

# INF LIFE PLATFORM MEETING

Krakow, Poland, 13-14th October 2014

## Report



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## **1. Introduction**

On 13-14 October 2014 an INF LIFE PLATFORM MEETING “Raising awareness on Natura 2000”, took place in Krakow. The aim of this meeting was to bring together beneficiaries of INF LIFE programme from across Europe to share the experience and discuss some of the key issues regarding implementation of the EU legislation, nature conservation and sustainable development in Natura 2000 areas in different parts of Europe, effective mechanisms of transferring knowledge about the Natura 2000 network and changing the attitude of local communities towards the network.

The meeting, attended by representatives of the European Commission, the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management, the Ministry of Environment, the General Directorate for Environmental Protection, the General Directorate of State Forests, the Regional Environmental in Krakow and representatives of 13 INF LIFE projects from Romania, Spain, Italy, Greece, Cyprus , UK, Belgium, Slovenia and Poland, was organized by the Astrale monitoring team and the Foundation for Support of Ecological Initiatives.

The meeting was opened by Ms Sylvia Barova from the European Commission (DG ENV, Nature Unit). She presented to the participants a range of the Commission’s communication activities (such as Natura 2000 Awards) conducted by both Nature Unit and Communication Unit of the DG ENV.

Mr Andrzej Langowski (General Directorate for Environmental Protection) focused on development and implementation of N2000 management plans, presenting in detail how participative management planning process looks in Poland.

Mr Bent Jepsen (ASTRALE), who chaired the first day, initiated the session with presentation of the history and the EU perspective in which the LIFE programme operates, mentioning the key issues such as: target groups important for implementation of the Natura 2000 network, green jobs related to biodiversity protection, halting biodiversity loss in the context of social and economic development.

## 2. LIFE Projects & Presentation Summary Sheets

[Presentations from the Platform Meeting are available on:  
<http://www.misjanatura.fwie.pl/index.php/pl/inf-life-platform> ]

The projects were presented in two sessions:

- **Session 1** – Assessing the success of communicating the importance of the Natura 2000 and nature and biodiversity in the Natura 2000 network – impact of LIFE INF projects on increasing awareness of key stakeholders groups (e.g. farmers, public administrations, consumers, managers of protected areas, etc. and local communities) and ensuring public involvement in conservation of Natura 2000 areas.
- **Session 2** – Targeted information campaigns as a tool for resolving specific protection issues (species protection, prevention of IAS, sustainable use of resources).

### Session 1:

Project	<b>NATURA mission</b>
Project nr	LIFE11 INF/PL/000478
Country	Poland
Status	open
Representative	Marzenna Nowakowska
Presentation abstract	<p><b>“Trainings for key stakeholders groups before public consultations on Natura 2000 management plans – our lessons from the series of trainings „Natura 2000 – the Natural Capital” in 7 Natura 2000 sites in Poland”</b></p> <p>The main aim of “Natura Mission” project is to increase public awareness and knowledge on the functioning of the Natura 2000 network and better implementation of the EU legislation related to management plans (MP) in Poland. Many different activities including: 16 one-day trainings, 10 twelve- day trainings in 10 Natura 2000 sites (pointed out by the General Directorate for Environmental Protection (GDEP) and all Regional Directorates for Environmental Protection (RDEPs), the Natura 2000 Information Centre, TV documentary series „Mission: Nature” are undertaken by the Foundation for Support of Ecological Initiatives within the project in order to increase understanding of the role of the Natura 2000 network in sustainable development of Europe. One of the great opportunities to increase public awareness and knowledge on the nearest Natura 2000 sites is the participation of local community in developing of the MPs. There are numerous MPs which are currently being developed for Natura 2000 sites in Poland. An integral part of the MP preparation process is conducting public consultations that involve all the concerned persons and institutions. The involved parties may actively influence the contents of this document, both by participating in</p>

