Application of CBVM for the Identification and Protection of Threatened Habitats - Possibilities and Challenges

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Background

Numerous assessments of threatened habitats have been conducted in various European countries, e.g. Austria, Germany, Norway, Finland, Russia, Great Britain, Latvia, Estonia and Hungary.
The main criteria in the assessment have been threats caused by the reduction of the area of the habitats and changes in the quality of habitats.
In the Finnish assessment, which was finished in 2008, altogether 381 habitat units were distinguished, covering forests, mires, Baltic Sea and coastal areas, inland watercourses, rock outcrops, traditional agricultural habitats and fell areas.
• Most of the units were on the site type level according to the Finnish vegetation classification.

In forests also the age and naturalness of the tree cover was taken into account.

In mires, in addition to site types, also mesotoposes (massifs) were assessed
The scale of CBVM is far too small to assess site types or associations.

With its about 700 mapping units, European Vegetation Mapping gives a lot of information about needs for conservation.
• European Vegetation Map in 1:2,5 mill. Differs greatly from the 1:10 mill. version
• In the 1:2 500 000 map the legend shows quite a high diversity
• If we go to 1:1 million scale we can distinguish single patterns of vegetation and also the land use impact
A main problem in the mapping is the impact of land use.
• In CBVM scale we can show potential edaphic hot spots of biodiversity (dark green) on the basis of forestry classification.
• But when we see the reality, things do not completely match. Brown colour shows the real botanical diversity hot spots, but inside of them only small part of the area really has a high diversity.
• In the Norwegian Atlas there are maps showing both natural (potential) vegetation and land use impact, which we also should consider in CBVM.
In conclusion, CBVM will be a useful tool to reveal the most important regions for threatened habitats, and the global scale will support more detailed local or regional assessments of the state of habitats.