

Guidelines developed in the framework of “Norwegian Financial mechanism 2009-2014 programme’s “Capacity-Building and Institutional Cooperation between Latvian and Norwegian Public Institutions, Local and Regional Authorities” project „Integration of specially protected nature territories of Latvia in spatial plans”.



## **Guidelines for the process improvement of nature management plans and their interaction with the local spatial planning documents**

**Client: Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia**

**Contractor: SIA “Estonian, Latvian & Lithuanian Environment”  
in cooperation with law firm “COBALT”**

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INSPIRING  
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C O B A L T

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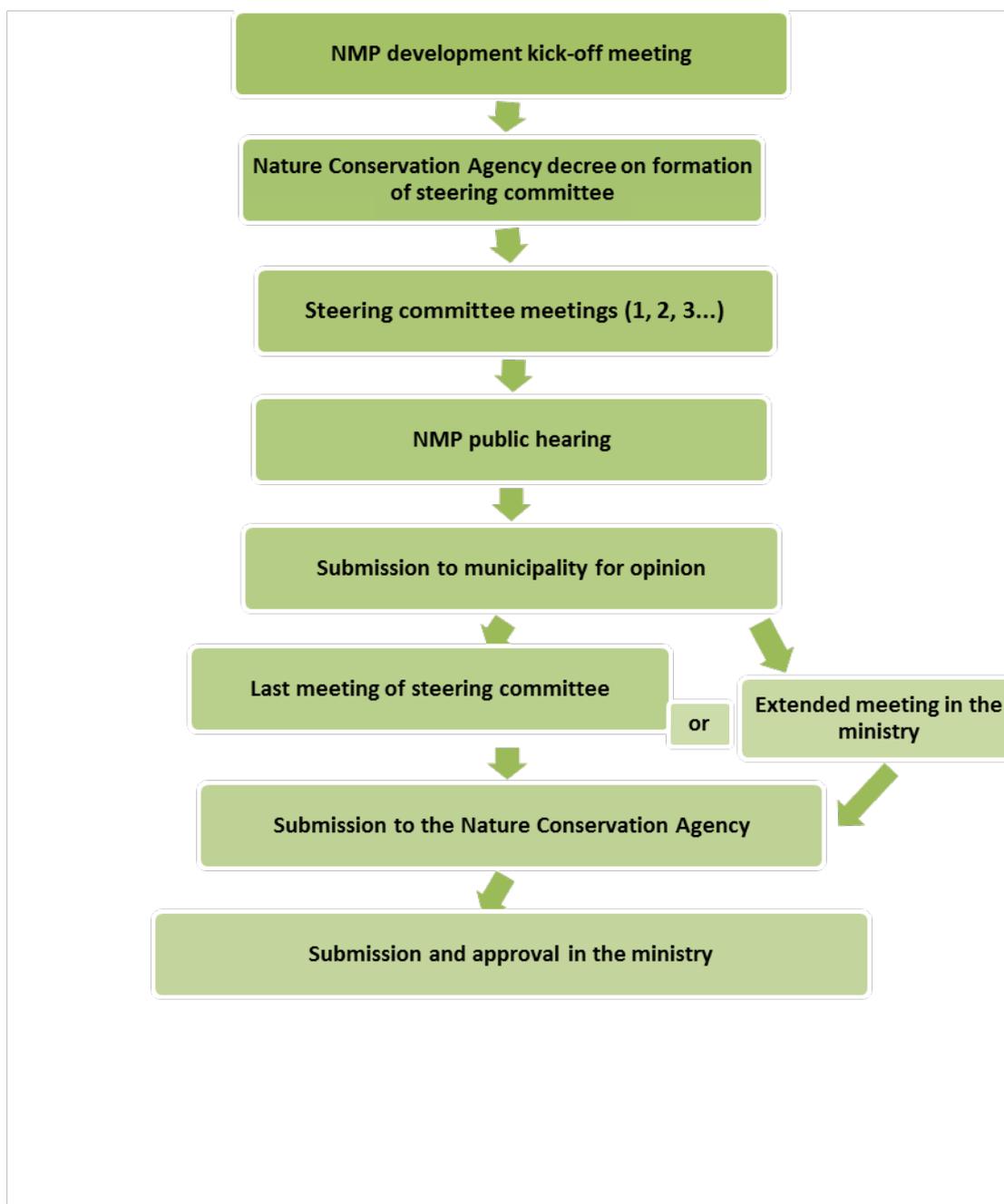
## **Introduction**