	<p>the meetings of the local cooperation team (LCT), and by coming forward with suggestions of the records at various stages of drafting MPs. A developed management plan is then adapted and remains in force as a decree, or local ordinance, of the Regional Director for Environmental Protection.</p> <p>Series of trainings being organized in 10 Natura 2000 sites within the scope of the “Natura Mission” project carried out by the Foundation for Support of Ecological Initiatives aim to prepare local communities to participate in drafting MPs. Each training consists of six 2-day meetings devoted not only directly to the Natura 2000 network and MPs but also the issues related to sustainable development of the region. Those trainings, which include meetings and discussions with local residents of the areas, people representing local administration authorities, non-government organizations, as well as entrepreneurs and owners of farms and holiday farms, together with knowledge previously derived from available materials and publications, allowed to work out models of public consultations for each of these Natura 2000 sites. These are, in principle, optimum models, based on ready-made procedures and practices, and supplemented by experience gained while running the “Natura Mission” project. The models contain indications and recommendations of actions that can be undertaken within existing guidelines, as well as suggestions of modifications of the latter. One of the lessons derived from the trainings was that the distance to own assessment, openness to other people's needs, admitting the right to errors and correcting them jointly are the keys to building good relationships among key stakeholders groups and lead to MPs that are more readily accepted by local communities.</p>
LIFE Database	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&amp;n_proj_id=4344">http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&amp;n_proj_id=4344</a>
Project web	<a href="http://www.misjanatura.fwie.pl">www.misjanatura.fwie.pl</a>



Project	<b>NATURA mission</b>
Project nr	LIFE11 INF/PL/000478
Country	Poland
Status	open
Representative	Joanna Cent
Presentation abstract	<p><b>How can we accurately evaluate awareness of local residents and levels of conflicts in Natura 2000 areas? –lessons from “Mission Nature” LIFE INF Project</b></p> <p>“Mission Nature” LIFE INF project comprises of several activities aiming at raising environmental awareness and knowledge on Natura 2000 network among key stakeholders groups, local communities and general society. Developing an effective program of activities, such as workshops, media campaign, consultancy, requires knowledge of stakeholders needs and opinions. Likewise, assessing success or failure of the project’s activities entail a systematic evaluation of its effects and outcomes. In this session we present our approach to diagnosis of needs and evaluation of effects in the case of “Mission Nature” project. The presentation includes both design of our research and mid-term results after the first evaluation and reporting period. Methodological and practical challenges of the research, its cost-effectiveness and the role of improving the overall quality of the project are discussed. Presentation presents evaluation plan for workshops, measurement of levels of conflicts over Natura 2000 designations and the impact of the project’s activities on reducing such conflicts, as well as the role of the project for promoting tourism in Natura 2000 sites. Also, we will share out approach to defining and measuring such a vast and ambiguous phenomena like conflicts, attitudes and awareness, in order to produce results of practical significance to the project.</p>
LIFE Database	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&amp;n_proj_id=4344">http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&amp;n_proj_id=4344</a>
Project website	<a href="http://www.misjanatura.fwie.pl">www.misjanatura.fwie.pl</a>

Project	<b>1.Promoting the importance of the EU Birds Directive in conservation management on farmland</b> <b>2.Futurescapes : promoting the development of green infrastructure in 34 priority areas throughout the UK</b>
Project number	1.LIFE08 INF/UK/000214 2.LIFE10 INF/UK/000189
Country	UK
Status	1.closed 2.open
Representative	1.Anna Broszkiewicz 2.Adrian Southern
Presentation abstract	<p><b>Legislation into Conversation: speaking clearly about the EU Directives</b></p> <p><b>The farmland bird project was designed to disseminate key messages from the Birds Directive by encouraging farmers and the public to recognise, appreciate and encourage the promotion of wildlife friendly farming:</b></p> <p>2,183 farmland bird surveys were undertaken by trained volunteers giving farmers species information and advice. This was an immensely popular means of engaging farmers in wildlife conservation. 1,002 advisory visits were made covering 209,297ha of farmland. Approximately half of this area entered into agri-environment schemes, leading to approximately 10% being managed specifically for wildlife.</p> <p>65 demonstration farms were set up, hosting 92 farmer workshops, 36 case studies and 87 volunteer workshops. With 2,479 farmers attending workshops hosted by a wildlife-friendly demonstration farmer, these proved to be a very popular means of disseminating information about wildlife-friendly farming in areas with close-knit farming communities.</p> <p>The Nature of Farming Award (NoFA) attracted interest from up to 420 farmers each year, and up to 22,069 public votes per year. This was a very successful means of publicising the project, getting media interest in wildlife-friendly farming, and finding farmer advocates.</p> <p>We attended all of the major agricultural shows - excellent opportunities for project staff to converse with farmers across the spectrum of environmental interests. We used the shows to promote the project, sign up participants and gain feedback from farmers.</p> <p>The annual project newsletter and farming e-newsletter kept approximately over 12,000 farmers and volunteers informed of the project actions.</p> <p>Although the majority of the project targets were met or exceeded, the national populations of farmland birds has continued to decline. It was estimated that our capacity to give advice to farmers would be limited to approximately 3% of the agricultural land of the UK over the course of 10 years, (the duration of agri-environment schemes). We proposed an extension to the project to trial a targeted approach for advice in focus areas; containing important populations or assemblages of farmland bird species. In total our focus area programme covers 5% of the farmland area of the UK. The aim of these focus areas is to apply sufficient conservation management to demonstrate that it is possible to improve farmland bird populations at a landscape scale.</p> <p><b>The Futurescape project was designed to promote the development of green infrastructure in 38 priority areas throughout the UK, and employed a range of officers and professional communicators to deliver against 6 key points:</b></p> <p>1. <b>Nature is in trouble... So are the Directives.</b> We are struggling to halt the loss of biodiversity, yet this problem is still not understood by the</p>

