

The Content of an Expert Opinion in the Field of Conservation of Species and Biotopes and the Minimal Requirements Contained Therein

*Issued pursuant to
Section 4, Clause 17
of the Law On the Conservation
of Species and Biotopes*

1. This Regulation prescribes the content of an opinion, prepared by an expert in the field of conservation of species and biotopes, regarding a certain biotope group, species or group of species (hereinafter – opinion) and the minimal requirements therein.
2. An expert in the field of conservation of species and biotopes (hereinafter – expert) shall prepare an opinion. The following information shall be indicated in the opinion:
 - 2.1. the biotope group, species or group of species, for which the opinion is being provided;
 - 2.2. the date of the survey of the territory to be explored and the meteorological conditions, the length of the survey, the location (cadastral number, address, area) and the research methods (for example, transects, randomised plot selection, photo fixation, route measurement using the geographic positioning system);
 - 2.3. the territorial status in accordance with the specified status of protected nature territories (for example, micro-reserve, nature reserve, nature park, national park), the functional zone of the protected territory, in which the research territory is located, if it is located in a specially protected nature territory;
 - 2.4. the purpose for provision of the opinion (for example, establishment of a micro-reserve, development of a nature protection plan, development of a detailed plan, an opinion in accordance with the requirements of regulatory enactments, planned activities or assessment of measures);
 - 2.5. a general description of the territory to be explored, also information regarding the terrain and microrelief, hydrological regime, the biotopes and relevant groups of species to be found therein, as well as the management (also information regarding the historical management of the territory, if such is known), indicating the proportion of the natural areas, partially natural areas and areas of anthropogenic origin;
 - 2.6. a brief description of the adjacent territory;
 - 2.7. the detected specially protected species or groups of species and the characteristics of their distribution, indicating the information sources used, the methodology for determination and the evaluation criteria, as well as the existing and potential (if it is possible to identify them) threatening factors in the explored territory and the impact assessment thereof;
 - 2.8. the detected specially protected biotopes in Latvia and the European Union, biotopes with specific distribution characteristics in Latvia and the quality of the detected biotopes, indicating the information sources used, the methodology for determination and the evaluation criteria, as well as the existing and potential (if it is possible to identify them) threatening factors in the explored territory and the impact assessment thereof;

2.9. other values significant for the conservation of biodiversity and landscape of the surveyed territory, for example, secular trees, old trees, avenues, sites of scientifically significant species;

2.10. the requirements for the provision of favourable protection status for protected nature and landscape values of the surveyed territory and measures in order to improve the condition and biological value of the detected species and biotopes regardless of their conservation status;

2.11. conclusions regarding the impact of the planned activities or measure on the condition and biological value of the detected species or biotopes, as well as on the adjacent territory and the conditions for the performance of activities or measure.

3. If an opinion is being provided for several biotope groups, species or groups of species, the description and assessment thereof in accordance with Sub-paragraphs 2.7, 2.8, 2.10 and 2.11 of this Regulation shall be presented separately for each biotope group, species or group of species.

4. A schematic map with indicated co-ordinates shall be appended to the opinion, if possible, also with maps and photographs. The schematic map shall be a schematic rendering of the explored territory and the boundaries thereof on the base of an orthophotographic or a topographical map, or a forest plan, or a land usage map on a scale of not less than 1 : 10 000. The sites of the specially protected biotopes and specially protected species detected in the surveyed territory in Latvia and the European Union, as well as other territories with special conservation and management requirements shall be indicated on the schematic map, if such are detected in the explored territory. The schematic map shall be prepared, using the LKS-92 Co-ordinate System (Transversal Mercator Projection, Scale factor on the axis of the meridian – 0.9996; x axis value on the central meridian – 500 000, reference point from the Equator (*False Northing* = 0) – 0 m), on which the boundaries of the explored territory shall be indicated.

5. Additional information may be included in the opinion, which the expert in accordance with his or her education and professional experience, as well as the certificate obtained in the field of conservation of species and biotopes considers necessary.

6. The opinion shall be drawn up in two copies. In the opinion the expert shall indicate his or her given name, surname, certificate number and date of issue thereof, biotope group, species or group of species, for which the expert is entitled to provide an opinion in accordance with the certificate, the date when the opinion was signed and the number of pages, as well as the given name, surname and address of the addressee.

7. The expert shall sign the prepared opinion. The detail “signature” of the document shall not be filled in if the electronic document has been prepared in conformity with the regulatory enactments regarding the drawing up of electronic documents.

Prime Minister

V. Dombrovskis

Minister for the Environment

R. Vējonis