



Nature & Biodiversity

LIFE

PROJECTS 2014



LIFE Environment

Environment



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION
ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE-GENERAL**

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LIFE Nature & Biodiversity 2014: Commission funds 39 new projects in 18 countries with €100 million

The European Commission has approved funding for 39 new LIFE Nature & Biodiversity (LIFE NAT) projects under the Environment sub-programme of LIFE, the European Union's fund for environment and climate action. The grants have been awarded to beneficiaries in 18 Member States, and will support the implementation of the Birds and Habitats directives and the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020. The projects are led by 'beneficiaries', or project promoters, based in Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. In total, they represent an investment of €153.9 million, of which the EU will provide some €100 million.

LIFE Nature & Biodiversity in 2014

LIFE Nature & Biodiversity projects support the implementation of the Birds and Habitats directives and the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020. Of the 289 proposals received under the call for proposals in 2014, the Commission selected 39 projects for funding. These projects will be carried out by partnerships of conservation bodies, government authorities and other parties located across 18 Member States. In total, they represent an investment of €153.9 million, of which the EU will provide some €100 million.

The majority (31) are Nature projects, contributing to the implementation of the Birds and/or Habitats directives and the Natura 2000 network of protected sites. Under this category, the Commission has allocated €83.4 million, of a total budget of €125.9 million. The other eight are Biodiversity projects, a category for pilot schemes that tackle wider biodiversity issues in support of EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020. Here the Commission will provide €16.7 million of an overall budget of €28.1 million.

Background

The LIFE programme is the EU's new funding instrument for the environment and climate action. The general objective of LIFE is to contribute to the implementation, updating and development of EU environmental and climate policy and legislation by co-financing projects with European added value.

The budget for LIFE 2014–2020 is set at €3.4 billion in current prices, administered through the Environment

and Climate Action sub-programmes. The Environment strand of the LIFE programme covers three priority areas: Nature & Biodiversity; Environment & Resource Efficiency; and Environmental Governance & Information. The 'Climate Action' strand covers: climate change mitigation; climate change adaptation; and climate governance & information. The Commission launches one call for LIFE project proposals per year.

LIFE Nature & Biodiversity (sub-programme for Environment) is similar to the former LIFE+ Nature & Biodiversity strand. It will co-finance action grants for best practice, pilot and demonstration projects that contribute to the implementation of the Birds and Habitats directives and the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, and the development, implementation and management of the Natura 2000 network.

More information on each LIFE Nature & Biodiversity project is available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm>

Contact details for the relevant national authorities can be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/contact/nationalcontact/life_nat.htm

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Location	Project number	Title of project
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	LIFE14 NAT/UK/000467 SciuriousLIFE	Sciuriosity - Evolving IAS grey squirrel management techniques in the UK

Restoration of the sterlet populations in the Austrian Danube

Project background

The sterlet (*Acipenser ruthenus*) is the smallest species of the Danube sturgeon and resides for its whole life-cycle in freshwater without the need to migrate to the Black Sea. Sterlets are still present in very small quantities in the Upper Danube whereas the large anadromous sturgeon species became extinct in the last century due to overfishing and migration barriers. Sturgeons are an indicator of human impact on aquatic ecosystems and the species they host.

The Austrian population of the sterlet is threatened with extinction as only very few individuals remain. Their extremely low densities mean that they are at the critical limit for self-reproduction.

Project objectives

The LIFE Sterlet project will apply innovative methods for breeding indigenous sterlets ahead of releasing them into the wild. The release of the genetic indigenous juvenile sterlets will support the wild population by reaching the required population size for sustainable natural reproduction.

Target areas for the release are the two free-flowing sections of the Austrian Danube in the Wachau and the Danube National Park regions, the latter including the Morava river at the Austro-Slovakian border. These areas are home to suitably diverse habitats that offer the greatest chance of sustaining populations of the sterlet in the long term.

Furthermore, the project aims to identify sensitive habitats in the project areas and provide recommendations for their conservation. The LIFE project will complement other LIFE projects that have been carried out on the Austrian Danube and have improved the project areas.

Expected results

- Creation of a genetic database including a hatchery and wild stocks;
- Establishment of a rearing container and hatching of 300 000 eggs per year over five years;
- Annual release of at least 10 000 juveniles in every project area over five years;
- Establishment of a population of at least 4 000 reproducing adults in the Danube National Park - Morava river system and 2 000 specimens in the Wachau area; and

LIFE14 NAT/AT/000057

LIFE Sterlet



Beneficiary:

Name of beneficiary

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Thomas FRIEDRICH

Duration of project:

76 months (01/09/2015 – 31/12/2021)

Total budget in euro:

907,468.00

EU contribution in euro:

544,468.00

- Development of a management plan for protecting identified key habitats, restoring new habitats, managing populations, developing release strategies and evaluating protection status through international participation.

LIFE Salzachauen - Riparian Forest Restoration

Project background

The Natura 2000 site "Salzachauen" covers an area of 1 145 ha and is located on the right side of the River Salzach. It stretches from the north of the town of Salzburg up to the border to the Upper Austria region. The Natura 2000 site includes an SCI site and a SPA site (Salzachauen), which largely overlap.

Currently, the ecological conditions in the Salzachauen are unfavourable and the natural potential of the region is not satisfactorily developed. The main problems are intensive forestry associated with a high share of non-natural vegetation, insufficient morphologic dynamics, hunting, lack of alluvial water bodies, as well as unsatisfactory cooperation with the fishery and tourism sectors.

Project objectives

The project aims to significantly improve the condition of the Salzachauen as one of Austria's most important alluvial forests. This will be achieved by using the high potential of Salzachauen's habitats and species and by adopting sustainable tourism practices. The project will carry out conservation measures on 118 ha of alluvial forest ecosystem and optimise natural processes for target habitats and species.

The specific objectives of the project are to:

1. Optimise the habitat qualities of the alluvial forests in the Weitwörther Au;
2. Improve hydrological and morphological dynamics;
3. Carry out ecological wildlife management instead of trophy hunting;
4. Increase the spawning grounds for amphibians;
5. Transform the "Ausee" into a rich habitat for fish and birds; and
6. Inform visitors about Natura 2000 conservation objectives.

Expected results

- Alluvial forest:
 - 118 ha of alluvial forests purchased;
 - 60 ha of the habitat 91E0 developed and safeguarded;
 - 13 ha of the habitat 91F0 developed and safeguarded;
 - 26 ha of near-natural alluvial forests purchased and then left to natural processes;
 - 16 ha of plantations transformed;
 - 55 ha of forests left to natural processes after initial measures;

LIFE14 NAT/AT/000496
LIFE Salzachauen



Beneficiary:

Name of beneficiary

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Bernhard RIEHL

Duration of project:

63 months (01/10/2015 – 31/12/2020)

Total budget in euro:

10,490,169.00

EU contribution in euro:

6,294,101.00

- The whole alluvial forest of the Weitwörther Au, 118 ha in size, left over to natural processes and permanently safeguarded; and
- Ecological wildlife management on 118 ha.
- The Ausee:
 - The Ausee (10.5 ha) developed into a typical alluvial water body through revitalisation;
 - Ending of fishing; and
 - Established population of the European bitterling (*Rhodeus amarus*) in the Ausee.
- 4 ha of lowered alluvial areas;
- 1.5 km of restored Reitbach brook (local measures, removal of riparian vegetation along 300 m, broadening of banks through lowering the area);
- Improving of the whole Reitbach brook between the Salzach ramp and its junction into the Salzach over 3.2 km;
- Five new spawning grounds for amphibians; and
- New LIFE infrastructure for visitors.

LIFE IN QUARRIES

Project background

Quarries can act as stepping stones and play a significant role in regulating green infrastructure in landscapes. In highly urbanised landscapes quarries are an exceptional opportunity to maintain rare and threatened transient habitats that host pioneer species.

Project objectives

The LIFE IN QUARRIES project aims to develop biodiversity in active quarries by:

- Testing and defining methods for the restoration, maintenance and management of pioneer species and habitats;
- Testing and defining methods for preparing the physical quarry infrastructure during exploitation processes, in order to facilitate the establishment of restoration plans that will increase ecosystem services and biodiversity following exploitation;
- Identifying lock-in situations and challenges for biodiversity development in active quarries such as legal constraints, lack of biodiversity management awareness etc;
- Developing the awareness of quarry managers, public administration managers and other local stakeholders for biodiversity management; and
- Demonstrating best practices of adapting management throughout the complete exploitation process for up to 24 Belgian quarries and sharing this experience in the European context.

Expected results

- Coherent ecological management for 24 quarries in Wallonia. Development of inventories and management plans for these 24 quarries.
- Active management of:
 - 12 ha of temporary ponds and 120 temporary ponds of 5-25 m²;
 - 10 banks of loose materials for solitary bees and sand martin reproductions;
 - 5 ha of screes with pioneer vegetation of the *Alyssa sedion*;
 - 96 fauna shelters;
 - Four translocated populations of *Bufo calamita* and four translocated populations of *Triturus cristatus* to suitable quarry habitats in the project sites; and
 - Successful introduction of a population of *Bombina variegata*.
- Permanent actions:
 - Creation of 24 ponds larger than 25 m²;
 - Creation of adequate conditions for the installation of 400 m of reedbeds on deep quarry lakes;

LIFE14 NAT/BE/000364

LIFE IN QUARRIES



Beneficiary:

Name of beneficiary

Federation des Industries Extractives SCRL

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Name of contact person

Michel CALOZET

Duration of project:

60 months (01/10/2015 – 30/09/2020)

Total budget in euro:

5,036,188.00

EU contribution in euro:

2,825,558.00

- Installation of 16 tern platforms;
- Securing four galleries for bats;
- Installation of 50 ha of infrastructure for pasture grazing and diversification of habitats;
- Floral diversification and 10 ha mowed grasslands; and
- Setting up of 8 km of linear screes adapted to reptiles.
- Training for CEOs and staff members of the 24 Walloon quarries and six EU quarries, including workshops, development of factsheets and guidelines for the creation and management of temporary habitats in quarries.
- External communication, demonstration and dissemination, including information panels, website, leaflets and newsletters for the general public as well as information material for other EU quarries and experience-sharing events with relevant partners in France, Germany and the Netherlands.
- Research:
 - Inventories of actual and potential ecosystem services provided by the extractive industry;
 - An analysis of the quarry network contribution to green infrastructure; and
 - Analysis of the Walloon and EU legal framework.

Bright Future for Black Vulture in Bulgaria

Project background

The most serious problem for vultures in Bulgaria today, is the critically low number of populations and their isolation. In spite of two decades of conservation efforts, the WWF Greece Dardia project showed that the number of breeding pairs is not increasing and remains around 20 pairs. Another threat is unsuitable livestock breeding practices resulting in inaccessible food sources for vultures. Availability of nesting sites is another factor.

Project objectives

The project aims to facilitate the return of the Eurasian black vulture to Bulgaria through enhancing EU expertise, improving the conditions, limiting threats, and increasing national capacity. The goal is to establish a nesting population of the Eurasian black vulture in Bulgaria, in order to restore the connections among the sub-populations of this species on the Balkans (Greece), Crimea, the Alps and the Iberian Peninsula, aiding the recreation of a much more sustainable pan-European population. The project will reach a new milestone in the implementation of the Balkan Vulture Action Plan, while also strengthening the core expertise on vultures in the country and the collaboration of Spanish and Austrian vulture experts with Bulgarian NGOs and academic and research communities.

Expected results

- Some 30 ha of land plots purchased for agro-silvo-pastoral complexes and fallow deer;
- Four existing aviaries expanded, another reconstructed, the service premises modernised, an external washing premise established, and a refrigerating premise equipped at the Wildlife Rescue and Breeding Centre of Green Balkans;
- Forty-eight Eurasian black vultures successfully translocated and released from three target sites in Bulgaria;
- A first wild Eurasian black vulture breeding attempt in the Balkan Mountains and/or Struma River Valley recorded for more than 60 years;
- Groups of five to 10 Eurasian black vultures settled in the Balkan Mountains and the Struma River valley;
- Some 60 griffon vultures released to supplement and support the adaptation and survival of the black vultures;
- Five new supplementary feeding sites established along the expected flyways of the released Eurasian black vultures;

LIFE14 NAT/BG/000649

Vultures back to LIFE



Beneficiary:

Name of beneficiary

Green Balkans - Stara Zagora NGO

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Name of contact person

Elena KMETOVA

Duration of project:

84 months (16/07/2015 – 15/07/2022)

Total budget in euro:

3,483,411.00

EU contribution in euro:

2,607,648.00

- Improved nesting conditions for the Eurasian black vulture through the planting of 2 000 saplings and the creation of 60 artificial nests;
- Three to five agro-silvo-pastoral complexes established, arranged according to the Spanish “dehesa” style, and long-term management started at a Natura 2000 site;
- A nucleus of 200 fallow deer free-ranging in one of the agro-silvo pastoral complexes;
- A farmer’s union established, providing a set of benefits for the farmers resulting in a direct increase of their profit and livestock numbers;
- Two flocks of sheep (250 heads each) and a herd of 100 cows established and accommodated to promote extensive animal husbandry practices;
- Two newly formed European ground squirrel (*Spermophilus citellus*) colonies of at least 300 individuals each;
- A total of 120 samples collected and analysed for lead, pesticide and antibiotic content;
- Around 170 of the most dangerous electricity pylons for Eurasian black vultures isolated; and
- A report on the socio-economic effect and the effect on ecosystems, as well as a database of the released Eurasian black vulture and monitoring reports for the Eurasian black vultures in Extremadura, Spain.

