



# LIFE unites people for Nature

Photo: LIFE10 NAT/D/000005

## How is LIFE contributing to the Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process?

### What is the Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process?

At the end of 2011, the European Commission launched the Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process to help Member States achieve favourable conservation status for habitats and species protected under the EU Habitats and Birds Directives. This will enable Member States to fulfil their legal obligations regarding the management of Natura 2000.

The Process involves multiple stakeholders cooperating at biogeographical level through seminars, workshops and joint activities. It aims to enhance the effective implementation, management, monitoring, financing and reporting of the Natura 2000 network.

Specifically, the Process:

- is a voluntary process for fulfilling obligations set out in the EU nature directives
- enhances coordinated and collaborative approaches among Member States sharing a common biogeographical context
- is strongly dependant on the active involvement of Member States and stakeholders (e.g. NGOs)
- sees Natura 2000 as both a network of protected sites and a network of people

Key objectives:

- collecting up-to-date information on threats and conservation needs for species and habitats
- identifying common objectives, priorities and management actions
- developing new management insights, cross-border stakeholder cooperation frameworks, and networks of specialists and site managers
- promoting Natura 2000 management that integrates socio-economic objectives

LIFE is the only EU funding programme with a core objective of supporting the designation and management of the Natura 2000 network, thus implementing the EU Birds and Habitats Directives. Since 1992, LIFE has implemented numerous actions to benefit nature and biodiversity in the EU, from building knowledge about the most effective ways to reach and maintain favourable status for habitats and species, to networking, and sharing information and experience.

In particular, LIFE supports the Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process by implementing practical habitat management and restoration activities, and providing a framework to share best practices, compare approaches, build contacts, and exchange information and new knowledge. LIFE projects also identify complementary funding opportunities and promote multiple benefits linked to Natura 2000 management, for example, via LIFE Integrated Projects that implement Prioritised Action Frameworks (PAFs) for Natura 2000.

LIFE actions support the Process by:

- building knowledge on species and habitat conservation needs at biogeographical level
- building partnerships between stakeholders for Natura 2000 management
- sharing best practices on management and restoration of habitats at biogeographical level
- providing funding and identifying complementary funding opportunities (e.g. EU Rural and Regional Development programmes)
- raising awareness of Natura 2000
- establishing networks for exchanging experiences, case studies and best practices across the EU on species and habitats conservation
- monitoring of project results (in support of Birds Directive Article 12 and Habitats Directive Article 17 reporting)
- promoting integrated Natura 2000 site management

# LIFE is supporting nature conservation actions across Natura 2000 biogeographical regions

The Natura 2000 network aims to protect vulnerable habitats and species across their natural range in Europe and to ensure that they are restored to, or maintained at, a favourable conservation status. The LIFE programme builds partnerships, and shares knowledge and best practices, to achieve Targets 1 and 2 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020 and to support the 'EU Action plan for nature, people and the economy'.



## LIFE project actions

- partnerships between stakeholders
- complementary funding opportunities
- sharing management and restoration best practices

## Project outcomes

- gathering knowledge of habitats and of the range, population trends and ecology of species
  - improving knowledge of conservation requirements
  - setting up species and habitat action plans
- setting up species and habitat conservation actions
  - establishing conservation priorities and measures (PAFs)
  - implementing species and habitat action plans
  - proposal of site management plans
- implementation of concrete habitat management and restoration actions
  - implementation of site management plans
  - setting up agri-environmental schemes (via EU Rural Development funds)
- creation of species and habitats conservation guidelines and manuals
  - organisation of international meetings and conferences
  - networking between projects
  - training N2000 managers and national authorities
- bringing together stakeholders
  - sharing of strategies and experiences between Member States and expert stakeholders

