- Inclusion of local knowledge
- Approach used to take the final decision
- Conflicts among stakeholders
- Level of trust in the other stakeholders

Selected questions and Indicators

Indicators of Natura 2000 network perception

Importance of human activities in Natura 2000 sites

Obstacles and opportunities of the Network for human activities

Ideal level of stakeholders involvement in sites management

Indicators of involvement in Natura 2000 network implementation

Real level of involvement in the decision process

Transparency of the process

Conflicts among stakeholders during the implementation process

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Obstacles and opportunities of the Network

| OPPORTUNITIES	OBSTACLES
The network is ...cracy and recover na... for ecosystem serv...	
The network is... different activi... compensation...	...nong ...ions, ...ctors,
The network ... habitats co... development	...ative ...atives
The network is... economic syst...	...neric ...s to ...estry, etc)
The network can improve the development of quality products and of niche activities	Compensations are not conformed to entity of restrictions
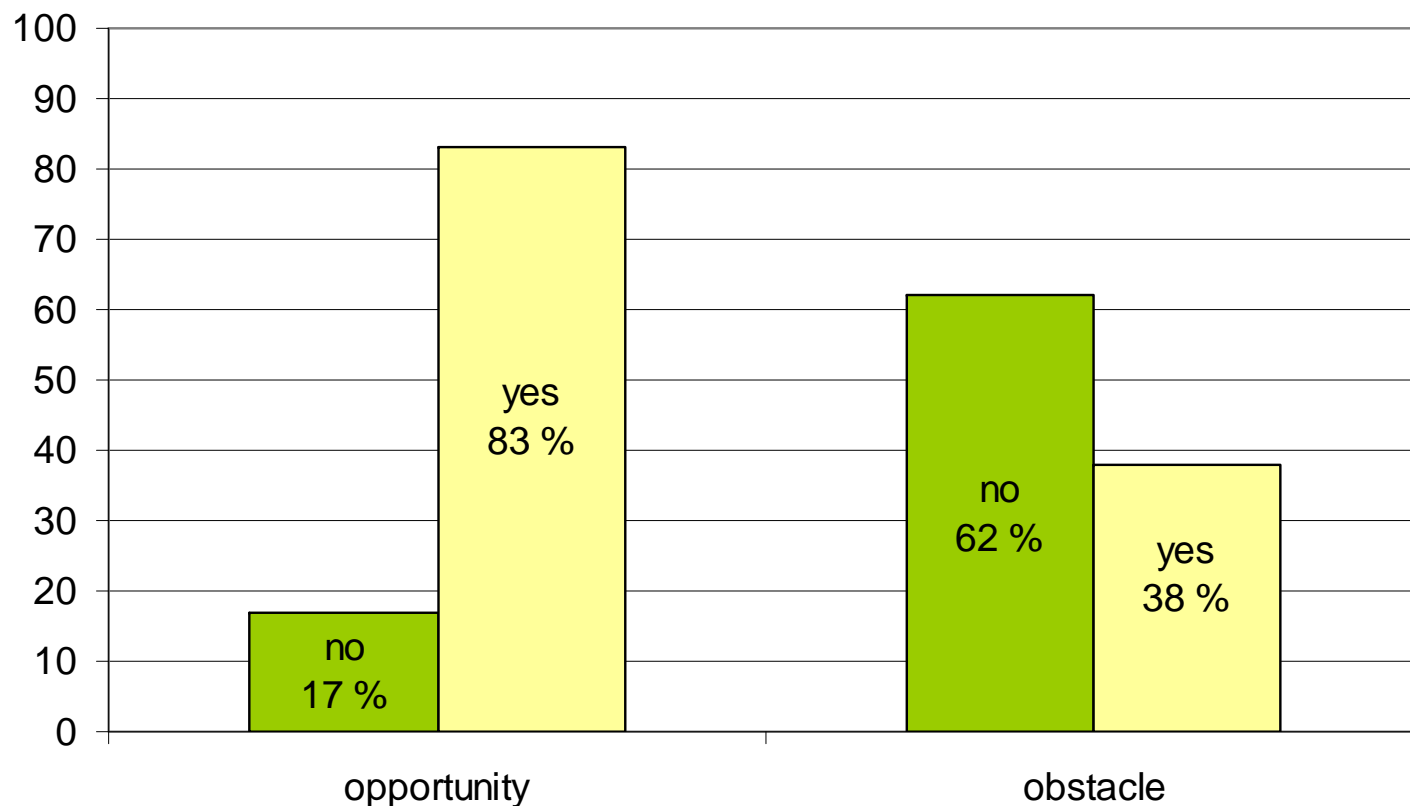
Ideal level of stakeholders involvement

"In your opinion which is the IDEAL level of involvement in Natura 2000 sites management for the following categories of stakeholders?"


