

# Identification and assessment of top priority areas for conservation management using Natura 2000 data

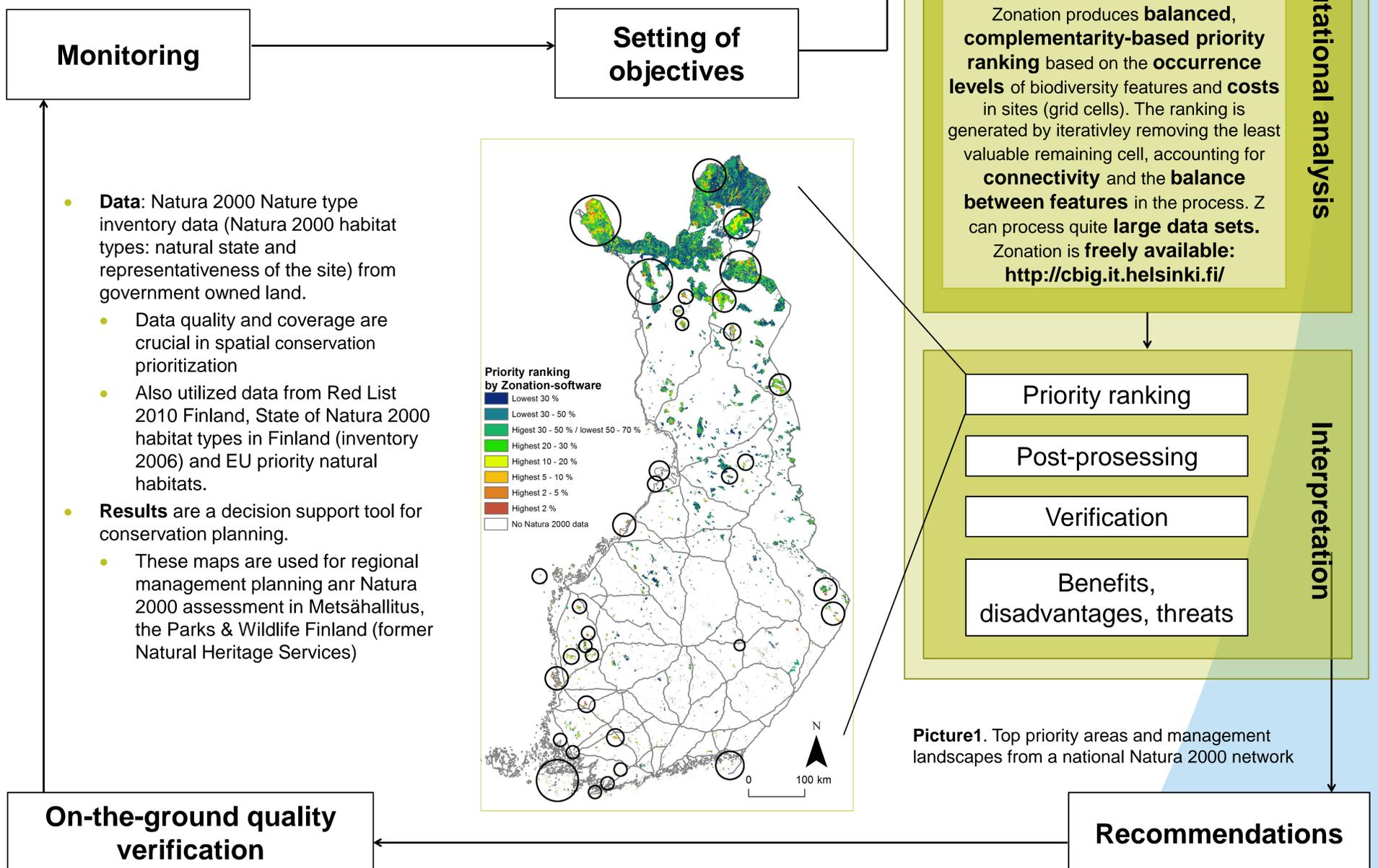
*In this study we develop a high-resolution spatial conservation prioritization for the Finnish national Natura 2000 network and identify top-priority areas in it. The primary purpose of this work is to assist targeting of habitat maintenance, management and restoration in and around the Finnish Natura 2000 network. While it is obligatory to maintain the condition of the Natura 2000 network or improve it by habitat restoration, it is a fact that national environmental bodies operate under budgetary constraints. Consequently, there is a need to prioritize targeting of conservation effort in and around the Natura 2000 network.*

*High priority areas are combinations of areas that are high quality (pristine and representative), irreplaceable (rare), well aggregated (connectivity), continuous (defragmented) and they complement Natura 2000 network. These areas and their neighbourhoods are the areas of high conservation relevance in terms of habitat maintenance and possibly habitat restoration.*

*Top-priority management landscapes fall into three categories: landscapes that 1. hold significant distribution of at least on Natura 2000 habitat type, 2. are highly prioritized and over 20 km<sup>2</sup> or 3. qualifies these both.*

*The analysis done here could be replicated elsewhere using publicly available spatial prioritization software Zonation and Natura 2000 inventory data.*

## CONSERVATION DECISION-MAKING: Spatial conservation prioritization process (in Zonation)



## References

- Lehtomäki, J. & Moilanen, A. 2013. Methods and workflow for spatial conservation prioritization using Zonation. *Environmental Modelling & Software* 47 / 128-137
- Mikkonen, N. 2012. Prioritizing protected areas managed by Metsähallitus the Parks & Wildlife Finland (former Natural Heritage Services) and their most significant management landscapes of nature values, on the basis of their Natura 2000 natural habitats. *Nature Protection Publications of Metsähallitus. Series A 200*. 87 pp. Finnish
- Mikkonen, N. & Moilanen, A. 2013. Identification of top priority areas and management landscapes from a national Natura 2000 network. *Environmental Science & Policy* 27 / 11-20