	<p>general public. The directives as one of our main mechanisms for halting this loss are under review, and may be watered down. It is more important than ever to communicate the importance of the Natura 2000 network effectively, and more broadly the environmental directives of the EU.</p> <p><b>2. Natura 2000 is a hard sell, but we can do it</b>  We have found it challenging to use the terminology “Natura 2000”, it can be a hard sell, not dissimilar to the term “Futurescape”, but it can be done.</p> <p><b>3. International importance</b>  We have found that it is easier to convey the Nature 2000 story by sharing the notion of the “international importance” of the landscape, which can engender a sense of pride.</p> <p><b>4. Inspire “a sense of pride and place”</b>  By building on what we talk about, around international importance. Most importantly of all, linking a sense of place to the interests and values of the people we are talking with. Using this as a starting point to inspire broader engagement and action through appropriate support.</p> <p><b>5. Eat the network</b>  Communicating the wide range of benefits (ecosystem services ) that the Nature 2000 network provide e.g. celebrating local food by promoting it and encouraging people to appreciate it.</p> <p><b>6. Journeys and stories</b>  We should see initial engagements with people as part of a journey that we collectively go on together to share stories of how we see and interact with our special places. This can start through peoples interest in their garden or local park, but could take them on a facilitated journey to understanding the issues in our landscapes and how they can be part of the solution.</p>
LIFE Database	<p>1.<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&amp;n_proj_id=3504">http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&amp;n_proj_id=3504</a></p> <p>2.<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&amp;n_proj_id=4028">http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&amp;n_proj_id=4028</a></p>
Project website	<p>1.<a href="http://www.rspb.org.uk/whatwedo/projects/details/286806-eu-life-farmland-bird-project">http://www.rspb.org.uk/whatwedo/projects/details/286806-eu-life-farmland-bird-project</a></p> <p>2.<a href="http://www.rspb.org.uk/whatwedo/futurescapes/">http://www.rspb.org.uk/whatwedo/futurescapes/</a></p>





Project	<b>LIFE Activa Red Natura 2000 - Natura 2000: Connecting People with Biodiversity</b>
Project nr	LIFE11 INF/ES/000665
Country	Spain
Status	Open
Representative	Beatriz Sánchez
Presentation abstract	<p><b>Life+ Natura 2000: Connecting people with biodiversity</b></p> <p>The Life + Project Connecting People with Biodiversity - Natura 2000 (LIFE11 INF/ES/665) aims to contribute to the conservation of the Natura 2000 network, through improving the knowledge and awareness of the Spanish population. Through different actions aimed at different target audiences, the project calls for action to society to know and be involved in the conservation of this protected set of high ecological, social and economic value sites where nature and human activity coexist. One of the main achievements of the project has been undoubtedly the establishment of the May 21st European Day of the Natura 2000 network. It has been designed and developed in two editions (2013 and 2014) and communication campaign associated with this conclusion, based on a gesture (butterfly effect) has been very successful among the public, policy makers, governments, businesses, public figures and between European partners BirdLife. In just two editions, it has managed to involve 19 countries in the celebration. It is estimated that some 19,000 people made the gesture for the Natura 2000 network and three million have received information through social networks. We expect these numbers keep rising and the campaign will continue in coming years, supported by the official declaration as a celebration by the European Commission.</p>
LIFE Database	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&amp;n_proj_id=4342">http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&amp;n_proj_id=4342</a>
Project website	<a href="http://activarednatura2000.com/en/proyecto-life/">http://activarednatura2000.com/en/proyecto-life/</a>



