

#LIFEprogramme

INVESTING WHERE IT COUNTS

The EU must dedicate at least 1% of its budget to the LIFE programme to better protect our nature and climate

Joint declaration on the future of the European Commission's LIFE Programme

Since its creation in 1992, the EU's LIFE Programme has delivered outstanding performance and high added value. However, the current funds are not sufficient to tackle the major environmental challenges Europe faces. We therefore call for LIFE to be continued after 2020 as a highly effective and efficient instrument, and for its funding to be increased to at least 1% of the overall EU budget. This is a critical investment in healthy ecosystems and key to innovation and meeting the EU's environment, nature conservation and climate change objectives, which will support prosperity, jobs¹ and well-being of EU citizens in a truly sustainable economy.





The LIFE Programme is the only EU funding instrument entirely dedicated to the environment, nature conservation and climate change, offering unique opportunities for cooperation between civil society, industry, SME's, research institutes and public institutions. Since its establishment in 1992, it has proven to be a very efficient and effective tool to finance innovative projects with long lasting impact, delivering innovative and nature-based solutions, whilst rolling out best practice and protecting biodiversity. Not only has LIFE been fostering cooperation between regions and member states, thus bringing Europeans closer together, it has also successfully encouraged local dialogue between stakeholders and helped in overcoming conflicts and strengthened openness and efficiency. The programme is also helping to transfer know-how and make better use of project results to ensure their long-term impact.

There is also strong evidence of a positive cost-benefit ratio when comparing funding to societal gains², and the LIFE Programme contributes to job creation from green investment and innovation for environmentally friendly solutions for industry. A study estimated that between 2009 and 2015, LIFE created 74,500 jobs, an economic growth of 9.3 billion EUR. The non - market value of the results achieved through nature projects alone is estimated to be 43 billion EUR³. For projects of the 2014 LIFE call, for example, the European Commission has estimated the benefit to society to represent four times the cost of the overall budget.

Accounting for only 0.3% of the current EU Budget, LIFE, however, has very limited resources and is thus inadequate to make a sufficient contribution to meeting the EU's commitments in the areas of environment and climate change.

Furthermore, in many countries the uptake of LIFE is at risk due to low co-financing rates. Therefore, the general co-financing rate for action grants should be increased to 75% to overcome financial constraints of applicants.

LIFE costs each European citizen on average less than one Euro per year⁴ - a low cost for our most precious goods: environment, nature and biodiversity, and the prospect of a truly sustainable economy for Europe.

We, the signing organisations, therefore call for a better integration of environmental concerns in the EU budget and support an increase for funding for LIFE to at least 1% of the EU budget in the next Multiannual Financial Framework.

1: www.eea.europa.eu/soer-2015/synthesis/report/0c-executivesummary

2: ec.europa.eu/environment/life/news/newsarchive2017/documents/swd_mid_term_evaluation2017_.pdf

3: ec.europa.eu/environment/life/publications/lifepublications/generalpublications/documents/jobs_growth_study.pdf

4: The LIFE financial instrument costs each European citizen on average less than one Euro per year (71 cent per year) (1.46 billion between 2014-2017, 0.365 billion per year, number of EU citizens in 2017: 511.81 million)