The guidelines were developed based on the “Conceptual solutions for the process improvement of nature management plans and their interaction with the local spatial planning documents” which were developed in the previous stage of the project by SIA “Estonian, Latvian & Lithuanian Environment” in cooperation with the law firm COBALT. The guidelines indicate and analyse possibilities for improvement of nature management plans (NMP) development in the framework of the current system and making changes in the current system. Guidelines is a non-binding document which is developed with the purpose of making further improvements in NMP development, therefore they do not provide one particular solution, but in some instances analyse several possible improvement alternatives. The next chapters provide brief insight in the recommended solutions, mostly in the form of schemes and processes. English version of the guidelines is a summary document based on the Latvian version, which includes broader and more descriptive overview of the recommended changes and is intended to be used by the relevant stakeholders in the process of NMP development and integration of NMP requirements in municipal spatial planning documents.

## 1. Improvement of NMP development process

### 1.1. Improvement of the process in the framework of the existing system

Taking into consideration that implementation of the new system is a time-consuming process, which requires political will and cooperation among various stakeholders, the possibility of improving the process in the framework of the existing system has been analysed. The existing process of NMP development, as it is set in the legislation, is depicted in the scheme below.



*Image No. 1. Current NMP development procedure*

In the framework of the above-depicted procedure it still possible to carry out measures that would facilitate a more effective NMP development. These measures include:

1. Development of model estimate, which can be carried out in the framework of the existing system and used when announcing tenders for development of NMP.
2. Determination of appropriate NMP development timeframe – oftentimes timeframes that are given for development of NMP are not realistic for development of well-detailed and argued NMP, therefore it is recommended to take into account that for big specially protected nature territories (SPNT) the NMP development timeframe should cover at least two vegetation periods.
3. Individual informing of landowners – individual informing of landowners, which should be done in cooperation with the ministry, Nature Conservation Agency or municipality/-ies, can facilitate a smoother NMP development process, as the landowners would have stronger “sense of ownership” in the procedure.
4. Development of guidelines for determination of functional zones.
5. Prioritization of management measures – it is recommended to use classification of management measures based on two levels – priority (compulsory) measures and recommended measures.
6. Municipalities provide their opinion within a month – current legal framework requires that municipalities provide their opinions on NMP within one month, yet in real life this period is oftentimes extended using argument that decision on opinion has to be made during the municipal council meeting; such form is not compulsory in accordance with the legislation, and municipality’s decision can be issued by a municipality officer, if it is foreseen in the municipal regulation. Accordingly the issuance of opinion within legally set timeframes shall be facilitated by all means.