Project	<b>LIFE Natura2000ValueCrete - "The ecological services, social benefits and economic value of the Ecosystem Services in Natura 2000 sites in Crete"</b>
Project nr	LIFE13 INF/GR/000188
Country	Greece
Status	open
Representative	Michalis Probonas
Presentation abstract	<p><b>The ecological, social and economic values of ecosystem services in Natura 2000 sites in Crete, Greece</b></p> <p>It is only in the late nineties that EC's Habitats Directive 92/43 - transposed into Greek law as late as 1998 - provided a strong base for the species' environmental protection, while the majority of Natura 2000 sites in Greece and in Crete do not have a specific governance mechanism for their management. As a result, the NATURA 2000 sites in Crete still face numerous environmental problems, such as the destruction of coastal habitats by the development of tourism, the degradation of mountain landscape and the loss of biodiversity due to intense agriculture, abandonment of traditional farming practices and the human-related mortality of certain species. Most of these problems are intensified by inadequate law enforcement and the poor implementation of EU regulations and environmental policy. Raising awareness in local communities about the importance of species and habitat protection, in combination with the application of management measures, is often a more effective way of achieving conservation goals than implementing national or European legislation. Public awareness is a "hard" conservation action and should always be viewed as such, since in most of the cases it constitutes the only effective measure for nature conservation. Regrettably, the majority of the local population in Crete was not properly and adequately informed, thus still many people believe that residing in an Natura 2000 area excludes them from the development opportunities of the rest of the island or specific EU rural funds. The present financial crisis in the country has forced many people of the rural sector to overexploit natural resources in an unsustainable way (excessive and illegal logging for firewood, misuse of water supplies, land abandonment etc.), or to change land uses (transformation of olive groves to photovoltaic installations) that deprive wildlife crucial habitat and degrade the agricultural environment. The LIFE13 INF/GR/000188 project on "The ecological services, social benefits and economic value of ecosystem services in Natura 2000 sites in Crete, Greece" (Acronym: "LIFE Natura2000ValueCrete") aims to support the NATURA 2000 sites in Crete and motivate the public to seize the opportunities and address the challenges identified by integrating the economics of ecosystems and biodiversity into the societal decision-making. Ultimate goal is to show the damage that biodiversity loss will cause to economies and to society in Crete, elucidate misconceptions regarding the EU's environmental policy mainly through the NATURA 2000 Network, and to promote the link between green economy and the creation of quality employment opportunities for present and future generations. More specifically the project is aiming at five main set of objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Inform and change the attitude of stakeholders, targeted audiences and the lay public in local societies that the integration of an area in the NATURA 2000 Network is an inhibitory factor for its development.</li> <li>2. Inform local societies about the ecological significance of the NATURA 2000 Sites for nature conservation and the funding opportunities for green economy in rural areas.</li> <li>3. Provide targeted audiences with the appropriate skills to engage in biodiversity preservation and value environmental sustainability as a prerequisite for better jobs and social protection.</li> <li>4. Incorporate the obligations that originate from the NATURA 2000 Network in all human activities taking place in non-urban zones.</li> <li>5. Provide guidance to other NATURA 2000 site managers in Greece on how they can develop information and communication strategy to highlight the ecological, social and economic value of ecosystem services.</li> </ol>
LIFE Database	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&amp;n_proj_id=5086">http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&amp;n_proj_id=5086</a>

Project website

[www.ecovalue-crete.eu](http://www.ecovalue-crete.eu) (from December 2014)



Project	<b>INFONATUR 2000 - Natura 2000?: an opportunity for everyone</b>
Project nr	LIFE11 INF/ES/000683
Country	Spain
Status	open
Representative	Carles Santana
Presentation abstract	<b>Communicating Nature 2000 in Spain Life+ Infonatur</b> A project on the effective communication of Nature 2000 network is ongoing in three areas in Spain. Hold by the regional Government of Extremadura, two local Governments in Girona and Lleida and the communication agency EFE has as main target detect the main misunderstandings on nature conservation and management and the best way to offer alternatives on human activities in protected areas.
LIFE Database	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&amp;n_proj_id=4343">http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&amp;n_proj_id=4343</a>
Project website	