Restoration and sustainable management of Imperial Eagle's foraging habitats in key Natura 2000 sites in Bulgaria

Project background

The EU breeding population of the imperial eagle (*Aquila heliaca*) is small (possibly as low as 230 pairs). The main threats to the species are destruction and alteration of breeding and feeding habitats, shortages of prey species (particularly the souslik), electrocution and collision with power lines, shooting, poisoning, nest robbing and human disturbance at breeding sites.

In Bulgaria the imperial eagle nests are often situated in groups of trees within river valleys in hilly areas. The adults are mainly sedentary, while juveniles disperse to as far away as Turkey, Syria and Sudan. Recent satellite telemetry data from Bulgaria show that after the first winter most of them return to the country, occupying temporary settlement areas. Conservation measures in such areas are as important as those implemented in the breeding territories.

Project objectives

The present project will focus on all SPAs that are crucial for the imperial eagle in Bulgaria where 19 out of the total 26 known breeding pairs are located. It aims to:

- Develop and test models for restoration and sustainable management of open-grassland habitats to ensure long-term preservation of the imperial eagle involving key stakeholders to ensure building ownership on project results;
- Restore and enhance the feeding habitats of the imperial eagle by implementing urgent measures to stabilise and increase the micro-populations of its main prey – small birds, reptiles and mammals, including the globally threatened souslik, and strengthening the national legal framework to secure its long-term protection;
- Mitigate the effects of loss of nesting substrate by providing artificial nesting platforms;
- Strengthen the strategic planning framework of the national and EU agri-environmental policy to minimise the detrimental effect of land-use changes in the project area; and
- Build up community pride in and support for the conservation of the imperial eagle, and the Natura 2000 sites where more than 80% of its population is concentrated.

Expected results

- The acquisition of 500 ha of degraded pastures and restoration of 250 ha of tilled pastures and 590 ha of overgrown pastures;

LIFE14 NAT/BG/001119
LAND for LIFE



Beneficiary:

Name of beneficiary

Bulgarian Society for Protection of Birds

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Svetoslav SPASOV

Duration of project:

60 months (01/09/2015 – 31/08/2020)

Total budget in euro:

3,555,173.00

EU contribution in euro:

2,559,683.00

- More than 1 400 ha of pastures managed for conservation purpose; six model herds (overall 100 horses, 1 000 sheep, 140 cows) established; 20 farmers trained in sustainable grazing and 40 attended field seminars; one website for farmers presenting the new RDP Regulations and the cross-compliance for grasslands;
- Eight information workshops for at least 80 farmers;
- Enhanced knowledge on the eagle's diet;
- A feasibility study on souslik reintroduction;
- A souslik colony established;
- 30 tree patches to secure foraging and nesting habitat by planting 600 tree saplings;
- 40 artificial nests platforms;
- A strategic national and EU planning framework to minimise the detrimental effect of land-use;
- Grazing recommendation to guide Natura 2000 management planning;
- Recommendation to enhance RDP payment schemes; and
- A souslik action plan.

DRAVA LIFE – Integrated River Management

Project background

River ecosystems are extremely threatened in Europe. The Drava in the project area, along with the connected Mura and Danube reaches, is one of Europe's most important examples. The creation of a Transboundary UNESCO Biosphere Reserve "Mura-Drava-Danube" in Croatia, Austria, Hungary, Slovenia and Serbia is a central part of Europe's largest river protection initiative.

Project objectives

The DRAVA LIFE project is the first inter-sectorial cooperation and integrated management initiative focusing on Croatian rivers. It aims to implement EU Directives (e.g. Water Framework, Floods, Birds and Habitats) to solve river ecosystem problems. Its specific aims are to:

- Increase pristine, dynamic river habitats – Dynamic river habitats (gravel, sand and steep banks) are extremely rare along the Drava, but are key for many habitat types and species;
- Preserve and create new floodplain waters and improve water level dynamics – Floodplain waters are the most threatened parts of the Drava river ecosystem due to riverbed deepening and disconnection from the main river by bank restoration and groynes. Actions will focus on the 're-dynamisation' of the side-arms to benefit habitats and species;
- Reduce human disturbance of birds – Visitor guidance to avoid negative impacts of uncontrolled human activities is key for the preservation of typical riverine bird species;
- Increase awareness of the Natura 2000 network – Natura 2000 sites have just been established along the Drava and in Croatia, but there's a lack of awareness, which the project will address, to ensure local support;
- Introduce inter-sectorial river management cooperation in Croatia; and
- Increase cross-border cooperation along the Drava.

Expected results

- 40.8 ha land acquired for river restoration;
- 13 ha new dynamic river zone with gravel, sand and muddy banks and succession stages of floodplain forests (91E0*);
- 1 000 m dynamic river banks restored/preserved;
- 11.9 km side-arms restored and 2.6 km newly created;
- 306 ha floodplain forest (91E0*) improved;
- Increased breeding populations of gravel/sand breeding birds e.g. little tern (*Sterna albifrons*) and sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*);

LIFE14 NAT/HR/000115
DRAVA LIFE



Beneficiary:

Name of beneficiary

Croatian waters

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Zdenko KEREŠA

Duration of project:

60 months (01/12/2015 – 30/11/2020)

Total budget in euro:

4,592,898.00

EU contribution in euro:

2,755,739.00

- Reduction of human disturbance of black stork (*Ciconia nigra*);
- Establishment of awareness-raising instruments: a new information centre, six info points, a nature educational corner, two monitoring towers, Drava rangers, a toolkit, and other information and educational material;
- Synergies among water management, nature conservation and NGOs visible due to successful restoration actions;
- International Drava symposium;
- Three excursions to other LIFE projects abroad; and
- Three transnational conservation actions.

Raised bogs in Denmark

Project background

Article 17 of the Habitats Directive requires Member States to report on the conservation status of priority species and habitats. The habitat type, active raised bogs (7110*), along with associated invertebrates, is unfavourable in the geographical areas targeted by the project. At present the project areas and associated vulnerable habitat types face several threats (e.g. poor hydrology, overgrowth, eutrophication and fragmentation) resulting in the destruction of the peat.

The total project area is 1 394 ha situated in eight potential sites of Community interest and distributed over 10 sub-project areas in Denmark. A small part (around 49 ha) of the project area is located outside of the Natura 2000 areas, in order to be able to restore the necessary hydrological regime in the Natura 2000 sites.

Project objectives

The main objective is to reach a favourable conservation status for active raised bogs in the project areas. This should be reached by enhancing the peat accumulating sites' characteristic of the raised bogs. The project actions aim to boost their significant potential to develop both qualitatively and spatially in the project sites. Water beetles and dragonflies (*Dytiscus latissimu*, *Graphoderus bilineatus* and *Leucorrhinia pectoralis*) are also expected to benefit from the improved habitats.

The project will also carry out specific management on existing active raised bogs (7110*), degraded raised bog (7120), transition mires (7140), bog woodland (91D0*) and other habitats by compensating 69 private landowners on 714 ha and by land consolidation procedures. Furthermore, clearance of shrub, trees and forest-like vegetation, including invasive species on 365 ha, is foreseen, as well as the restoration of the hydrological regime on 904 ha.

Expected results

- Some 214 ha of the existing raised bog managed through the combined effect of clearance and hydrological improvements;
- Some 429 ha developed into raised bog through the transformation of degraded raised bog (79 ha), transition mires (53 ha), bog woodland (256 ha) and other areas; and
- Some 643 ha of resulting raised bog area surrounded by 531 ha of buffer zones.

LIFE14 NAT/DK/000012

LIFERaisedbogs



Beneficiary:

Name of beneficiary

Tønder Municipality

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Ole OTTOSEN

Duration of project:

77 months (01/08/2015 – 31/12/2021)

Total budget in euro:

5,592,198.00

EU contribution in euro:

3,355,319.00

Restoration and conservation of petrifying springs (*7220), calcareous fens (*7210) and alkaline fens (7230) in Denmark

Project background

Scattered across the Danish countryside, often at the foot of inland cliffs or on the sides of gullies created by the melting ice at the end of the last glacial period, is or should be, a string of moist light-open habitat types. However, inappropriate hydrology, land reduction/fragmentation, and nutrient load have resulted in a direct loss of some of these habitat types.

The majority of the remaining habitats are endangered (some places even critically endangered) for the above reasons, and encroachment/inappropriate management, pesticide exposure and invasion of alien species. In addition, due to these endangered habitats, several species connected to them suffer the loss of breeding grounds.

Project objectives

The overall objective of the RigKilde LIFE project is to ensure the favourable conservation status of calcareous fens (7210*), petrifying springs (7220*) and alkaline fens (7230) habitat types, and to increase their size.

- For the priority habitat type, calcareous fens, the aim is to increase the cover from 14.0 ha (16.1% of the habitat area in Denmark) to 18.5 ha;
- For the priority habitat type, petrifying springs, the aim is an increase from 5.7 ha (1.6% of the habitat area in Denmark, of which 3.5 ha, or 14.7% of the habitat area, is located in the Atlantic biogeographical region) to 12.7 ha;
- For alkaline fens, the aim is an increase from 196.3 ha (6.6% of the habitat area in Denmark, of which 165.6 ha or 30.6% of the land is located in the Atlantic biogeographical region) to 271.3 ha

The specific objectives for the target species are to:

- Ensure existing breeding grounds for great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*);
- Improve breeding and foraging conditions for the moor frog (*Rana arvalis*), in order to increase the number of breeding active adults by 50%; and
- Maintain the eastern part of the Øvre Mølleådal, Furesø og Frederiksdal Skov site as one of the best breeding sites in Denmark for the water beetle (*Graphoerus bilineatus*) and the dragonfly, large white-faced darter (*Leucorrhinia pectoralis*).

LIFE14 NAT/DK/000606
RigKilde-LIFE



Beneficiary:

Name of beneficiary

Thisted Municipality

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Name of contact person

John PATUEL HANSEN

Duration of project:

60 months (01/08/2015 – 31/07/2020)

Total budget in euro:

6,220,049.00

EU contribution in euro:

3,732,029.00

Expected results

The expected results of RigKilde LIFE are:

- Establishment of appropriate hydrology on 1 026.2 ha;
- Invasive species removed on 327.6 ha;
- Grazing established and/or improved on a total of 743.9 ha;
- Open water surfaces re-established – 11 amphibians scrapes, 11 ponds and 25 potential habitats for the water beetle; and
- Ex-situ breeding and introduction of the water beetle to new habitats. The number bred will depend on the result of a feasibility study, which will include an estimation of the number of larvae that can be taken from the donor stocks for breeding.

Conservation and restoration of Mire Habitats

Project background

The priority habitat types – active raised bogs (7110), bog woodlands (91D0) and Fennoscandian deciduous swamp woods (9080) – have become very rare in the EU. This is mainly due to the negative impact of drainage. Based on overall biogeographical assessments of Estonia, the status of the habitat types targeted by the project is neither favourable nor secure.

Project objectives

The overall objective of the LIFE Mires Estonia project is to secure the favourable conservation status of wetlands, especially mires and priority habitats protected by the Habitats Directive: active raised bogs, bog woodland and Fennoscandian deciduous swamp woods.

Through the restoration of the hydrological regime and the abandoned peat mining areas, the project also aims to benefit fauna affected by drainage such as birds, amphibians, dragonflies and butterflies. The project will also raise awareness among the local population, present the project results nationally and internationally and develop a methodology and guidelines for the restoration of degraded mire habitats sites concurrently supporting western capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*), moor frog (*Rana arvalis*) and dragonfly (*Leucorrhinia*) populations.

The restoration and management activities will be carried out on six Natura 2000 areas and the hydrology improved on around 5 800 ha of which 3 450 ha are Natura 2000 priority habitats.

