

A review of national and regional habitat mapping projects in Europe : A contribution to the French CARHAB project



**Muséum
national
d'Histoire
naturelle**

Jean Ichter¹, Dr. Corrado Marceno¹, Dr. Doug Evans² & Laurent Poncet¹

(1) Service du patrimoine naturel - Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle
36 rue Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire F-75005 Paris FRANCE
(2) European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity - Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle
57, rue Cuvier, F-75231 Paris FRANCE



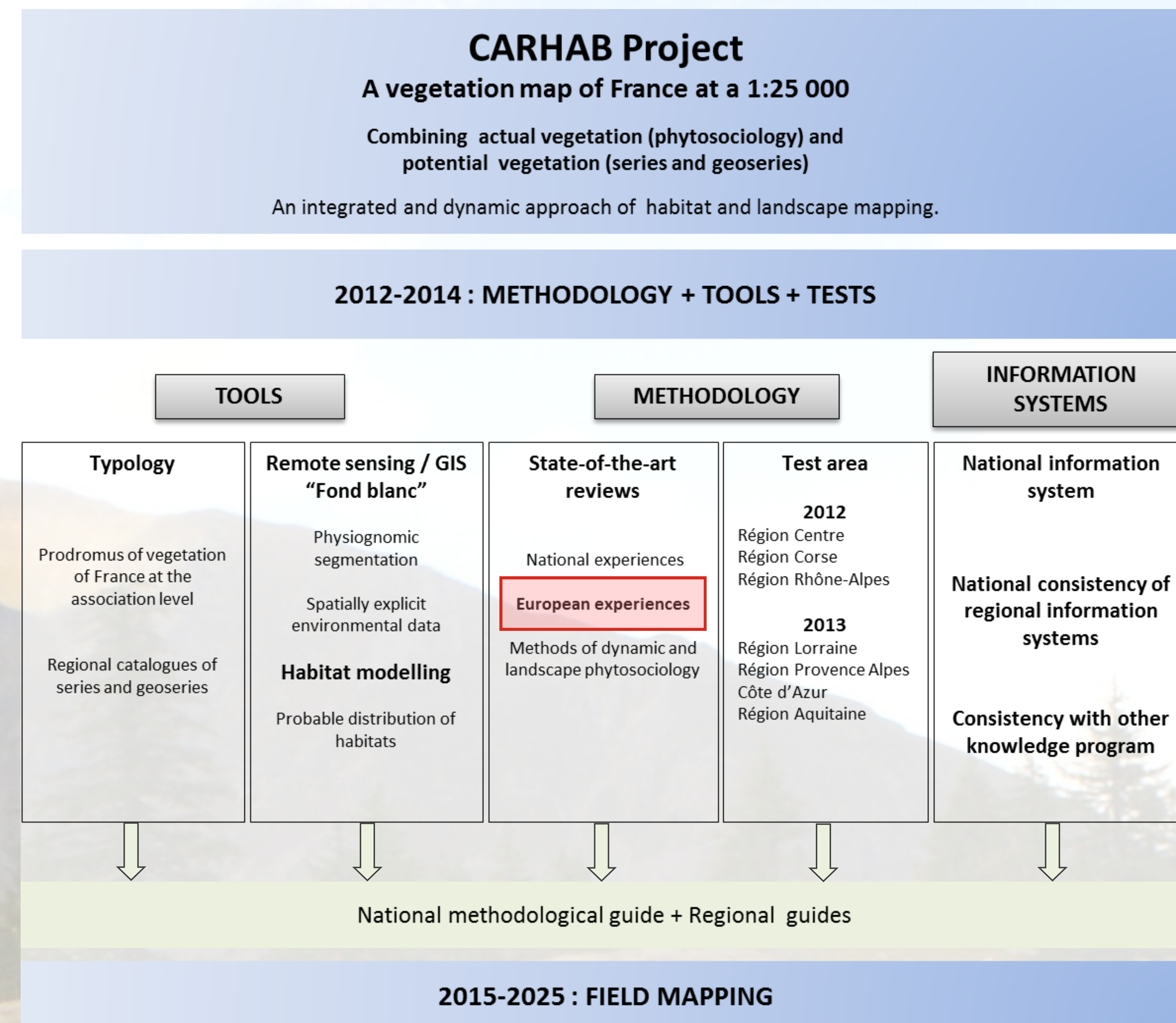
CONTEXT

Europe has a long and well documented tradition of vegetation mapping. However there are relatively few examples of habitat or vegetation mapping at large scales (e.g. 1:50 000) across large areas such as entire countries or regions and no comprehensive overview is available.

