LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity

Guidelines for applicants 2007

The current guidelines apply to the preparation of project proposals to be submitted to the European Commission under *LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity*. They are intended to help the applicant preparing his project proposal and filling in the application forms.

Table of contents

1. What is *LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity*?

The LIFE+ Regulation[1]

LIFE+ is the European Community financial instrument supporting the Community environmental policy for the period 2007 – 2013. LIFE+ consists of three components:

(1) LIFE+ Nature & Biodiversity,

(2) LIFE+ Environment Policy and Governance, and

(3) LIFE+ Information and Communication.

These guidelines concern uniquely ***LIFE+ Nature & Biodiversity***.

LIFE+ Nature & Biodiversity aims specifically at contributing to the implementation of Community policy and legislation on nature and biodiversity. Furthermore, actions financed must have a European added value and be complementary to those actions that can be financed under other Community funds during the period 2007-2013. There are two distinct categories of projects: ***LIFE+ Nature*** projects and ***LIFE+ Biodiversity*** projects.

A proposal must either be a ***LIFE+ Nature*** or a ***LIFE+ Biodiversity*** project. **It cannot be a mixture of both.**

LIFE+ Nature projects contribute to the **implementation of the Birds and/or Habitats Directives**[2], including at local and regional level, and support the further development and implementation of the Natura 2000 network, including coastal and marine habitats and species (Article 4.2 and Annexe II.1 of the LIFE+ Regulation). The focus is on long-term sustainable investments in Natura 2000 sites and on the conservation of species and habitats targeted by these Directives. LIFE+ Nature projects must be "best practice" or "demonstration" projects (Article 3.2a of the LIFE+ Regulation).

LIFE+ Biodiversity projects contribute to the implementation of the objectives of Commission Communication "Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 – and beyond"[3]. LIFE+ Biodiversity projects must be ***demonstration*** or ***innovation*** projects (Article 3.2b of the LIFE+ Regulation). They are different from LIFE+ Nature projects insofar as their focus is on the demonstration of short-term measures and practices that contribute to halting the loss of biodiversity on the territory of the Member States. All biodiversity projects, whether innovative or demonstration, must have as an integral part of their project the evaluation and active dissemination of the results and lessons learnt during the project.

[1] Regulation (EC) n° 614/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 May 2007, published in the Official Journal of the European Union L149 of 9 June 2007
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2007/l_149/l_14920070609en00010016.pdf

[2] Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds;
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/birdsdirective/index_en.htm

Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/habitatsdirective/index_en.htm

[3] Communication from the Commission COM (2006) 216 final "Halting the loss of Biodiversity by 2010 – and beyond"
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/index_en.htm

A nature conservation project that targets **exclusively** species/habitats of the Birds/ Habitats Directive *is a LIFE+ Nature project* (provided it meets the various requirements specified in this document). In all other cases, it can only be a *LIFE+ Biodiversity* project (provided it meets the various requirements specified in this document), and must therefore be an innovative / demonstration project and cannot include land purchase.

The only exception to this rule is that you may submit a LIFE+ Biodiversity project proposal that targets exclusively species covered by the Birds / Habitats Directives in the case where it is a demonstration of an innovative site-related conservation measure not involving long-term investments, and that takes place outside a Natura 2000 site.

LIFE+ Biodiversity projects taking place within Natura 2000 areas should not have, as a primary goal, conservation management of species/habitats covered by the EU Birds and Habitat Directives. Should this be the case, the project should be classified as a LIFE+ Nature project. It is however acceptable that a LIFE+ Biodiversity project demonstrating innovative conservation techniques targets, **amongst others**, species and habitats covered by the Birds and Habitats Directive.

The table below lists the key differences between the two sorts of project.

LIFE+ Nature	LIFE+ Biodiversity
exclusively in relation to the objectives of the Birds and Habitats Directives	not restricted to the Birds and Habitats Directives, but is in relation to the Commission Communication "Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 – and beyond"
best practice and/or demonstration	demonstration and/or innovation
long-term, sustainable conservation measures and investments in Natura 2000 sites, species and habitats	short term demonstration of the feasibility of measures in favour of biodiversity monitoring, evaluation and active dissemination of these measures are an integral part of the project
land purchase and long-term lease or compensation eligible	only short term lease or compensation are eligible
infrastructure and equipment costs 100% eligible (public authorities and NGOs)	infrastructure and equipment costs only partially eligible (depreciation)

LIFE+ Nature and LIFE+ Biodiversity projects should be primarily focussed on nature protection and/or biodiversity conservation issues. A project that may have a positive but *secondary* impact on nature and biodiversity and whose main objective is in relation to another environmental theme (e.g. water quality) should not be submitted under *LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity* (see application guidelines for *LIFE+ Environment Policy and Governance* to see whether the project may be eligible under this other strand of LIFE+).

A project on nature protection and/or biodiversity conservation that is purely targeting awareness raising campaigns should be submitted under *LIFE+ Information and Communication*.

2. LIFE+ Nature

2. a. General principles of LIFE+ Nature funding

General scope

LIFE+ Nature projects aim to improve the conservation status of species / habitats of the Birds / Habitats Directives; the species and habitats targeted must be listed in the annexes of the EU Birds and Habitats Directives as follows:

Site-based actions:

- Bird species targeted by site-based actions must be listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive or be regularly occurring migratory bird species.
- Any habitat types / species (other than bird species) targeted must be listed in Annexes I or II of the Habitats Directive.

Species-based (i.e. not site-based) actions:

- Bird species targeted must be listed in Annex I or II of the Birds Directive or be regularly occurring migratory bird species.
- Any species (other than bird species) targeted must be listed in Annexes II, IV and/or V of the Habitats Directive.

Geographic scope

LIFE+ Nature projects must exclusively take place on the terrestrial and/or marine territory of the EU Member States where the EU Birds and Habitats Directives apply[4].

Best practice and/or demonstration

LIFE+ Nature projects must either be best-practice or demonstration projects.

A "**best practice**" **project** applies appropriate, cost-effective, state-of-the-art techniques and methods for the conservation of species/habitats targeted, taking into account the specific context of the project and its sites. Testing and evaluating best practice techniques and methods should not be part of the project as they are already state-of-the-art (monitoring the impact of the project actions is nevertheless obligatory).

A **"demonstration" project** puts into practice, tests, evaluates and disseminates actions/methodologies that are to some degree new or unfamiliar in the project's specific context (geographical, ecological, socio-economical …), and that **should be more widely applied** elsewhere in similar circumstances. The project must therefore be designed right from the start to demonstrate whether the techniques and methods used work or not in the project's context (geographical, ecological, socio-economical …). Monitoring, evaluation and active dissemination of the main project results and/or lessons learnt are integral parts of the project and its aftermath. A demonstration project therefore ultimately aims to encourage other stakeholders to use the conservation techniques and methods demonstrated in the project. Given the time required in many cases for restoration actions to have a measurable impact, it is

[4] Note that these two Directives do not apply to the French Overseas Departments (DOMs).

recognised that the evaluation and dissemination (transfer) of the results may need to continue well after the end of the project.

Applicants must clearly explain (form B3) the best-practice or demonstration nature of their project and its actions, and in the case of demonstration to what extent they may be applied elsewhere.

Recurring actions cannot be financed

The LIFE+ Regulation (Article 3.2) does not allow the financing of recurring activities.

Any **recurring** monitoring or management action that was already carried out prior to the start of the project and/or that needs to be continued after the end of the project (at the same level of intensity, using the same techniques and material…) cannot be included in the *LIFE+ Nature* proposal budget. For example, any recurring site surveillance, annual mowing or long-term monitoring actions (other than to evaluate the impact of the project) are in principle ineligible.

For *LIFE+ Nature*, investments necessary to *facilitate recurrent management* (e.g. the purchase of grazing animals and related infrastructure or machinery) may be fully eligible for funding. In such cases, however, the costs related to the use of this equipment remain, as above, ineligible as they concern recurring activities.

Also by way of exception, *recurring actions with a clear demonstration* value may be considered as eligible for funding. However, in such cases, the proposal must clearly explain the demonstration character.

Projects must have at least 25% of their budget earmarked for concrete actions

At least **25%** of the provisional budget of *LIFE+ Nature* projects must concern "concrete" actions. In this context, *"concrete conservation" actions* are those that *directly improve* (or slow/halt/reverse the decline of) *the conservation status* of the species and habitat types targeted.

Preparatory actions (e.g. planning and preparation of the concrete conservation actions) and land purchase / lease / compensation payments count towards this 25% *insofar as they are directly necessary for the execution of concrete actions during the project's lifetime*. Any investments necessary to facilitate recurring management (see below) are also considered as concrete actions.

It is strongly advised that *LIFE+ Nature* projects include *significantly more* than 25% concrete conservation actions. During the evaluation of the proposal, certain actions may be considered ineligible and removed from the project. Should the percentage of concrete actions fall under 25%, then the whole project may be rejected for that reason.

LIFE+ Nature proposals involving few or no concrete actions will thus generally be considered ineligible. There are however two exceptions to this rule:

- *Life+ Nature* projects for preparatory inventories and planning for the designation of *marine Natura 2000* sites do not need to include any concrete conservation actions.
- *Life+ Nature* projects for the support and/or the further development of the surveillance of the conservation status of natural habitats and species covered by the Birds and Habitats Directives (in the sense of Article 11 of the Habitats Directive) do not have to include any concrete conservation actions.

Note however that, as for any other *LIFE+ Nature* projects, projects that fall under either of these two exceptions **cannot involve recurring activities** in the sense of Article 3.2 of the LIFE+ Regulation.

Long term sustainability of the project and its actions

LIFE+ Nature projects will often represent a considerable investment, and the Commission attaches a great importance to the long term sustainability of these investments. For this reason, it is obligatory that throughout the duration of the project, the beneficiaries consider how these investments will be secured, maintained, developed and made use of after the end of the project.

Any investments regarding land purchase, long-term lease, land management and/or land restoration shall normally be restricted to land that is located within the existing *Natura 2000* network of sites. This criterion will be strictly applied in all those cases where the areas concerned would qualify for *Natura 2000* designation. The following **exceptions** may however be allowed:

- Investments outside existing *Natura 2000* sites may be considered as eligible for funding if a commitment to designate the sites concerned before the end of the project is provided by the competent nature conservation authority. Where such commitments are necessary, this authority must be an active beneficiary of the project (either the coordinating beneficiary or an associated beneficiary).

- Where the creation of corridors or "stepping stones" between existing *Natura 2000* sites is foreseen, investments may exceptionally also be considered for co-funding on areas that will not be designated under Natura 2000. In such cases, evidence must be provided that the investments foreseen contribute (a) to an "improvement of the ecological coherence of the *Natura 2000* network" and (b) to "maintaining or restoring the integrity of a *Natura 2000* site". A guarantee must also be provided for the sustainability of these investments, in the form of a commitment for giving these sites **the highest possible protection status** at the national/regional level before the end of the project. Note also that any such actions will only be accepted where the national *Natura 2000* network of sites is considered as sufficient for the species/habitats targeted by the project.

Complementarity with other EC funding instruments

Applicants must take full note of the corresponding section 6.15 of the General Guidelines for Applicants.

Applicants may nevertheless find themselves in a **period of uncertainty** for this first 2007 call under LIFE+. For example if at the time of preparing the proposal, the Rural Development Programme for their country is not yet finalised, they may be uncertain as to whether some of the measures proposed in their LIFE+ proposal will or will not finally "fall within the eligibility criteria and main scope" of the RDP. They must therefore manage this in a responsible manner, notably by giving in their proposal full details on this point (see also the obligatory signed declaration on form A2 paragraph 1).