Expected results

- Significant and sustained improvement of conditions of the EU priority habitats active raised bog habitats (2 447.2 ha restored), bog woodland (567.8 ha), Fennoscandian deciduous swamp woods (159 ha) and western taiga (276.2 ha);
- Conditions sustained for western capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*), willow ptarmigan (*Lagopus lagopus*), amphibian moor frog (*Rana arvalis*), and *Leucorrhinia* dragonfly populations;
- Spatial planning methodology developed for reducing the potential negative impacts to these species due to restoration activities, e.g. removal of trees or sudden closure of drainage ditches; and
- Public events to introduce restoration activities, study days for schoolchildren and teachers and the establishment of a LIFE trail.

LIFE14 NAT/EE/000126

LIFE Mires Estonia



Beneficiary:

Name of beneficiary

Estonian Fund for Nature

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Duration of project:

60 months (01/09/2015 – 31/08/2020)

Total budget in euro:

2,815,576.00

EU contribution in euro:

2,100,713.00

Restoring connections between the Alpine and Pyrenean populations of the bearded vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*)

Project background

The conservation status of the bearded vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*) is listed as vulnerable on the European IUCN Red List and endangered in France. Before vulture reintroductions started, the Alps represented a huge barrier separating the Pyreneo-Iberian populations and those of the Balkans. To bridge the distance between the populations of the western Alps and the Oriental Pyrenees, it is essential to establish a new core population of bearded vultures and to favour an exchange of populations with a view to forming a true European meta-population.

Project objectives

The LIFE GYPCONNECT project aims to develop new vulture populations in the Department of the Dronne and the Massif Central, thus creating a connection between the two existing populations, currently confined to the Alps and the Pyrenees.

The project's main objectives are to:

- Strengthen the population of bearded vultures by creating core populations in the Drôme and the Massif Central; and
- Facilitate bird movements between the Alps and the Pyrenees and thus enhance exchanges and genetic diversity of bearded vulture populations.

The project team comprises raptor conservation experts, managers of the electricity grid networks and sociologists. Specifically, the team plans to:

1. Coordinate a captive breeding programme and to reintroduce vultures on specific sites;
2. Enhance the availability of food resources;
3. Reduce existing threats;
4. Draw up a communication plan to increase the public's awareness and to spread results; and
5. Regularly assess the impact of the project and to develop a strategic implementation plan.

Expected results

1. Establishment of new core populations by:
 - a. Setting up several sites where captive vultures can be released;
 - b. Releasing up to four vultures per year throughout the project's lifetime;
 - c. Having at least two couples established in the area by the end of the project; and
 - d. Enhancing the exchange of birds between different core populations in the Alps and the Pyrenees from the second year of the project onwards.

LIFE14 NAT/FR/000050
LIFE GYPCONNECT



Beneficiary:

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Pascal ORABI

Duration of project:

75 months (01/09/2015 – 30/11/2021)

Total budget in euro:

5,632,328.00

EU contribution in euro:

4,157,440.00

2. Enhanced available food resources by setting up different feeding places.
3. Improve peacefulness and security of vulture sites by:
 - a. Isolating the sections of the electric network considered to be dangerous for the birds;
 - b. Mapping favourable vulture areas and integrating these in the relevant SRCAE (Energy, Air and Climate Regional Scheme);
 - c. Managing poison threats;
 - d. Testing lead-free ammunition;
 - e. Taking care of unhealthy birds through a safeguard network;
 - f. Reducing sources of disturbance and by enhancing awareness actions; and
 - g. Securing vulture releasing sites.
4. Improved knowledge and the monitoring of the reintroduction programme by:
 - a. Analysing demographic and spatial data;
 - b. Modelling population dynamics;
 - c. Producing indicators and a technical guide to monitor the populations; and
 - d. Producing at least one scientific publication.

First demonstration of reintroduction of West Indian Manatee in the Grand Cul-de-Sac Marin Bay, Guadeloupe

Project background

The West Indian manatee (*Trichetus manatus manatus*) is an endangered species (IUCN Red List, endangered status), which has disappeared from Guadeloupe. This large herbivorous marine mammal is, however, an emblematic symbol of Guadeloupean biodiversity and is part of the Creole culture. Extinct from the Lesser West Indies due to overhunting in the colonial era, the West Indian manatee population is now also threatened in the rest of the Caribbean. Few countries have more than 100 individual manatees remaining. French Guyana is the only European-administered territory with a manatee population.

Project objectives

The main objective of the LIFE SIRENIA project is to re-establish a population of West Indian manatee in Guadeloupe. The project aims to reintroduce and monitor 10 manatees; support operational and scientific exchange and conservation initiatives; and educate and involve the public in manatee conservation and environment protection activities. This project will be the first such marine mammal reintroduction, and thus will be an important demonstration of marine mammal conservation for organisations in similar Caribbean regions (e.g. St Maarten, Martinique) where the results could be reproduced.

Expected results

- Ten West Indian manatees introduced and monitored in the natural environment of the Grand Cul-de-Sac Marin Bay, with normal wild behaviour developing;
- Target users (100 fishermen, 10 tour operators, and 100 boatmen) informed and involved in the protection of the manatee and its natural environment;
- At least 20 schools made aware of the protection of the manatee and its natural marine environment in Guadeloupe;
- Data, experience and knowledge of the project shared and discussed with scientists and public actors in France, the Caribbean and through specialist networks (e.g. LIFE); and
- Numerous publications, including guidelines on best practices for marine mammal reintroductions, incorporating a set of protocols for animal management and reintroduction; films (educational and for the general public) presenting the project and its implications; scientific studies of the natural environment in Guadeloupe; and a project website.

LIFE14 NAT/FR/000885
LIFE SIRENIA



Beneficiary:

Name of beneficiary

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Maïtena JEAN

Duration of project:

65 months (01/09/2015 – 31/01/2021)

Total budget in euro:

5,927,481.00

EU contribution in euro:

3,556,488.00

LIFE floodplain amphibians

Project background

The ongoing decline of amphibian species is especially severe in Central and Northern Europe, particularly those species listed in Annex II and IV of the Habitats Directive. This is due to habitat destruction and degradation, mainly driven by the intensification of land use over recent decades. In some regions, more than 90% of reproduction ponds were destroyed in the last century as a result of drainage and filling up. Dramatic changes in the agricultural landscape have also occurred. Hedgerows, nutrient poor grasslands, extensively grazed pastures and bare soil patches have been eliminated.

Project objectives

The LIFE Auenamphibien project aims to increase the population size of three amphibian species listed in Annex II and IV of the Habitats Directive: the fire-bellied toad (*Bombina orientalis*), tree frog (*Hyla arborea*) and great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*), along with other endangered plant and animal species. The project will target 11 project areas in middle and southern Lower Saxony, creating and restoring 301 spawning ponds. Thereby the coherence of the protected areas as well as the connection between the populations will be improved and the target species will be able to recolonise the restored habitats.

The project will reintroduce the fire-bellied toad to selected project areas (on the basis of genetic analysis) in order to re-establish populations in the Atlantic biogeographical region. It will also carry out population management to secure genetic material of isolated fire-bellied toad populations. Extensive grazing in the pond surroundings will be cost-effectively and sustainably managed. Finally, areas lacking suitable places for new ponds will be purchased.

Expected results

- Pond action plans for all the project areas;
- Construction and restoration of 301 ponds in the projects areas, restoration of wet meadows and construction of hibernation sites;
- Improved land management in the vicinity of pond complexes by extensive grazing (cattle, horses and sheep);
- Strengthened fire-bellied toad populations by artificial rearing; and
- Re-established several fire-bellied toad populations in the Atlantic biogeographical region by reintroduction.

LIFE14 NAT/DE/000171

LIFE Auenamphibien



Beneficiary:

Name of beneficiary

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Holger BUSCHMANN

Duration of project:

96 months (01/01/2016 – 31/12/2023)

Total budget in euro:

3,428,125.00

EU contribution in euro:

2,056,875.00

Restoration of the river Isar and its floodplains in the region of the lower Isar valley

Project background

The project area is located in the Lower Isar valley in Bavaria, Germany. It covers 699 ha, about 31 km of the river Isar as well as the outstanding alluvial forest and alluvial island system between Loiching and Ettling in the county of Dingolfing-Landau. The river Isar, via the Danube, connects the alpine region with Eastern Europe and therefore plays a very important role in the biogeographical habitat network, especially for wetland, peatland and dry habitats.

The original character of the alpine and pre-alpine river Isar, however, has changed considerably. Large-scale modifications to the river have been made to meet the demands of flood protection, energy production and the intensification of land use. The ecological function of the river, as well as the alluvial floodplains and the natural dynamics of the alluvial floodplains, have declined significantly. Multiple damming of the river bed has moreover created migration barriers for a range of species while also preventing the transportation of sediment. Former structures, habitats or species that were characteristic of this area have now disappeared or are highly endangered.

Project objectives

The main aim of the LIFE project is to improve the habitats at the Isar valley through restoration measures focused on the River Isar and specific tributaries, and by optimising the habitat conditions in the alluvial areas. It will focus on demonstrating scientific and economic synergies created through close cooperation between water management and nature conservation authorities.

Specific project aims are to:

- Restore the river banks of the Isar and its tributaries to improve river dynamics and habitat functions for organisms living in running watercourses;
- Optimise, increase and connect soft- and hardwood alluvial forests with typical alluvial water bodies, especially in areas of restored river banks;
- Extension and connection of important dry habitats such as alluvial islands;
- Protection of seven habitat types listed in Annex I of the Habitats Directive, including two priority ones, and seven species in Annex II of the Habitats Directive as well as the improvement of their conservation status; and
- To raise awareness among the public and land users of Natura 2000, the project with its valuable habitat types and species, as well as the importance of complex alluvial systems for biodiversity.

LIFE14 NAT/DE/000278
LIFE Flusserlebnis Isar



Beneficiary:

Name of beneficiary

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Andreas LAUDENSACK

Duration of project:

87 months (01/10/2015 – 31/12/2022)

Total budget in euro:

6,354,640.00

EU contribution in euro:

3,812,784.00

Expected results

- Purchase of 2.8 ha of agricultural and forestry land;
- Some 1 650 m of restored, structured river banks, 1 500 m river banks with removed bank enforcement, 3 050 m new gravel and sand banks, and 4 490 m structured river banks;
- An increase of the populations of huchen (*Hucho hucho*), asp (*Aspius aspius*), streber (*Zingel streber*), pigo (*Rutilus pigus*) and white-finned gudgeon (*Gobio albipinnatus*);
- Some 2 600 m of semi-natural and ecologically improved alluvial water bodies (habitat type 3150) and improved habitats for the European weatherfish (*Misgurnus fossilis*);
- A new river branch of the Isar of 420 m in length, and 20 new or optimised permanently flooded alluvial water bodies (3150),
- Some 28 new small ephemeral water bodies and improved habitats and conservation status for yellow-bellied toad (*Bombina variegata*);
- Some 49 ha of layered, richly structured and semi-natural soft- and hardwood alluvial forests, and improved conservation status and connectivity for the habitat types alluvial forests (91E0*) and riparian mixed forest (91F0);

Restoring Active Raised Bog in Ireland's SAC Network 2016 - 2020

Project background

The conservation status of active raised bogs in Ireland is under increasing pressure due to a long history of mismanagement, most notably turf cutting and associated drainage. It is estimated that there has been a 99% loss of the original area of actively growing raised bogs; while only about 1 650 ha of the remaining 'intact' high bog can now be classified as 'active raised bog'. There is an urgent need to reverse this decline and improve the conservation status of this priority habitat type, by developing and implementing restoration measures to restore their sites to favourable condition.

Project objectives

The overall objective of the LIFE Irish Raised Bogs project is to improve the conservation status of the Annex I Habitats Directive habitat type, 'active raised bog', through the protection and restoration of 12 Natura 2000 network sites in the centre of Ireland.

The specific objectives of the project are:

- To secure landowner cooperation and local community involvement and support;
- To raise water levels to create the necessary conditions for active raised bog;
- To remove naturally regenerating trees and shrubs;
- To put in place fire protection measures; and
- To fence project sites where necessary.

Expected results

- An initial indication of an improvement in the conservation status of active raised bog (although it could take 10-30 years for definitive results);
- A total of 752 ha of active raised bog restored across the 12 sites;
- A total of 2 649 ha of raised bog habitat improved by restoration works across the 12 sites;
- Around 182 km of drains blocked on high and cutover bog areas using over 15 000 dams to raise water levels;
- The clearance of naturally regenerating trees on up to 2 649 ha;
- Fire plans prepared for all project sites and a fire prevention campaign run;
- Up to 6 km of fencing erected where necessary;
- A heightened public awareness of the importance of Ireland's 53 raised bog sites and support from local communities for the urgent long-term conservation and restoration measures needed;

LIFE14 NAT/IE/000032
LIFE Irish Raised Bogs



Beneficiary:

Name of beneficiary

Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

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Suzanne NALLY

Duration of project:

60 months (01/01/2016 – 31/12/2020)

Total budget in euro:

5,408,249.00

EU contribution in euro:

4,056,186.00

- Increased employment opportunities for rural communities;
- EU added value provided in demonstrating how to implement policies requiring engagement with rural-dwelling citizens, who represent about half the total EU-28 population; and
- Project techniques' manual for transferability and replication of best practices.