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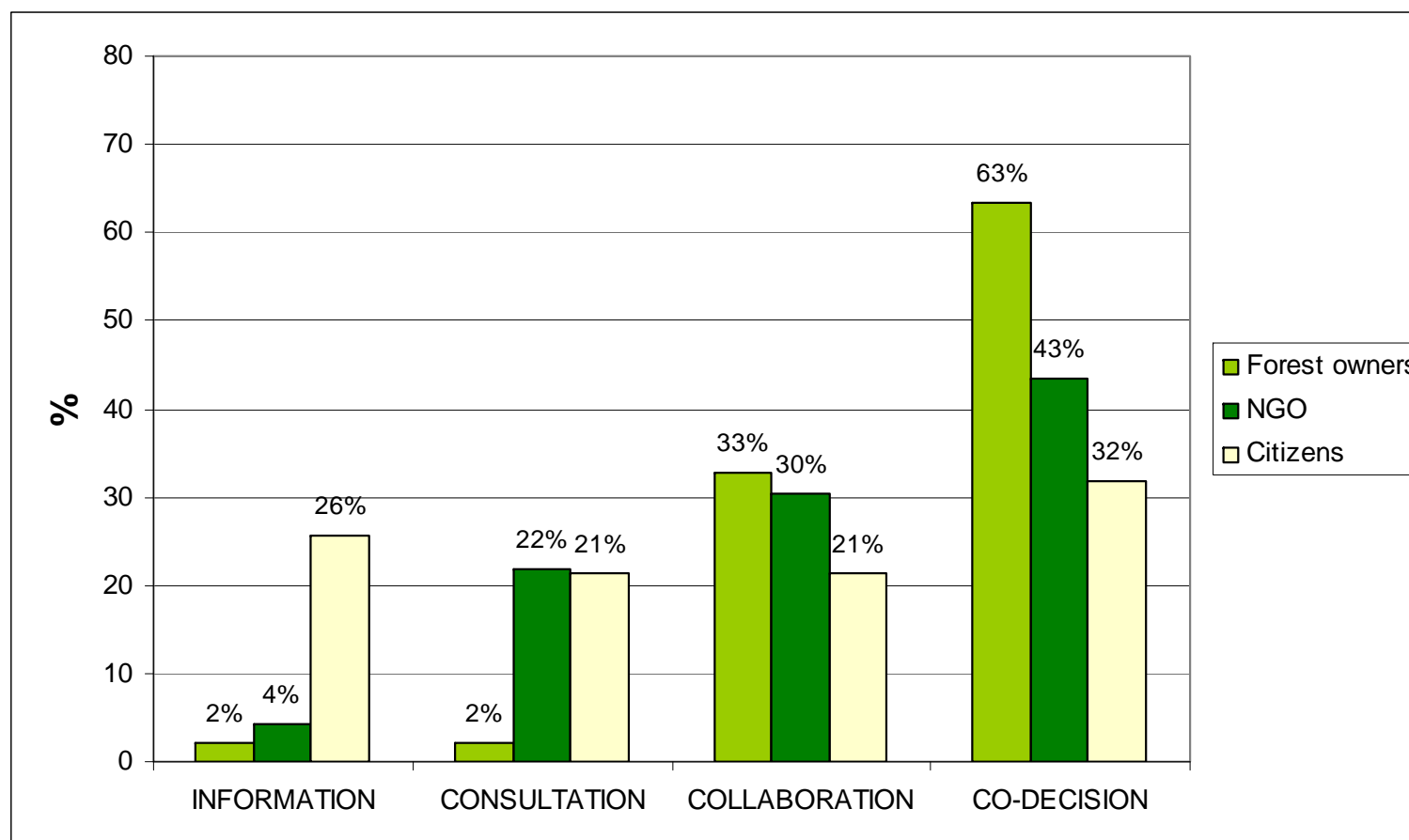
Importance of human activities in Natura 2000 sites