Applicants in such a situation may wish to consider the following possibility. Supposing measure **x** (e.g. tree clearing) forms an integral part of their project, is not at the moment able to be financed by another EU instrument but this may change in the coming months. Applicants could nevertheless include this action in their proposal with a budget **y**, indicating clearly that it may be cancelled if other funding becomes available during the course of the project. Should this happen, the corresponding budget **y** would be freed.

In order to be able to make use of this budget **y**, they should foresee in their original proposal one or more **complementary** concrete conservation actions that are **coherent with the project** for an **equivalent budget**. The description of these complementary actions should be as detailed as that of the other actions and should indicate their potential cost (cost per hectare, number of ha, total cost,…). The financial forms should include these complementary actions, but with **a zero budget**.

A second way of making use of the freed budget **y** would be to use it to reinforce one or more of the other concrete conservation actions foreseen in the proposal. For example another action has an objective of 100 ha, but if an additional budget **y** were to become available, this objective could be increased by a **complementary objective** of 50 ha. Applicants should clearly indicate and give details of possible complementary objectives in the description of any of their actions for which this is possible.

Applicants should carefully consider the budget categories concerned in the light of the 30,000€/10% limit in Article 15 of the Common Provisions, as the breakdown per category of the budget **y** freed for one action may not correspond to the breakdown if it were used in a complementary action or for a complementary objective.

The situation regarding what may or may not be funded by other EU funds is likely to evolve after the projects are submitted (November 2007). The Commission may require applicants to modify their proposal accordingly during the revision period (provisionally May-July 2008) to take this evolution into account.

Maximum co-financing rates

LIFE+ Nature projects are co-financed by the Community at a maximum rate of 50% of their eligible costs (Article 5.3 of the LIFE+ Regulation).

By way of exception, a maximum co-financing rate of 75% is applicable to *LIFE+ Nature* projects that focus on priority habitats/species of the Birds and Habitats Directives. Note that where such proposals also contain actions that do not target priority species/habitats, a maximum co-financing rate of 50% will be applied to the whole project

Priority habitat types and priority species of the Habitats Directive are those marked by an asterisk in Annexes I or II of this Directive. Bird species considered as "priority for funding under LIFE+" are those that appear in the following list:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/wildbirds/action_plans/index_en.htm

2. b. How to conceive a *LIFE+ Nature* project proposal?

When preparing your proposal, the following main types of eligible actions must be clearly distinguished:

- Preparatory actions,
- Land purchase/lease of land and/or compensation payment for use rights,
- Concrete conservation actions,
- Communication and dissemination actions (obligatory),
- Project management and monitoring (obligatory).

Preparatory actions

As a general principle, all preparatory actions must produce practical recommendations and/or information which can be implemented (either during the project or after the project) and be used without requiring further preparatory work. Furthermore, where preparatory actions do not lead to direct implementation during the project, the proposal must provide a sufficient set of explanations, commitments and guarantees to show that their full implementation after the project is effectively ensured. Most projects include preparatory actions. Projects may not include preparatory actions that have been fully completed prior to the start of the project.

In general, and amongst others, preparatory actions:

- should not be research actions,
- should not be inventories of new Natura 2000 sites (unless they are marine sites),
- should be of limited duration (i.e. should be significantly shorter than the project duration),
- should be clearly related to the objective(s) of the project.

Preparatory actions may therefore include (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Actions preparatory to the concrete conservation actions of the project (technical planning, permit procedures, stakeholder consultations, etc.),
- Drafting Natura 2000 site management plans,
- Making preparatory inventories and other actions necessary for the designation of marine Natura 2000 sites,
- Developing conservation action plans for species/habitat types of the Birds and Habitats Directives,
- Preliminary studies required to improve the ecological coherency and connectivity of the Natura 2000 network.
- Actions to persuade and help third parties in the project area (eg farmers, landowners, forest managers, …) to apply to other sources of funding for measures that are complementary to the actions foreseen in the project and which would contribute to the specific objectives of the project.

Where management plans, action plans or other similar plans are drafted or modified in the framework of a *LIFE+ Nature* project they must become legally operational before the end of the project. Therefore in those Member States where a procedure for their legal adoption and/or approval exists, this procedure must be completed before the end of the project otherwise the related expenses will be ineligible. Applicants are therefore advised not to include actions to develop such plans unless they are **certain** that they will be legally operational before the end of the project.

Land purchase/lease of land and/or compensation payment for use rights

This includes:

- the purchase of land and associated costs (e.g. notary expenses, taxes, etc.);
- the long-term lease of land and associated costs;
- one-off land use compensation payments and associated costs.

(Note: short term lease and/or compensation payments are possible but only for the demonstration of innovative actions - see below)

Land purchase, long-term lease and/or one-off compensation payments for land uses are only possible for *LIFE+ Nature* projects. The eligibility of any such costs is subject to the following conditions. The applicant must address each of these conditions in his proposal, explaining how each condition is met or will be met during the project.

1. The land purchase must be clearly related to the objectives of the project.
2. The purchase of land shall normally be restricted to lands that are located within an existing Natura 2000 site (see below, section "Site-related conservation actions outside Natura 2000 sites" for possible exceptions).
3. The land purchase would contribute to maintaining or restoring the integrity of a Natura 2000 site.
4. The purchase is the only or most effective way of achieving the desired conservation outcome.
5. The land purchased is reserved in the long-term for uses consistent with the implementation of the EU Birds and Habitats Directives. The beneficiaries must ensure that the sales contract and/or entry in the land register includes a guarantee that the land is assigned definitively (without time limitation) to nature conservation purposes consistent with the objectives of the EU Birds and Habitats Directives. Where both possibilities exist (sales contract and land registry entry), the beneficiaries must use that which offers the strongest long-term protection. Note that with the final report, the beneficiaries will have to submit a copy of the sales contract and/or entry in the land register including the above mentioned guarantee. Should they fail to provide such documents, the corresponding land purchase costs and associated costs will be considered ineligible. For countries where it would be illegal to include such a guarantee both in the land register and in the sale contract, the Commission may accept an equivalent guarantee, provided it offers the same legal level of protection in the long term and complies with the requirement contained in Annex I of the LIFE+ Regulation.
6. The land must be purchased by one of the official project beneficiaries who is either a well-established private organisation (e.g. nature conservation NGO or other) or a public authority with nature conservation tasks, and must remain in his ownership after the end of the project.
7. The proposal must demonstrate that each beneficiary carrying out land purchases has the necessary competence and experience in land purchase for nature conservation, and that the planned target is realistic within the time framework of the project,
8. If the purchasing body is a private organisation, its statutes must include a provision that, in case of dissolution, the land will be transferred to another legal body primarily active in the field of nature conservation (e.g. another conservation NGO or appropriate public authority).
9. Evidence must be provided in the proposal that the purchase price is consistent with the current market prices for the type of land and the region concerned.

10. Evidence must be provided that the land purchased was privately owned prior to the project starting date (exceptions are only possible if duly justified and accepted by the Commission). Purchase of land that that has recently been transferred from public to private ownership will not be eligible.
11. Land purchased must in general be the subject of specific restoration or management or restrictions of use during or after the project. The purchase of land that is in excellent conservation status (i.e. that requires no restoration or specific management or restrictions of use) is only eligible if strategic to the objectives of the project.

Long-term land lease and one-off compensation payments: The same conditions listed above apply, as and where appropriate, to long-term land lease and one-off compensation payments. The applicant must address each of these conditions in his proposal, explaining how each condition is met or will be met during the project. The duration must be sufficient to guarantee the durability of the conservation investment, i.e. the principles of long-term sustainability and cost-effectiveness must apply.

Short term land lease or compensation payments with a limited duration within the project period will only be eligible insofar as they are **necessary for the demonstration of innovative actions** favourable to the conservation status of the species/habitats targeted. Note that appropriate justification for the costs of short term lease and/or one-off compensation payment will have to be provided with the project's final report.

Any land purchase payments, compensation payments or lease payments to public bodies are not eligible, with the exception of one-off compensation payments to local authorities. It is recommended that local authorities re-invest the income from such one-off payments into conservation or public awareness-raising measures for Natura 2000 sites. Those proposals which include a commitment from the local authorities in question to do so will be considered for a higher scoring in the project selection process and will therefore have a higher chance of being selected for co-funding.

Concrete conservation actions

Concrete conservation actions must aim to directly improve (or slow/halt/reverse the decline of) the conservation status of the species and habitats targeted. Their impact must be measurable and must be monitored and evaluated during the project.

The maintenance of the investments made through these actions must be ensured in the long-term after the end of the project.

Site-related conservation actions inside Natura 2000 sites:

As a general rule, site-related conservation actions shall take place within existing designated *Natura 2000* sites (exceptions are given below in the section entitled "Site-related conservation actions outside Natura 2000 sites").

Actions in sites that are not yet officially designated Natura 2000 sites by the deadline for the submission of applications are ineligible. The date of designation in this context is the date at which the European Commission received the formal information from the Member State about the site's designation.

For each Natura 2000 site targeted, you should provide a general description and (in annex) a map of the site, indicating where each action is planned to take place. The project area will be the whole of the Natura 2000 site(s) targeted by the project (it is thus unnecessary to further delimit a project area within the Natura 2000 site).

Actions targeting bird species must take place within SPAs (Special Protection Areas) that were explicitly designated for the species in question.

Actions targeting habitat types or species other than birds must take place within pSCIs (proposed Sites of Community Interest) or SCIs (Sites of Community Interest) that were explicitly designated for the species / habitats in question.

Actions targeting species and habitats not listed in project site's official Natura 2000 data sheet are ineligible. Applicants are advised to check this carefully. Where the species/habitats are in fact present but are not in the data sheet, actions targeting them can only be accepted if the proposal contains a letter of commitment from the competent authority to correct the data sheet before the end of the project.

Eligible site-related conservation actions inside Natura 2000 sites concern a wide range of **restoration** and **management** actions too numerous to list here. Eligible actions may include, amongst others:

- Actions **aimed at improving** the long-term effectiveness, in terms of cost-efficiency and conservation benefit, of the management of Natura 2000 sites, habitat types and species;
- **Investments necessary to facilitate recurring management** (e.g. the purchase of grazing animals and related infrastructure or machinery). These investments must be clearly linked to the objectives of the project. The equipment / infrastructure acquired through such investments must be used to a significant degree for the project objectives during the project. Note, however, that the costs related to the use of such material are in principle ineligible as they concern recurring management - see general principles – unless they relate to the demonstration of an innovative recurring management technique;
- Actions for **combating invasive alien species** or for **mitigating negative impacts of climate change**, insofar as they directly benefit the species / habitats targeted by the project.

<u>Site-related conservation actions outside Natura 2000 sites:</u>

By way of exception, the following types of concrete site-related actions are eligible outside Natura 2000 sites, and in all of these, the long-term sustainability of the investments must be guaranteed:

- Actions on strategic spots and actions affecting adjacent Natura 2000 sites;
- Habitat and/or site restoration actions on areas to be come Natura 2000 sites;
- Actions for improving the ecological coherence / connectivity of the Natura 2000 network.

- Actions on strategic spots and actions affecting adjacent Natura 2000 sites:

A strategic spot is defined here as an area with no or limited natural value, but which is necessary for the implementation of key actions resulting in a direct and significant benefit for the habitats/species targeted by the project within a Natura 2000 site (e.g. a plot needed to relocate a damaging structure/device, etc.). Land purchase may be possible in this context.