France has recently started an ambitious project (CARHAB) to produce a large scale vegetation map (1:25 000) of its territory using both phytosociological and synphytosociological (i.e. vegetation series and geoseries) approaches.

Due to the complexity of the task the steering committee considered it essential to learn from the experience of habitat and vegetation mapping elsewhere in Europe. Therefore the Service du Patrimoine Naturel of the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, in close collaboration with the European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity, is carrying out a survey of all significant projects in Europe.

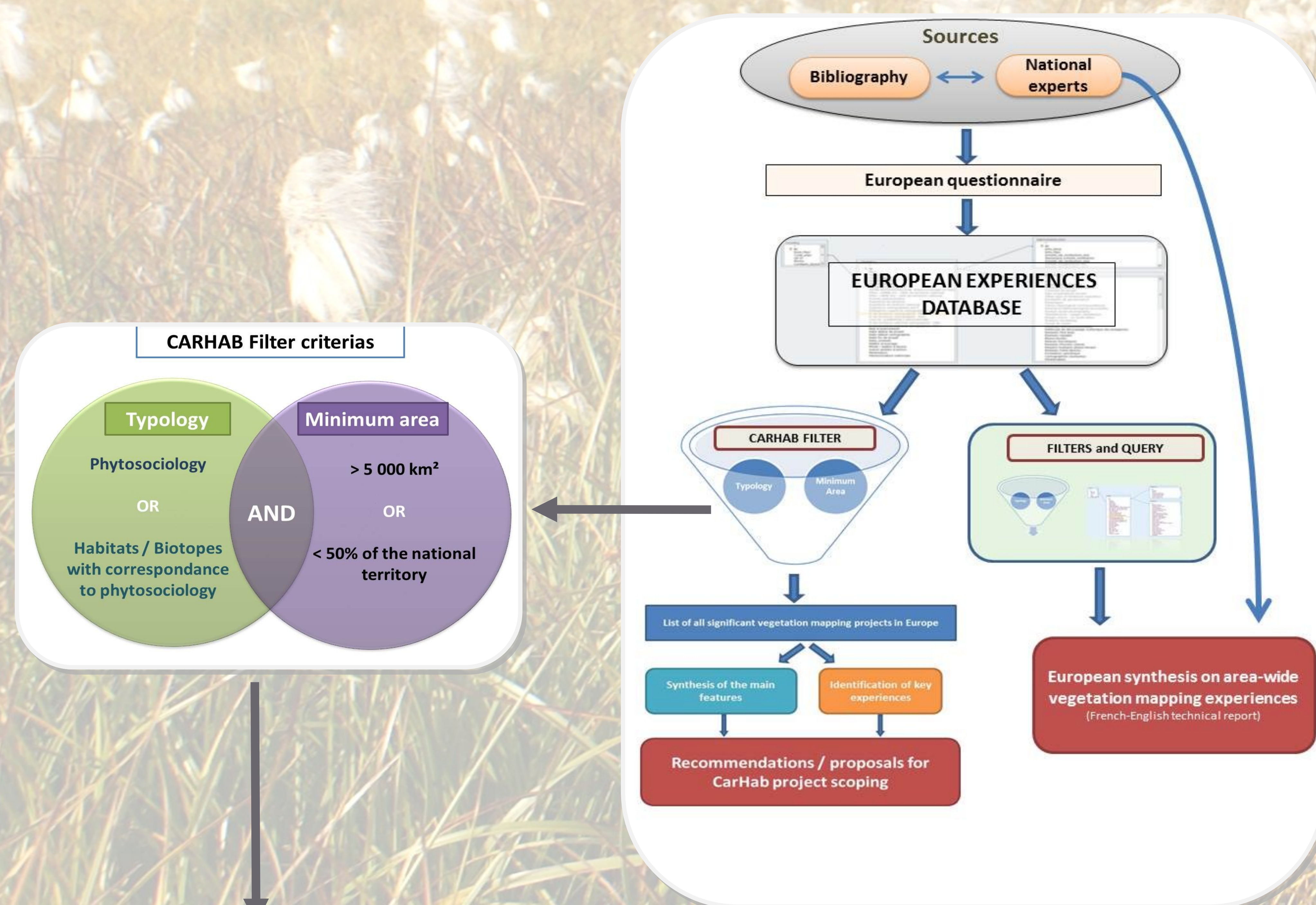
The objective of the project is to produce a state-of-the-art review that aims to be useful not only in the context of CARHAB but for any area-wide habitat mapping project.