Respondents evaluation of relative importance among six activities in the Natura 2000 sites

Respondents used

Pairwise Comparison

to prioritize activities

	Nature conservation	Recreational activities	Environmental education	Productive forest functions	Agricultural activities
Nature conservation					
Recreational activities					
Environmental education					
Productive forest functions					
Agricultural activities					
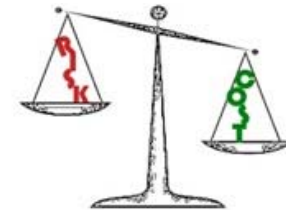
IMPORTANCE	
MUCH MORE	+3
MORE	+1
EQUAL	0
LESS	-1
MUCH LESS	-3

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Importance of human activities in Natura 2000 sites

> The most important activity in the Natura 2000 sites is **nature conservation** followed by environmental education, agricultural activities and forest management. Recreational activities are considered to be marginal in this type of protected areas.
>
> For all comparisons, the consistency ratio resulted less than 0.1.
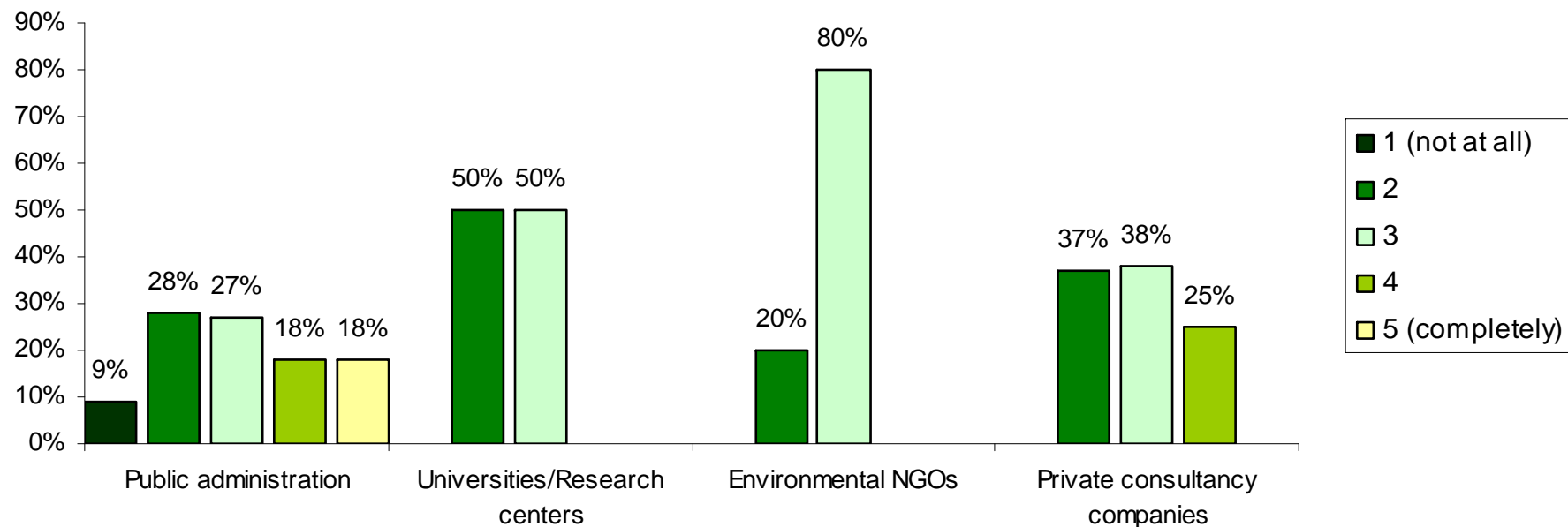