Actions carried out near or adjacent to a Natura 2000 site which improve the conservation status of the species/habitats targeted within the site may also be eligible. This may concern, for example, actions for **combating invasive alien species** outside a pSCI so as to limit or prevent damage within the site.

- Habitat and/or site restoration:

In general, habitat restoration must take place within designated Natura 2000 sites. However projects and actions to restore/recreate habitats outside Natura 2000 sites may be eligible but only if they:

- target the conservation of a priority habitat/species or of a large proportion of the European surface/population of a non-priority habitat/species;
- address the main threats to the habitats/species and have a direct impact on restoring their favourable conservation status within the EU and candidate countries;
- are based on a good scientific knowledge (ecology, function, resilience, …).
- have a good chance of success and be cost effective,
- include a commitment from the Competent Authority to designate the sites concerned as Natura 2000 sites before the end of the project (provided the restoration has been successful); **in any such cases, it is expected that the Competent Authority is involved as an active beneficiary of the project** (coordinating beneficiary or associated beneficiary); land purchase is possible in this context;
- set clear targets and give a detailed timetable outlining when it is expected that the site concerned may be designated under Natura 2000, and include specific and detailed monitoring to verify at predetermined intervals if the site has achieved the conditions necessary for designation (i.e. if the restoration has been successful).

- Actions for improving the ecological coherence / connectivity of the Natura 2000 network:

Where the creation of corridors or "stepping stones" between existing Natura 2000 sites is foreseen, investments may exceptionally also be considered for co-funding on areas that will not be designated under Natura 2000. Land purchase may be possible. Evidence must be provided that the investments foreseen contribute (a) to an "improvement of the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network" and (b) to "maintaining or restoring the integrity of a Natura 2000 site". A guarantee must also be provided for the sustainability of these investments, in the form of a commitment for giving these sites **the highest possible protection status** at the national/regional level before the end of the project. Note also that any such actions will only be accepted where the national Natura 2000 network of sites is considered as sufficient for the species/habitats targeted by the project. The applicants must demonstrate how these corridors or stepping stones will improve the conservation status of the species targeted by the project.

Actions for the creation of "corridors" may also include the construction of infrastructure acting as animal migration corridors that would enhance the possibilities for the migration of animals, provided that the species population targeted already benefits from an appropriate Natura 2000 site designation of their main breeding, feeding and/or resting areas. Typical examples are wildlife bridges/tunnels, fish passes etc. In these cases, a protected area status is not required for the site where the infrastructure will be located. The applicant will however need to provide evidence that the future use and maintenance of the infrastructure is backed by an appropriate land use planning at the most relevant administrative level.

Species-related actions (that are not site-related):

- Species-based conservation actions (i.e. actions that are not site-based and that target species of the Birds / Habitat Directives):

This concerns any actions other than site-related actions that are necessary to improve the conservation status of species covered by the Birds Directive (annex I or II or regularly occurring migratory species) or Habitats Directives (annex II, IV or V). Such actions should be clearly distinct from those that concern site protection and must address significant conservation issues, and applicants must provide guarantees and commitments that the investments made will be sustained in the long-term. Such projects may include, amongst others:

- Actions related to the direct protection of animal species against unintentional or incidental disturbance, collection, capture, poisoning or killing. These may in particular concern wide-ranging or mobile species for which the designation of Natura 2000 sites and the associated conservation and management of sites are not sufficient to ensure a favourable conservation status. For example, this may concern actions to remove or modify technical devices or infrastructures such as electric power lines, fishing gear, etc.;
- Actions for combating invasive alien species or mitigating the negative impact of climate change, insofar as they directly benefit the species targeted by the project.

- Species re-introduction:

Projects and actions to reintroduce species are subject to the following conditions:

- they are justifiable and have a high chance of success;
- they target areas where the causes of extinction of the species have been eliminated;
- the removal of individuals for re-introduction is only considered if that would not endanger the captive or wild source populations;
- they target areas whose habitats meet the conditions necessary for the survival of a viable population of the species;
- they establish and document a prior agreement between all parties involved (e.g. between the competent authority for the donor population and the manager of the area of reintroduction);
- they target only areas where the attitude of the local population towards the planned reintroduction is favourable or there is a reasonable expectation that local acceptance can be achieved during the project;
- they only reintroduce animals / plants that belong to the closest and most similar population available (in terms of genetics, ecology, etc…) to that previously occurring in the area;
- they include a feasibility study, a preparatory phase, a re-introduction phase and a follow-up phase.

Projects and actions to reintroduce species outside existing Natura 2000 sites and which target species for which Natura 2000 designation is foreseen are subject to the following additional condition:

- they include a commitment from the Member State to designate the core reproductive and feeding areas of the re-introduced population as Natura 2000 sites before the end of the project (provided the reintroduction has been successful); the competent authority for Natura 2000 site designation must be an active beneficiary of the project (coordinating beneficiary or associated beneficiary); land purchase is possible in this context;

For further guidelines on re-introduction can be found in the following document:
http://www.iucnsscrsg.org/images/Englishglines.pdf

- Ex-situ conservation actions:

These concern such actions as captive breeding, seed banks, etc., and may include sustainable investments in infrastructure / equipment.

Communication and dissemination actions (obligatory)

Every proposal must contain an appropriate amount of communication and dissemination actions. These typically include:

- information activities to the general public and stakeholders aimed at facilitating the implementation of the project;
- public awareness and dissemination actions aimed at publicising the project and its results both to the general public and to other stakeholders that could usefully benefit from the project's experience.

Should the proposal include the development of general guidelines for setting up management plans for Natura 2000 sites / habitat types / species or guidelines for their practical management, it must demonstrate the need for such guidelines and that equivalent guidelines do not already exist elsewhere, and must identify the target "public" and how the guidelines will be distributed to them.

Should the proposal include the creation of **small-scale** visitor infrastructures, these must not cover more than 10% of the budget allocated to concrete actions in the proposal budget, and must be well-justified and cost effective or else they will be deleted from the proposal during the revision phase.

The range of possible actions is large (media work, organisation of events for the local community, didactic work with local schools, seminars, workshops, brochures, leaflets, newsletters, DVDs, technical publications, …), and those proposed should form a coherent package. To be effective, these actions should in general begin early on in the project. Each communication and dissemination action must clearly define and justify its target audience, and should be expected to have a significant impact. The organisation of large and costly scientific meetings or the financing of large-scale visitor infra-structures is not eligible.

Note that certain communication actions are obligatory (project web site, notice boards, …) and should therefore be explicitly foreseen in the proposal as separate actions. See Article 13 of the Common Provisions: "Communication actions, …" for full details.

Please see also http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/toolkit/comtools/index.htm for detailed advice on communication and dissemination actions, in particular the Life-Nature: Communicating with stakeholders and the general public - Best practices examples for Natura 2000 and the guidelines on how to design a LIFE web-site.

Project management and monitoring (obligatory)

Every project proposal must contain an appropriate amount of both project management and monitoring actions. This typically involves at least all of the following actions and associated costs:

- Project management, activities undertaken by the beneficiaries for the management of the project (administrative, technical and financial aspects) and for meeting the LIFE+ reporting obligations. The technical project management may be partially outsourced. Outsourcing of project management is possible, provided the coordinating beneficiary retains full and day to day control of the project. The project management structure must be clearly presented (including an organigramme and details of the responsibilities of each person and organisation involved). It is strongly recommended that the project management staff has previous experience in project management.
- Monitoring and evaluating the effect of the concrete conservation actions on the conservation status of the habitats / species targeted by the project. Monitoring should take place throughout the project and its results should be evaluated on a regular basis.

- Where obligatory, the external audit and the bank guarantee.
- Training, workshops and meetings for the project beneficiaries' staff, where these are required for the achievement of the project objectives.
- The participation in and the organisation of networking (for example, with other LIFE projects) and information platforms related to the project objectives (including at international level where justified).

It is strongly recommended that the project manager be full-time. If a coordinator or project manger also directly contributes to the implementation of certain actions, an appropriate part of his/her salary costs should be attributed to the estimated costs of those actions.

3. *LIFE+ Biodiversity*

3.a. General principles of LIFE+ Biodiversity funding

General scope

LIFE+ Biodiversity projects must aim to implement the objectives of the Commission Communication "Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 – and beyond". They must be different from LIFE+ Nature projects (i.e. they shall not be best practice projects primarily targeting species and/or habitat types of the Birds and Habitats Directives).

LIFE+ Biodiversity projects may only concern European biodiversity; i.e. actions and measures for species, habitats and/or ecosystems other that those naturally present on the terrestrial or marine territory of the Member States are not eligible for funding.

LIFE+ Biodiversity projects must be compatible with national and/or regional strategies for biodiversity (where these exist).

Geographic scope

LIFE+ Biodiversity projects must exclusively take place on the terrestrial and/or marine territory of the EU Member States. This includes the French Overseas Departments (DOMs).

Demonstration and/or innovation

LIFE+ Biodiversity projects must either be demonstration or innovative projects. The proposed actions cannot simply be best practice. All LIFE+ biodiversity projects must therefore have as an integral part of the project the evaluation and active dissemination of the results and lessons learnt.

A **"demonstration" project** puts into practice, tests, evaluates and disseminates actions/methodologies that are to some degree new or unfamiliar in the project's specific context (geographical, ecological, socio-economical …), and that **should be more widely applied** elsewhere in similar circumstances. The project must therefore be designed right from the start to demonstrate whether the techniques and methods used work or not in the project's context (geographical, ecological, socio-economical …). Monitoring, evaluation and active dissemination of the main project results and/or lessons learnt are integral parts of the project and its aftermath. A demonstration project therefore aims to assess the effectiveness of the method and, ultimately, to encourage other stakeholders to use the conservation techniques and methods demonstrated in the project.

An "**innovative**" **project** applies a conservation technique or method that has not been applied / tested before or elsewhere and that offers potential advantages compared to current best practice. The monitoring, evaluation and active dissemination of the main project results and/or lessons learnt is an integral part of the project. An innovative project therefore aims to evaluate whether the innovative conservation techniques and methods work or not. Moreover, it aims to assess the effectiveness of the method, to inform other stakeholders of the results and to encourage them where appropriate to use the conservation techniques and methods successfully tested in the project.

Note that the application of an established best practice action/methodology in a particular geographical region where it has not been applied before is not considered to be "innovative" but rather "demonstration".

Recurring actions cannot be financed

The LIFE+ Regulation (Article 3.2) does not allow the financing of recurring activities.

A ***recurring action*** is understood in the context of this application guide as "any day to day operation". Any recurring monitoring or management action that was already carried out prior to the start of the project and/or that needs to be continued after the end of the project (at the same level of intensity, using the same techniques and material…) cannot be included in the *LIFE+ Biodiversity* proposal budget. For example, any recurring site surveillance, annual mowing and long-term monitoring actions (other than to evaluate the impact of the project) are in principle ineligible.

However, *recurring actions with a clear demonstration* value and/or *innovative recurring actions* may be considered as eligible for funding. In such cases, the proposal must clearly explain the demonstration/innovation character.

Projects must have at least 25% of their budget earmarked for concrete actions

At least **25%** of the provisional budget of *LIFE+ Biodiversity* projects must concern "concrete" actions. In this context, *"concrete conservation" actions* are those that *directly improve* (or slow/halt/reverse the decline of) *the conservation status* of the species, habitats or ecosystems targeted.