Coordinated actions to preserve residual and isolated populations of forest and freshwater insects in Emilia-Romagna

Project background

The wide area of Emilia-Romagna includes relevant sites for the conservation of the project's target species, the southern damselfly (*Coenagrion mercuriale castellanii*) and hermit beetle (*Osmoderma eremita*) and possesses a high insect biodiversity. It is home to important populations of beetles, dragonflies and butterflies (*Oxygastra curtisii*, *Lucanus cervus*, *Cerambyx cerdo*, *Callimorpha quadripunctaria*, *Maculinea arion*, *Zerynthia polyxena*).

The dragonfly species *Coenagrion mercuriale* is present in only two isolated sites and the population size is low (from fewer than 300 to 4 000 individuals per year). Nonetheless, these populations represent around 7% of the total population of Italy, thus their conservation is a priority. The other target species, the hermit beetle, is present at one site only, and with a reduced population that has fallen in the distribution area mostly likely due to wood cutting. Other sites could host this species, but it is necessary to make interventions to improve the habitat and make it more suitable for the species.

Project objectives

The overall objective is to improve the conservation status in the Emilia-Romagna region of the populations of two species of saproxylic beetles: *Osmoderma eremita* and *Rosalia alpina*.

Specific objectives are to:

- Increase knowledge of the sub-populations of the target species;
- Increase available habitat for residual populations and improve their connectivity;
- Produce a long-term management strategy;
- Establish a specific habitat regional network that is suitable for the target species; and
- Improve the public's attitude towards the conservation of the target species and to encourage the involvement of farmers, managers and forest users.

Expected results

- Habitat availability increased by 200-900% in the Emilia-Romagna region, depending on the species;
- Population distribution increased by 50-600% in the region, depending on the species; and
- Population size increased by 80-400% in the region, depending on the species.

LIFE14 NAT/IT/000209

LIFE EREMITA



Beneficiary:

Name of beneficiary

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Enzo VALBONESI

Duration of project:

48 months (01/01/2016 - 31/12/2020)

Total budget in euro:

2,126,987.00

EU contribution in euro:

1,268,863.00

Life under griffon wings - Implementation of best practices to rescue griffon vultures in Sardinia

Project background

Sardinia's population of griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*) is listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive and represents the last autochthonous breeding population of vultures in Italy. The Natura 2000 network sites around the Bosa, Capo Marargiu and Porto Tangone SPA and SCI and Capo Caccia SPA and SCI are two of the most important breeding sites for griffon vultures in Italy and in the wider Mediterranean area. Conservation actions are needed to improve the conservation status of this species.

Project objectives

The overall objective of the project is to improve the conservation status of the griffon vulture population in Sardinia. The specific goals are to:

- Mitigate the shortage in carcass availability and increase the carrying capacity of the foraging areas;
- Mitigate the risk of poisoning;
- Enhance population viability via restocking; and
- Reinforce the local wildlife rescue centre and reduce human disturbance in the reproductive sites.

Expected results

- Food availability increased for the griffon vulture population;
- Number of poisonings decreased in the project area;
- Local population rescued from a critical situation;
- Improved welfare of recovering griffon vultures;
- High survival rates of the recovered vultures;
- Skills, expertise and competences on large vulture protection increased within the relevant public bodies and scientific community;
- Increased productivity of the local population; and
- Increased visitors numbers in the target sites.

LIFE14 NAT/IT/000484
LIFE UNDER GRIFFON WINGS



Beneficiary:

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Duration of project:

60 months (01/09/2015 - 31/08/2020)

Total budget in euro:

1,733,385.00

EU contribution in euro:

1,039,985.00

Restoring the Pontine Archipelago ecosystem through management of rats and other invasive alien species

Project background

The breeding success of bird species with unfavourable conservation status, such as Scopoli's shearwater (*Calonectris diomedea*) and Yelkouan shearwater (*Puffinus yelkouan*), is seriously threatened by the black rat (*Rattus rattus*), as demonstrated by international scientific literature. This negative trend is occurring in several Mediterranean islands (Tavolara, Pianosa and Montecristo) as well as the Pontine Archipelago. Furthermore, the uncontrolled growth of invasive alien plant species in the Mediterranean islands has led to the degradation of many habitats, threatening endemic plants and favouring the expansion of the black rat population. This problem is also occurring in Pontine Archipelago, which is threatened by *Carpobrotus spp.*

Project objectives

The project aims to:

- Eradicate and control alien animal species (such as rodents and feral goats) in order to restore island habitats (6220*, 3170*, 5320, 5330, 1240) and communities and improve the breeding performances of native species (mainly *Calonectris diomedea* and *Puffinus yelkouan*);
- Fence off key land plots on Zannone island in order to exclude wild alien animals (mouflons) and to restore habitats of Community interest (9340);
- Eradicate invasive alien plant species (*Carpobrotus spp.*) on S. Stefano, Ventotene and Palmarola islands, as well as to improve the success of rat eradication;
- Implement tight bio-security measures to prevent rat reinvasions.

Expected results

Palmarola, S. Stefano and Ventotene

- Increase of breeding success (in the short term) and population size (in the long term) of seabirds (for *Calonectris diomedea* and *Puffinus yelkouan* expected results are comparable to those obtained at Zannone island (i.e. 80% productivity) and at La Scola islet in Tuscany);
- Attraction of new breeding species (i.e. *Hidrobates pelagicus*) in the long term;
- Increase of biodiversity and biomass, and the restoration of ecosystems functions with plant species whose seeds are eaten by rats;
- Improvement of habitat conditions for bird species breeding on the ground or close to it, for migrating birds present stopping over and for reptiles, invertebrates and vegetation;

LIFE14 NAT/IT/000544

LIFE PonDerat



Beneficiary:

Name of beneficiary

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Dario CAPIZZI

Duration of project:

54 months (01/10/15 – 31/03/20)

Total budget in euro:

1,788,216.00

EU contribution in euro:

1,072,930.00

- Improvement of sanitary conditions for island inhabitants at Ventotene and for tourists (in all three islands);
- Maintenance of long-term low risk of recolonisation;
- Eradication of *Carpobrotus spp.* and an increase in awareness of the alien plant species issue; and
- Recovery of habitats 5330, 6220*, 3170* at Palmarola.

Ponza

- Improvement of sanitary conditions (through the reduction of the risk of transmission of zoonoses via rats) for inhabitants of the area surrounding the harbour.

Zannone

- Maintenance of long-term low risk of recolonisation.
- Restoration of Holm oak forest (habitat 9340) ecosystem functions by the recovery of natural regeneration in the fenced area (10% of the total habitat available on the island).

Conservation of amphibians and butterflies of open wet areas and their habitats at the Foreste Casentinesi

Project background

Analysis of the population dynamics of species related to wetlands in the target area, and particularly amphibians and butterflies, reveals a range of problems. In particular, the populations of amphibians, the yellow-bellied toad (*Bombina variegata*) (in sharp decline at national level), spectacled salamander (*Salamandrina terdigitata*) and Italian crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) and the butterflies, Jersey tiger (*Euplagia quadripunctaria*) (priority species) and *Eriogaster catax* have an irregular distribution due to the alteration and reduction of their habitats (including wetlands) and breeding sites, pathogens and transformation of their territory. Restoration of wetlands and other habitats relevant to the target species is vital.

Project objectives

The overall objective is to improve the conservation status of the populations of amphibians and butterflies living in open wet areas inside the Foreste Casentinesi National Park. The specific objectives are to:

- Improve the habitats, establish breeding sites and reinforce the populations of *Bombina variegata*, *Salamandrina terdigitata* and *Triturus cristatus* populations;
- Improve the habitats of *Euplagia quadripunctaria** and *Eriogaster catax*;
- Improve the conservation status of the wetlands of open areas (habitat 6430) and of the rare plant species found in these areas; and
- Foster a favourable attitude towards the conservation needs of amphibians and butterflies species.

Expected results

- Conservation measures carried out to improve the target species populations in 156 areas; seven new wetland areas established; vegetation restored and deepening puddles established in 15 areas (habitat 6430); tree and shrub clearance in 24 wetland areas; fences installed in nine areas; accessible structures placed in 46 areas; fountains built or restored in 48 areas; 20 underpasses for amphibians completed in one area;
- Populations of *Bombina variegata* and *Salamandrina terdigitata* increased and more largely spread;
- At least 10-15 (per year) small metamorphosed individuals of *Bombina variegata* and at least 1 000 to 1 500 eggs of *Salamandrina terdigitata* reintroduced in the target areas;

LIFE14 NAT/IT/000759

LIFE WetFlyAmphibia



Beneficiary:

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Nevio AGOSTINI

Duration of project:

75 months (01/09/2015 - 31/12/2021)

Total budget in euro:

1,596,342.00

EU contribution in euro:

948,057.00

- Population status of the target species and impact of the interventions properly monitored; and
- Increased awareness of the conservation of the target species.

River Functionality Index as planning instrument for a good governance of Sile's ecosystem

Project background

The conservation status of three target habitats *Molinia* meadows, calcareous fens and alluvial forests found in the project area have been assessed as mostly poor or extremely poor, hence the need for restoration actions. Similarly, the 11 target aquatic species are all classified as endangered. The restoration of the functionality of the humid ecosystems is crucial to their improved conservation status.

Project objectives

The project aims to:

- Strengthen the ecological network of the River Sile, creating some main points of nature preservation that will be included in the network;
- Preserve the areas risking degradation, particularly those suffering from human pressures, such as agriculture. The abandonment of already wooded areas has caused degradation and loss of habitat, and the project aims to create some valuable areas that will be permanently reserved for nature conservation;
- Promote the integration of agricultural activities with the needs of nature preservation. To avoid conflicts, it is advisable to integrate the development of agriculture and environment through the support of the Rural Development Plan (RDP) 2014-2020 of the Veneto region;
- Monitor the effectiveness of the actions, assessing also the value of ecosystem services and the socio-economic effects related to nature preservation in the area of the River Sile;
- Raise awareness of the value of Natura 2000 network sites, involving citizens actively in the preservation of sites and their sustainable use;
- Network and share project results across the EU, building a permanent network of projects that are focused on the management of floodplain areas in territories converted by human actions; and
- Ensure efficient and effective project management to guarantee continued nature preservation after the end of the project.

Expected results

- Acquisition of 6.7 ha of land for the conservation of nature;
- Hydrogeological works and recovery of superficial water supply network, with at least three springs reactivated;
- Restoration of ecological function of 14 ha of habitats;

LIFE14 NAT/IT/000809
LIFE SILIFFE



Beneficiary:

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Enrico SPECCHIO

Duration of project:

40 months (01/08/2015 - 31/12/2018)

Total budget in euro:

3,048,811.00

EU contribution in euro:

1,818,652.00

- Interventions to consolidate the typical fauna habitat, including the re-naturalisation of a stretch of about 300 m of the River Sile, the release of 20 000 small trout and 6 000 small grayling every year for four years, and the creation of sites for the care of crayfish, bullhead and lamprey;
- Interventions to combat invasive alien species (catching catfish, Louisiana crayfish and exotic turtles);
- Construction of a path for disabled people (270 m of footpath and two educational panels); and
- Seven wood panels for the teaching and promotion of the project and 15 banners at the premises of the beneficiaries and in the municipalities of the Park.

Conservation of biodiversity in the Municipality of Bressanvido

Project background

Spring systems provide environmental stability and help combat climate change threats. The Padano-Veneta plain represents a unique environment at the European level, due to its rich spring systems. Waters, rivers and channels are considered as a 'blue infrastructure' that can provide ecosystem services aimed at both preserving biodiversity and developing tourism and recreational activities.

Project objectives

The overall project objectives are to restore and consolidate 'green infrastructure' such as a network of springs, irrigation ditches and canals in the territory of Bressanvido (Vicenza, Italy). This infrastructure is found in areas of high agricultural activity, mainly animal husbandry for milk production, in which it can significantly contrast the loss in biodiversity caused by the intensive territory exploitation.