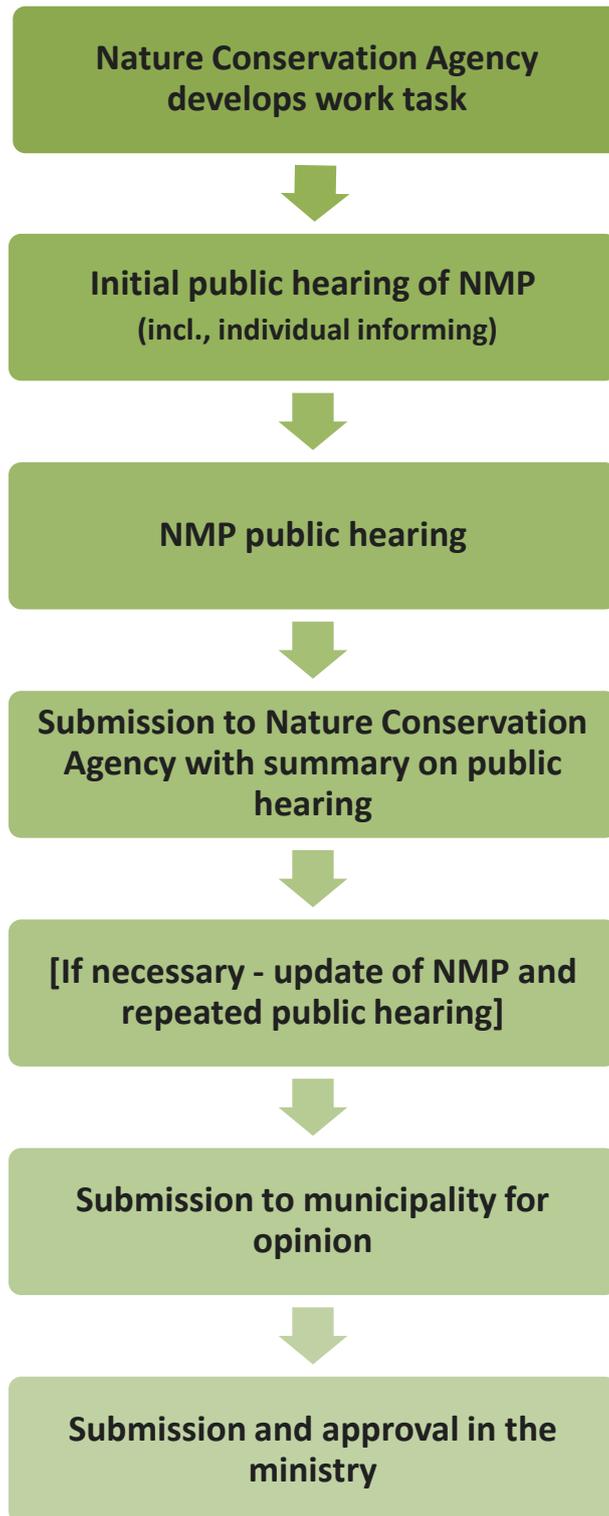
## **1.2. Improvement of the process making changes in the existing system**

In the framework of developing conceptual solutions for improvement of NMP development system a number of possible options were assessed, and as the most suitable legal solution adoption of NMP as a general administrative act (adopted by the minister of Environmental Protection and Regional Development) was identified. In order to introduce such system, a number of changes in existing legal acts shall take place, as well as new legislation has to be adopted.<sup>1</sup>

The recommended process for development of NMP is depicted in the scheme below.

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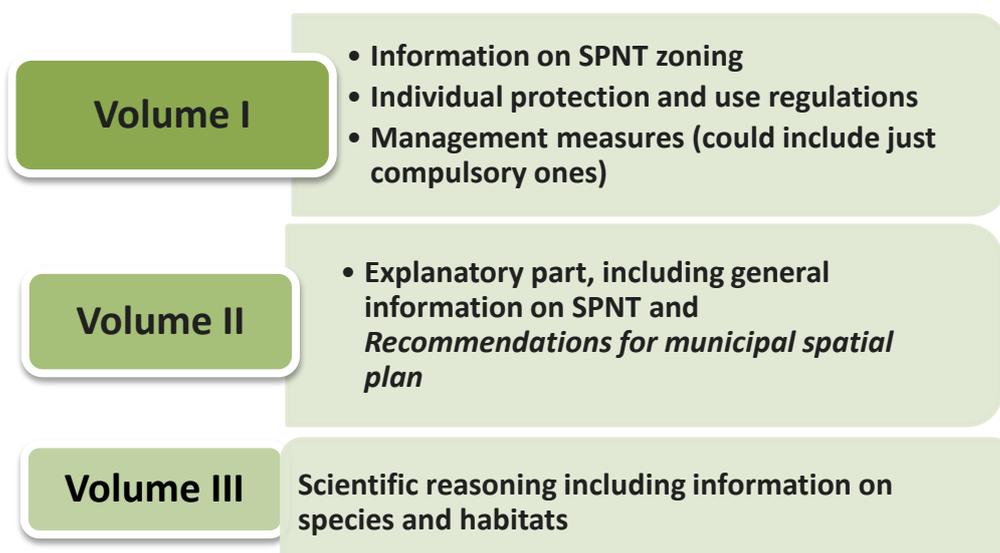
<sup>1</sup> More detailed account on necessary changes in legislation is provided in Latvian edition of the guidelines.