Preparatory actions (e.g. planning and preparation of the concrete conservation actions) and short-term lease and/or compensation payments count towards this 25% *insofar as they are directly necessary for the execution of concrete actions during the project's lifetime*.

It is strongly advised that *LIFE+ Biodiversity* projects include *significantly more* than 25% concrete conservation actions. During the evaluation of the proposal, certain actions may be considered ineligible and removed from the project. Should the percentage of concrete actions fall under 25%, then the whole project may be rejected for that reason.

LIFE+ Biodiversity proposals involving few or no concrete actions will thus generally be considered ineligible. There are however two **exceptions** to this rule:

- *Life+ Biodiversity* projects for the development and testing of new biodiversity monitoring indicators do not need to include any concrete conservation actions.
- *Life+ Biodiversity* projects for the development and testing of risk assessment methodologies regarding the impact of GMOs on biodiversity support do not need to include any concrete conservation actions.

Note however that, as for any other *LIFE+ Biodiversity* projects, projects that fall under either of these two exceptions cannot involve recurrent activities in the sense of Article 3.2 of the LIFE+ Regulation.

Complementarity with other EC funding instruments

Applicants must take full note of the corresponding section 6.15 of the General Guidelines for Applicants.

Since *LIFE+ Biodiversity* projects must either be demonstration or innovative projects, there is *a priori* little risk of overlap with the main scope of other EU funding instruments. Nevertheless, applicants should address this issue carefully while preparing their proposal which should contain relevant details.

Maximum co-financing rates

LIFE+ Biodiversity projects are co-financed by the Community at a maximum rate of 50% of their eligible costs (Article 5.3 of the LIFE+ Regulation).

3. b. How to conceive a LIFE+ Biodiversity project proposal?

When preparing your proposal, the following main types of eligible actions must be clearly distinguished:

- Preparatory actions,
- Short term lease of land and/or one-off compensation payments,
- Concrete conservation actions,
- Communication and dissemination actions (obligatory),
- Project management and monitoring (obligatory).

Preparatory actions

As a general principle, all preparatory actions must produce practical recommendations and/or information which can be implemented (either during the project or after the project) and be used without requiring further preparatory work. Furthermore, where preparatory actions do not lead to direct implementation during the project, the proposal must provide sufficient set of explanations, commitments and guarantees to show that their full implementation after the project is effectively ensured. Most projects include preparatory actions. Projects may not include preparatory actions that have been fully completed prior to the start of the project.

In general, and amongst others, preparatory actions:

- should not be research actions,
- should not be inventories of new Natura 2000 sites,
- should be of limited duration (i.e. should be significantly shorter than the project duration),
- should be clearly related to the objective(s) of the project

Preparatory actions may therefore include (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Actions preparatory to the concrete conservation actions of the project (technical planning, permit procedures, stakeholder consultations, etc.),
- making preparatory inventories, drafting, monitoring and reviewing biodiversity action plans (at trans-national, national, regional or local level);
- Actions to persuade and help third parties in the project area (e.g. farmers, landowners, forest managers, …) to apply to other sources of funding for measures that are complementary to the actions foreseen in the project and which would contribute to the specific objectives of the project.

Where management plans, action plans or other similar plans are drafted or modified in the framework of a *LIFE+ Biodiversity* project they must become legally operational before the end of the project. Therefore in those Member States where a procedure for their legal adoption and/or approval exists, this procedure must be completed before the end of the project otherwise the related expenses will be ineligible. Applicants are therefore advised not to include actions to develop such plans unless they are **certain** that they will be legally operational before the end of the project.

Short-term land-lease/one-off compensation payments covering the project period

Short-term leases or compensation payments with a limited duration will only be eligible insofar as they are necessary *for the demonstration of innovative actions* that would take place during the project period and that would be favourable to biodiversity or the conservation status of the species targeted.

Evidence must be provided that the lease price is consistent with the current market prices for the type of land and the region concerned.

One-off compensation or lease *payments to public bodies are not eligible*.

Concrete biodiversity conservation actions

Concrete biodiversity actions are actions that *directly improve the biodiversity* of the sites/areas targeted and/or *improve* (or slow/halt/reverse the decline of) *the conservation status* of the species and habitats targeted. Their impact must be measurable and must be monitored and evaluated during the project.

They must be *innovative and/or demonstration actions* that are different from and have an added value compared to those related to the Natura 2000 network (see above General Principles and *LIFE+ Nature* section). They may include, amongst others:

- the conservation management of species, habitats and ecosystems;
- the implementation of biodiversity action plans;
- actions targeting rare/endangered/declining habitats and species (irrespectively of whether or not they are covered by the Birds/Habitats Directives);
- actions to restore and/or significantly increase the biodiversity in a particular area or context;
- actions combating invasive alien species or mitigating the negative impact of climate change.

These actions may concern all types of areas, including farmlands, forests, urban and sub-urban areas, marine areas, river basins, areas in or outside Natura 2000 sites, etc. (provided that they do not fall within the main scope of, or are financed at the same time by other European Community funding programmes).

While the focus should be on "in situ" actions, "ex-situ" measures (seed banks, captive breeding …) may be eligible where justified for species conservation.

The impact of these actions must be *monitored* during the project.

Communication and dissemination actions (obligatory)

LIFE+ Biodiversity projects are innovative or demonstration projects. As such they **must include a significant set of actions to disseminate the results of the project** so that the knowledge gained is actively communicated to those stakeholders that may best make use of it and apply the lessons from the project.

These typically include:

- information activities regarding the project to the general public and stakeholders aimed at facilitating the implementation of the project
- awareness and dissemination actions aimed at publicising the project and its results both to the general public and to other stakeholders that could usefully benefit from the project's experience and implement themselves the innovative actions demonstrated in the project.

Actions may also include the development of guidelines on biodiversity issues. These must be disseminated during the project to those parties that could most readily benefit from them.

The range of possible actions is large (media work, organisation of events for the local community, didactic work with local schools, seminars, workshops, brochures, leaflets, newsletters, DVDs, technical publications, …), and those proposed should form a coherent package. To be effective, these actions should in general begin early on in the project. Each communication and dissemination action must clearly define and justify its target audience, and should be expected to have a significant impact. The organisation of large and costly scientific meetings or the financing of large-scale visitor infra-structures is not eligible.

Note that certain communication actions are obligatory (project web site, notice boards, etc.) and should therefore be explicitly foreseen in the proposal as separate actions. See Article 13 of the Common Provisions: "Communication actions, etc." for full details.

Please see also http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/toolkit/comtools/index.htm for detailed advice on communication and dissemination actions, in particular the Life-Nature: Communicating with stakeholders and the general public - Best practices examples for Natura 2000 and the guidelines on how to design a LIFE web-site.

Project management and monitoring (obligatory)

Every project proposal must contain an appropriate amount of both project management and monitoring actions. This typically involves at least all of the following actions and associated costs:

- Project management, activities undertaken by the beneficiaries for the management of the project (administrative, technical and financial aspects) and for meeting the LIFE+ reporting obligations. The technical project management may be partially outsourced. Outsourcing of project management is possible, provided the coordinating beneficiary retains full and day to day control of the project. The project management structure must be clearly presented (including an organigramme and details of the responsibilities of each person and organisation involved). It is strongly recommended that the project management staff has previous experience in project management.
- Monitoring and evaluating the effect of the concrete conservation actions on the conservation status of the habitats / species targeted by the project. Monitoring should take place throughout the project and its results should be evaluated on a regular basis.
- Where obligatory, the external audit and the bank guarantee.
- Training, workshops and meetings for the beneficiaries' staff, where these are required for the achievement of the project objectives.
- The participation in and the organisation of networking (for example, with other LIFE projects) and information platforms related to the project objectives (including at international level where justified).

It is strongly recommended that the project manager be full-time. If a coordinator or project manger also directly contributes to the implementation of certain actions, an appropriate part of his/her salary costs should be attributed to the estimated costs of those actions.

4. How to fill in the technical application forms?

The technical part of the *LIFE+ Nature & Biodiversity* application file consists of 3 parts (A, B and C) available for download as a single Word file.

All forms are mandatory and must be fully completed, except:

- the associated beneficiary declaration (form A3) and profile (form A5) if there are *no associated beneficiaries*
- the co-financier profile (form A6) if there are *no co-financiers*
- details of preparatory actions, etc (form C1a) if there are *none*
- details of land purchase, lease or compensation payments, etc (form C1b) if there is no land purchase, lease or compensation payment foreseen

Where forms are not obligatory or where you have no specific information to put on certain parts of obligatory forms (e.g. for "previous conservation efforts"), you are advised to indicate "not applicable" or "none" or "no relevant information" or an equivalent indication. A form with totally blank sections will be assumed to be incomplete and may render your application ineligible.

Part A – administrative information

Form A1

Project title (max 120 characters): It should include the key elements and objective of the project, such as the name of the site and/or the name of the main species/habitat type or biodiversity issue targeted. Note that the Commission may ask you to change the title in order to make it clearer.

Expected start date: The earliest possible start date is 1st January 2009. Please use the following format for all dates: DD/MM/YYYY.

Policy area: A project must be either LIFE+ Nature or LIFE+ Biodiversity, not both.

Form A2

Before completing this form, please check that the coordinating beneficiary does not fall into any of the situations listed in articles 93.1 and 94 of the Financial Regulation (EC) 1605/2002, reference: http://www.cc.cec/budg/leg/finreg/leg-020_finreg_en.html

3. Financial contribution of the coordinating beneficiary, actions for which it is responsible…: Amount to be provided in Euro (€).
The amount indicated here must be identical with the amount indicated as coordinating beneficiary contribution in the financial forms **FA** and **FC.** This amount must be greater than 0€ and cannot include any funding specifically obtained for the project from other public or private sources (this is cofinancing). List all the actions for which the coordinating beneficiary is responsible (as indicated in forms C - only one organisation is responsible for each action), and indicate their total cost (in euros) – this must be coherent with the costs indicated in forms C and in the financial form FB.

Signature: The form **must be signed** and the signature **must** be stamped and dated.

Form A3

If the project foresees associated beneficiaries, this form becomes compulsory. Complete one form per associated beneficiary (A3/1, A3/2, A3/3, etc.).

Before completing this form, please check that the associated beneficiary does not fall into any of the situations listed in articles 93.1 and 94 of the Financial Regulation (EC) 1605/2002, reference: http://www.cc.cec/budg/leg/finreg/leg-020_finreg_en.html

2. Financial contribution of the associated beneficiary, actions for which it is responsible…: Amount to be provided in Euro (€). The amount indicated here must be identical with the amount indicated as corresponding associated beneficiary contribution in the financial form **FC.** It must be greater than 0€ and cannot include any funding specifically obtained for the project from other public or private sources (this is cofinancing). List all the actions for which the associated beneficiary is responsible (as indicated in forms C - only one organisation is responsible for each action), and indicate their total cost (in euros) – this must be coherent with the costs indicated in forms C and in the financial form FB.

Signature: The form **must be signed** and the signature **must** be stamped and dated.

Form A4

Short Name: The coordinating beneficiary should be identifiable throughout the technical proposal forms by its short name (max 25 characters).

Beneficiary number: The beneficiaries should be identifiable in the financial proposal forms FC and F1 – F7 by their beneficiary number. For the coordinating beneficiary, the beneficiary number is always 1, for the first associated beneficiary it is 2, etc.

Legal Name: The legal name is the name under which the coordinating beneficiary is officially registered (if applicable).

