

Annex

LIFE programme: Winners 2016/17

BELGIUM (BE)

LIFE Nature & Biodiversity

Large-scale restoration of a unique river valley (LIFE Kleine Nete)

The Klein Nete river valley in Flanders is a unique habitat in western Europe with great natural diversity, including flower-strewn grassland meadows, marshes and wetland forests. LIFE funds helped restore it to a more natural state with improved connectivity between habitat types, reversing the impact of decades of intensive agriculture and drainage that saw the building of holiday homes and recreational ponds. And by bringing together several different agencies and interests, the project was able to make management of the river's flood plain more integrated. Flood risk is reduced and biodiversity enhanced, now including a stable beaver population.

[Project summary](#)

GREECE (EL)

LIFE Nature & Biodiversity

Protecting brown bears and Greek drivers (LIFE ARCTOS/KASTORIA)

The prefecture of Kastoria in Greece has protected bears and drivers along a new stretch of motorway. LIFE funds helped identify its deadliest spots by radio-tagging bears and following them via satellite. As part of the ARCTOS/KASTORIA project, the local authority has installed traffic signs, visual deterrents, and 35 km of bear-proof fences to keep wildlife off the road. These measures have almost completely eliminated lethal traffic accidents. The project has also deployed an emergency team of experts and over 100 volunteers to restore damage bears cause to local farms and provide equipment to safeguard beehives and livestock.

[Project summary](#)

SPAIN (ES)

LIFE Environment

Tackling the particles that pollute our air (AIRUSE)

The EU has introduced a strategy for tackling air pollution that lowers the limits for harmful particles in the air. Raising awareness of the health and environmental impact of these particles was central to the AIRUSE project. The Spanish National Scientific Research Council analysed manmade and natural sources of particles and their effect on levels of particulate matter (PM) in five cities in Spain, Portugal, Greece and Italy. This analysis was used to identify the most effective mitigation measures for reducing particle levels and to draw up recommendations for national authorities on how to lower airborne concentrations of such harmful substances.

[Project summary](#)

Clean and green food processing (LIFE ECO-DHYBAT)

Sleek new machinery is reducing the environmental footprint of production lines in the food processing sector. Sanitation typically consumes vast amounts of water and energy, and releases undesirable chemicals into the environment. The LIFE ECO-DHYBAT project saw a consortium of Spanish food producers modify industrial equipment to cut water, chemicals and

energy consumption in fish and dairy processing. The cost of the new equipment is largely offset by spending less on cleaning products, and improvements in cleaning standards have led the EU to consider this eco-hygienic design as a role model for the food, drink and milk sectors.

[Project summary](#)

LIFE Climate Action

Till-free farms lock greenhouse gases underground (LIFE+AGRICARBON)

LIFE persuaded farmers in the Guadalquivir valley to switch to more sustainable and higher precision agricultural techniques that help bring down carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere. Farmers have avoided tilling their land, left crop debris on fields, and guided farm machinery using satellite technology for more efficient use of water and nutrients. These practices outshined conventional techniques when compared in field trials. They stored on average 30% more carbon in the soil and reduced energy consumption from farming by over 10%. Savings of more than 1 200 tonnes of CO₂ during the project are growing further as till-free agriculture spreads across Spain.

[Project summary](#)

Organic farming for healthy soils (Crops for better soil)

Traditional crops and natural compost are helping semi-arid farms in Spain restore their soils and redress their balance sheets. Spanish agricultural yields have been faltering in recent years and the irrigation, fertilisers and pesticides used to bolster them are eroding large tracts of farmland. The Crops for better soil project showed that organic farming techniques can return carbon content to vulnerable soils and make their cultivation economically viable again. The project notably reintroduced non-standard crops including spelt, rye, buckwheat and field beans, fine-tuning their cultivation practices and crop rotations for different climates.

[Project summary](#)

ITALY (IT)

LIFE Environment

Biomass for soil rehab (ECOREMED)

Potentially toxic elements found in industrial waste, fertilisers and gasoline are raising public health concerns given the risk of them reaching agricultural fields and making their way up the food chain. Working within the ECOREMED project, researchers from the University of Naples rehabilitated a hectare of contaminated ground in Campania by growing pollutant-removing plants on it. The plants cannot be eaten but they provide biomass for sustainable energy and biodegradable plastics. The land has since recovered and farmers have returned much of it to agricultural use.

[Project summary](#)

AUSTRIA (AT)

LIFE Climate Action

Towards sustainable living in Vorarlberg (EKO-LIFE)

Building on the energy strategy of the Austrian region of Vorarlberg, the EKO-LIFE project further encouraged local people to reduce their carbon footprints, particularly greenhouse gas emissions relating to mobility and diet. It created opportunities for people to explore sustainable ways of living over an experimental three-week period, the minimum time required for the long-term changes in habit to take hold. The Vorarlberger Energy Institute then encouraged participants to act as 'change ambassadors', sharing their experiences on social

media, and using their success stories in a wide-reaching communication campaign.

[Project summary](#)

POLAND (PL)

[LIFE Environment](#)

Rehabilitating reservoirs in a Polish city (EH-REK)

With up to 3 000 people visiting the bucolic Arturówek Reservoirs in Łódź every day, the city's University set out to clean the site's waters without spoiling their appeal. Conservationists removed 11 000 cubic metres of bottom sediment, planted species that recycle nutrients, and constructed buffer zones out of earth. These natural measures now help to improve the quality of the city's water supply without compromising the environment or recreational activities.

[Project summary](#)

SLOVAKIA (SK)

[LIFE Nature & Biodiversity](#)

Creating city homes for swifts and bats (APUS & NYCTALUS)

Conservationists have installed thousands of nesting boxes to welcome swifts and bats back to cities in Slovakia. These urban flyers have recently been losing their homes as building owners install better insulation that prevents access to old nests and hibernation sites. To encourage energy efficiency while conserving local wildlife, the APUS & NYCTALUS project helped convince landlords in 270 cities across the country to time construction work for outside bird nesting periods, and avoid trapping animals indoors. Their efforts have also preserved 14 000 nesting and roosting sites by installing modified plastic grids on ventilation holes in attics.