CARHAB Steering committee

CBNx : Conservatoires Botaniques Nationaux
EVS-ISTHME : Université de St-Etienne – Environnement Ville Société
FCBN : Fédération des Conservatoires botaniques nationaux
IGN : Institut national de l'information géographique et forestière
IRSTEA : Institut national de recherche en sciences et technologies pour l'environnement et l'agriculture
MEDDTL : Ministère de l'Ecologie, du Développement durable, des Transports et du Logement
MNHN : Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle
PRES Clermont- Université : Pôle de Recherche et d'Enseignement Supérieur
SFP : Société Française de Phytosociologie
Université Bordeaux 1
UBO : Université de Bretagne Occidentale

A European synthesis on area-wide vegetation mapping experiences



Progress of the survey

Many responses and encouraging feedback

Keys figures (may 2012)

- 121 experts contacted
- 32 countries (52 replies)
- 124 experiences listed

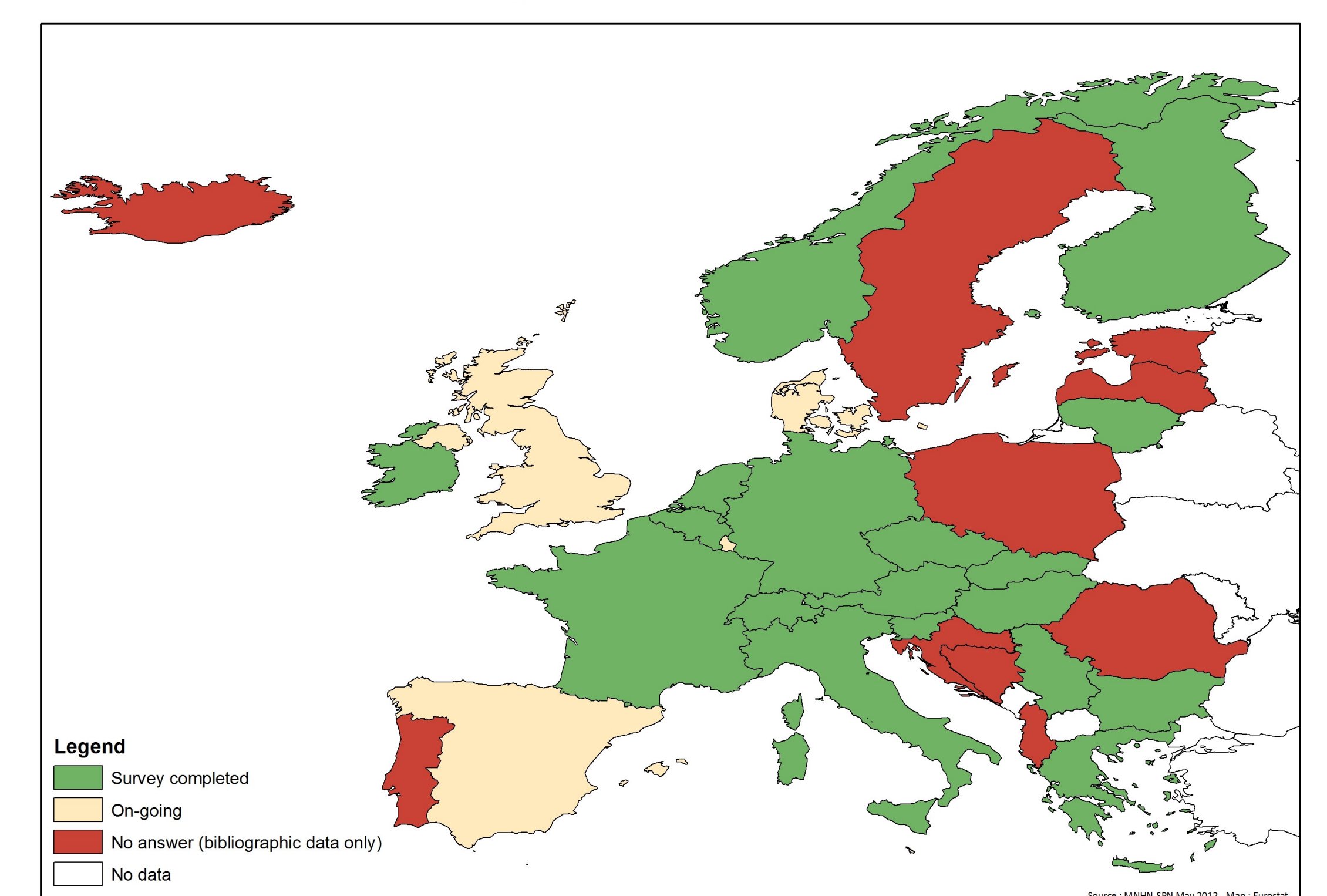
The project received very favourable feedback from the vegetation scientist community.