Legal Status: Select one of the following 4 choices: *Public Authority*, *Other Public body*, *Private commercial* or *Private non-commercial* (including NGOs). Indicate an "**X**" in the appropriate box. Further guidance on how to distinguish private organisations from public bodies can be found in section 5 of the General Application Guide for LIFE+ 2007.

Value Added Tax (VAT) number: If applicable, provide the organisation's VAT number in the VAT register.

Legal Registration Number: If applicable, provide the organisation's legal national registration number or code from the appropriate trade register (e.g. the Chamber of Commerce register), business register or other.

Country Code: Use the relevant country code as indicated at:
http://www.ec.europa.eu/comm/eurostat/ramon/nuts/codelist_en.cfm?list=nuts

Title: Title commonly used in correspondence with the person in charge of proposal co-ordination. Example: Mr., Mrs., Ir., Dr., Prof.

Function: Provide the function of the person in charge of coordinating the proposal. Example: Managing Director, Project Manager, etc.

Department/Service Name: Name of the department and/or service in the organisation, co-ordinating the proposal and for which the contact person is working. The address details given in the fields which follow must be for the department / service and not the legal address of the organisation.

Year: Provide the year for which the figures in this section are provided, e.g. '2006'. Information from the most recent accounting year should be provided.

Annual turnover: To be provided by all coordinating beneficiaries **other than "public authorities"** for which this type of information is available. If not applicable, please indicate **"N.A."**. Information from the most recent accounting year should be used. The figures should be given for the organisation as a whole and not just for the department carrying out the work. They must be expressed in Euros.

Annual Balance Sheet Total: (i.e. total of assets or total of liabilities): To be provided by **all non-public** coordinating beneficiaries for which this information is available. If not applicable, please write **"N.A."**. The figures should be given for the legal entity as a whole and not just for the department carrying out the work. Information from the most recent accounting year should be used. They must be expressed in Euros.

Number of employees: The figures should be for the legal organisation as a whole - not only for the department carrying out the work. The contribution of part-time staff should be accounted as the equivalent number of full-time staff (full-time equivalents).

Number of employees in the department carrying out the project: The figures should be for the department carrying out the work. The contribution of part-time staff should be accounted as the equivalent number of full-time staff – as full-time equivalents. If not applicable, please write **"N.A."**.

Is your organisation independent? (for private commercial bodies only): Is 25% or more of the capital or the voting rights owned by one enterprise or jointly by several enterprises falling outside the definition of an SME (except public investment corporations, venture capital companies and institutional investors, provided no control is exercised either individually or jointly)?

If the organisation is not independent, you should provide the name(s) of the company(ies) which own(s) 25 % or more of the organisation.

An SME (small and medium-sized enterprise) is defined as an entity that has fewer than 250 full time equivalent employees, an annual turnover not exceeding 40 million € or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding 27 million €, and is not controlled by 25% or more by a company which is not an SME

Owner (for private commercial bodies only): Please provide the legal name(s) of the organisation(s) or person(s) controlling the organisation by 25% or more.

Affiliation (for private commercial bodies only): An organisation is considered as being affiliated to another organisation if:

- It is under the same direct or indirect control as another organisation, or
- It directly or indirectly controls another organisation, or
- It is directly or indirectly controlled by another organisation.

Control: Company A controls company B if company A, directly or indirectly, holds more than 50% of the share capital of company B, or if company A, directly or indirectly, holds more than 50% of the shareholders' voting rights of company B, or if company A has, directly or indirectly, the decision-making powers within company B.

It should be noted that Company A's holding a simple majority of the share capital, or the voting rights, of Company B may be sufficient to create a controlling relationship.

If the beneficiary organisation is a private commercial body affiliated to another organisation, the short name(s) of the organisation(s) to which the beneficiary organisation is affiliated should be indicated and the codes below used to describe the character of the affiliation(s):

(D): Direct control;

(I): Indirect control.

Brief description of the activities of the coordinating beneficiary: Please describe the organisation, its legal status, its activities and its competence in nature / biodiversity conservation, particularly in relation to the proposed actions. The description given should enable the Commission to evaluate the technical reliability of the coordinating beneficiary, i.e.

whether it has the necessary experience and expertise for a successful implementation of the project.

For private non-commercial organisations please provide the key elements that prove that the organisation is recognised as such.

Form A5

If the project foresees associated beneficiaries, this form becomes compulsory. Complete one form per associated beneficiary (A5/1, A5/2, A5/3, etc.). **See instructions for form A4.**

Form A6

Complete one form A6 per co-financier (A6/1, A6/2, A6/3, etc.).

We will contribute the following…: Provide this amount in Euro (€). Remember that the amount(s) indicated here must be consistent with the amount(s) indicated as co-financier's contribution(s) in the financial forms FA and FC.

Status of the financial commitment: please indicate either "*Confirmed*" or "*To be confirmed*" (only applicable if funding is conditional on project selection).

Signature: The form **must be signed** and the signature **must** be stamped and dated.

Form A7

Clear and complete answers must be provided to each question. **Applicants frequently underestimate the importance of this form**. LIFE+ projects **may not include** actions that fall within the main scope of other Community financial instruments (see "Complementarity with other EC funding instruments" in the section on general principles). **Applicants must therefore verify this aspect carefully** (please note point 1 of the declaration in form A1 that you have to sign) and provide the fullest possible information in your answers.

National authorities may be asked to review this declaration

Form A8 - Competent authority supporting the proposal

For projects carried out in more than one country, this form must be completed by the relevant competent nature conservation / biodiversity authority of **all participating countries**. In this case, one form needs to be completed by each authority.

The **name and legal status**, **full address**, **telephone** number, **fax** number, **e-mail** and **contact person** (name and function) of each authority should be indicated on the form.

The authority in question should indicate **whether, why and how** it will support this project. The authority's support or non-support for the project should be without ambiguity. The authority should indicate, in particular, if the proposed actions constitute part of a programme drawn up/approved by the competent authority. The reasons why the authority grants support should be described. If the competent authority is to play an active role in some aspects of project implementation (such as through the provision of a permit, the approval of a prepared management plan etc.), this should also be detailed.

Should the proposal include actions that, in order to be eligible, require a commitment from the Member State to **designate new Natura 2000 sites before the end of the project**, this commitment should be given in full detail here. This may concern in particular:

- habitat restoration outside Natura 2000 sites,
- species re-introduction outside Natura 2000 sites,

It is also preferable, where possible, to include in this form a commitment from the Competent Authority to support or ensure the implementation of preparatory actions after the end of the project (where this is not ensured during the project) and/or to disseminate and make use of the innovative techniques demonstrated by the project.

Signature: The form **must be signed** by the contact person indicated and the signature **must** be **stamped and dated**.

This form may also be used, as a separate page, to indicate any other support to the project by **important stakeholder bodies, administrative bodies or individuals** that may be concerned by the project. The submission of such form(s) is encouraged in all cases where the feasibility or the success of the project implementation is dependent on agreements from any third parties.

Part B – Technical summary and overall context of the project

Form B1 – Summary description of the project (to be completed in English)

Please provide a Summary Description of your project. The description should be structured, concise and clear. It should include:

- **Project title:** see instructions on form A1.
- **Objectives**: List the objectives of your project in decreasing order of importance.
- **Actions and means involved**: Please explain clearly what means will be utilised during the project to reach the objectives indicated above (financial means should not be indicated). Please ensure that there is a clear link between the proposed actions and means and the project's objectives.
- **Expected results (quantified as far as possible)**: Please list the main results expected at the end of the project. These must directly relate to the species/habitats/biodiversity issue(s) targeted by the project and to the project's objectives. The expected results must be concrete, realistic and **quantified** as far as possible. Since the project's final achievements will be judged against its expected results, please make sure that the expected results are well defined and well quantified.

Form B2a – General description of the area(s)/site(s) targeted by the project

➢ ***For projects with actions targeting a well-defined area/site:***

Please provide a general description of the area(s)/site(s) targeted by the project. If your project involves several distinct **sub-areas / sub-sites**, please fill in **one form for each**.

Note that for site-based LIFE+ Nature projects, the project area is considered to be the entire area of all of the Natura 2000 sites covered by the project, i.e. you should not define a project perimeter within a Natura 2000 site. The form should include:

- **Name of the project area**: Please indicate the name of the area. The name indicated should be short and must be used consistently on all maps and technical forms of the proposal.
- **Surface area (ha):** Please indicate the total surface of the project area in hectares.
- **EU protection status:** Please tick SPA and/or pSCI as relevant and indicate the corresponding Natura 2000 site code. In case the site is protected both under the Birds and Habitats Directive, both Natura 2000 codes should be provided.
- **Other protected statuses according to national or regional legislation**: Please indicate, if relevant, any other international, national and/or local protection status.
- **Main land uses and ownership of the project area:** Please indicate what are, at the project application date, the main uses made of the project site. Examples of uses are farming, tourism, urban, nature conservation etc. Please indicate the rough proportions (in %) among the various uses. Please ensure that the total reaches 100%. Please also indicate the ownership status/types of the area at the project application date (e.g. private, state, etc.) Please indicate the rough proportions (in %) among the different ownership status/types. Please ensure that the total reaches 100%.
- **Scientific description of the project area:** Please provide a global description of the scientific value of the project area (geological, botanical, zoological, hydrological etc.). Whenever possible, please indicate the main source of your information for this description.
- **Importance of the project area for biodiversity and/or for the conservation of the species / habitat types targeted at regional, national and EU level:** You must

justify why you have selected this particular area for your project. You must explain why your choice is the most appropriate to reach the project's objectives. Indicate what actions are planned in this area and at what locations (where feasible provide a map in A4 or A3 format of the area/site summarising where each action will take place). The size of the area should correspond to the scope of the actions planned. As far as possible, provide quantitative information and indicate your main source of information.

➢ ***<u>For projects without actions targeting a well-defined area:</u>***

In case the project does not include actions targeting a well-defined area, you should describe as precisely as possible where the project will be implemented (city, area, region, etc.). Please use only one form, which should include:

- **Name of the project area(s)**: Please indicate the name of the city, area, region…. The name indicated should be short and must be used consistently on all maps and technical forms of the proposal.
- **Surface area (ha), EU protection status**, **Other protected statuses according to national or regional legislation, Main land uses and ownership of the project area, Scientific description of the project area:** Please indicate relevant information or else 'NON APPLICABLE'
- **Importance of the project area for biodiversity and/or for the conservation of the species / habitat types targeted at regional, national and EU level:** You must explain where the project will be implemented. Justify why you have selected this particular area for your project. You must explain why your choice is the most appropriate to reach the project's objectives.

<u>Form B2b – Map of the general location of the project area</u>

This map must be provided in **A4 format**. Form B2b should be only one page.

It should locate **the project area(s) described in form(s) B2a**. It should locate the project area(s) within the country and, if necessary, within the region(s) concerned. In case the project does not include actions targeting a defined area, you should locate as clearly as possible where project is implemented (city, area, region etc.).

The **title and scale of the map** must be indicated. The map should be of **high quality** and **high resolution**, preferably in colour. The map should be easy to read. It should include, as a minimum: a clear legend and the background (main cities, main administrative delimitations, main rivers, lakes and sea(s) with the corresponding names, and the main roads). In addition, topography and vegetal coverage may be indicated on the map, if appropriate.

