Appendix 1: Summary of Digital Interviews

During the investigative process 145 Organisations and/or persons (experts in the field) were approached with a request to complete a digital interview. In order to streamline the process, this took the form of a stand-alone application. This enabled the user to rank criteria in terms of importance and then within the "level of importance" to rank the sub-selection. In total 10 responses were received via the digital interview. In addition 4 responses were received where persons did not make use of the digital interview application.

Overview of the response to the digital interviews.

A summary of the results is presented here. The results of the open-ended questions have been incorporated, in the thesis.

Ecological Networks:

1a) Are you familiar with ecological networks?

Yes	No	No response
10		

1b) If yes. Please rate your familiarity:

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not at all	No response
4	5	1			

2a) Do you know of any ecological network(s) in any state of development?

Yes	No	No response
9	1	

2b) Where is(are) this(these) ecological network(s) located?

Various countries in Europe: (Hungary, Poland, Netherlands, Flanders, (Belgium) UK, Spain, Italy, Germany, Ukraine, Moldova, Poland, Russia: Moldova, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ural, Altai-Sajan)

USA, several states e.g. Phoenix, Arizona

And TFCA's in Southern Africa

2c) What is/are the network(s) called?

Vlaams ecologisch netwerk, Peace Parks, Ecologische hoofdstructuur (EHS), Econets, greenways, National ecological networks, Naturforbindsele, Redes ecologicas PEEN, Penisula Europe (Harrison -Ecological Art, EECONET, RAMSAR, Migrations Corridors, European Life Line Danube-Drava-Mura, different regional initiatives (UK, Italy).

2d) What stage of development is it in?

Initial	Planning	Design	Implementation	Running and management	No response
		2	3		2

Remarks: some respondents selected multiple development stages

2e) What scale level does it function on?

None	Local	Regional	National	Continental	Global	Multi-level	No response
	1	3	2	1	1		1

Remarks: one respondent indicated local or regional

3) Do you think fragmentation needs to be combated?

Yes	No	No response
10		

4a) Do you agree that the most important species to protect and conserve are those on the endangered and threatened lists (e.g. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species)?

Yes	No	No response
2	5	1

Remarks: 2 respondents submitted multiple answers

Geographical Information Systems

1a) Are you familiar with the GIS (geographical Information systems)?

Yes	No	No response
10		

1b) If Yes, Please rate your familiarity:

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not at all	No response
2	3	4	1		

2) In what stages of an ecological network can GIS be used in?

None	Initial	Planning	Design	Implementation	Running and management	No response
						9

Remarks: one respondent selected multiple stages

Criteria:

In this section respondents were asked to give their opinion about general criteria for ecological networks.

The respondents were asked to study the diagram for the argumentation for the criteria for an ecological network,

1a) Do you agree with it?

Yes	No	No response
2	7	1

2) Which of the following would you rank as most important?

Threat	Distribution	Naturalness	No response
3	3		3

Remarks: one respondent marked this question as not relevant.

3) Which of the following would you rank as most important?

Species Criteria	Ecosystem Criteria	Site Criteria	No response
3	3	1	3

4) Rank the following set of broad criteria in order of importance;

Criteria	Rank				
	Very important	Important	Less Important	Not Important	No Response
Biodiversity	4	2	2	0	2
Distribution (of species)	2	6	0	0	2
Endemic (to the area)	4	3	0	1	2
Fragility (rate of)	1	6	1	0	2
Fragmentation (extent of)	6	3	0	0	1
Functional relationships in the landscape	6	2	1	0	1
Habitat (state of)	1	8	0	0	1
Human activity (extent of disturbance)	5	4	0	0	1
Key species (determined from ICUN red data book)	0	6	2	0	2
Landscape ecological structure	3	4	2	0	1
Location (of ecological network)	2	1	6	0	1
Migratory routes (of species)	5	4	0	0	1
Minimum viable population size (of species)	5	2	2	0	1
Mobility / dispersal capacity (of species)	5	3	1	0	1
Mutual relation between sites	2	7	0	0	1
Natural structure	0	8	1	0	1
Naturalness (of possible site)	0	4	5	0	1
Negative external influences	1	6	2	0	1
Projection status (species, ecosystem, landscape)	2	4	3	0	1
Proximity (core to core)	2	6	1	0	1
Quality of nature	0	4	5	0	1
Rarity (species, ecosystem, landscape)	3	4	1	1	1
Representativeness (species, ecosystem, landscape)	0	5	3	0	2
Size / area (core / corridor / buffer)	4	3	2	0	1
Spatial heterogeneity (of core)	1	6	1	0	2
Sustainability (of ecological network)	5	3	0	0	2
Threat (to species & ecosystem)	2	7	0	0	1
Urban development (influence to ecological network)	3	2	4	0	1
Urban emission (proximity & type)	1	6	1	0	2
Vulnerability (of system)	2	6	0	0	2

Questions 5 - 8 are summarised in the group pairwise comparison matrix in chapter 5, table 5.2.

