

## Learning from LIFE – best practice for nature conservation in Europe

**The European Commission is hosting a special event to identify and disseminate the lessons learned from EU funded projects on how best to promote nature conservation in Europe.**

This first LIFE Nature 'best practice' conference will take place **in Brussels on November 17-19, 2008**. "Protecting Europe's Nature: Learning from LIFE", will examine the role of the Nature component of the EU's LIFE programme as an instrument to support the implementation of the EU birds and habitats directives and the Natura 2000 network, encompassing the Commission Communication on "Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 – and beyond".

*"I am overwhelmed by the interest and dedication of all those present in their support of nature conservation", said Philip Owen in charge of the LIFE programme. "The purpose of this conference is to exploit the lessons learned from Natura 2000 and apply them in a wider biodiversity context. With this degree of enthusiasm – and the incentive effect of LIFE funds – surely we can together play our role in helping to halt the loss of biodiversity within the European Union."*

Day 1 of the conference will feature four parallel thematic sessions and will present examples of 'best practice' tools for implementing the Natura 2000 network and the protection of European habitats. Each session (forest habitats; marine habitats; river habitats; grassland habitats) will feature 5-6 selected LIFE projects. A poster session will then take place enabling some 100 participating LIFE nature projects to showcase the work they are carrying out on biodiversity protection in Europe.

The second day of the event will focus on "LIFE projects targeting challenges to biodiversity", reflecting the Biodiversity component of the LIFE+ programme (2007-2013). The four parallel sessions (each of which will again feature 5-6 selected projects) will look at: responding to climate change; the challenges of invasive alien species; ensuring the favourable conservation status of Europe's species; and international cooperation on biodiversity protection.

The plenary session will examine the role of LIFE Nature as a tool for implementing EU nature protection and biodiversity policy. The conference will end with a presentation on the role of LIFE+ in the future implementation of EU nature and biodiversity policies by Ms. Soledad Blanco, Director of International Affairs and LIFE at the European Commission's Environment Directorate.

Post conference excursions on November 19 will give participants the opportunity to visit three local LIFE Nature projects in Belgium.

More than **200 participants** are expected to attend the conference **at the Brussels Bedford Hotel Conference Centre**, including representatives of LIFE Nature projects, international nature protection NGOs and members of the Habitats Committee, as well as representatives of European Commission, LIFE national contact points, and the Member States.

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**Or see the LIFE website at:**

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/news/newsarchive2008/november/index.htm#lifeday>

**About LIFE and LIFE+:**

*LIFE is the EU's financial instrument supporting environmental and nature conservation projects throughout the EU, as well as in some candidate, acceding and neighbouring countries. Since 1992, LIFE has co-financed some 2 750 projects, contributing approximately €1.35 billion to the protection of the environment. LIFE+ (2007-2013) will provide approximately EUR 2 143 million for co-financing actions in favour of the environment in the Member States of the European Union and in certain non-EU countries. Further information on LIFE and LIFE+ is available at <http://ec.europa.eu/life>*