**Questions to the scientific committee about the LPI results**

**1. About the methods**

* 1. **Should species with trends classified as “uncertain” be included (i.e. trends not classified as increasing/ decreasing/stable)?**

*Note****:*** *They are included now because the classification as “uncertain” pertains to the variability of the trend, not to the data it is built on. Therefore, we consider that ‘uncertain’ does not question de validity of the resulting trend but only the categorization of it;*

* 1. **Do you have any objections regarding the methodology followed for assigning species to habitats?**

*Note: During Scientific Committee Meeting #2 it was suggested to classify species by habitat type, as it seemed the most feasible option for the current project.*

* 1. ***Do you have some objection against combining abundance (Trim) and occupancy (SOM) output into one LPI for Belgium as done in the Dutch LPR?***

*Note: The primary objective of the project was to calculate an LPI for Belgium. Because of the lack of abundance datasets, it was decided at the scientific Committee Meeting #1 to extend the exercise to Occupancy data (trough SOM, as done in the Netherlands) acting as proxies. Therefore, some of the current results reflect changes in abundance (TRIM trends for breeding birds, wintering bats, moths in Flanders) and all other results reflect changes in distribution (based on SOM/Site Occupancy Models). Certain simulations made by Natuurpunt suggest the sensitivity of SOM analyses is asymmetric: even after a massive decline in numbers, when the last individuals still hangs on, a grid-cell remains occupied (hence SOM is less sensitive to decline), but when increasing, a single individual colonizing an new grid-cell is sufficient for “occupation” (hence SOM represents increases better). Therefore, a composed index of a community based on SOM tends to be on the positive side. In any case, the limitations of the chosen methodology will be clearly stated in the text and the explanation of the inherent differences between abundance and occupancy data will be explained with an infographic.*

**2. About the results**

* 1. **General LPIs**
     1. **Do the results make sense? If not, what is not OK?**
  2. **LPI by taxonomic group**
     1. **Are the results of the species representative for the group? If not is the current level of representativeness a problem regarding the objectives of the project?**

*Note: Bearing in mind that due to the scarcity of data, good representativeness will never be reached and that the philosophy of this project was to ‘show the best we can with we what we have’, which is, to us, better (for biodiversity preservation) than ending up with nothing because of a very ‘conservative’ approach*

* + 1. **Are the data of each group representative for what is really going on, and if not, is the current level of representativeness problematic?**
    2. **Did you expect the average trend for each taxonomic group and does the global trends reflects other data that you are aware of or other publication, in Belgium or other European countries?**

*Note*: *remember this is an average trends for the group where every species share the same weight, wherever their abundance. This means that a increase of the LPI for the considered group could well correspond to a decrease of total individual / biomass for the same group)?*

* + 1. **Do you have some general remarks about the average trend for this group, words of caution that we should bare in mind? Reason not to include the group in the global / habitat LPI?**
  1. **LPI by habitat**
     1. **Did you see any species that should not be included because it is not specific to the considered habitat?**

**3. About the messages**

* 1. **Is it sufficient to include the message of *the limited availability of good quality abundance data* as an important aspect of the chapter of the results?**
  2. **How to communicate around the increasing LPI for both Belgium and Flanders/Wallonia?**

*Is it correct and true? Does biodiversity really increase?*

* 1. **Do you believe it is possible to compensate the potentially positive message of a slightly increasing trend with a good accompanying text and communication package stating that this outcome does not imply biodiversity is doing well**\* (as it has successfully been done in the Netherlands) **?**

\**Mention the shifting baseline syndrome, the representativity issue, put in context of other indicators and mentioning it is complementary to others (i.e. show the RLI for Be)*

* 1. **Do you agree with the following message developed in view of the results?**

* + 1. The National/Regional LPIs
    2. *The regional and national LPI are showing a slight recovery, which can be partly explained by a recent improvment for some species but probably also a focus on species group that are both popular to observe and link to habitat that deserve currently special attention (i.e. dragongly and pond restauration).*
    3. *Regional differences seem relatively small.*
    4. *There are big winners and big loosers, and the methodology put all species with the same weight. However, we can say that there are dramatic decline in some widespread species and we risk national extinction for some of them.*
    5. Disaggregated LPI’s:
    6. *The main impact is agriculture/land use*
    7. *Impact of climate change follows second (for now), causing great changes, i.e. re-shaping of living communities, but because we are where we are geographically, this does not result in dramatic declines yet*
    8. *Farmland is the habitat (covering the majority of our land) where the situation is worst (large scale declines in most species) and not getting better. It is so much bad that, a part for bird, we were not able to find indicator species linked to farmland other than generalist species.*
    9. Other messages coming out from the project:
    10. *Long-term monitoring with counts of individual is needed for many more groups and the existing monitoring scheme should be properly funded and organised.*
    11. *Need for open access of data*
    12. *Concerning the probable driving factors behind these trends, change in land use (incl. farming practices), climate change are probably\* important or at least this is congruent with the observed trends. (we can only "guess" as we don't have sufficient data to prove causality?*
    13. *Outcomes in Be compare match pretty well the outcomes in LPI Netherland? (only if feasible/desirable/relevant to make the comparison)*

**3.5 Do you see other key messages that comes out the results?**