Expected results

- Some 26 spring systems strengthened and stabilised in Vicenza middle-lowland (green infrastructure), which includes 43 springs and their watercourses flowing across the entire territory of Bressanvido municipality;
- Demonstration of the effectiveness of spring systems as infrastructure to achieve the objective of the Water Directive (2000/60/EC) of preventing the deterioration of the quality and quantity of water bodies due to intensive farming;
- Demonstration of the possibility of involving private commercial entities (e.g. farmers and their associations, as well as reclamation groups) and non-profit organisations (e.g. voluntary groups, fishing associations) in the maintenance of spring systems;
- Raised awareness of citizens about the role of spring systems as green infrastructure for the improvement of the quality of life in rural areas;
- Promotion of an innovative management model of spring systems at the interregional scale, in all middle lowland areas. The project proposes a model that can be transferred to the entire spring zone, from the foothills of the Alps to the Po Valley, from Friuli to Piedmont. The model can be replicated in other European areas with similar features.
- Active preservation of Natura 2000 habitats (SCI 'Dueville Forest' and nearby springs) and species of Community interest; and
- Strengthened ecosystem services supplied by spring water.

LIFE14 NAT/IT/000938

LIFE Risorgive



Beneficiary:

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Salvatore ABBATE

Duration of project:

48 months (01/10/2015 – 30/09/2019)

Total budget in euro:

1,161,293.00

EU contribution in euro:

696,775.00

Measures for the conservation of Bonelli's eagle, Egyptian vulture and Lanner falcon in Sicily

Project background

Sicily represents a key area for three species listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive: Bonelli's eagle (*Aquila fasciata*), Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) and lanner falcon (*Falco biarmicus*). The three species are all endangered. The population of Egyptian vulture in Sicily has decreased by 85-90% over the past 30 years, mainly due to changes in agricultural practices and the reduction of extensive goat and sheep grazing; while the Bonelli's eagle is suffering as a result of poaching of eggs and chicks. It is threatened with extinction in the region in the coming decades.

Project objectives

The overall goal of the project is to improve the reproductive success of Bonelli's eagle, Egyptian vulture and lanner populations, by carrying out habitat improvement measures. The aim is to increase the number of nesting pairs and their area of distribution. Specifically, the project aims to:

- Halt nest predation by poachers in Sicily;
- Improve the trophic (nutritional) capacity of the Sicilian territories where the species occur, by setting up feeding sites and rabbit hutches;
- Gain a detailed picture of the three species' demography, mortality rates and survival rates, as well as their distribution, proposing, where necessary, adjustments;
- Draw up a genetic map of the Bonelli's eagle population;
- Set up guidelines for habitat management aimed at improving the status of species, through the development of models of habitat preference and habitat suitability;
- Draw up the National Action Plan for Bonelli's eagle and its adoption by the national and regional institutions; and
- Improve information in the areas where the species occur.

Expected results

- Reduction by 80-90% of nest predation by poachers affecting the Sicilian population of Bonelli's eagle and the reduction of the problem for the lanner;
- Stabilisation and possible increase in the population of Egyptian vulture, through an increase in reproductive success, a reduction in mortality and recruitment of new individuals (fledging rate increased from 1-1.49% for young nesting pairs) and the establishment of new breeding pairs (3-5 pairs by 2020);

LIFE14 NAT/IT/001017

LIFE ConRaSi



Beneficiary:

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Name of contact person

Massimiliano ROCCO

Duration of project:

37 months (01/09/2015 - 30/09/2018)

Total budget in euro:

2,877,095.00

EU contribution in euro:

2,071,508.00

- Complete census across the entire regional territory of the breeding population of Bonelli's eagle and Egyptian vulture, and the population of lanner in the targeted SPAs;
- Genetic mapping of the Bonelli's eagle population as a tool for combatting the illegal market of birds of prey in Italy and abroad;
- Preparation of a National Action Plan for the conservation of Bonelli's eagle;
- Recolonisation of recently abandoned areas because of trophic problems thanks to the increased availability of prey species (wild rabbit) and colonisation of new territories due to an increase in reproductive success;
- Equipping of 10 individual Bonelli's eagle/year with GPS satellite transmitters to track the movements and collect data about juvenile dispersal and mortality; and
- Increased knowledge of the ecology of the species, through the assessment of habitat preferences and collection/documentation of prey and food remains at nests.

Spatial containment of *Vespa velutina* in Italy and establishment of an Early Warning and Rapid Response System

Project background

The Asian predatory wasp (*Vespa velutina*) is an invasive alien species that poses a serious threat to European biodiversity due to its alimentary habits. The wasp feeds larvae on animal proteins from native wasps, bees, other hymenoptera, diptera and lepidoptera. The species is being controlled in France through the use of baited traps and the destruction of nests. But these methods have proved to be inadequate and the species has spread to most of France and other countries, including Italy. The invasive species could prey honey bees and raise alarm when nesting in urban areas.

Project objectives

The main LIFE STOPVESPA objective is to contain the invasive wasp species and prevent it from further invading Italy. It will develop a prototype and an effective monitoring and control system that will enable the species to be removed from those already affected areas in Liguria and Piedmont. Specifically, the project aims to:

- Develop a prototype of harmonic radar provided by a transponder, in order to locate flying wasps flying back to their nests. The harmonic radar could greatly improve the search for colonial nests early in the season, even those hidden among the vegetation, allowing them to be destroyed before new queens are created;
- Remove all colonial nests present in the invaded area (western Liguria and southern Piedmont) and those that may be established during the project;
- Implement an Early Warning and Rapid Response System at the regional and national level to prevent further invasions; and
- Create a coordinated coalition of trained volunteers among beekeepers to detect and destroy colonial nests.

Expected results

- New tools and a management model for alien wasps that will be useful to manage *V. velutina* and other introduced wasps in Europe;
- Use of attractive beehives placed in areas without beekeepers to attract and monitor invasive wasps;
- GIS-based maps of wasp and colonial nest distribution that will be used to explain the trend of removal operations;
- Elimination of possible public alarm due to the presence of colonial nests;

LIFE14 NAT/IT/001128
LIFE STOPVESPA



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Name of contact person

Marco PORPORATO

Duration of project:

48 months (01/09/2015 - 31/08/2019)

Total budget in euro:

2,273,738.00

EU contribution in euro:

1,364,254.00

- Creation of an emergency team that could rapidly intervene in other invaded areas;
- Increased awareness on the impacts produced by invasive species and *V. velutina* in particular; and
- Dissemination of the new methods developed by STOPVESPA at national and international level.

LIFE Arcipelagu Garnija - Securing the Maltese islands for the Yelkouan Shearwater *Puffinus yelkouan*

Project background

The Yelkouan shearwater (*Puffinus yelkouan*), which is endemic to the Central and Eastern Mediterranean regions, is listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive and Annex II of the Bern Convention, and accordingly receives special conservation measures across Europe. Due to drastic population declines the status of the Yelkouan shearwater was recently downgraded to 'vulnerable' according to IUCN criteria.

More than 10% of the world's Yelkouan shearwater population breeds in Malta. To date, BirdLife Malta and partners have made various efforts to understand and tackle the main threats causing the decline of the species both at land and at sea. The LIFE Yelkouan Shearwater project (LIFE06 NAT/MT/000097) secured the largest colony in Malta, and the LIFE+ Malta Seabird project (LIFE10 NAT/MT/000090) helped identify marine SPA sites for the species and other seabirds. In the light of previous achievements, it has become necessary to prepare the ground for a long-term recovery of the species in the central Mediterranean islands of Malta.

Project objectives

The project aims to:

- Ensure the long-term recovery of the species in the central Mediterranean islands of Malta, by increasing the knowledge of colony sites, number of breeding pairs and reproductive output, and prevalent terrestrial threats;
- Reduce the direct and indirect human-caused threats by managing them through informed concrete conservation actions;
- Increase the number of breeding pairs by approximately 10% and the reproductive output of the majority of the breeding colonies by 25%; and
- Tackle the targets of relevant policies, such as Malta's National Strategy and Biodiversity Action Plan (2014-2020), Marine Strategy Framework Directive, Birds Directive and the Integrated Monitoring Programme of the Barcelona Convention.

Expected results

- Reduced threats for the 13 nesting colonies and increased reproductive output at the target sites;
- Decreased disturbance of the nesting colonies, thanks to the better attitude and behaviour of boat owners

LIFE14 NAT/MT/000991
LIFE Arcipelagu Garnija



Beneficiary:

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Steven MICKLEWRIGHT

Duration of project:

60 months (01/09/2015 - 31/08/2020)

Total budget in euro:

1,261,940.00

EU contribution in euro with %:

757,220.00

- and operators, and of other users responsible for the organic littering of the target areas;
- Improved policy such as that on light pollution and the management of an offshore island (Comino) that will be used as a sanctuary for Yelkouan shearwaters; and
- A National Species Action Plan for the Yelkouan shearwater in Malta.

Egyptian Vulture and Bonelli's Eagle Conservation in Douro/Duero Canyon

Project background

The “Douro Internacional e Vale do Águeda”; and “Arribes del Duero” SPAs form one of the main areas for Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*), Bonelli's eagle (*Aquila fasciata*) and red kite (*Milvus milvus*) in the Iberian Peninsula. Populations of Bonelli's eagle are stable in both SPAs with 13 breeding pairs since 2006, but the number of flying chicks fell from eight in 2006 to just four in 2013. As for the Egyptian vulture, the population in both SPAs decreased from 157 breeding pairs in 2006 to 116 in 2013, a 35% decline.

Project objectives

The project aims to:

- Strengthen the populations of Egyptian vulture and Bonelli's eagle in the Douro valley, through improved breeding success and reduction of mortality;
- Improve the reproductive rate for both species (the target is at least one flying chick per active nest/year for both species);
- Reduce nest disturbance for these species with the aim of eliminating persecution of all breeding pairs in the project area;
- Increase food availability, particularly during the breeding season;
- Reduce adult mortality for both species;
- Improve the habitat quality through better management of farming and grazing practices; and
- Better knowledge and dissemination of best practices for wildlife conservation.

Expected results

- An improvement of breeding productivity of Egyptian vulture and Bonelli's eagle, compared with baseline (2006-2013) data.
- Increased red partridge and European rabbit abundance compared with the 2015 baseline, through better habitat and game management in at least six Bonelli's eagle territories;
- Increased pigeon abundance, compared with the 2015 baseline, through the recovery and reactivation of traditional pigeon houses in eight Bonelli's eagle territories;
- Establishment of temporary local feeding stations for small scavengers, functioning within the EU and national sanitary regulations, serving at least 50 territories of Egyptian vulture;
- Surveys of all vulnerable nests and their protection during critical periods;

LIFE14 NAT/PT/000855

LIFE Rupis



Beneficiary:

Name of beneficiary

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Domingos LEITÃO

Duration of project:

48 months (16/07/2015 – 15/07/2019)

Total budget in euro:

3,578,924.00

EU contribution in euro:

2,672,481.00

- Every individual of the target species that is found injured sent to recovery centres, which are equipped to treat these species and to deal with suspected poisonings;
- Two operative human-canine brigades to detect and act against illegal use of poison in the field. More than 300 monitoring actions to detect poison in the field performed per year in the project area;
- At least 50% of all suspected cases of illegal poisoning in the project area are adequately investigated and documented, and at least one case followed through a criminal process;
- Data on the prevalence of heavy metals and veterinary drugs on scavenging raptors available for future conservation planning;
- At least 120 electric pylons retrofitted as a mitigating measure against bird electrocution; and
- Pilot habitat management covering at least 120 ha through traditional livestock practices.

Linear Infrastructure Networks with Ecological Solutions

Project background

There is a good knowledge of the existing fauna and flora in the Portuguese region of Alentejo. However one of the main transport and energy corridors linking Portugal to Spain lies in this region. This puts significant pressure on the area's wildlife, as the mortality data for the linear infrastructure (roads and powerlines) shows. Within this socio-economic context, stakeholders and public and private bodies, have actively participated with universities to solve the environmental problems caused by transport and energy networks.

The situation for wildlife could be improved through a coordinated strategy, based on research carried out at the University of Évora in the field of mapping the functional and structural connectivity of landscapes, which takes into account the movements and habitat use/preferences of target fauna species.

Project objectives

The main objectives of the LIFE LINES project are to evaluate and disseminate practices to mitigate the negative effects that transport and energy infrastructure have on wild fauna, and to promote the creation of a demonstrative 'green Infrastructure' based on ecological corridors and stepping stones.

Alongside grey infrastructure e.g. roads, railways and energy networks, enhanced green infrastructure will improve connectivity and the conservation of local and regional biodiversity. A green infrastructure strategy will be used, for the first time, as a decision-support tool for practical conservation aims.