13
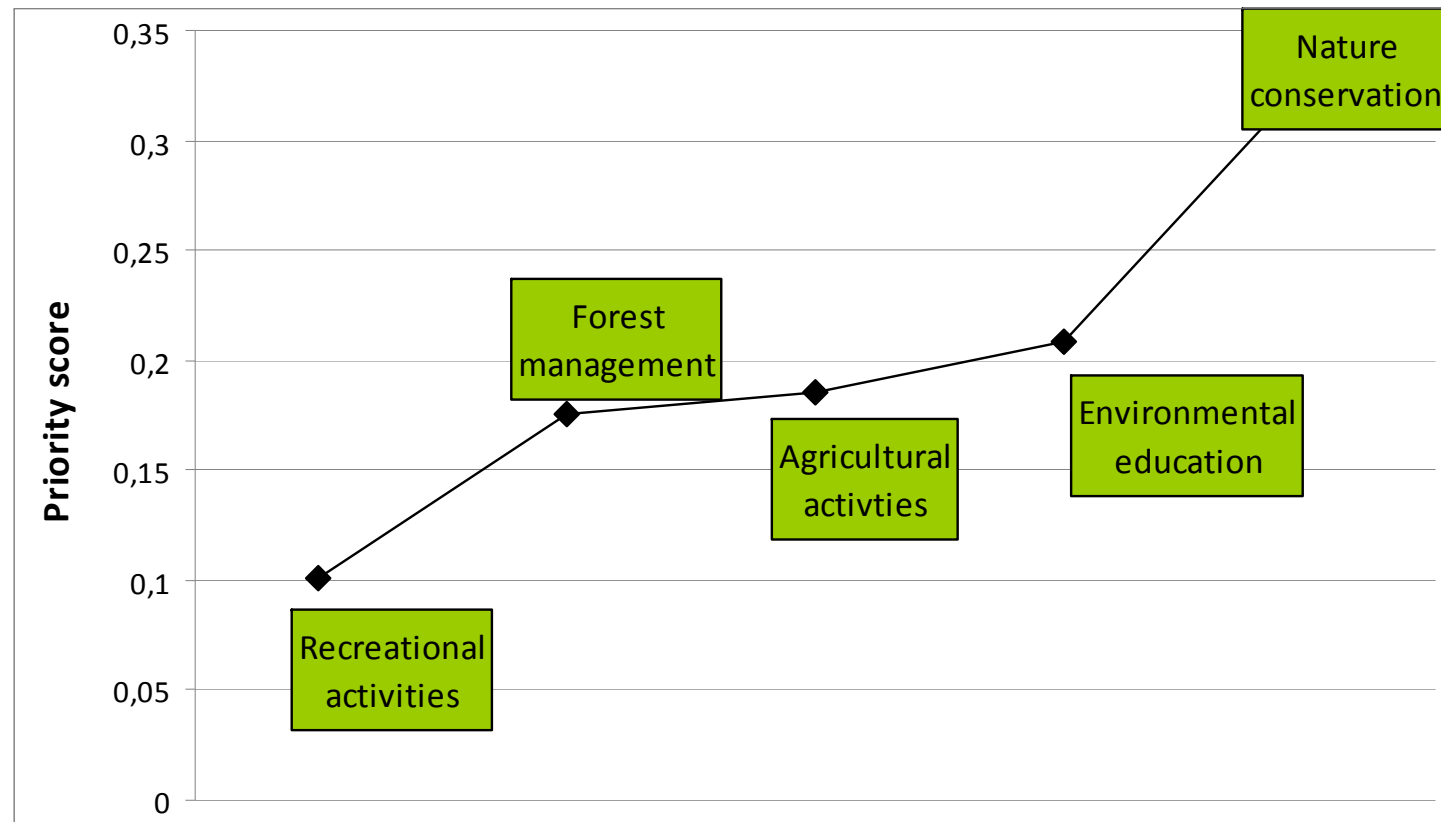
Transparency of process of involvement

"In your opinion the process of implementation of Natura 2000 has been transparent?"

