

ANNEX: LIFE AWARDS 2022 – PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

NATURE

European black vultures and griffon vultures are vulnerable due to poisoning, limited food, collisions, electrocution, isolation of breeding populations and low reproduction rates. [LIFE RE-Vultures](#) protected these vultures in Bulgaria and North-Eastern Greece. The team tagged and monitored the birds to establish migration routes and reasons for dying. They also set up a geographic information system and developed maps showing the birds' locations. They reduced poisoning through awareness-raising, an anti-poisoning dog unit and five feeding stations. The project eliminated electrocution by insulating dangerous electricity power lines. And a breeding programme ensured a sustainable population.

Since the 1960s, the roseate tern has suffered catastrophic declines and shrinking distribution across all its colonies in Western Europe. [LIFE Roseate- Tern](#) improved breeding conditions for Europe's rarest breeding sea bird at core colonies in Ireland and the United Kingdom. The team enhanced nesting habitat by clearing vegetation, building terraces, nest boxes and floating rafts. They also protected the tern from predators. Data on the bird's diet, foraging ranges and migration behaviour were gathered, helping the team develop a long-term conservation strategy. The UK population increased from 73 breeding pairs in 2013 to 131 pairs by the end of the project. The Irish breeding population rose from 1 413 to 1 710 pairs.

The distribution of the Cyprus cedar is restricted to a small area in the country's Paphos forest. [LIFE-KEDROS](#) improved the conservation status and resilience of cedar forests at risk from climate change on a Natura 2000 site. The team undertook silvicultural treatments for the first time and reduced competition between mature and young cedar trees. They restored 12 hectares of degraded habitat, planted 8 hectares of new Cedar habitat, and installed a seedbank for reforestation. They closed more than 30 km of forest roads to improve habitat connectivity and stability. Fire patrols became more frequent, and controlled grazing was encouraged to reduce flammable vegetation on the ground.

Minuartia smejkalii is a flowering plant endemic to Czechia. It is only found in two Natura 2000 sites, and it has seen a 65% decline between 2011 and 2015. [LIFE for Minuartia](#) saved the plant from extinction on these two sites. The team introduced regular mowing and grazing. They also removed plant overgrowth and thinned the surrounding forest. And they erected fencing on four small plots of land to reduce pressure from game. 3 300 seedlings reinforced the population, while 21 *Minuartia* rock gardens open to the public, increased awareness of the plant.

ENVIRONMENT

Tourism, fishing and recreational activities are among the primary sources of marine litter - one of the major threats to marine ecosystems. [CLEAN SEA LIFE](#) was an awareness-raising project that reduced marine litter along Italian coasts. The team involved 170 000 citizens and fishers who removed 112 tonnes of waste from the Mediterranean. The campaign reached around 34 million people on social media and national television. Their work inspired new Italian legislation to reduce and prevent marine litter. More than 20 000 people signed the project's Pledge to the Sea.

More than 40% of rivers and coastal water bodies are affected by pollution from agriculture. [LIFE EcoSens Aquamonitrix](#) designed and manufactured a portable monitoring solution for the water sector. The instrument measures water and wastewater quality in real-time so that users don't have to wait for laboratory analysis. The solution is low cost, low energy and connected by the Internet of Things to allow for remote access and monitoring. The team successfully tested 42 prototypes in Ireland, Spain and Finland and plans on selling the device across the EU and globally. The improved water quality will have a positive impact on environmental quality and public health.

Harmful chemical substances from industrial activities remain in the environment for a long time. [LIFE Fit for REACH](#) helped companies in the Baltic States manage chemicals and substitute hazardous substances in their operations. Six companies substituted hazardous substances or increased their resource efficiency, cutting emissions. Other 'low-effort, low-cost' measures were introduced in another 76 companies. The project's training sessions and events reached more than 3 000 people from 1 500 companies. The team developed guidelines and three online tools to help SMEs manage chemicals properly.

Mining operations cause soil degradation. [LIFE No Waste](#) combined ash from burnt forest residues, and organic waste from the pulp and paper industry, to revive degraded soil at three former mining sites in Portugal. The team recycled around 50 tonnes of biomass ash and 70 tonnes of biological sludge. The resulting 'soil improvers' neutralised soil acidity, increased nutrients for plants to grow, cut toxic elements and reduced soil erosion. The project's actions also lowered waste from the pulp and paper industry.

CLIMATE ACTION

Street lighting represents one of the primary sources of energy consumption in urban areas. [LIFE-DIADEME](#) proved the energy-saving benefits of its adaptive street lighting system in Rome, Piacenza and Rimini. They installed 1 000 devices to collect data on luminance, road traffic, pollutants, noise levels and weather conditions. As it uses less electricity than current lighting systems, the technology reduces CO₂ emissions and maintenance costs. It also extends the average life of the appliance and guarantees excellent visibility for pedestrians and vehicles. LIFE-DIADEME won the 2021 EU Sustainable Energy Award in the Innovation category for its work.

Climate change mitigation plans often overlook the barriers to participation of poorer households. [LIFE - Doppelplus](#) helped low-income people in Tirol, Austria become clean energy transition ambassadors. The team sent climate protection starter kits to low-income families. They advised around 1 000 households on how to optimise their daily energy consumption. This resulted in a saving of €200 per household each year. They also forged long-term partnerships with energy suppliers, cultural organisations, social housing companies and others and ran a comprehensive communication campaign to raise awareness on energy issues. The project created a win-win situation - for the environment and household budgets.

Rising average temperature, less annual rainfall and extreme weather events mean cultivation methods in viticulture must adapt. [LIFE VinEcoS](#) boosted biodiversity on vineyards in Saxony-Anhalt, Germany, making them more climate-resilient. The team added wild seed mixtures to steep slopes, reducing soil erosion and water stress. Results show that the number of plant species increased considerably compared to conventional plots. Sheep grazing and the seed mixtures improved vegetation cover, preventing soil from being washed down hillsides after heavy rainfall. Also, wild bee numbers increased by more than 200%. The team developed a toolset to evaluate ecosystem services in the vineyards. The project helped maintain around 1 000 jobs in the winemaking sector and gave other vineyards the tools to better adapt to climate change.

Public services and economic activities are vulnerable to climate change. [LIFE Clinomics](#) increased the climate change resilience of various territories and economies in Catalonia, Spain. The team involved several municipalities, private businesses and other stakeholders in developing a strategy and action plans to encourage local involvement in climate change adaptation. This will result in environmental and economic benefits for the community in the longer term. The team also launched a climate change adaptation pact to encourage uptake in other areas. Adaptation training was provided to public servants and private companies. The project's results fed into the Catalan Adaptation Strategy 2021-2030.