Expected results

The project will implement actions and test solutions to make roads, abandoned railways and powerlines (medium and high voltage) more sustainable for wildlife, by managing this infrastructure within the 'green infrastructure' concept. Specifically, the project expects to:

- Increase landscape connectivity in the study area and surrounding areas, and reduce wildlife mortality caused by grey infrastructure;
- Create a network of corridors and micro-reserves in the vicinity of linear infrastructure, including road embankments and around pylons;
- Promote practices for the rapid detection and control of invasive alien plant species in grey infrastructure;

LIFE14 NAT/PT/001081
LIFE LINES



Beneficiary:

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

António MIRA

Duration of project:

60 months (01/08/2015 – 31/07/2020)

Total budget in euro:

5,540,485.00

EU contribution in euro:

3,324,303.00

- Create a nursery and seed mixtures of native plants for use in habitat creation, recovery of areas invaded by exotic flora, and to create biodiverse flora communities within micro-reserves;
- Create a national wildlife mortality database that can be used as a shared platform for all infrastructure operators and nature conservation organisations;
- Increase people's awareness of and views on the problem of wildlife mortality from vehicle collisions, through the development of an app for mobile devices;
- Test the efficiency of new designs of landing deterrents mounted on pylons of medium and high voltage powerlines; and
- Test the efficacy of various 'self-learning' machines/systems for the identification of amphibian and bird roadkill.

Restoration and management of Danube floodplain habitats

Project background

In the past 200 years, the water and wetland habitats of the Danube region have undergone great change: dams have been constructed; flood protection introduced; navigation improved; agricultural and forestry activities intensified; and land drained. Large continuous flood areas have been reduced and divided by dykes, while numerous branches have been cut off from main river courses. This process has resulted in stagnant water in river branches for much of the year, and several habitat types and species have declined, especially those dependent on river dynamics, flowing waters and fluctuating water levels.

Project objectives

The project aims to restore the key natural habitats of the Danube floodplains and to introduce sustainable management. Habitat restoration will be achieved by improving the water regime in the vast river branch system and by direct interventions to secure a favourable conservation status of targeted habitats.

Specific objectives are to:

- Optimise water levels and distribution of water within the Danube river branch system and in the Danube floodplains;
- Restore the water regime of selected disturbed areas;
- Restore targeted habitat types and improve their conservation status;
- Increase biodiversity of floodplain forest habitats, and the production potential and ecosystem services of forest management;
- Improve the conservation status of the last remaining fragments of non-forest habitats within the project site; and
- Raise awareness of the importance of floodplain restoration, disseminate knowledge for replication and transfer results and best practices.

Expected results

- Some 70 ha of the land acquired by purchase and long-term lease for restoration actions;
- Minimum of five technical objects created or reconstructed and water regime on an area of 1 850 ha improved;
- Two major river branches restored on at least 4 500 m, and branches reconnected;
- Decrease of human disturbance on 135 ha;
- Four wetlands restored covering 37 ha;

LIFE14 NAT/SK/001306
LIFE Danube floodplains



Beneficiary:

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Tomáš KUŠÍK

Duration of project:

78 months (01/08/2015 – 31/01/2022)

Total budget in euro:

5,999,420.00

EU contribution in euro:

3,599,651.00

- Native tree species represented in a database of genetic resources, with 45 000 seedlings for reforestation grown and a gene pool established on 3.8 ha;
- Planting of 57 500 native tree species on an area of 45 ha;
- Invasive tree and plant species removed on 40 ha;
- Targeted habitat types restored and their conservation status improved on an area of 745.5 ha;
- Waste clean-up and the removal of ammunition on 5 ha;
- Some 84 ha of grasslands restored and their regular management started;
- At least 150 pollard willows restored;
- Overall 200 pollard willows planted;
- Project website in three languages; and
- Two study visits for 30 people organised; guided excursions for 400 students, members of the public, teachers and guides; and 20 camps organised for a total of 240 children.

LIFE Conservation and management of dry grasslands in Eastern Slovenia

Project background

Dry grasslands – i.e. semi-natural dry grasslands on calcareous substrates (6210) and species-rich *Nardus* grasslands on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (6230) – have an unfavourable conservation status in Slovenia. Overgrowth resulting from land abandonment is a critical threat for these habitat types. Additionally in the past few decades, orchards have been disappearing rapidly for economic reasons.

Project objectives

The LIFE TO GRASSLANDS project aims to:

- Restore 260 ha of habitat type 6210 and 257 ha of habitat type, 6230, through the removal of overgrowth;
- Reintroduce grazing/mowing management aimed at maintaining open patches of habitat type, 6230, in the forest (on around 5 ha);
- Establish the long-term sustainable use of target areas;
- Revitalise 45.5 ha of traditional orchards, thus preventing land slides, and enhancing species diversity;
- Incorporate sustainable dry grassland management into farming and environmental policy in Slovenia;
- Establish a network of landowners and potential land users to reduce land use fragmentation;
- Improve the viability of sustainable dry grassland use by identifying alternative activities; and
- Increase public awareness of the importance of dry grasslands.

Expected results

- Conservation guidelines for sustainable management of the habitat types 6210 and 6230;
- At least 15 ha of dry grasslands leased and 18 ha purchased;
- Overgrowth of at least 81 ha cleared from the habitat type, 6210 and 52.57 ha from the habitat type, 6230;
- Appropriate long-term use of dry grasslands on a surface of more than 500 ha;
- Traditional orchards revitalised on a surface of at least 45.50 ha of dry grasslands;
- An online platform created for the networking of landowners in the Haloze area;
- At least 49 farm management plans for dry grasslands drawn up;
- Prepared expert proposal for AEP measures for integration into the Slovenia (2021-2027) RDP;
- Identified economic interest for further sustainable use of dry grasslands;

LIFE14 NAT/SI/000005
LIFE TO GRASSLANDS



Beneficiary:

Name of beneficiary

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Aleksander KOREN

Duration of project:

60 months (01/11/2015 – 31/10/2020)

Total budget in euro:

3,898,582.00

EU contribution in euro:

2,923,936.00

- Improved social and economic prospects of agriculture in project areas and beyond;
- Increased awareness on the importance of dry grassland; and
- An improvement of conservation status of the habitat type, 6210 on 2 342 ha, and of habitat type, 6230, on 309.57 ha.

Project of range expansion, and population size of the priority species *Fringilla teydea polatzeki*

Project background

The blue chaffinch is a species endemic to the Canary Islands. It has two distinct sub-species, each restricted to a single island: *Fringilla teydea teydea* inhabits pine forests on Tenerife and *Fringilla teydea polatzeki* occupies only certain pine forests on Gran Canaria. The blue chaffinch population on Gran Canaria is currently very restricted. The central core of the island is home to almost the entire population of the sub-species (about 200 individuals), with some also in the pine forest of Tamadaba. Currently, its small population size, predation (especially by feral cats), coupled with the degradation and decline of its habitat, form a set of factors which together threaten the population's survival. The species is listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive.

Project objectives

The project's objectives are fourfold. They are to:

1. Create sustainable population centres of blue chaffinch in the pine forests of the mountains of Gran Canaria;
2. Improve the viability of the population through release of birds into the wild from the captive breeding centre;
3. Increase the population size of blue chaffinch on the island of Gran Canaria; and
4. Enhance the operation of ecological corridors, established in an earlier project (LIFE07 NAT/E/000759).

Expected results

The main expected results are:

- The release of 120 individuals of *Fringilla teydea polatzeki* in the central mountain area from the captive breeding centre and also translocation of species from the source population, so the population size in those pine forests reaches 160 individuals (including those born in the natural environment) at the end of the project;
- The production of 20 individuals/year in the captive breeding centre;
- An increase of the wild blue chaffinch population of Gran Canaria by up to 450 individuals, effectively doubling the size of the population; and
- A plantation of 80 000 Canarian pines in the ecological corridors in the central mountains and Tamadaba. This will allow connectivity between the most suitable pine forests for the species.

LIFE14 NAT/ES/000077
LIFE+PINZON



Beneficiary:

Name of beneficiary

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Name of contact person

Miguel Ángel RODRÍGUEZ BERMÚDEZ

Duration of project:

53 months (01/08/2015 – 15/02/2020)

Total budget in euro:

1,123,860.00

EU contribution in euro:

674,316.00

Open rivers: Improving connectivity and habitats of rivers shared by Navarra and Gipuzkoa

Project background

Rivers along the Cantabrian coast are threatened by fragmentation. Obstacles blocking the continuity of the rivers have accumulated over the years to the extent that these obstacles can be found on virtually every kilometre stretch of the rivers. Moreover, they run for some distances (in the order of tens of kilometres). As a result, the river ecosystems have been altered and the range of the most sensitive species (semi-aquatic mammals and fish) have been reduced or fragmented. Together with genetic isolation and other associated problems, such fragmentation jeopardises the ecosystems' ability to recover from or withstand other pressures.

River obstacles are therefore extremely relevant to the management of Cantabrian Natura 2000 sites and are the main focus of River Basin Management Plans. These obstacles have also been the main focus of several public authorities responsible for river management in both the Basque Country and Navarra. Conservation efforts in both territories are combined with recent projects to increase cooperation among regions. As a result, the scope of this LIFE project includes two shared river basins: the Bidasoa and Oria basins.

Project objectives

Building on previous studies, the LIFE IrekiBAI project aims to improve the conservation status of river habitats and species listed in the Habitats Directive that are found in the Natura 2000 sites located in the Bidasoa and Oria river basins.

Specific objectives are to:

- Improve river connectivity by increasing the permeability of obstacles in rivers, restoring habitats and reducing impacts on watercourses, especially carrying out those measures identified as most effective;
- Improve knowledge of how to manage and restore these resources; and
- Disseminate project results and raise public awareness on the environmental values and services the rivers provide.

Expected results

- Achievement of a River Connectivity Index of "Very good. Absence of obstacles" for 11 obstacles;
- Achievement a River Connectivity Index of "Good. Obstruction with an efficient passage device for all types of fish" for the waterwheel (obstacle) of the "Goiko Errota" mill;

LIFE14 NAT/ES/000186
LIFE IrekiBAI



Beneficiary:

Name of beneficiary

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Iñigo MENDIOLA

Duration of project:

65 months (16/07/2015 – 31/12/2020)

Total budget in euro:

2,999,372.00

EU contribution in euro:

1,799,624.00

- Achievement of a River Connectivity Index of "Moderate. Surmountable through an efficient device" for the Olaverri waterwheel;
- Elimination of a total of 5 133 m of artificial lake sections (reservoirs) associated with the obstacles eliminated;
- Removal of 1.5 ha of artificial areas occupying the river territory;
- Restoration of 3.46 ha with alder and ash groves (91E0*) species and mixed Atlantic forest;
- Control and assessment of the American mink population in Navarre; and
- Introduction of a 40 m³/ha thick dead wood structure in the riverbeds along the sections covered in actions.

Green Belt of Bay of Santander: connecting nature and city

Project background

The Bay of Santander is the largest estuary on the north coast of Spain extending over 41 675 ha. Due to the influence of the city of Santander and its metropolitan area, nearly half the region's population is situated around the bay area. Despite its relative shallowness, the bay serves as the city's main seaport and has consequently undergone dramatic changes.

Project objectives

The main LIFE Anillo Verde project objective is to contribute to nature conservation in seven municipalities of the Bay of Santander, by improving and restoring ecosystems and habitats, and enabling the population recovery of species. It will also aim to halt the loss of biodiversity, to sustain ecosystem services, and to restore, insofar as possible, estuarine and bay ecosystems by creating a green and blue infrastructure: the 'Green Belt Bay of Santander'.

Further to these aims, the project will:

- Design the 'Green Belt Bay of Santander' as a permanent and long-term sustainable infrastructure, and develop appropriate management tools and funding;
- Restore characteristic ecosystems of the bay, including the removal of invasive alien species;
- Improve the connectivity of natural areas of the bay from ecological and sustainable mobility perspectives;
- Raise public awareness of the natural, cultural, and social values of the bay through the green belt, and promote the territory as a sustainable tourist destination; and
- Foster the expansion of the bay's green belt, through land stewardship agreements.

Expected results

The project's expected results include:

- The creation of a green and blue infrastructure, the 'Green Belt of the Bay of Santander', and the design of basic tools for its sustainable long-term management;
- Reduced territorial fragmentation through improved ecological connectivity within and between nature reserves, and by promoting sustainable mobility through trails and other paths to improve the public use of natural areas;
- An evaluation of ecosystem services in the bay and the increase in these achieved after the implementation of the project;

LIFE14 NAT/ES/000699

LIFE Anillo Verde



Beneficiary:

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Carlos SÁNCHEZ MARTÍNEZ

Duration of project:

48 months (01/10/2015 – 30/09/2019)

Total budget in euro:

2,568,132.00

EU contribution in euro:

1,540,887.00

- The enhancement and restoration of 95 ha of degraded habitats (e.g. coastal wetlands, inland wetlands, relict oaks, and islands);
- The removal of 150 ha of invasive fauna and flora (e.g. *Cortaderia selloana*, *Baccharis halimifolia* and *Reynoutria japonica*);
- A reduction in the number of fires by up to 80% around the Bay of Santander (helped by the removal of *C. selloana*);
- The removal of illegal landfill and the prevention of uncontrolled waste dumping within all reserves;
- Increased environmental awareness among the local population on the green belt, and the use of green and blue infrastructure to provide jobs, ecosystem services and to improve quality of life;
- The creation of a business lobby to support the green belt in the medium and long term; and
- The implementation of at least one ecotourism initiative leveraging the green belt as a tourist resource.