## Session 2

Project	<b>SAVING DANUBE STURGEONS - JOINT ACTIONS TO RAISE AWARENESS ON OVEREXPLOITATION OF DANUBE STURGEONS IN ROMANIA AND BULGARIA</b>
Project number	LIFE11 INF/AT/000902
Country	Romania
Status	Open
Representative	George Caracas
Presentation abstract	<p><b>Information actions and discussions in fishing communities along Danube and in the Delta</b></p> <p>Sturgeons are the most threatened animals on the IUCN Red List of Threatened species . Of 6 species native to the Danube, Beluga, Stellate Sturgeon, Russian Sturgeon, Ship Sturgeon and Atlantic Sturgeon are listed as Critically Endangered, with Atlantic Sturgeon already extinct here. Only Sterlet is assessed as Vulnerable. For Danube sturgeon populations, quantitative information is hardly available due to very patchy monitoring. However, the decline of Danube sturgeons is clearly documented by the rapidly decreasing catches in the last decades. In Bulgaria, total annual catches fell from 63.5 t in the 1940 to 25.3 t in 1995 – 2002 and in Romania from app. 1144 t in 1940 to less than 8 t in 1995.</p> <p>The main direct threat to the survival of all Danube sturgeons is overexploitation, further aggravated by habitat loss and disruption of spawning migration. Reasons for dramatic decline of these species are complex, but lack of awareness and information is the background of all identified threats and the root cause of the most important one, overfishing. The project provides a major contribution to protect and stop overexploitation of Critically Endangered Danube sturgeons in Bulgaria and Romania and to secure the long term survival of these species with high natural and economic value.</p>
LIFE Database	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&amp;n_proj_id=4340">http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&amp;n_proj_id=4340</a>
Project website	<a href="http://danube-sturgeons.org/the-project/">http://danube-sturgeons.org/the-project/</a>



Project	<b>Roads for Nature - campaign promoting trees in Poland's rural landscapes as habitats and ecological corridors</b>
Project number	LIFE11 INF/PL/000467
Country	Poland
Status	open
Representative	Piotr Tyszko-Chmielowiec
Presentation abstract	<p><b>Roads for Nature – protecting roadside trees together with road services and local authorities</b></p> <p>BACKGROUND: Rows of trees growing along roads and among fields have been a hallmark of traditional European rural landscapes for centuries. They contribute to high biodiversity of cultural landscapes, serving as habitats and green infrastructure. In the last half century, however, the development of transportation infrastructure and land consolidation lead to dramatic decline of trees in Europe’s rural landscapes. This leads to the loss of biodiversity, including EU priority species, as well as loss of cultural values.</p> <p>PROJECT MISSION is to reverse the decline of rows of trees in rural areas, through raising awareness of decision makers, local communities and the general public on their importance and functions as habitats and green infrastructure, as well as through improving tree planning and maintenance skills in responsible authorities. Thus contribute to halting the loss of biodiversity in rural landscapes, including EU priority species.</p> <p>INTERVENTION LOGIC: The main project tool is a local participatory process of planning of tree resources development conducted within a local partnership involving authorities, conservationists, and community, supported by training and educational materials. The change desired will come through modifying the attitudes of public officials, improving the practice of tree resources management, and gaining the support of local communities and the general public.</p> <p>ACTIONS AND MEANS include conducting local campaigns in 66 municipalities to promote planning and implementation of tree planting and maintenance, supported by training and education and supplemented by an awareness campaign directed to the general public and engaged individuals countrywide, as well as disseminating activities (seminars, conferences, a film).</p> <p>RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS: The partnership with institutions responsible for managing trees was proved to be an effective approach. A knowledge base on managing trees in the open landscape was created and made available in high-quality publications and on the website. It is disseminated at trainings and seminars and in unique publications. A network of experts on tree maintenance and conservation is being developed. A network of local activists in towns and countryside is being developed. The issue of proper management of trees is more often discussed publicly.</p> <p>The project has a strong potential to support conservation of all trees in the human environment. The management guidelines created for avenues apply to all trees in green spaces. While treating roadside trees as a priority, we explore application of the know-how to trees in urban environment. This is supported by a growing movement of grassroots initiatives to protect trees, most of which are in towns.</p>
LIFE Database	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&amp;n_proj_id=4346">http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&amp;n_proj_id=4346</a>
Project website	<a href="http://aleje.org.pl/">http://aleje.org.pl/</a>