<u>Form B2c – Description of species/habitats/ecosystems targeted by the project</u>

➢ ***<u>For LIFE+ Nature projects:</u>***

List and provide a brief description of the **main species** and/or **main habitats** directly targeted by the project. Please note that only the main species and/or habitats should be described. For each of the main <u>species</u> targeted, please indicate:

- **Scientific name** (in Latin), as indicated in the EU Birds or Habitats Directive. Please note that the regularly occurring migratory bird species not listed in the EU Birds Directive which are targeted by the project should be listed here. If the species is a priority species (according to Annex II of the Habitats Directive or is on the list of priority bird species referred to in "50% or 75% co-financing" in the general principles section), please mark with an asterisk.
- The **annex of the EU Birds or Habitats Directive** where the species is listed.

- **Population size** within the project area. In case the project does not include actions targeting a well-defined area, please indicate the population size at regional, national or multinational level, as relevant.
- The **conservation status** within the project area. Please provide full and quantitative details. In case the project does not include actions targeting a well-defined area, please indicate the conservation status at regional, national or multinational level, as relevant.
- For bird species, please indicate whether the project area (if relevant) is used for **breeding, wintering and/or staging.**

For each of the main habitats targeted, please indicate:

- **Name and Natura 2000 code**, as indicated in the EU Habitats Directive. If the habitat is a priority habitat (according to the Annex I of the Habitats Directive), please mark with an asterisk.
- The **% of the cover of the habitat type** over the whole project area and for each sub-area
- The **conservation status** within the project area (if relevant). Please provide full and quantitative details.

➢ ***For LIFE+ Biodiversity projects:***

Please describe the biodiversity issue(s) targeted by your project and the biodiversity/conservation status within the project area. In case the project does not include actions targeting a defined area, you should describe the biodiversity/conservation status at the city, area, region etc. scale.

Should your project target specific species and/or habitats, please provide for each of the main species / habitats the same information as listed above for LIFE+ Nature projects.

Form B2d

Conservation / biodiversity problems and threats: Identifying the threats in the project area(s) to the species / habitats or biodiversity issue(s) targeted is essential for determining which actions need to be undertaken. This section should describe these threats (in decreasing order of importance) and their importance for the conservation of the habitats/species targeted (both within the project area(s) and in general) or for biodiversity in general. Whenever possible, problems/threats should be located and quantified. The description should include: **the name of the threat**, its **description**, its **location** (if relevant), its **impact on biodiversity or on the habitats/species targeted** (quantify if possible) and an indication as to **how these problems and threats will be dealt with during the project**.

Objectives of the project: Please provide a detailed description of all project objectives, listing the by decreasing order of importance. These objectives must be realistic (be achievable within the timeframe of the project with the proposed budget and means), clear (without ambiguity), should concern mainly the species/habitats/biodiversity issue(s) targeted by the project, and should directly address the problems and threats identified in form B2d.

Previous conservation efforts in the project area and/or for the habitats / species targeted by the project: Please describe whether any actions have been undertaken previously on the area or for the species / habitat type or biodiversity issue(s) targeted (e.g. any management plan drawn up, surveys conducted, land purchased etc.). Please indicate the year and results of these efforts. Please also indicate who was/is responsible for these efforts. If the project fits into a regional/national or EU conservation / biodiversity strategy, this should be clearly mentioned there.

Form B3

EU added value of the project and its actions: Please indicate the added value of your project for the benefit for biodiversity or for the species/habitats targeted by the project. Indicate what would be the situation should your project **not** be implemented.

For LIFE+ Nature projects indicate if the project will make a significant contribution to the conservation of the species/habitats targeted at the EU level.

For LIFE+ Biodiversity projects and LIFE+ Nature projects *with demonstration of innovative methods or techniques* indicate to what extent these methods or techniques are potentially replicable in the EU. For LIFE+ Biodiversity projects, indicate to what extent the biodiversity issue targeted is of European importance and to what extent the project results (if successful and widely applied) could make a significant difference to biodiversity at the EU level.

You should also provide here a clear description of the geographical scope of the project. A **transnational approach** and/or a **multinational partnership** may, if well justified here, be also considered as added value.

Best Practice / Innovation / Demonstration character of the project: Please explain the best practice / demonstration / innovation character of your project. LIFE+ Nature projects must complete "best practice" and/or "demonstration", and may complete "innovation" as applicable. LIFE+ Biodiversity projects must complete "demonstration" and/or "innovation". They must not be "best practice" (see definitions of best practice, demonstration and innovation above).

Efforts for reducing the project's "carbon footprint": Please explain how you intend to ensure that the "carbon footprint" of your project remains as low as is reasonably possible.

Form B4 – Expected constraints and risks related to the project implementation

It is important that applicants identify all possible **external events** ("constraints and risks") that could have **major negative impacts** on the successful implementation of the project. Please list such constraints and risks, in the decreasing order of importance. Please also indicate any possible constraints and risks due to the **socio-economic environment**. If your project involves management agreements or land purchase, please indicate whether the landowners have been consulted and if they agree in principle. For each constraint and risk identified, please indicate how you envisage overcoming it.

You are also strongly advised to include in this section any details on licences, permits, EIA, etc., and to indicate what support you have from the competent bodies responsible for issuing such authorisations.

Finally, please detail how you have taken into account the risks identified into the planning of the project (time planning, budget, etc.) and the definition of the actions.

Form B5 – Continuation/valorisation of the project's results after the end of the project

Describe how the project will be continued after the end of the LIFE+ funding, and what actions are required to consolidate the results in order to ensure the favourable conservation status of the targeted species and/or habitats and/or biodiversity aspects. Please indicate what mechanisms will be put in place to ensure that this will be done. Please note that information provided in this section is indicative and will have to be updated during the project life.

In particular, please reply to the following questions:

- **Which actions will have to be carried out or continued after the end of the project?** Please list such project actions indicating their reference (e.g. A1, A2…) and title.

- **How will this be achieved, what resources will be necessary to carry out these actions?** Please indicate how the above actions will be continued after the project, by whom, within what timeframe and with what financing.
- **Potential for using other EU funds after the end of the project**: Please list the EU financial instruments for which you may apply for the continuation of the above project activities. Explain the complementary with other EU funds after the project end (for example whether maintenance of grasslands will continue through Rural Development support).
- **Protection status under national/local law of sites/species/habitats targeted (if relevant):** Please indicate what protection status is expected to be acquired by or after the end of the project, and when. Describe the legal protection under national and local law, and (if relevant) any provisions in local zoning and land use planning which will be applied to the site and, in particular, to any land purchased.
- **How, when and by whom will the equipment acquired be used after the project end**: Please list the main pieces of equipment to be purchased under the project and provide details on their utilisation after the end of the project. For LIFE+ Nature projects, please bear in mind that, according to Article 25.9 of the Common Provisions, the eligibility of durable goods purchased under the project shall be subject to the beneficiaries undertaking to continue to assign these goods **definitively to nature conservation activities** beyond the end of the project.
- **To what extent will the results and lessons of the project be actively disseminated after the end of the project to those persons and/or organisations that could best make use of them? (Please identify these persons/organisations):** Please indicate how dissemination activities will continue after the end of the project. **This is of particular importance for all LIFE+ Biodiversity projects and for LIFE+ Nature projects that have a demonstration character.** Please list the persons/organisations that have been so far identified as targets for these dissemination activities.
- **Any other issues**. Please indicate any other useful information regarding the continuation / valorisation of the project results after the end of the project.

Part C – Detailed technical description of the proposed actions

Under this part, the applicant must list **all the actions which will be implemented under the project**. There are 5 types of actions:

A. Preparatory actions, elaboration of management plans and/or of action plans
B. Purchase/lease of land and/or compensation payments for use rights
C. Concrete conservation actions
D. Public awareness and dissemination of results (obligatory)
E. Overall project operation and monitoring (obligatory).

Under each type of action (A, B, C…), the applicant must list the different actions: A1, A2 …, B1, B2 … C1, C2 … etc. It is recommended that each action which is expected to have an important output for the project (e.g. preparation of a management plan, purchase of X ha of land …etc.) is presented as a **separate action**.

The actions must be described as precisely as possible, however the description of an action should not in general exceed 1 page. The descriptions may be accompanied by **maps** locating the actions. Such maps may be included in the forms. However, please note that detailed maps locating all the activities foreseen under the project must be submitted **in annex** (see below).

The description of each action should clearly indicate the links with other actions (e.g. action C2 follows the purchase of land in action B1 which follows the preparation in action A2) and should clearly (and in quantitative terms) indicate how it contributes to the project's overall objectives. There should be a **clear coherence between the technical forms and the financial forms.**

For each action, the applicant should provide the following information:

- **Name of the action**: Please ensure that the name is short (maximum 2 lines) and that it clearly reflects the objective of the action.
- **Description (what, how, where and when)**: Please describe the content of the action indicating what will be done, using what means, on which location/site, with what duration and with what deadline.
- **Reasons why this action is necessary:** Please indicate why the action is necessary and how it will contribute to reaching the project's objectives.
- **Beneficiary responsible for implementation:** Please indicate which of the project's beneficiaries will be in charge of the implementation of this action. Please note that **<u>only one</u>** responsible beneficiary should be indicated here. If the same type of action is carried out by several project beneficiaries, it is advisable to split this action and to create one separate action for each of these beneficiaries.
- **Expected results (quantitative information as far as possible):** Please indicate concisely what results will be achieved at the end of the action (e.g. xx ha of grasslands restored or yy ha land purchased) and what deliverable products (e.g. management guide) will be produced.

Please find below indication on the additional information to be provided for specific actions.

<u>Form C1a – A. Preparatory actions, elaboration of management plans and/or of action plans</u>

Should the project not include any preparatory action, the applicant should indicate on form C1a 'NON APPLICABLE'.

The preparatory actions should cover all that is needed to be completed to allow the start or proper implementation of other project actions indicated in sections B, C, D or E. This includes the preparation of technical documents (blueprints, preparation of inventories…) and any administrative or legal procedure needed to be carried out (consultation, call for tender, deliberations, training etc.).

If the elaboration of a management plan of the site and/or action plans are foreseen, the description of the corresponding preparatory action should specify what will be done to ensure that these plans will be implemented (e.g. competent authorities adopt the plan before the end of the project).

Where preparatory actions do not lead to direct implementation during the project, their description should include a sufficient set of explanations, commitments and guarantees to show that their full implementation after the project is effectively ensured. Otherwise, such actions may be deleted from the project.

<u>Form C1b – B. Purchase/lease of land and/or compensation payment for use rights:</u>

Should the project not include any action for the purchase/lease of land and/or compensation payment for right use, the applicant should indicate on form C1b **'NON APPLICABLE'**.

For LIFE+ Nature proposals, it is particularly important that the description of each action clearly indicates how **<u>each</u>** of the 11 eligibility conditions (listed above, see section 2.b on land purchase) is met.

For each action, please indicate the state of discussions with the landowners. Have they been consulted and do they agree in principle? Specify clearly what kind of habitats will be bought/leased and where they are located. Specify how much land will be bought/leased of each habitat types and justify the proposed cost/ha in relation to current land prices. If the land is to be bought for **land swaps**, specify this clearly (to be eligible the swap must be completed before the end of the project). If land is to be bought or leased in order to undertake other actions within the project, **indicate which actions** are dependent on the land purchase being achieved. If appropriate, please indicate **'alternative' land** which will be bought if there are difficulties with the prime target.

Form C1c – C. Concrete conservation actions

In case some of these concrete actions depend on preparatory actions or land purchase/leasing, please indicate this clearly. You should also indicate what will happen should these preparatory or land purchase actions not be completed as planned.