*Image No. 2. Recommended NMP development procedure*

## 2. Recommendations for changes in NMP structure and contents

In addition to the proposed changes in the NMP development procedure, it is also recommended to review the existing structure and requirements on contents, making NMP more “user-friendly”, comprehensible and eliminating unnecessary information and data. The recommended structure is depicted in the scheme below.



### ***Image No. 3. Recommended structure of NMP***

The above-provided separation in volumes is a recommended solution, though some issues are still to be discussed – e.g. all pros and cons of setting compulsory management measures and interests of all stakeholders in this respect should be analysed before determining whether division of management measures in compulsory and recommended is the best solution.

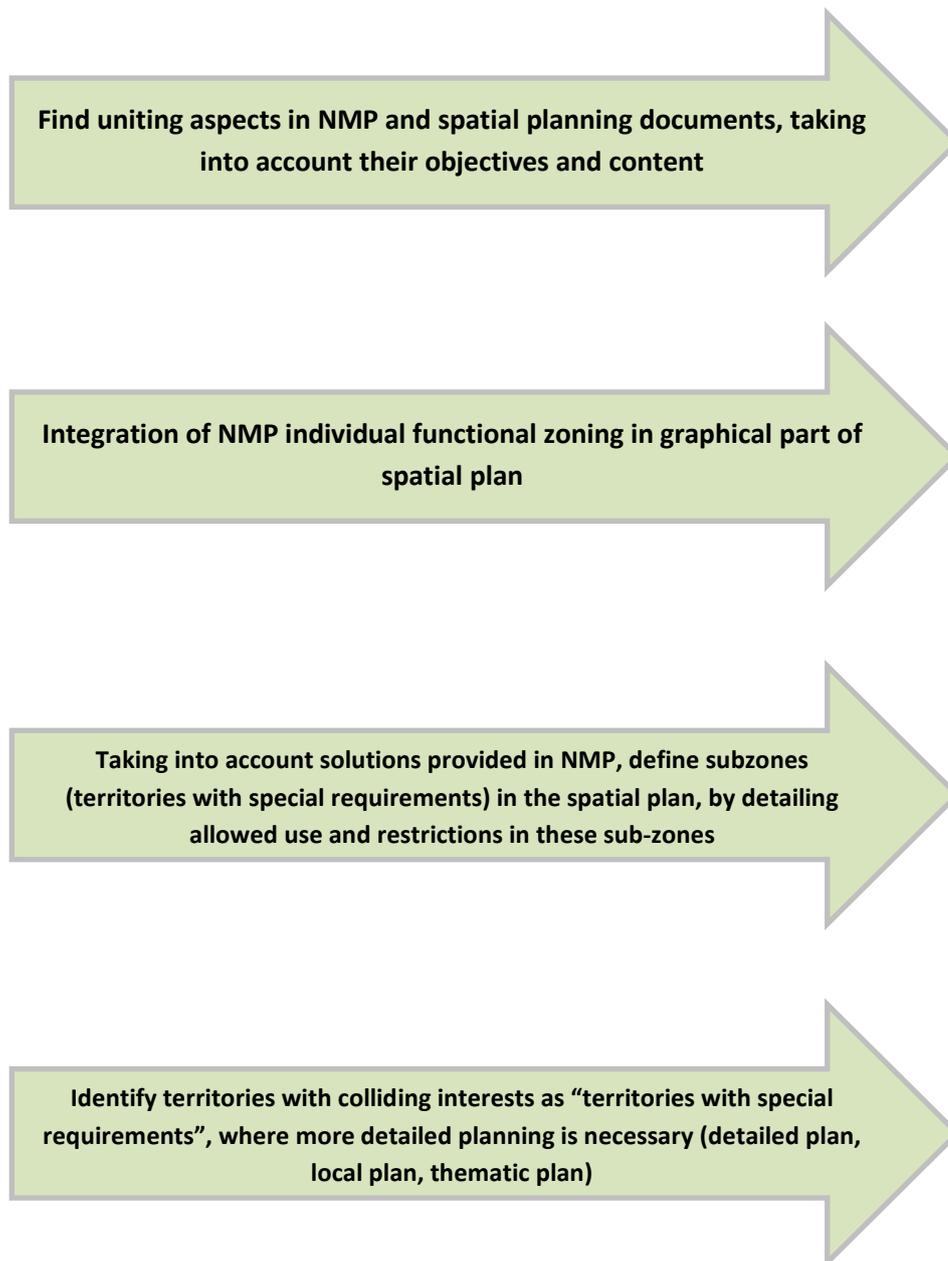
Turning to contents of the NMP, as it is required in the framework of the current legislation, some of the information at issue is not relevant or is not available in the required level of detail, e.g. socio-economic information on the territory, which in practice is available only on the level of municipalities, therefore it does not represent situation in SPNT. It is also recommended to exclude chapter on overview of applicable legislation, as in practice it is merely formal and requirements of the most relevant legal acts are analysed in other chapters that refer to particular aspects (water management, species, habitats, etc.).