Project	<b>Safe Haven for Wild Birds - A safe haven for wild birds: Changing attitudes towards illegal killing in North Mediterranean for European Biodiversity</b>
Project number	LIFE11 INF/IT/000253
Country	Italy
Status	open
Representative	Claudio Celada
Presentation abstract	<p><b>Education and Lobby to stop Poaching in three Mediterranean Countries</b></p> <p>The safe Haven for Wild birds projects targets illegal bird killing in three hotspots of the Mediterranean: SW Sardinia (IT), Valencia Comunidad (ES) and the Ionian Islands (GR), where three different types of poaching take place. Three national campaign deliver the agreed message about the need to enforce existing legislation to ensure biodiversity protection as the local killing have impact at both local, national and international level.</p> <p>Education activities target local schools, public events promote the issue among local communities and advocacy and capacity building facilitates the work of Law Enforcement Agencies. International cooperation is promoted by specific events. So far over 30 million people in the three countries have been reached through media (Newspapers, Radio, TV) and social media.</p>
LIFE Database	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&amp;n_proj_id=4347">http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&amp;n_proj_id=4347</a>
Project website	<a href="http://www.leavingisliving.org/life/index.php/en/">http://www.leavingisliving.org/life/index.php/en/</a>





Project	<b>AlterIAS - Increase awareness to curb horticultural introductions of invasive plants in Belgium</b>
Project nr	LIFE08 INF/B/000052
Country	Belgium
Status	closed
Representative	Mathieu Halford
Presentation abstract	<p><b>Communication and prevention on invasive alien plants: results of the AlterIAS project</b></p> <p>Voluntary approaches have been recently used in the horticultural sector to deal with the introduction and spread of invasive alien plants. In Belgium, the first Code of conduct has been developed within the frame of the AlterIAS project, a LIFE+ “Information &amp; Communication” project aiming at raising the awareness of horticulture professionals and gardeners on the invasive plants issue. The Belgian Code was prepared in consultation with representatives from the ornamental sector, public authorities and the scientific community. The Code was promoted throughout the country with a specific communication campaign entitled “Plant different”. Thanks to communication efforts, a positive dynamic of involvement was observed over time. Surveys were performed to assess the changes of attitudes and the perception of the Code by the target audience of the project. Positive results were achieved for horticulture professionals. However, the Code will require more time to be widely adopted by the ornamental sector in Belgium.</p>
LIFE Database	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&amp;n_proj_id=3501">http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&amp;n_proj_id=3501</a>
Project website	



Project	<b>EME Natura2000 - Efficient Managers for Efficient Natura2000 Network</b>
Project nr	LIFE11 INF/RO/000819
Country	Romania
Status	open
Representative	Ioanna Bejan
Presentation abstract	<b>Strategic planning and Natura 2000</b> Improving territorial planning in Romania to incorporate biodiversity concerns by providing guidance to the most important economic sectors that are using land and natural resources on how to contribute actively to the development of regional territorial plans that reflect biodiversity concerns, including objectives of the Natura 2000 network.
LIFE Database	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&amp;n_proj_id=4341">http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&amp;n_proj_id=4341</a>
Project website	<a href="http://www.emenatura2000.ro">www.emenatura2000.ro</a>



Project	<b>AQUAVIVA - Live Water - from Biodiversity to the Tap</b>
Project nr	LIFE10 INF/SI/000135
Country	Slovenia
Status	closed
Representative	Marjana Hönigsfeld Adamič
Presentation abstract	<b>AQUAVIVA – Communicating aquatic biodiversity</b> The main goal of the project LIFE AQUAVIVA was promoting biodiversity of the freshwater ecosystems in Slovenia and increase public awareness about it. Different approaches were used, among them workshops and nature education days in the schools, outdoor exhibitions and exhibitions in the shopping centres, covering of buses with biodiversity items, websites, social networks, photo competition etc. In the end of the project (2014), public opinion research revealed the increase of public awareness of the term “biodiversity” regarding the year 2010 by 34 % while the share of public well or very well informed about biodiversity loss decreased for 3 %; in 2014, 31% of people captured in survey have recognized the project AQUAVIVA. Therefore, we estimate that 31% of increase in public awareness is a result achieved by the project LIFE AQUAVIVA.
LIFE Database	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&amp;n_proj_id=4030">http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&amp;n_proj_id=4030</a>
Project website	<a href="http://www.aquaviva.si">http://www.aquaviva.si</a>