For all concrete conservation actions to be carried out, please specify **which habitat types, species or biodiversity aspects** are affected, and how this relates to the project's objectives. Provide clear information on the location and expected impact of each of these actions. Specify who will take care of the maintenance, if needed, after the end of the project.

If the beneficiaries need to build **infrastructure or purchase equipment or animals** (e.g. grazing cattle) for conservation management, these items should be listed, described and justified in detail. The corresponding costs should be clearly indicated in the financial forms F.

If appropriate, explain how, by whom and through which financing source the action will **be continued** after the project period. Note also that any anticipated payments for management actions that take place after the end of the project are not eligible for LIFE+ funding.

The output of all C actions should be **concrete, measurable and with a clear benefit** for the habitat, species and/or biodiversity issues targeted by the project. This benefit should be **measurable** and should be measured and evaluated under **monitoring actions(s) proposed in section E**. The output of each action should be indicated in the 'expected results' section. It should be quantified when possible.

Form C1d – D. Public awareness and dissemination of results (obligatory)

For each action please specify and justify the target audience. If an action involves meetings (e.g. with local stakeholders), you should specify how many meetings, where, when, who will attend, what will be discussed, how many persons are expected and how this will help the project. If an action concerns brochures, leaflets, publications..., specify how many copies, how many pages (size, colour...), to who they will be distributed and when. Should an action concern a film, specify the format, duration, number of copies, where it will be shown, etc. Should an action concern visitor access, specify what will be done, where, how many visitors, how this will help the project, etc. Should beneficiaries plan to present the project results in national / international events (conferences, congresses), the relevance and added value for the project should be clearly explained.

All actions should specify the expected results in qualitative and quantitative terms (e.g. improved support from the local community, 2500 persons informed, 3000 newsletters circulated…), indicating how this serves the project's objectives.

The following dissemination activities are considered obligatory and shall be included as actions on form C1:

- **Notice boards** describing the project shall be displayed at strategic places accessible to the public. The LIFE logo should always appear on them.

- A description of the project shall be included in a newly-created or existing **website** (with the LIFE logo), and full details of its objectives, actions, progress and results should be provided. The web site shall be regularly updated during the project period.
- A **layman's report** shall be produced in paper and electronic format at the end of the project. It shall be 5-10 pages long and presented in English and in the project's language (optional). This report shall be 5-10 pages long and present the project, its objectives, its actions and its results to a general public.

The following dissemination activities are not considered obligatory, but shall, if foreseen, be included as actions on form C1:

- **Any media work** foreseen (press conferences, meetings with or visits by journalists, preparing articles for the press …).
- **Organisation of events:** e.g., public information meetings, meetings with interest groups, guided visits… Describe exactly what is planned and how it contributes to the objectives of the project. Describe final output.
- **Workshops, seminars, conferences:** If (one or more) beneficiaries are attending, specify which (if known already). If (one or more) beneficiaries are organising, describe exactly what the topic will be, how it contributes to the project objectives, who will be invited (whenever possible, beneficiaries implementing or having implemented similar projects ought to be invited in order to foster networking). Finally, describe the output of each event and how it will be disseminated.
- **Production of brochures, films, visitor maps, etc.** Specify exactly what is planned (subject matter, number of copies, distribution to whom). Note that all such material charged to LIFE+ must bear a clear reference to LIFE+ financial support (including the LIFE logo) to be considered eligible for reimbursement and that one copy of each product must be annexed to the progress/intermediate report or final report.
- **Technical publications on project:** If already known, indicate in which journal the publication will take place. Such publications must acknowledge the Community financial support.

Form C1e – E. Overall project operation and monitoring (obligatory)

The applicant should list the different actions aiming at managing/operating the project and monitoring the impact of the concrete conservation actions on the habitat, species and/or biodiversity aspects targeted by the project.

Overall project operation:

Each project must include one or several distinct actions named "Project management by (name of the beneficiary in charge)". This/these action(s) should include a description of the project management **staff** and describe management and reporting duties of the project beneficiaries. The management should be described, even if no costs are charged for this to the project. Reporting should include the preparation of the Inception report, the progress reports, the mid-term and final reports with payment requests.

Please include a **management chart** of the technical and administrative staff involved. This chart must provide evidence that the coordinating beneficiary (Project Manager) has a clear authority and an efficient control of the project management staff, even if part of the project management would be outsourced. Explain if the management staff has **previous project management experience**.

Monitoring:

All LIFE+ Nature & Biodiversity projects shall include separate monitoring action(s) to measure and document the effectiveness of the project actions as compared to the initial situation, objectives and expected results. Regular reporting on monitoring should be foreseen. A distinct “monitoring” action with an individual budget should therefore be proposed. In the description of this action, the "monitoring protocol", the “monitoring indicators” and “sources of verification” should be identified and described.

For projects that have a demonstration or innovation character, this action should also clearly include the evaluation of the technique or method demonstrated.

Please also include the following activities/actions:

Networking with other projects:

Networking with other projects (including LIFE III and/or LIFE+ projects), information exchange activities etc. should be presented as one distinct E category action with a separate budget.

Audit:

Where required, an independent auditor nominated by the coordinating beneficiary must verify the financial statements provided to the Commission in the final project report. This audit should not only verify the respect of national legislation and accounting rules but should also certify that all costs incurred respect the LIFE+ Common Provisions. In the financial forms, the costs for the audit should be under the budget item “external assistance”.

Form C2 – Deliverable products and milestones of the project, and activity reports foreseen

Deliverable products: Please list all deliverable products chronologically according to their deadline for completion (day/month/year). ***Deliverable products*** are all those **tangible** products that can be shipped (e.g. management plans, studies and other documents, software, videos, etc). For each deliverable, please include the code of the associated action (e.g. A1, C5 etc.) and the deadline for its completion (day/month/year). Please note that any deliverable product will have to be **submitted as a separate document** (bearing the LIFE logo) to the Commission together with an activity report.

Milestones: Please list all project milestones chronologically according to their deadline for delivery/achievement (day/month/year). ***Project milestones*** are defined as **key** moments during the implementation of the project e.g. ”Nomination of the Project Manager”, “Completion of land purchase”, etc. Please list the milestones of the project. Milestones (or corresponding documents) do not need to be submitted to the Commission. In a report, you would need to inform the Commission whether the milestone has been completed or not.

Activity reports foreseen: the coordinating beneficiary shall report to the Commission about the technical and financial progress of the project. The project's achieved results and possible problems should be highlighted in these reports. The first report is the "Inception Report", which shall also provide a self-assessment of the viability of the project. If the project lasts more than 24 months and requests a Community contribution in excess of €300.000, and if the coordinating beneficiary intends to ask for a mid-term payment, a more detailed "mid-term report with payment request" has to be provided. One "Final Report with payment request" shall be submitted, not later than 3 months after the project end date. Progress reports are to be submitted to ensure that at least one report is received every 18 months (the reporting schedule may be modified during the revision phase). Please consult Article 12 of the Common Provisions for full details on reporting obligations of LIFE+ projects.

Form C3 - Timetable

In the table, please list all actions ordered by number and using their numbers and names. Please use the same number and title of action as presented in the project proposal (e.g. A1, A2 …etc.). For each project action, please tick the action's implementation period. Please ensure that the timetable is presented **on one page only**. You may use the 'landscape' page setup format as necessary.

When planning the implementation period of your project, please bear in mind that a LIFE+ 2007 project cannot start before 1st January 2009. Also, please add an appropriate safety margin at the end of the project, to allow for the inevitable unforeseen delays.

Annex:

Maps are **mandatory for projects including site-related actions**. One map per project site (sub-area) should be presented. Each map should include where appropriate:

- A title,
- If relevant, indication if the area is a SPA and or SCI, the name and code of the Natura 2000 area,
- The location of the main habitats targeted by the project,
- Site-related activities, as planned in the proposal,
- The scale and legend of the map. The legend should include all project actions which have been located on the map, indicating its number and title (e.g. B1-Land purchase). The legend should also include the explanation of the habitats located on the map. Please indicate the official names and codes of these habitats,
- The boundary(ies) of the Natura 2000 sites. If the proposal includes actions targeting species/habitats of the Habitats Directive, pSCI/SCI/SAC boundaries must be indicated. If the proposal includes actions targeting bird species of the Birds Directive, SPA boundaries must be indicated.
- The boundary(ies) of the project area(s), only if they are different from the Natura 2000 site boundaries.
- For information, and only if useful, the boundaries referring to other protection status either at regional or national level,
- The location and extent of the main project actions listed in Part **C**. These actions must be specified in the legend.

Applicants shall make sure that maps are of **very good quality** and contain all the requisite information. Maps should be presented in **A4 or A3 formats only**.

5. How to fill in the financial application forms?

The financial part of the *LIFE+ Nature & Biodiversity* application file consists of 10 forms (FA, FB, FC, F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6 and F7). It is available for download as an Excel file.

<u>Important</u>: The project's budget must include only costs which are in accordance with Article 25 of the Common Provisions.

The coordinating beneficiary and associated beneficiaries, as well as other companies which are part of the same groups or holdings, cannot act as sub-contractors.

Internal invoicing (i.e. costs which result from transactions between departments of a beneficiary) is not allowed, unless it is possible to prove that such transactions represent the best value for money and exclude all elements of profit, VAT and overheads.

The Community contribution will be calculated on the basis of eligible costs.

<u>Cover page:</u>

Please fill in the acronym of your proposal as stated in the technical forms.

<u>Form FA - Budget breakdown and project funding</u>

This form is filled in automatically, based on the data provided in the other forms in this section, with the exception of the cost of overheads. **Please do not modify any other cell**.

The form summarises the financial structure of the project, by providing a budget breakdown for the project and an overview of the financing plan.

Overheads are eligible at a flat rate of up to 7% of total eligible direct costs excluding land purchase. The cell background will become red if the value entered exceeds this threshold.

<u>Form FB – Cost breakdown for actions</u>

For every action described in the technical forms C1, a detailed breakdown of costs should be provided on this form. Please use the same numbers and names for the actions as in forms **C1**.

Particular attention should be given to the coherence of the presented costs. In particular, please make sure that totals for each cost category are the same as those calculated in forms **F1-F7**.

For each individual action listed in this form, there should be only one responsible beneficiary. If the same type of action is carried out by several project beneficiaries, it is advisable to split this action and to create one separate action for each of these beneficiaries.

Depending on the number of actions, rows may have to be added on this table. Information should be consistent with the contents of the technical forms.

Form FC – Project funding breakdown

This form describes the funding of the project by the beneficiaries and/or co-financier(s), as well as the EC contribution requested per beneficiary.

Goods or services which are to be provided **"in kind"**, i.e. for which there is no cash-flow foreseen, are ineligible for EC co-financing and should not be included in the project's budget.

Beneficiary country: Select the country code of the beneficiary from the drop-down list.

Beneficiary N°: Please use the number given in the Beneficiary profiles in the *LIFE+* technical forms **A4 and A5**.

Beneficiaries' short name: As in the *LIFE+* technical forms **A4** and **A5**.

Total costs of the actions in €: Indicate the total costs of the actions undertaken by the beneficiaries as in the *LIFE+* technical forms **A2** and **A3**.

Coordinating beneficiary contribution: specify the amount of financial contribution provided by the coordinating beneficiary. This amount cannot include any funding obtained from other public or private sources specifically earmarked for the project or for a part of it (which should be declared as other co-financing). The amount indicated here should be the same as in the *LIFE+* technical form **A2**.