9a) Are there any criteria that you think have been left out?

Yes	No	No response
3	5	2

Core areas:

In this section the respondents were asked to provide their opinion about core areas in ecological networks.

1) What types of core areas would you include in an ecological network?
(check the boxes which you think should be included.)

Types of core areas	**Yes**	**No**	**No response**
Ramsar areas,	1		
World Heritage sites	1		
The Special Areas of Conservation under the Habitat Directive,			
Areas of Special Conservation Interest,	1		
areas designated under the Barcelona and Helsinki Conventions,			
the areas that are important for the species on the IUCN list that are threatened, vulnerable, etc.	1		
natural and almost-natural areas larger than 1000 hectare,	1		
natural and almost-natural areas smaller than 1000 hectare,			
semi-natural areas covering ecosystems or species that are threatened, larger than 1000 ha.,	1		
semi-natural areas covering ecosystems or species that are threatened, smaller than 1000 ha,			
multi-functional areas covering ecosystems or species that are threatened, larger than 1000 ha,			
multi-functional areas covering ecosystems or species that are threatened, smaller than 1000 ha,			
National Parks, or the parts of the National Parks that will fit the criteria,	1		
Important Bird Areas (IBA),	1		
“ecologically sensitive areas” as designated in the UK,			
MAB Biosphere reserves.			
Game reserves			
Nature Reserves,	1		
Conservation areas,	1		

Sanctuaries			
Others	8		1

2) Would you include areas of scenic beauty?

Yes	No	No response
3	5	2

3) Would you include areas of natural value?

Yes	No	No response
8		2

4a) If you measured natural value of a region by looking at the total number of ecosystems and species would you be satisfied with the result?

Yes	No	No response
	8	2

Corridors:

In this section the respondents were asked about what their ideals are for ecological corridors.

1) What is the ideal width of a corridor?

Multiple dimensions were specified by the respondents ranging from a few centimetres to 10 kms.

2a) What type of corridor shape would you suggest is most feasible, generally?

Linear Corridor	Stepping Stone Corridor	Landscape Corridor	None of these	No Response
	1	5	2	2

3) What type of functional typology do you think is the most important?

Migration Corridor	Commuting Corridor	Dispersal Corridor	All Equally Important	No Response
	1	1	7	1

4) What scale level do you think will be most effective for implementation?

None	Local	Regional	National	Continental	Global	Multi-level	No response
		6				2	2

5) Do you think that Corridors are beneficial for species conservation?

Yes	No	No response
8		2

6) Pick the option you think is most appropriate:

Corridors should be _____ specific.

Species	Ecosystem	Species and ecosystem	Not	No Response
1	1	6		2

Buffer zones:

In this section the respondents were asked about buffer zones and their possible role in ecological networks.

1a) Do you think buffer zones are necessary?

Yes	No	No response
8	1	1

2a) Should buffer zones be core specific?

Yes	No	No response
5	2	3

3) What activities would you not allow in a Buffer Zone?

Industry, polluting activities, mining, excavation, high intensive land use.

Spatial Dimensions:

In this section the respondents were asked a number of questions regarding the spatial dimensions of various elements of an ecological network. They were asked to assume that the questions relate to a species NON-specific network. That is a network without key-species which determine it's planning.

1) What do you think is an adequate size for a core area?

< 500ha	500 - 1000ha	1000 - 2000ha	2000 - 5000 ha	5000ha <	No Response
1		2		4	3

2) What kind of shape would be ideal for a core area?

Square	Rectangular	Circular	Hexagonal	Irregular	Other	No Response
		1	1	2	3	3

3) What is the minimum size for a core area?

The respondents stated that it was not possible to answer this question, as the size is function and species dependent.

4) What is the maximum distance between core areas?

The respondents stated that it was not possible to answer this question, as the size is function, corridor and species.

5a) Would your answers differ if the core area were species specific?

Yes	No	No response
5	2	3

6) What is an optimum width for a corridor?

< 10m	20m	50m	200m	500m	1000m	More	No Response
			1	1	2	2	4

7) What is an optimum length for a corridor?

< 10m	50m	200m	500m	1000m	2000m	More	No Response
				2	1	2	5

8) What are the maximum dimensions (length & width) for a corridor and why?

There is no maximum, but corridors should be core to core and are species dependent. As they are used to ensure connectivity.

9a) Would your answers differ if the corridors were species specific?

Yes	No	No response
3	3	4

10) What percentage of the network must be connected?

100%, as much as possible, otherwise not part of the network.

11) Do you have any further comments on spatial dimensions?

Generally the respondents felt that this was very much species dependent. Also that GIS is crucial in helping to plan protected areas.