Olive Alive: Towards the design and certification of biodiversity friendly olive groves

Project background

With nearly 1.9 million olive farms (Eurostat, 2007) the olive sector is a vital source of employment and economic activity in many European regions. In Andalusia almost 100 000 ha of olive groves are located in the Natura 2000 network. The olive has an important role to play in the conservation of biodiversity. Moreover, olive groves are a vital element of green infrastructure, connecting areas of high conservation value.

Project objectives

The project aims to define an innovative model of olive growing with high demonstration value. The model will be agriculturally, economically and socially viable, while contributing to the halt in the loss of biodiversity in the EU by 2020. Specifically the project aims to:

- Establish profitability formulas based on an added value for consumers (biodiversity) to help curb the abandonment of traditional olive farming;
- Develop a science-based agrifood certification system linking oil production to the recovery of biodiversity;
- Show that stakeholders, especially farmers, have a key role to play in the EU strategy on biodiversity;
- Provide an effective solution to the economic and environmental crisis that is affecting traditional olive farming;
- Improve the ecosystem services provided by olive farming through restoration actions and creation of green infrastructure in demonstration plots;
- Contribute to the integration of biodiversity in EU agriculture and demonstrate that it is possible to harmonise the environment, economy and agriculture.
- Provide proven and useful information in support of measures to reach the objectives of the CAP 2014-2020, the payment for environmental services and the design of agri-environmental measures;
- Demonstrate the role that citizens can play as consumers in strategies to halt the loss of biodiversity in the EU;
- Show that the integration of socio-cultural values and environmental values is a step towards the multi-functionality of agricultural systems; and
- Establish cooperation with other olive-growing regions outside the EU.

Expected results

The expected results will include:

- An assessment of the conservation status of biodiversity in Andalusian olive plantations;

LIFE14 NAT/ES/001094

LIFE Olivares Vivos



Beneficiary:

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José María SÁNCHEZ

Duration of project:

60 months (01/10/2015 – 30/09/2020)

Total budget in euro:

2,856,005.00

EU contribution in euro:

1,713,603.00

- Strategies for restoring biodiversity in different models of olive plantations;
- Proven methodology for assessing the contribution of olive plantations to biodiversity;
- Sixteen demonstration experiences (>2 000 ha) in olive groves on the recovery of biodiversity;
- Ecological restoration of at least 2 000 ha of olive plantations – for every 100 ha around 3 000 m of roadsides and 1 000 m of hydrological network will be restored, and the construction of at least 100 m of walls;
- Sixteen ponds/watering places for amphibians and reptiles created;
- 3 000 m² of irrigation ponds for nesting waterfowl adapted;
- A value added Brand Olive Alive certifying a production model that recovers biodiversity;
- More than 1.35 million litres of olive oil certified as “in conversion to Olive Alive” and more than 600 000 l of olive oil certified as Olive Alive;
- 16 land stewardship agreements (2 000 ha) with olive farms; and
- Proposed recommendations for the conversion of conventional olive farms to ‘Olive Alive’ farms.

Integration of human activities in the conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 Network in the littoral of Cantabria

Project background

The aquatic coastal areas' management plan of Natura 2000 sites in Cantabria highlights the main risk factors for good conservation status of habitats and species of Community interest in estuaries, and the physical processes that enable the ecosystem to develop. As with other estuaries in the EU, an important aspect of these factors are hydromorphological alterations. These can be derived from productive uses (e.g. dykes for agroforestry use); and educational uses (e.g. ethnographic use of tidal mills). The alteration of tidal inundation regimes and the changes in the sedimentary characteristics derived from these pressures favour the spread of invasive alien species (e.g. *Baccharis halimifolia*), a new threat for biodiversity.

Project objectives

The project's general objective is to improve the conservation status of habitats and species of Community interest by restoring ecological and hydrodynamic functioning.

Specifically, the project aims to:

- Reduce direct pressure on biological diversity, by improving the conservation status of vulnerable estuarine habitats and species of Community interest;
- Promote the sustainable development of educational, cultural and leisure activities in estuarine systems;
- Improve estuarine ecological restoration in the Atlantic biogeographical region by promoting a participative planning approach, knowledge management and the dissemination of results; and
- Improve the conservation status of estuarine marine birds and habitats across the Natura 2000 coastal area of Cantabria, through the design and drafting of an inundation management plan on coastal lagoons (both natural and anthropic).

Expected results

- Restoration of a favourable conservation status of the coastal salt meadow habitats (currently not favourable) across the Natura 2000 sites of Cantabria. The elimination of the invasive alien plant *Baccharis halimifolia* in Tina Menor, the Capitán estuary, Joyel estuary and Victoria lagoon, will allow the marsh areas to be restored and potential habitat for species of the salt meadow habitats to be developed;
- Improvement of the conservation status of sandbank habitats, mudflats or sand flats not covered with

LIFE14 NAT/ES/001213
CONVIVE-LIFE



Beneficiary:

Name of beneficiary

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José Antonio JUANES DE LA PEÑA

Duration of project:

48 months (20/10/2015 – 20/10/2019)

Total budget in euro:

1,325,680.00

EU contribution in euro:

795,406.00

- water in low tide, annual pioneering vegetation with *Salicornia*; and other species from the muddy and sandy areas, and grasslands of *Spartina*.
- Improvement of the conservation status of marine birds and habitats, in particular for spatula (*Platalea leucorodia*), grey heron (*Ardea cinerea*) and purple heron (*Ardea purpurea*) through the elimination of pressures and the design of a water level management plan;
- Update of the Community interest species inventory in the Natura 2000 sites in the coastal area of Cantabria that are not integrated, and completion of the declaration forms;
- Restoration of connectivity in the Oyambre estuary site, by removing the dyke that currently restrains tidal flow; and
- Improvement in the connectivity of the Joyel estuary site, while protecting the Santa Olaja mill.

Re-creating habitat complexity for semi-aquatic fauna

Project background

Freshwater ecosystems are vital for biodiversity and human wellbeing. Wetlands harbour multiple organisms that are at least partially dependent on freshwaters for completing their lifecycle.

Many herptiles (reptile or amphibian) and insect species have been subject to dramatic declines due to human disturbance – e.g. draining of wetlands, urbanisation and fragmentation of the landscape. Invasive alien species, including diseases, also pose global threats to the native semi-aquatic fauna. In Europe, many herptiles and insects are dependent on Natura 2000 sites and other protected areas for their long-term survival. A key factor for the survival of reptiles or amphibians and insects with limited dispersal abilities is that populations must be able to thrive in a metapopulation. This means that there must be a minimum number of suitable breeding sites within dispersal distance. Moreover, the terrestrial environment must also provide suitable habitats for feeding, hibernation and protection against predators.

Previous work in Natura 2000 sites typically focused on actions on either aquatic or terrestrial habitats.

Project objectives

The main objective of SemiAquaticLife is to restore and improve the conservation status of herptiles and semi-aquatic insects in Natura 2000 sites in southern Sweden (11 sites), Denmark (19 sites) and Germany (9 sites). The goal is to ensure viable metapopulations of species listed in the annexes of the Habitats Directive. The focus will be on listed herptiles and invertebrates and improvement of both aquatic and terrestrial habitats.

Another objective is to increase awareness and acceptance among stakeholders and the general public of the need for restoration actions for semi-aquatic fauna and herptiles. Finally, the main results of the project will be summarised in guidelines of best practices that will provide European conservation recommendations.

Expected results

- Some 179-207 new wetlands created and 196 wetlands restored;
- Hibernation spots created with 148 piles of gravel, stones, dead wood or shrubberies;
- Some 57 ha of bushes, trees and invasive flora cleared and fencing erected on 8.8 km;

LIFE14 NAT/SE/000201
SemiAquaticLife



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Anders HALLENGREN

Duration of project:

60 months (01/01/2016 - 31/12/2020)

Total budget in euro:

5,805,687.00

EU contribution in euro:

3,478,941.00

- Species reintroduction and supportive breeding for *Lacerta agilis* (DE), *Bombina bombina* (DK, DE, SE), *Pelobates fuscus* (DE, SE), *Bufo viridis* (DE), *Hyla arborea* (DK), *Epidalea calamita* (DK, SE);
- Information material and exhibitions aimed at the public offering an introduction to the life and ecology of the semi-aquatic fauna and herptiles;
- Site specific management plans for future conservation produced for all 40 project sites;
- Outcome of the conservation actions assessed by monitoring the colonisation success of the listed semi-aquatic fauna and herptiles in the restored/created habitats. (The conditions for a viable metapopulation are expected to be established during the project and good conservation status of the targeted species not later than five years after completion);
- Monitoring of the ecosystem services and the socio-economic aspects providing additional information about the effects of restoration actions not just for biodiversity, but also for human well-being; and
- A comprehensive guide on how to successfully apply and evaluate 'best practice' methods for restoration of aquatic and terrestrial habitats.

Conservation of Black and Griffon vultures in the cross-border Rhodopes mountains

Project background

The European black vulture (*Aegypius monachus*) and griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*) are considered as umbrella species whose conservation will also substantially benefit other raptor species sharing the main diet of carrion as well as breeding and foraging habitats. These species are also an indicator of healthy, intact, natural habitats. The conservation status of all species of European vultures, however, is vulnerable as a result of poisoning, limited food availability, collisions (wind farms and powerlines) and electrocution (electricity pylons). Moreover, most breeding populations are isolated and most species have low reproduction rates. It is difficult to ensure the long-term survival of these species in Europe.

Only around 2 125 breeding pairs of black vultures remain in four EU countries (France, Germany, Portugal and Spain). Around 97% are found in Spain. The single remaining colony left in the Balkans is located in the National Park of the Dardia-Soufli-Lefkimi forest (Dardia NP) in the Rhodope Mountains in Greece, close to the border with Bulgaria. The black vulture population here has around 28 pairs.

Project objectives

The overall objective of the LIFE LIFE RE-Vultures project is to reduce severe threats to black and griffon vultures and thus allow them to recover in the Bulgarian/Greek cross-border area of the Eastern Rhodope Mountains.

Expected results

The project's expected results are as follows:

- Increased population of black vulture to 35 pairs and griffon vulture to 80 pairs;
- Increased knowledge of mortality factors and threats affecting the vultures through toxicological research and GPS tagging of more than 40 vultures;
- Increased understanding of migration and dispersal of black and griffon vultures by mapping the movements of tagged vultures in a database;
- Reduced disturbance, poisoning and direct persecution of the vultures through training of local authorities, anti-poison dog teams and targeted awareness-raising campaigns;
- Increased food availability for the vultures through the reintroduction of 50 red deer and 200 fallow deer in at least three SPAs along with six small locally operated feeding places;

LIFE14 NAT/NL/000901
LIFE RE-Vultures



Beneficiary:

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Ilko BOSMAN

Duration of project:

66 months (01/01/2016 – 30/06/2021)

Total budget in euro:

2,198,572.00

EU contribution in euro:

1,648,015.00

- Reduced mortality risk of vultures from electricity infrastructure by identifying all dangerous electricity pylons in the project Natura 2000 network sites (SPAs) in Bulgaria, insulating more than 120 pylons and the mounting of bird diverters on 2.5 km of powerlines;
- Increased awareness and support from key stakeholders, including local businesses, by organising excursions for stakeholders and community leaders to vulture-watching sites, supporting businesses in improving their vulture-based activities, media campaigns, an interactive website and a youth education programme at the Vulture Centre in Madzharovo; and
- Extended networking with conservation organisations through an international workshop on supplementary vulture feeding, vulture threats and relevant EU directives.

Urgent actions for the recovery of the European Bison populations in Romania

Project background

The European bison (*Bison bonasus*) or wisent, is Europe's largest wild land mammal. It once roamed all across the continent. However, it was hunted to near extinction by 1927, when only 54 individuals remained, all in captivity. A slow but successful breeding and reintroduction effort in Central and Eastern Europe helped to re-establish a wild population.

Today, the population of the European bison in Romania is around 140 animals, of which 63 are in the wild. The Southern Carpathians are one of the most favourable areas to initiate a large-scale European bison reintroduction, because the area has little fragmentation and low human intrusion. This will enable the establishment of a bison meta-population, formed of various sub-populations interconnected through ecological corridors.