- ✓ 5-Point Likert scale
- ✓ 75% of respondents put the level of transparency among the three worst classes

Legend:
- 1 (not at all)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (completely)

Public administration: 9%, 28%, 27%, 18%, 18%
Universities/Research centers: 50%, 50%
Environmental NGOs: 20%, 80%
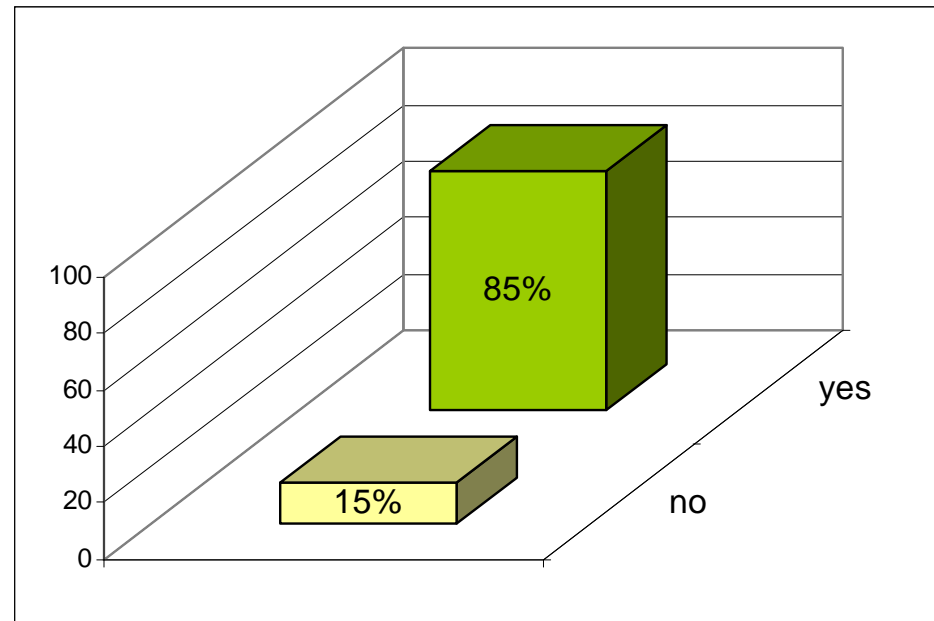Private consultancy companies: 37%, 38%, 25%

Level of involvement in the decision process

"Which approach was adopted to take final decisions during the process of implementation of Natura 2000?"

Chart data (percentages):

Approach	Public administration	Universities/Research centers	Environmental NGOs	Private consultancy companies
Decision by authority	40%	40%	25%	45%
Minority decision	24%	40%		44%
Democratic decision	12%		25%	
Consensu decision	24%	20%	50%	11%
Unanimous decision				

