The UN Climate Change Conference COP25 [2], taking place in Madrid during 2-13 December, has a mission of raising the level of ambition on climate action to help meet the Paris Agreement [3]’s goals.

A leader in the fight against climate change, the EU is on track to meet its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction targets for 2020 and aiming to be climate neutral by 2050. LIFE is key to this success, supporting a raft of projects focused on climate action. Here’s a taste of some of those projects and their work.

Energy-efficient brewing

The biggest source of global GHG emissions is energy production and consumption. Tackling this, such as through energy-efficiency measures, is critical for meeting climate goals.

In the brewing industry, the LIFE Beverage project has piloted an innovative energy-saving process at breweries in Belgium and the UK. The technique uses an inert gas to remove unwanted components from the brew. It simulates the effect of boiling but without the heating requirements, giving better energy and water efficiency.
Solar panel innovations

Another project, LIFE SunAlgae, is producing a revolutionary new material (using the shells of an algae group called diatoms) that can improve the efficiency of silicon-based and thin film solar panels. Currently still in the pilot phase, the prize-winning company behind LIFE SunAlgae will move up to commercial scale next year, enabling it to start selling material in the solar energy sector.

Better beef farming

Agriculture is another major source of GHG emissions, with beef farming accounting for a large proportion of these. In France, Ireland, Italy and Spain – home to a third of the EU’s cattle population – LIFE Beef Carbon is working to reduce the carbon footprint of beef production. The project is testing new ways of reducing emissions and increasing carbon sequestration on farms.
Murcian vineyards

Spain also boasts one-third of Europe’s vineyards. LIFE Sarmiento is tackling emissions from vineyards in Murcia by converting pruning waste (usually burned) into enriched compost, which can then be applied in the vineyards or used for other horticultural purposes. This boosts profitability for vineyards as well, while stopping soil degradation and improving soil resilience and biodiversity.

A low-cost solution for managing pruned vine shoots

Threatened landscapes

Mediterranean ecosystems are threatened by the changing climate, with the trend towards drier and
hotter conditions increasing the risk of erosion and desertification. One of these ecosystems, unique for its combination of traditional agroforestry, is known as montado in Portugal and dehesa in Spain. Typically made up of oak species and pastureland for livestock grazing, it yields a variety of products from timber to wild game, mushrooms and honey. LIFE-Montado-adapt is applying new climate adaptation technologies in these landscapes, to restore the land's multi-functional character.

More about LIFE-Montado-adapt [9]

Managing storm water

Cities face enormous climate challenges as well, including heat waves, droughts, heavier rainfall and flooding. Initiatives such as LIFE UrbanStorm’s complex storm water management system are aimed at coping with these impacts. This project is working to improve the climate resilience of Estonian cities, especially their ability to manage flash flooding after heavy rainfall.

More resilient municipalities [10]
Resilient housing

Some types of housing are more vulnerable to climate change. In Slovakia, LIFE Deliver is developing ways to improve the climate resilience of residential areas with many prefabricated buildings. Measures such as renovating buildings to make them more energy efficient and sustainable rainwater management will also help to improve the health and comfort of local citizens.

More on the LIFE Deliver project [11]

Climate action for all

In Austria, Doppel Plus is focused on low-income households, a group particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The project team engage with people on low incomes, to show that behaviour change can contribute to climate protection – even on the tightest of budgets.

Protecting the climate on a low income [12]
Decarbonising buildings

Meanwhile, LIFE EconomisE, is seeking to unlock the investment potential for making housing in Finland more climate resilient. Buildings can play an enormous role in reducing GHG emissions, with deep energy renovation of existing buildings key for making energy savings. This project works with institutional investors to decarbonise buildings and improve their climate resilience.

Influencing financial flows to decarbonise building stock [13]

Finance and climate

Aligning financial flows with climate goals is an important objective in the Paris Agreement. LIFE is playing its part here, too. The LIFE PACTA project is developing a tool to analyse investment portfolios and assess EU insurance companies and pension fund assets. The idea is to promote transparency
and accountability among financial institutions on their alignment with climate goals.

More about LIFE PACTA [14]

See also

Publication: Ready, steady, green! LIFE helps farming and forestry adapt to climate change [15]

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