After a pre-feasibility study (2011) and a detailed feasibility study (2013), the Armenis-Plopu area in the Tarcu Mountains has been selected for the reintroduction of the European bison. Local authorities, stakeholders and community leaders in this area welcomed the idea of the bison reintroduction, and offered 70 ha of communal land plus 60 ha of forest for the first introduction. Since May 2014, 17 individuals have been released into the wild and 18 more are being prepared for release.

Project objectives

The overall aim of the LIFE RE-Bison project is to enable the successful recovery of the European bison in the Tarcu and Poiana Rusca Mountains in southwest Romania. The specific objectives are to:

- Establish a free-roaming, genetically and demographically viable sub-population of the European bison, comprising around 185 animals;
- Create new economic activities in the area based on the bison;
- Reduce conflicts between these bison and rural economic activities;
- Stimulate a positive attitude among local stakeholders in support of the European bison; and
- Increase public awareness and interest in the conservation of the European bison.

Expected results

- An increased population of European bison in Romania, from around 30 at the end of 2015 to 185, through the successful introduction of over 100 animals;

LIFE14 NAT/NL/000987
LIFE RE-BISON



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Ilko BOSMAN

Duration of project:

63 months (01/01/2016 – 31/03/2021)

Total budget in euro:

1,816,991.00

EU contribution in euro:

1,362,735.00

- A demographically and genetically viable population that survives without further structured reintroduction in the two designated areas;
- A healthy population, not exposed to serious threats from disease or parasites;
- New economic incentives, providing fertile ground for a positive local attitude towards the bison; and
- Increased public awareness and understanding of the importance of the bison for the designated areas.

Bringing the Bure back to LIFE: Hoveton Wetland Restoration Project

Project background

The Broads Natura 2000 network site is situated near the eastern English coast in the county of Norfolk. It is an internationally important wetland ecosystem and covers an area of 5 889 ha. Its lakes are a key biodiversity and iconic landscape feature that have suffered from a legacy of water quality issues. Hoveton Great Broad and Hudson's Bay have been flagged as a priority for lake restoration work.

Project objectives

The main aim of the Bure LIFE project is to restore the naturally eutrophic lake habitat to a species-rich, clear-water state through minimal carbon footprint project actions. The restoration work will also benefit EU priority habitats, such as calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* (7210*), and Annex II-listed Habitats Directive species such as otter, as well as water fowl including wigeon, gadwall and shoveler.

Specifically, the project aims to:

- Improve the ecological condition of the naturally eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition habitats (3150) within Hoveton Great Broad and Hudson's Bay, bringing them to an 'unfavourable recovering' conservation status by 2020. This will involve:
 - Sediment removal from both water-bodies; and
 - Biomanipulation of both lakes to achieve clear-water conditions, leading to an aquatic macrophyte dominated state.
- Reuse the sediment to create new areas of fen vegetation corresponding to the previous extent of marginal lake edge habitats, including calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* habitat and to help restore eroded river banks;
- Monitor the recovery process and disseminate best practice guidance associated with the restoration techniques to managers of similar habitats both within the SAC and elsewhere in the UK and the rest of Europe; and
- Raise awareness of anthropogenic impacts, improve physical and intellectual access and increase appreciation of biodiversity amongst local communities, visitors, land managers and a range of other target audiences.

LIFE14 NAT/UK/000054

Bure LIFE



Beneficiary:

Name of beneficiary

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Dawn ISAAC

Duration of project:

63 months (01/09/2015 - 30/11/2020)

Total budget in euro:

5,004,346.00

EU contribution in euro:

3,002,608.00

Expected results

The project's results will include:

- Removal of around 59 600 m³ of sediment from the eastern end of Hoveton Great Broad (HGB);
- Removal of around 37 900 m³ of sediment from Hudson's Bay and western area of HGB;
- Removal of 75% of the target fish species (principally roach and bream) through isolation of the lakes from the River Bure and Hoveton Marshes dyke network with six fish-proof barriers and a three-year fish removal programme;
- Increase in calcareous fen habitat area by reusing removed sediment at HGB and Hudson's Bay to create 4.3 ha of species-rich fen in HGB and to create 1.7 ha of tall herb fen at Wroxham Island;
- A monitoring plan to capture the habitat response to the management actions and to monitor the success of moving the lake towards meeting its conservation objectives; and
- Improved access to HGB and Hudson's Bay through construction of 75 m nature trail boardwalk, a landing area, two viewing areas, a 6 m bridge, 12 interpretation panels and a tern raft.

MoorLIFE 2020

Project background

The South Pennine Moors Natura 2000 site is important for the EU priority habitat, active blanket bog. The conservation status of the site has, over the years, been unfavourable and under threat due to almost two centuries of heavy sulphate and nitrate pollution, leading to the destruction or severe depletion of the essential sphagnum cover of these moors. Fire damage has thus led to extreme levels of erosion that are now so widespread that not only is it difficult for sphagnum to become re-established but even those areas that have managed to retain sphagnum cover remain under continued threat of further erosion and new fires.

Project objectives

The aim of the MoorLIFE 2020 project is to conserve and protect the priority active blanket bog habitat within the South Pennine Moors Natura 2000 site and the ecosystem services it provides. It will protect the integrity of around 9 500 ha of the target habitat by:

- Stopping the erosion of the peat body by re-vegetating 837 ha of bare peat and ensuring the positive trajectory of a further 2 030 ha;
- Raising water tables to reduce chemical peat erosion by blocking 50 402 m of grips and 57 582 m of erosion gullies;
- Reducing wildfire risk and increasing habitat resilience by diversifying 4 640 ha of homogenous vegetation;
- Improving the hydrological integrity of the blanket bog and reducing wildfire risk and severity by delivering and further developing sphagnum reintroduction methods; and
- Reducing erosion of the peat body and raising water tables by trials of blocking peat pipes.

The project will moreover increase the resilience of 8 500 ha of the targeted habitat by introducing appropriate plant species in 1 400 ha of species-poor habitat and by controlling invasive species on 1 800 ha. It will also safeguard the bog habitats through the promotion of appropriate land management and by reducing the threat of wildfires.

Expected results

- 2 040 ha of damaged ground improved (43 ha of bare and eroding peat) within a mosaic of 10 453 ha of active blanket bog;
- Installation of 8 226 gully blocks along 57 582 m of gullies;

LIFE14 NAT/UK/000070
MoorLIFE 2020



Beneficiary:

Name of beneficiary

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Sharon DAVISON

Duration of project:

64 months (01/10/2015 – 28/02/2021)

Total budget in euro:

16,046,116.00

EU contribution in euro:

12,034,587.00

- Installation of 7 172 grip blocks along 50 204 m of grips;
- Best practice techniques for management of peat pipes, application of sphagnum at a landscape scale and re-establishment of sphagnum;
- Sphagnum applied to 970 ha of cut *Calluna*, *Molinia* and *Eriophorum* dominated blanket bog;
- 1.36 ha of established rhododendron plants removed;
- 1 800 ha of invasive woody seedlings cleared;
- Creation of 'Restoration trajectories';
- Up-to-date map of vegetation cover;
- High-resolution mapping of capital works' sites, using remote sensing technology to enable planning;
- Include the carbon budget in project delivery and carbon benefits of the capital works programme
- Land management materials and code of practice for sustainable moorland management;
- Junior MoorLIFE established, giving young people the chance to attend a Euro Parks youth ranger congress;
- 80 events organised to reach local community; and
- Project information boards installed.

Improving the conservation prospects of the priority species roseate tern throughout its range in the UK and Ireland

Project background

Listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive, the roseate tern (*Sterna dougallii*) breeds in just two areas of Europe, namely the Azores and the far northwest. The northwest metapopulation is spread across a small number of sites in France, Ireland and the UK. The French sites have been targeted by a LIFE project (LIFE05 NAT/F/000137), and this project is designed to build on the previous one.

Project objectives

The overall goal of LIFE14 Roseate Tern is to improve the conservation prospects of roseate tern (*Sterna dougallii*) in the UK and Ireland. This aim will contribute to a long term goal of improving the conservation status of roseate tern across Europe.

Specific objectives are to:

- Increase the population of roseate tern in the UK and Ireland by enhancing habitat management and reducing threats at the three principal colonies;
- Provide the conditions needed for a re-expansion of roseate tern in the UK and Ireland through enhanced management and restoration of the other SPAs for this species;
- Identify long-term options for the management and establishment of tern colonies across northwest Europe, in view of predicted changes to the climate and coastlines.
- Improve understanding of key issues affecting roseate terns in northwest Europe and in wintering areas in West Africa;
- Develop and disseminate guidance and plans for the management of roseate tern breeding sites; and
- Develop the first ever conservation strategy covering the whole northwest European metapopulation of roseate tern.

Expected results

The expected results include:

- An increase in the UK breeding population of roseate tern from 73 breeding pairs in 2013 to at least 100 pairs. The Irish breeding population will increase from 1 413 pairs in 2014 to 1 710 pairs by the end of project;
- Habitat for roseate terns will be enhanced and threats from disturbance and predation reduced at the three main colonies;
- Habitat for roseate terns will be created or restored, and threats from habitat change, predation and dis-

LIFE14 NAT/UK/000394

LIFE14 Roseate Tern



Beneficiary:

Name of beneficiary

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

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Nick FOLKARD

Duration of project:

60 months (01/10/2015 – 30/09/2020)

Total budget in euro:

3,229,020.00

EU contribution in euro:

2,421,765.00

- turbance reduced, in all five other UK and Irish roseate tern SPAs;
- A report produced summarising long-term opportunities for tern colony management and/or creation in northwest Europe;
- A demographic study completed clarifying the relative importance of factors operating at breeding and non-breeding grounds and the relationships between colonies in France, Ireland and the UK;
- Improved understanding of the ecology of prey species, such as sand eels, and of the methods to increase their availability;
- Improved understanding of the importance of potentially damaging impacts in West Africa, and a plan created to address these impacts if necessary;
- A best practice manual for the management of roseate tern breeding sites; and
- Action plans for the conservation of roseate tern in the UK and Ireland.

Sciuriosity - Evolving IAS grey squirrel management techniques in the UK

Project background

The presence of the invasive alien grey squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) in the UK is detrimental to several native species and the overall health and resilience of affected woodland ecosystems. The native Eurasian red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*) is particularly threatened by grey squirrels, but to date there has been no clear plan to stem its population growth. A collaborative management framework that crosses administrative boundaries is required. Currently, the approach to grey squirrel management lacks coordination, focus and adequate funding. Anglesey is a 720 km² island in North Wales from which grey squirrels have recently been eradicated.

Project objectives

The SciuriosityLIFE project aims to:

- Develop mechanisms to prevent the unintentional introduction of grey squirrels to currently uncolonised woodland landscapes;
- Develop early warning/rapid response mechanisms to ensure Anglesey is not recolonised;
- Develop rapid response mechanisms to mitigate the impacts of grey squirrels in urban woodlands with high biodiversity and tourism value;
- Develop early warning systems to detect grey squirrels in sparsely populated rural landscapes;
- Develop more efficient strategic mechanisms to evolve community-based grey squirrel management;
- Quantify the financial and community-based resources needed to achieve regional eradication;
- Share knowledge gained across the EU;
- Use knowledge exchange and trust building processes to aid the development of a broader IAS management;
- Test the impact of measures to increase public awareness and community capacity associated with grey squirrel management; and
- Inform the development of a long-term management framework for grey squirrels in the UK.

Expected results

- The prevention of Anglesey recolonisation;
- The prevention of grey squirrel colonisation of the largest network of grey squirrel-free woodlands on the English mainland;
- An early warning system to prevent grey squirrel re-invasion of a 165 km² section of County Gwynedd in north Wales, following grey squirrel eradication from 1 500 ha of woodland habitat;

LIFE14 NAT/UK/000467
SciuriosityLIFE



Beneficiary:

Name of beneficiary

Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts

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Duration of project:

50 months (01/11/2015 – 31/12/2019)

Total budget in euro:

2,699,565.00

EU contribution in euro:

1,619,741.00

- Eradication of IAS grey squirrels from a specific Northern Irish landscape unit through direct grey squirrel control and creation of a community-based early warning and rapid response network;
- New urban IAS management communities in north Merseyside created to improve the sustainability of protection measures for Sefton coast woodlands;
- New grey squirrel management by 50 private landowners across Northern Ireland;
- Seven existing Northern Irish squirrel community groups supported to increase their membership by 10% from a January 2016 baseline;
- Creation of three new grey squirrel management groups in Northern Ireland;
- Four annual knowledge fairs held;
- Three best practice guides published;
- Four academic papers published in peer-reviewed journals; and
- Increased public understanding of grey squirrel management.

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