Legend: ■ Public administration ■ Universities/Research centers □ Environmental NGOs □ Private consultancy companies
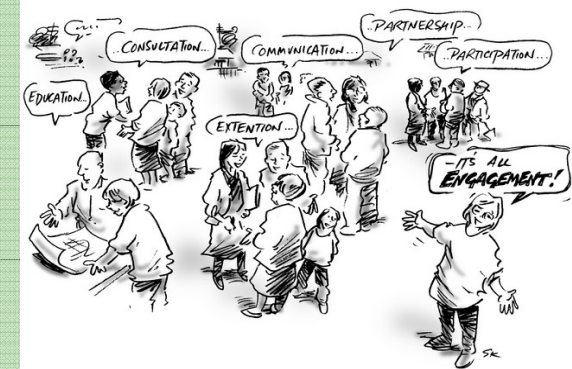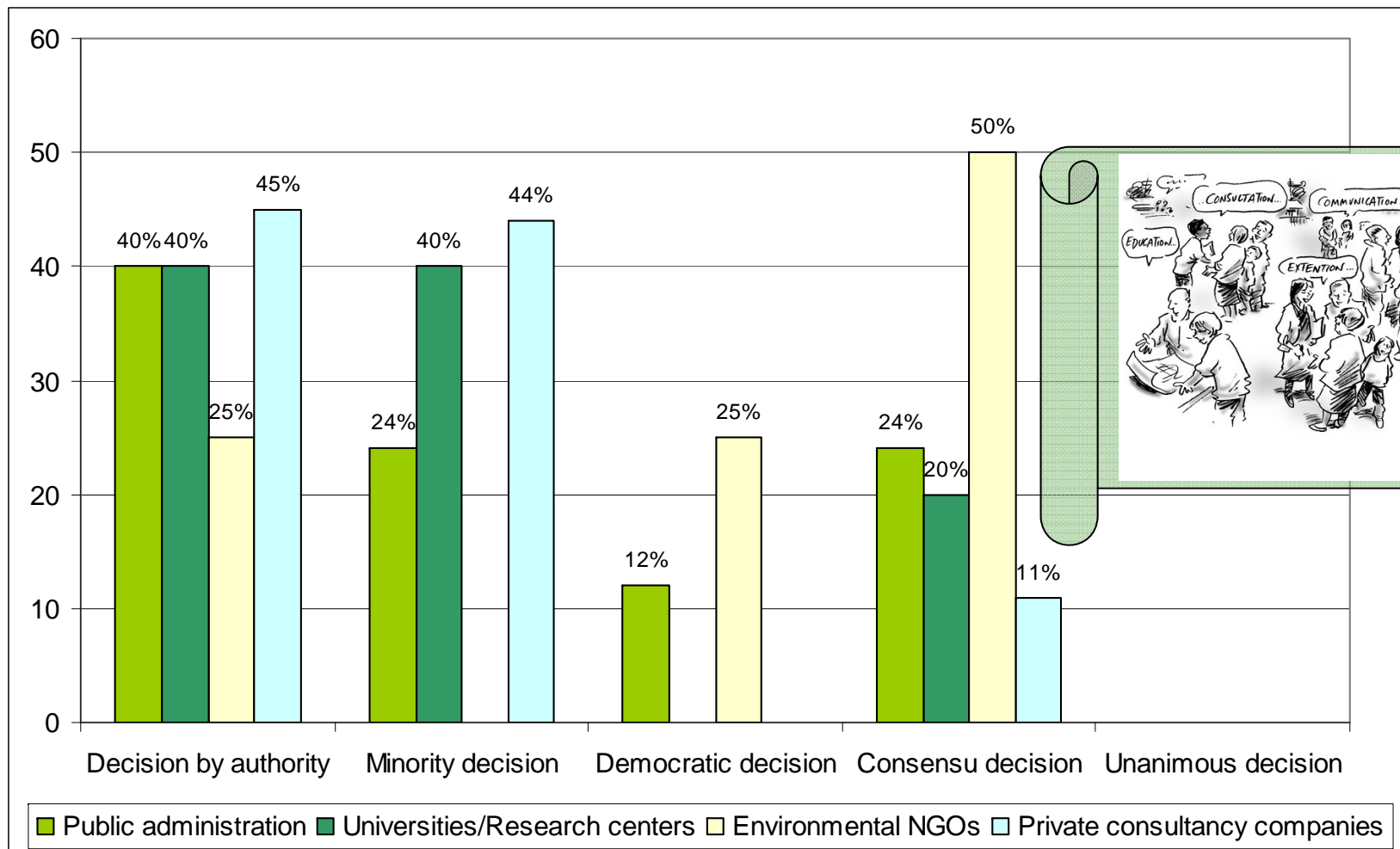
Conflicts among stakeholders during the implementation process

WHICH?

Conflicts due to the application of restrictions without taking in consideration activities of the territory

Conflicts due to absence or no correct information and to part interests exasperation

Conflicts between level of management and authorization (effect evaluation) and level of human activities (agriculture, forestry, zootechny)

Conflicts among stakeholders during the implementation process

AMONG WHO?

In lowland area conflicts are stressed between farmers and institutions in reason of more industrialized activities

Conflicts among local authorities (Regions representatives) responsible for Natura 2000 implementation and sites definition and stakeholders (municipalities, owners, farmers, associations), in reason of the restrictions imposed

Conflicts between actors of the tourist sector and conservationists

Hunters see Natura 2000 as an obstacle for human activities and often do not recognize a sense in the presence of Natura 2000 sites.

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Conclusions

- ✓ Natura 2000 network implementation is seen both as an opportunity and as an obstacle by different stakeholders: bureaucracy, restrictions, scarce information are the main obstacles. Economic support, development of sustainable economic systems and reconciliation of natural habitats conservation and economic development are the main opportunities

- ✓ The most important activity in the Natura 2000 sites is nature conservation followed by environmental education, agricultural activities and forest management

- ✓ Concerning the transparency of the implementation process, 75% of respondents affirmed that the process was not transparent

- ✓ Decision by authority and minority decision were considers the most used approaches adopted to take final decisions during the process of implementation of Natura 2000

- ✓ Most of the respondents affirmed that there were Conflicts among stakeholders during the implementation process

Thanks for your attention!

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