Project	<b>BIOforLIFE - An awareness-raising campaign in Cyprus for appreciating biodiversity in our life</b>
Project number	LIFE11 INF/CY/000863
Country	Cyprus
Status	open
Representative	Antonis Karatzias
Presentation abstract	<b>Bio4Life</b> Good and not so good practices
LIFE Database	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&amp;n_proj_id=4350">http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&amp;n_proj_id=4350</a>
Project website	<a href="http://www.cyprusbiodiversity.eu/home.html">http://www.cyprusbiodiversity.eu/home.html</a>

### 3. Workshop summary

The final discussion was facilitated by the experts of Mission for Nature. The participants were asked to choose the three topics which were the most relevant for them to further discuss. They had an opportunity to exchange experience on how to best promote the Natura 2000 programme by:

- Formulation of targeted messages (success stories),
- Use of various media,
- Evaluation of the success.

#### 1. Messages related to Natura 2000 and success stories

It is important that the messages related to Natura 2000 passed to local communities should be not only positive, but also true, simple and understandable. People are often suspicious towards strangers talking about the land on which they have lived for generations and their trust is not easily gained. If the message appears to be untrue or unclear, further communication will be blocked. Also, messages addressed to people living on Natura 2000 should emphasize success stories, and focus on the positive outcomes rather than negative. It is important that these stories should refer to Natura 2000 sites which are similar in their socio-economic aspects to the site whose community the message is addressed to. It makes stories more credible and communities are more likely to identify with them.

We should also remember that benefits of living in a Natura 2000 site should be connected to, and shown from the point of view how they meet people's needs. Those can differ between sites, therefore our message should be adapted to the audience. Sometimes the local community's needs are rather basic: food and a shelter, a workplace. In other cases people are interested in new business opportunities, recreation, tourism, etc. We also cannot forget about the Natura 2000 programme's objectives: species and habitats conservation, biodiversity protection, science and education.

The question if there are any cases when communicating Natura 2000 is hopeless was also discussed and if so, where we should focus the efforts in these cases. Although there was no consensus in the group here, most of participants claimed that, in fact, there are no hopeless cases and the most important question is how to transform constraints into opportunities. By talking to, and involving local communities in discussions, those communities can be encouraged to take ownership of Natura 2000's aims and objectives.

## 2. Media

Nowadays, we can use various media to target different stakeholder groups (newspapers and magazines, TV and radio, internet and social media). Media can be very powerful if well used, and they can serve different purposes. The news will require identifying “hot topics” and presenting them in the way which is expected by media providers. The messages should show urgency, importance and often threats to make the audience interested in them. However, to increase the knowledge of the audience other forms can be applied (essays, articles, websites). For raising interest in conservation activities and encouragement to act – campaigns and calls for action can work best. Social media draw attention mostly of the younger generations and involve them in debates. TV spots, radio ads and newspaper announcements can help with wide promotion of specific actions and event.

## 3. Evaluating success –how to improve promotion of the Natura 2000 by taking into consideration the results of our evaluation?

Evaluation is an important process, although quite often underestimated part of a project and a tool which, when properly used, can highly improve efficiency of the project’s actions. It is very important to make the evaluation part of the project’s plan, both before, in order to know what is the baseline situation, and after – to understand whether our action brought a change. Using proper tools for evaluation are the keys to success. Preparation of a well formulated questionnaire is crucial if we want to receive valuable information. If it is possible and appropriate, we should aim at making the evaluations “sexy” (e.g. interactive feedback). Well conducted evaluation allows us to gather very useful data, for example gained confidence of stakeholders, degree of acceptance, opinion change, behaviour change, etc. It let us identify trends and find out what works and what does not and which are the most efficient actions (e.g. identify best practice, something that involves the population). However, even the best conducted evaluation will be useless unless we change our actions according to its results. Those lessons learned can also help identify where to focus effort in the future. The results of evaluation can be valuable not only for us, but to other projects as well – that is why sharing experience between projects (Layman’s report, conferences, etc.) is so important.

During the final plenary session the participants summarised the results of the working groups and showed how integrated they have become during those days in the efforts to support the promotion and implementation of the Natura 2000 network.



The workshop and its conclusions were featured in the December issue of LIFE news [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/features/2014/nat2000\\_1.htm#top](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/features/2014/nat2000_1.htm#top) .

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