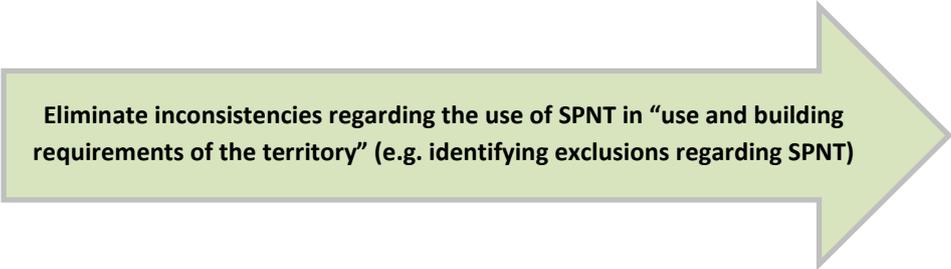
## 3. Possibilities of integration in municipal spatial planning documents

### 3.1. In the framework of the existing system

The idea of possible ways to integrate requirements of NMP to spatial planning documents, and especially – in municipal spatial plans – has been discussed before. Based on the previous practical experience in developing NMP and municipal planning documents, as well

as various discussions, the possibilities of integrating the NMP requirements in planning documents without amending the governing legislation are listed below.

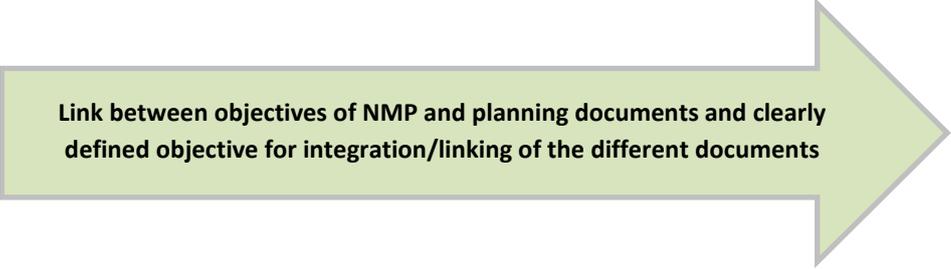




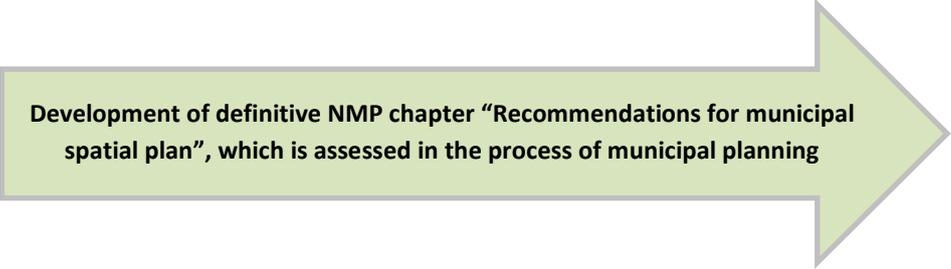
**Eliminate inconsistencies regarding the use of SPNT in “use and building requirements of the territory” (e.g. identifying exclusions regarding SPNT)**

