



Why the EU-Budget needs a stronger LIFE

NGO Briefing for negotiations on the EU's MFF 2014-2020

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In times of strained public budgets it is more important than ever to ensure European taxpayers' money is spent wisely, sustainably and where added value is highest. A recent study shows: greening only 14% of EU subsidies would result in the short-term creation of half a million jobs. Currently 78% of the EU budget supports not even 1.2 million jobs.¹

Overuse of resources, degradation of ecosystems, biodiversity loss and climate change are fundamental challenges of the 21st century risking to undermine well-being of Europeans and the economic competitiveness of the EU in a changing world. There is mounting evidence that failing on these challenges would result in huge costs to society, economy and future public budgets - many times higher than the costs of action now.

The EU budget 2014-2020: sustainable investment or piling up ecological debts?

The ongoing negotiations of the next Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 are the ultimate test for governments' credibility: the outcome will be decisive for success or failure in meeting 2020 environmental objectives and for avoiding future ecological debts for public budgets and economy. It is of fundamental importance that Member States receive support from the EU to safeguard the common natural capital of Europe.

EU Member States committed to turn the tide and reform subsidies

In 2010 EU Member States committed to stop the loss of biodiversity by 2020 and to restore ecosystems as far as possible, both at European Council and United Nations level. Similar commitments exist in other environmental areas. To achieve this, the mobilisation of additional resources and the reform of environmentally harmful subsidies is essential – and has been announced by governments at many occasions.

In the light of mounting environmental challenges, public budget constraints and proven cost-efficiency and socio-economic benefits of the EU's LIFE programme it is of paramount importance to increase the share of LIFE in the EU budget from 0.23% to 1%. This can be achieved through very limited readjustments of budget lines within the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020.

¹ www.birdlife.org/eu/pdfs/2012GreenjobsGlossy-LR.pdf

^{1 2} in current prices

LIFE: cost-efficient and successful for environment, society and economy

It is widely agreed that the LIFE programme is essential to support Member States in implementing EU environmental law and address the above mentioned challenges. With currently only 0.23% of the EU budget LIFE has proven to be of outstanding cost-efficiency, combining measurable environmental results and socio-economic benefits with involvement, empowerment and awareness raising of critical local stakeholders. It is an excellent example of EU action that delivers visible added value to citizens.

In “**COUNTRY**” LIFE has funded environmental projects with a total budget of **X million EUR**, and an EU contribution of **Y Million EUR** (since **2007**).

Examples for successful projects that delivered measurable results for the environment, society and economy: “**XYZ**”

	THE CURRENT EU BUDGET (2007-2013)	EC PROPOSAL FOR THE FUTURE EU BUDGET (2014-2020)	OUR ASKS FOR THE EU BUDGET (MFF 2014-2020)
Allocation of the LIFE programme	€2.1 billion EUR (0.23%)	€ 3.6 billion (0.3%) incl. new LIFE Climate Action	1% of the EU budget (approx. 12 billion Euro over 7 years) ²
Allocation of LIFE Biodiversity and coverage of Natura 2000 costs³	€ 120 million (less than 2% of Natura 2000 costs)	€ 160 million (less than 2.5 % of Natura 2000 costs)	€ 1 billion /year allowing to fund approx. 15% of Natura 2000 costs
Allocation of LIFE for biodiversity bottom-up projects	€ 120 million/year	€ 75 million/year	at least €300 million /year
Co-financing rate	50% (for priority species/habitats 75%)	de-facto 50% (70-80% but neutralized by changed eligibility rules)	80% based on current eligibility rules

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² in current prices

³ Assumption: 90% of LIFE Biodiversity is benefitting Natura 2000, not included funds leveraged through co-financing (additional 25-50%)