## LIFE Nature Integrated Projects



## Site designation

## Natura 2000 site management and restoration

## Favourable conservation status



Photo: LIFE12 NAT/MT/000845/OCEANA/Carlos Minguel

## Maltese marine Natura 2000 designation

The MALTA SEABIRD and MIGRATE projects surveyed seabirds, turtles and cetaceans, leading to the designation of 9 new Natura 2000 sites in Malta's marine waters. The surveys benefitted from knowledge and capacity transferred to Malta from previous marine LIFE projects in Portugal and the UK, via BirdLife partners SPEA and the RSPB, respectively. Building on this, LIFE BaMAR for N2K has created inventories of habitats and species to fill existing knowledge gaps, and extended marine protection in Maltese waters. The project team analysed the data to identify the most suitable areas for protection. As a result, it proposed the extension of 6 marine Natura 2000 sites and the creation of 2 brand-new sites. All the projects promoted the active participation of all stakeholders.

**Biogeographic region(s): Marine Mediterranean**



Photo: LIFE05 NAT/PL/000101/Mateusz Matysiak

## Pan-European aquatic warbler habitat management

The LIFE programme has made a major contribution to implementing concrete conservation actions targeting the aquatic warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*) over the past two decades. Two LIFE projects, from Germany and Poland, got together and produced "The Aquatic Warbler Conservation Handbook," which summarises more than 20 years' knowledge about the ecology, habitat management, and conservation of this threatened songbird throughout its distribution range. The handbook also compiled the experiences of relevant LIFE projects in France, Lithuania and Spain. This contributed to the development of a common approach for habitat management, thus improving the conservation status of the aquatic warbler along its migratory flyway.

**Biogeographic region(s): Continental and Mediterranean**



Photo: LIFE13 BIO/UK/000428/East Ayrshire Coalfields Environmental Initiative

## Transfer of best practices on peatland habitats restoration

Several LIFE projects from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia and the UK got together to share best practices and improve knowledge on the restoration and management of bog, mire and fen habitats listed in Annex I of the Habitats Directive. These meetings were an opportunity for the projects to discuss their specific restoration and management experiences, and the lessons learned. Several approaches to habitat monitoring were also shared. The results of habitat and hydrological monitoring on LIFE project sites across the EU showed that raised bog restoration activities have a significant positive effect both on site hydrology and vegetation cover, thus improving the long-term conservation status of peatland habitats.

**Biogeographic region(s): Atlantic, Continental and Boreal**



Photo: LIFE10 NAT/EE/000107

## Common approach for Boreal grasslands management

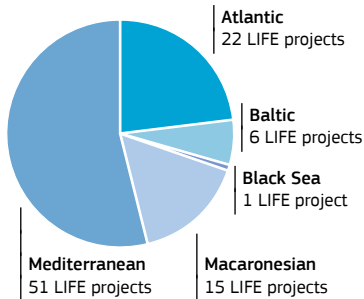
Boreal Baltic coastal meadows and Nordic alvar grasslands are a priority for conservation in the EU. These habitats are found close to the shores of the Baltic Sea in Finland, Sweden and the Baltic states. For the past 15 years, several LIFE projects from Estonia, Finland, Latvia and Lithuania have been working together, and sharing experiences and knowledge on the best way to restore and manage these habitats. They have created management guidelines for meadows and quantified grazing intensities, and provided practical aid for stakeholders involved in the management of coastal and grassland habitats. Such initiatives are crucial for ensuring the long-term success of the projects' excellent pump-priming activities, catalysing other funding sources, and involving farmers and local authorities. The projects also facilitated better use of EU Rural Development Programme (RDP) agri-environmental schemes for the maintenance of biologically-valuable grasslands, which provided new economic benefits for farmers.

