

Environment and Climate: Commission invests EUR 281.4 million in new environment and climate projects

The European Commission has approved funding for 248 new projects under the LIFE+ programme, the European Union's environment fund. The projects cover actions in the fields of nature conservation, climate change, environmental policy and information and communication on environmental issues across all Member States. Overall, they represent a total investment of some EUR 556.4 million, of which the EU will provide EUR 281.4 million.

Environment Commissioner Janez Potočnik said: "The LIFE+ programme continues to provide vital funding for innovative projects. These new projects will make a big contribution to protecting, conserving and enhancing Europe's natural capital. They will support the goal of turning the EU into a resource efficient, greener and more competitive low-carbon economy ."

Commissioner for Climate Action Connie Hedegaard said: "I am happy to see confirmed this year that an ever rising share of LIFE projects is going to contribute to climate action. And we want to improve this even more: The new LIFE programme from 2014 to 2020 will foresee over 850 million Euros dedicated to climate action. This will roughly triple the amount which is spent on climate action."

The Commission received 1 159 applications in response to its latest call for proposals, which closed in September 2012.

LIFE+ Nature & Biodiversity projects improve the conservation status of endangered species and habitats. Of the 258 proposals received, the Commission selected 92 projects for funding from partnerships of conservation bodies, government authorities and other parties. Led by project beneficiaries in 24 Member States, they represent a total investment of EUR 247.4 million, of which the EU will provide some EUR 139.3 million. The majority (82) are Nature projects, contributing to the implementation of the [Birds and/or Habitats Directives](#)

and the

[Natura 2000](#)

network. The other 10 are pilot schemes that tackle wider biodiversity issues (the LIFE+

"biodiversity projects").

LIFE+ Environment Policy & Governance projects are pilot projects that contribute to the development of innovative policy ideas, technologies, methods and instruments. Of the 743 proposals received, the Commission selected 146 projects for funding from a wide range of public and private sector organisations. The successful projects, led by project beneficiaries in 18 Member States, represent a total investment of EUR 298.5 million, of which the EU will provide some EUR 136.8 million.

Under this component, the Commission will contribute more than EUR 34.6 million to 29 projects directly tackling climate change, with a total budget of EUR 81.1 million. In addition, many other projects focusing on other issues will also have an indirect impact on greenhouse gas emissions.

Other important areas of focus include water, waste and natural resources, chemicals, the urban environment, soil and air quality.

LIFE+ Information and Communication projects disseminate information and raise the profile of environmental issues. Of the 158 proposals received, the Commission selected 10 projects from a range of public and private sector nature and/or environment organisations. The projects are based in nine Member States and represent a total investment of EUR 10.5 million, of which the EU will provide some EUR 5.2 million.

Four of the 10 projects are concerned with raising awareness about nature and biodiversity matters, whereas six are focused on other environmental matters such as climate change, resource efficiency and coastal pollution prevention.

Background

An informal agreement was reached in Brussels on 27 June 2013 on the next funding period for the LIFE programme (2014-2020). Changes include a specific section devoted to climate mitigation and adaptation, and a new funding category for "Integrated Projects". This should

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boost the implementation of environmental legislation, making it possible to scale up projects by mobilising additional financing from EU, national and private funds. Formal consent from Parliament and Council are now needed for the agreement to pass into law.

LIFE+ is the European Union's financial instrument for the environment and has a total budget of EUR 2 143 billion for the period 2007-2013. The Commission launches one call for LIFE+ project proposals per year.

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