The response rate is satisfying (74% of the 32 countries) and the exchange with the partners highlighted a need for a comprehensive overview at European level.

The interviews notably revealed that significant projects could be poorly known outside, and even sometimes inside, their borders. Many of the respondents were interested in sharing both the existence and the outcomes of their project while others declared the results of the survey could be very useful for their future mapping schemes

For CARHAB steering committee, a report will be presented in October but the first results already provided some relevant insights into methodological issues.

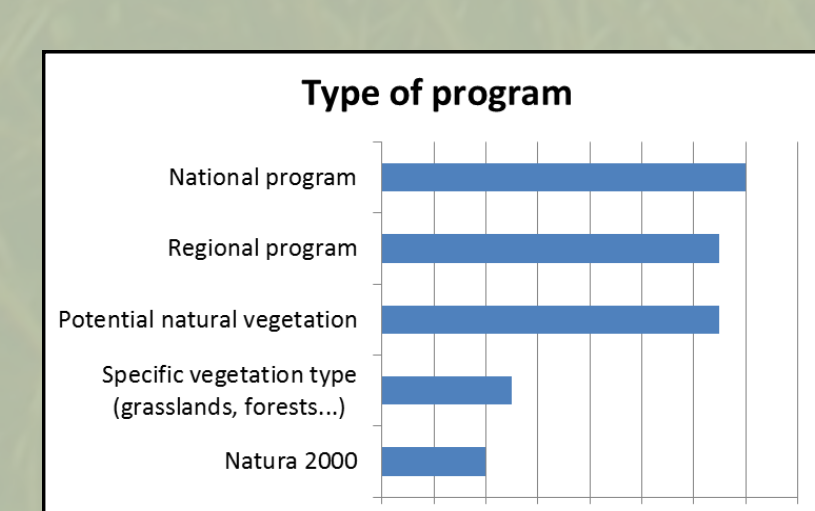
Progress of the survey



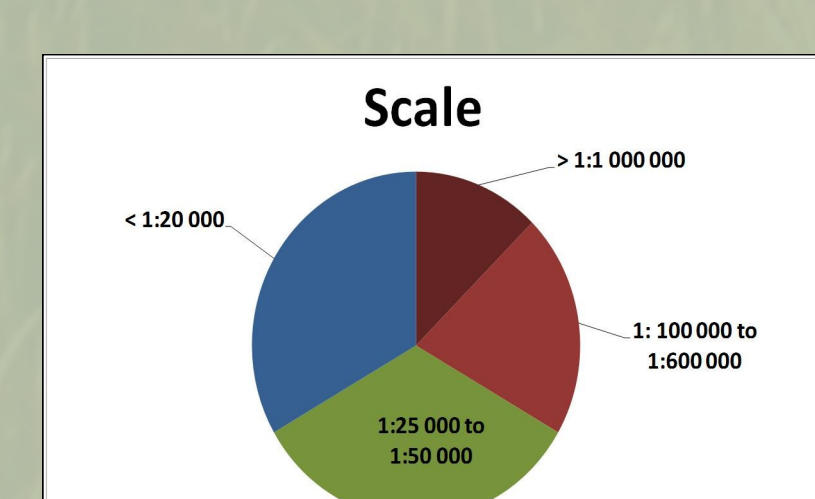
Preliminary results

In may 2012, 124 projects were inventoried of which 46 fulfilled the criterias

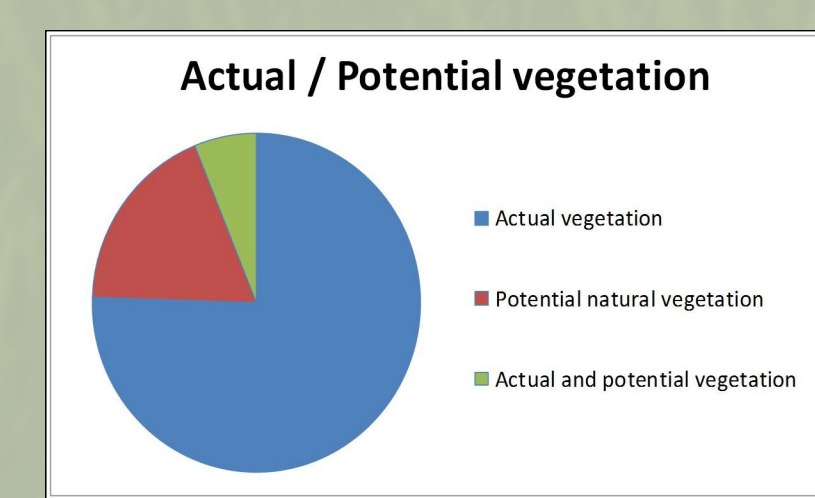
Analyses of these partial results highlighted differences of typology, scale and type of program.



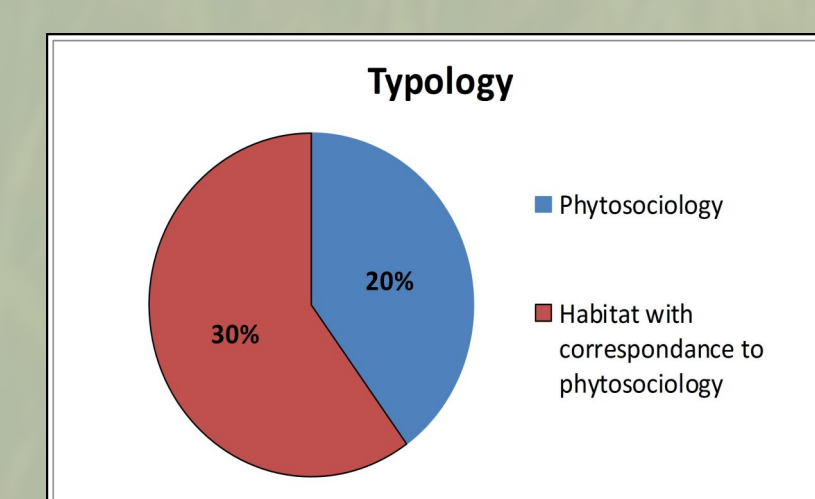
After applying the area/typology filter, 5 main categories of program were distinguished. The 'minimum area' filter excluded many « Specific vegetation type » (e.g. grasslands, forests) and N2000 programs (i.e. SCI and Ann.1 habitat inventories).