**Biogeographic region(s): Boreal**

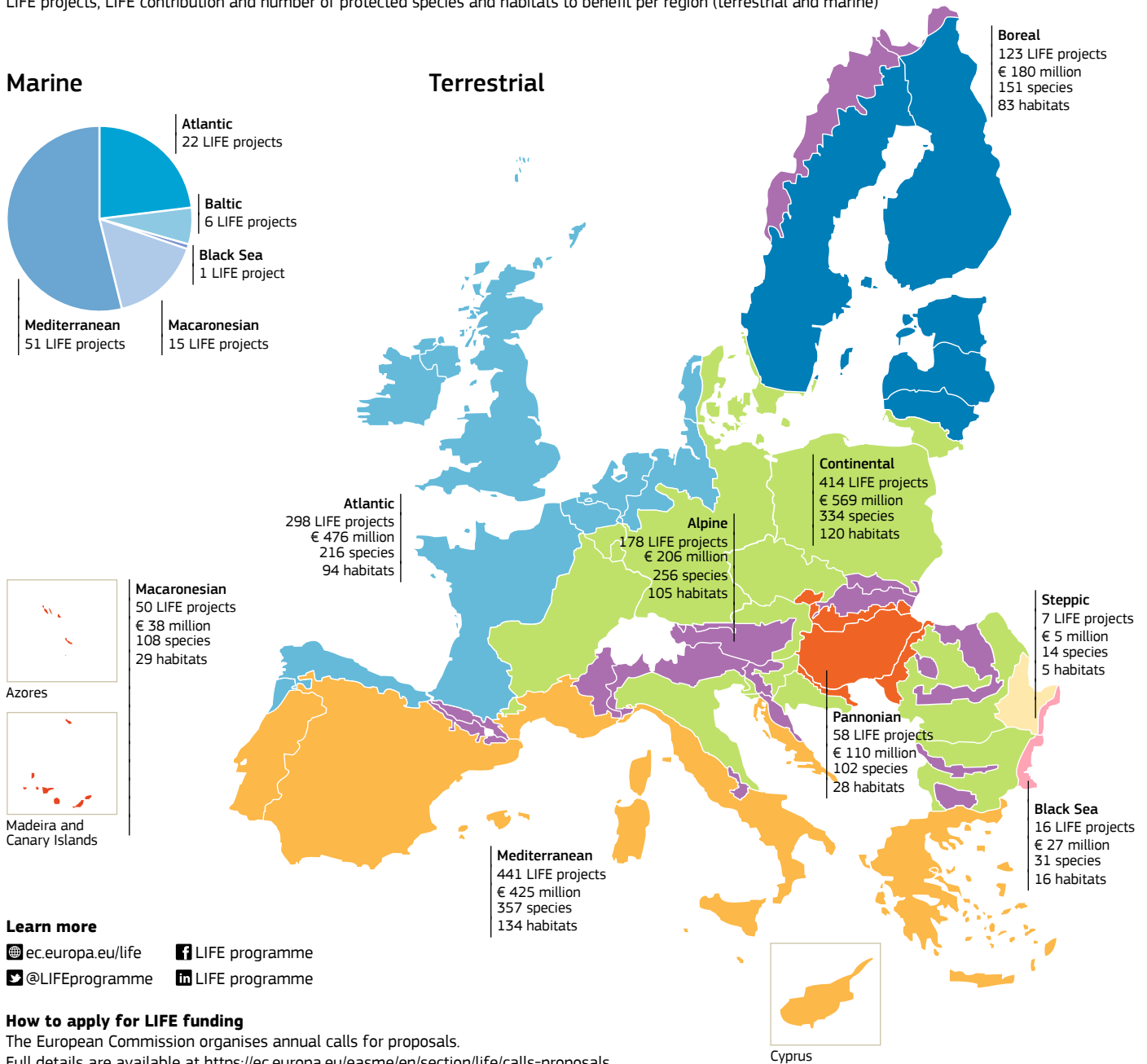
# LIFE by biogeographical region

LIFE projects, LIFE contribution and number of protected species and habitats to benefit per region (terrestrial and marine)




## Marine



## Terrestrial



## Learn more

[ec.europa.eu/life](https://ec.europa.eu/life)
 LIFE programme  
 @LIFEprogramme
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## How to apply for LIFE funding

The European Commission organises annual calls for proposals. Full details are available at <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/section/life/calls-proposals>

## Contact

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