### **3.2. Making changes in the existing system**

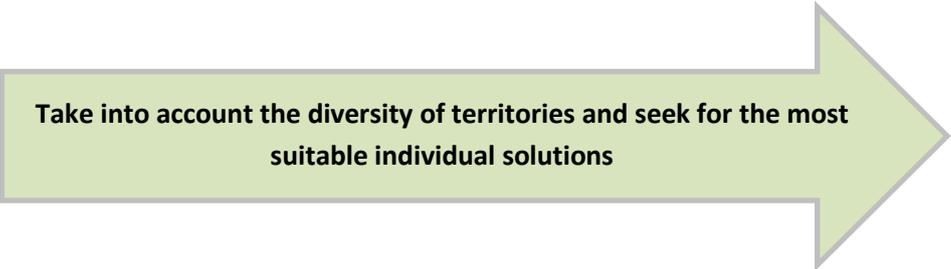
The possible integration ideas that are listed in the chapter above can also be practiced after changes in the existing system are implemented, taking into account the content of municipal spatial planning documents, especially – municipal spatial plan. This chapter lists identified solutions to ensure better integration possibilities requiring changes in existing regulation and system.



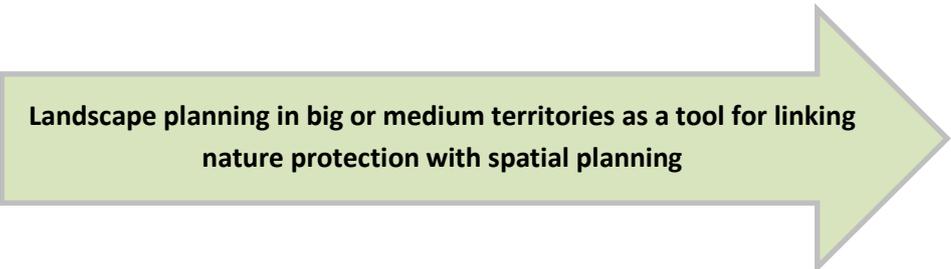
**Link between objectives of NMP and planning documents and clearly defined objective for integration/linking of the different documents**



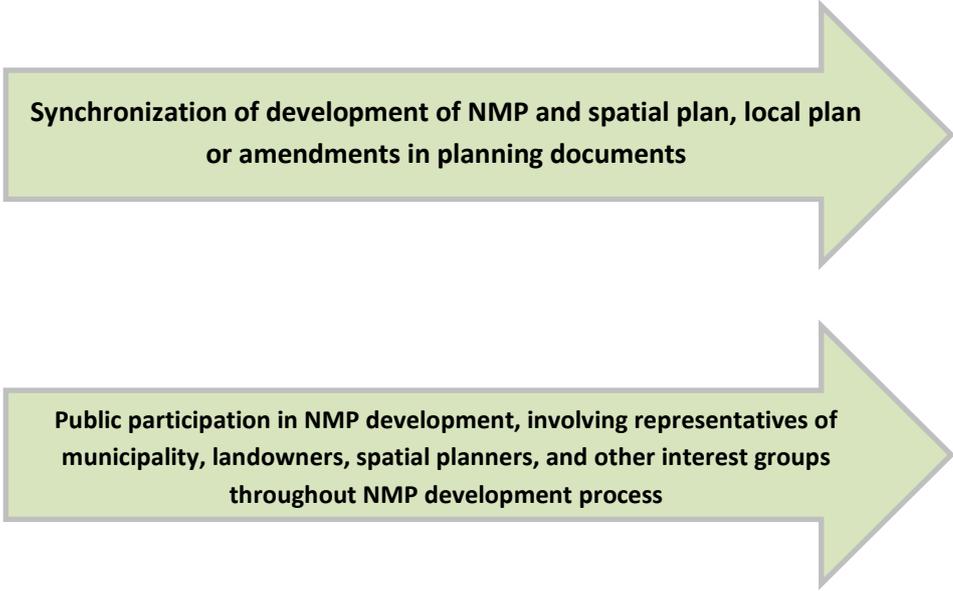
**Development of definitive NMP chapter “Recommendations for municipal spatial plan”, which is assessed in the process of municipal planning**



**Take into account the diversity of territories and seek for the most suitable individual solutions**



**Landscape planning in big or medium territories as a tool for linking nature protection with spatial planning**



**4. The most important aspects to be considered, improving NMP development process**