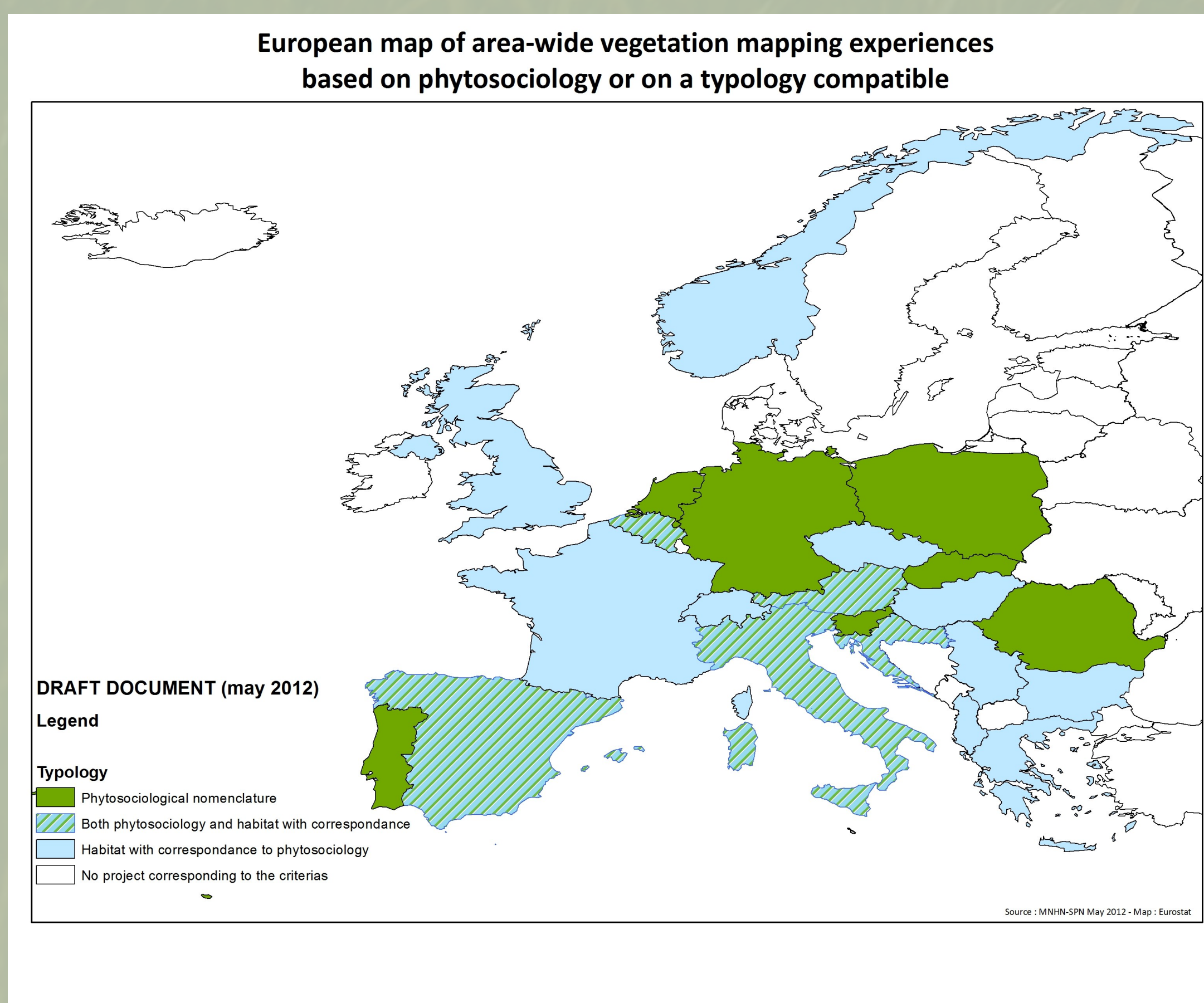
The restitution scale (or optimal use scale) is one of the most important factor for the elaboration of the methodology. We assume that 1:25 000 to 1:50 000 projects are more likely to provide relevant information for CARHAB. Out of the 16 experiences larger than or equal to 1:50 000 « key experiences » will eventually be identified.



CARHAB aims to combine both actual and potential vegetation. Very few experiences inventoried correspond to this criteria. Moreover a large majority of Potential natural vegetation maps are at small scale (e.g. 1:1 000 000) thus likely to be excluded from the final selection



Habitat or biotope-type classifications are more common than the ones using phytosociological nomenclature. However within the «habitat with correspondence to phytosociology» there is a wide range of typologies more or less related to phytosociology.



Perspectives :

Final conclusions expected by the end of 2012

- End of the survey : September 2012
- Presentation at CARHAB Meeting (Paris) : 17-19 October 2012
- Final report : end of 2012 expected to be published by the European Environment Agency in the Technical Report series

Call for contribution

We invite all European colleagues to contact us for a contribution to the survey by :

- Joining the refereed section to validate the information for your country/region
- Writing a 1-3 pages paper presenting area-wide vegetation mapping schemes in your country/region as part of the final report of the survey

CONTACT

Jean Ichter
(MNHN – SPN)
Laboratoire d'écologie générale
4 Avenue du Petit Château F-91800 Brunoy,
+33(0)1.60.47.92.02 ichter@mnhn.fr