Associated beneficiary contribution: Indicate the financial contribution from each associated beneficiary, as in the *LIFE+* technical form **A3.** These amounts cannot include any funding obtained from other public or private sources specifically earmarked for the project or for a part of it (which should be declared as other co-financing).

Amount of EC contribution requested: Specify the amount of financial Community contribution requested by the coordinating beneficiary and each of the associated beneficiaries. This amount must be in accordance with the Articles 24 and 25.2 of the Common Provisions.

Co-financier's name: As in the Co-Financier profile and commitment forms **A6.**

Amount of co-financing in €: Indicate the financial contribution of each co-financier as in the Co-Financier profile and commitment forms **A6.**

General remarks on the forms F1 – F7

All costs must be rounded to the nearest Euro and must exclude recoverable value-added tax (VAT) when the beneficiary can recover this cost from its national authorities.

Form F1 – Direct personnel costs

General: Article 5(5) of the Regulation states that civil servant's salary costs[5] may be funded only to the extent that they relate to the cost of project implementation activities that relevant public authority would not have carried out had the project concerned not been undertaken. The staff in question must be specifically seconded

[5] The definition of civil servant includes long term public employees from public authorities as well as other public bodies.

to a project and they must represent an additional cost with respect to existing permanent staff.

Accordingly, any staff expenditure of public body/authority beneficiaries may only be considered as eligible costs of the project if the staff in question has been specifically seconded to the project, i.e. their contracts/personnel files must show that the individuals concerned have been working for x weeks/months on the project.

Moreover, the sum of the public authorities/bodies' contributions (as coordinating beneficiary and/or associated beneficiary) to the project budget must exceed (by at least 2%) the sum of the salary costs of their staff charged to the project. This will be checked at both the selection phase and at the time of the final payment.

Beneficiary N°: Please use the number given in the Coordinating beneficiary and Associated beneficiary profiles in the *LIFE+* technical forms **A4** and **A5**.

Type of contract: Indicate the exact legal denomination of the type of contract, civil servant / permanent contract / temporary contract / service contract / etc. and whether it is part time or full time.

Note that service contracts with individuals may be charged to this category on condition that the individual concerned works in the beneficiary's premises and under its supervision and provided that such practice complies with the relevant national tax and social legislation.

Important: The time which each employee spends working on the project shall be recorded on a timely basis (i.e. every day, every week) using time sheets or an equivalent time registration system established and certified regularly by each of the project beneficiaries.

Category: You should identify each category or grade in a clear and unambiguous manner to enable the Commission to monitor the labour resources allocated to the project, to analyse cost claims and to carry out audits. *Examples of staff categories are: project manager, senior engineer, technician/worker, etc.*

Daily rate: The daily rate charged for each member of personnel is calculated on the basis of gross salary or wages plus obligatory social charges, any other statutory cost but excluding any other costs. For the purpose of establishing the budget proposal, the salary may be calculated based on indicative average rates which are reasonable to the concerned category of personnel, sector, country, type of organisation, etc. Please take predictable salary increases into account when estimating the average daily rates for the project duration.

When reporting the costs, however, only actual incurred costs based on actual salaries, obligatory social charges and any other statutory cost can be used (estimations or payments based on the rates indicated in the proposal cannot be accepted).

The total number of person.days per year should be calculated on the basis of the total working hours/days according to national legislation, collective agreements, employment contracts, etc. An example for determining the total productive days per year could be as follows (provided what is established in the appropriate legislation):

Days/year	365 days
Less 52 weekends	104 days
Less annual holidays	21 days
Less statutory holidays	15 days
= Total productive days	225 days

Number of person.days: The number of person.days needed to carry out the project.

Number of person.months: Is obtained by dividing the total number of person.days by the number of productive days per month. It should be rounded to the first decimal place.

Direct personnel costs: calculated automatically by multiplying the total number of person.days for a given category by the daily rate for that category.

% of Total personnel costs for project: Calculated automatically

Form F2 – Travel and subsistence costs

General: Only costs for travel and subsistence must be included here. Costs related to the attendance of conferences, such as conference fees, should be reported under other costs. The cost of participation in a conference is only considered eligible if the project is presented at the conference. The number of participants in conferences is limited to those for whose attendance there is a valid technical justification.

Beneficiary N°: Please use the number given in the Coordinating Beneficiary and Associated Beneficiary profiles in the *LIFE+* technical forms **A4** and **A5**.

Destination (From / To): Specify the country and city name, if already known. If applicable, for repetitive visits to the project area, write ‘project area’.

Outside Europe: Indicate ‘Yes’ for travel outside the European Union.

Purpose of travel: The purpose of travel must be clearly described, in order to allow an assessment of the costs in relation to the objectives of the project (examples: ‘dissemination event’, ‘technical co-ordination meeting’, ‘project area visit’). Also insert the number of trips foreseen and the number of people who will be travelling.

You may use more than one line for the purpose of travel or destination if necessary, but costs may be presented grouped, e.g. for all technical co-ordination meetings. However, the individual costs must be discriminated when reporting.

Travel costs: Travel costs shall be charged in accordance with the internal rules of the beneficiary. Beneficiaries shall endeavour to travel in the most economical and environmentally friendly way – video conferencing must be considered as an alternative.

Costs related to the use of an organisation's own cars (in opposition to private cars) are to be estimated at 0.22 € / km. If only costs for fuel are foreseen, they should also be listed here.

Subsistence costs: Subsistence costs shall be charged in accordance with the internal rules of the beneficiary (daily allowances or direct payment of meals, hotel costs, local transportation etc.). Make sure that meals related to travel/meetings of the beneficiaries are not included if subsistence costs are already budgeted as per diem allowances.

Form F3 – External assistance costs

General: External assistance costs refer to sub-contracting costs: i.e. services/works carried out by external companies or persons, as well as to renting of equipment or infrastructure. They are limited to 35% of the total budget unless a higher level can be justified in the proposal.

For example, the creation of a logo, establishment of a dissemination plan, design of dissemination products, translation services or edition of a book should be included in external assistance. However, transportation of materials, printing of dissemination materials and others, even if done by an external company, should be reported under other costs.

Please note that any services supplied under subcontract, but which are **related to prototype** should be budgeted under prototype and not under external assistance. Costs related to the **purchase or leasing** (as opposed to renting**) of equipment and infrastructure** supplied under subcontract should be budgeted under those cost categories and not under external assistance.

Costs for the **lease of land use rights** must be charged under "external assistance" only if it concerns a **short-term** lease that expires prior to the project end date. Longer-term leases must be declared under land purchase.

Auditor costs related to the auditing of the project's financial reports should always be placed under this budget category. These costs will always be incurred solely by the coordinating beneficiary.

Beneficiary N°: Please use the number given in the Coordinating Beneficiary and Associated Beneficiary profiles in the *LIFE+* technical forms **A4** and **A5**.

Procedure: Specify the procedure foreseen to sub-contract the work, e.g. 'public tender', 'direct treaty', 'framework contract', etc. Subcontracts must be awarded in accordance with Article 8.4 of the Common Provisions.

Description: Provide a clear description of the subject of the service that will be subcontracted, e.g. 'carrying out impact assessment', 'maintenance of …', 'renting of …', 'consultancy on …', 'web page development', '*intra-muros* assistance', 'organisation of dissemination event', etc. You may use more than one line for the description of the subcontract if necessary.

General comments on Forms F4.a, F4.b and F4.c - Durable goods

In the sub-categories equipment and infrastructure, you need to indicate the actual cost as well as the value of depreciation, in accordance with Article 25 of the Common Provisions. Only the depreciation is an eligible cost for the project and the EC co-financing will be calculated on the basis of this amount.

Important: Depreciation of durable goods already owned by beneficiaries at the start of the project is not eligible for LIFE+ funding.

Actual cost: Full cost of the infrastructure or equipment without applying any depreciation.

Depreciation: Total value of the depreciation in the accounts of the beneficiaries at the end of the project. For the purpose of establishing the budget proposal, the beneficiaries should estimate as precisely as possible the amount of depreciation for each item, from the date of entry into the accounts (if relevant) until the end of the project. This estimation is based on their internal accounting rules and/or in accordance with national accounting rules. This amount represents the eligible cost.

Please note that depreciation is limited to a maximum of 25% of the actual cost for infrastructure and a maximum of 50% of the actual cost for equipment.

Exception 1: For prototypes, the eligible costs are equal to real costs under the conditions set up in Article 25.7 of the Common Provisions (for LIFE+ Biodiversity projects).

Exception 2: for LIFE+ Nature projects (but not for Biodiversity projects), the cost of durable goods purchased by beneficiaries which are public bodies or private non-commercial organisations shall be considered eligible at 100%, if the organisation complies with all conditions set under Article 25.9 of the Common Provisions. In this case, the depreciation amount indicated should be the same as the actual cost.

Form F4.a – Infrastructure costs

Beneficiary N°: Please use the number given in the Coordinating Beneficiary and Associated Beneficiary profiles in the *LIFE+* technical forms **A4** and **A5**.

Procedure: Specify the procedure foreseen to sub-contract the work, e.g. 'public tender', 'direct treaty', 'framework contract', etc. Subcontracts must be awarded in accordance with Article 8.4 of the Common Provisions.

Description: Give a clear description and breakdown of the infrastructure per cost item, e.g. 'supporting steel construction', 'foundation of installation', 'fencing' etc.

Important: *All the costs related to infrastructure, even if the work is carried out under sub-contract with an external entity, should be reported under this heading.*

Investments in large-scale infrastructure are considered ineligible.

Form F4.b – Equipment costs

Beneficiary N°: Please use the number given in the Coordinating Beneficiary and Associated Beneficiary profiles in the *LIFE+* technical forms **A4** and **A5**.

Procedure: Specify the procedure foreseen to sub-contract the work, e.g. 'public tender', 'direct treaty', 'framework contract', etc. Subcontracts must be awarded in accordance with Article 8.4 of the Common Provisions.

Description: Provide a clear description of each item, e.g. 'laptop computer', 'database software (off-the-shelf or developed under sub-contract)', 'measurement equipment', 'mowing machine', etc.

Form F4.c – Prototype costs

Beneficiary N°: Please use the number given in the Coordinating Beneficiary and Associated Beneficiary profiles in the *LIFE+* technical forms **A4** and **A5**.

Procedure: Specify the procedure foreseen to sub-contract the work, e.g. 'public tender', 'direct treaty', 'framework contract', etc. Subcontracts must be awarded in accordance with Article 8.4 of the Common Provisions.

Description: Give a clear description of the prototype*.*

Important: Durable goods acquired under the project can only be accepted in this cost category when they are essential to the innovative or demonstration aspects of the project. See Article 25.7 of the Common Provisions for definition of prototype.

Prototype costs are only eligible for Life+ Environmental Policy and Governance and LIFE+ Biodiversity projects.

<u>Form F5 – Costs for land purchase or long-term lease of land/use rights</u>

General: Please consult Article 35.1 of the Common Provisions, for the rules concerning land purchase.

If short-term lease would be appropriate for achieving the project objectives, those costs should be presented under external assistance.

Important: Land purchase and long-term lease is eligible only for Life+ Nature projects, while Life+ Biodiversity projects will be limited to short-term lease.

Beneficiary N°: Please use the number given in the Coordinating Beneficiary and Associated Beneficiary profiles in the *LIFE+* technical forms **A4** and **A5**.

Description of land purchase / long term lease / one-off compensation: Give a clear description of each item, e.g. "purchase of acidic grasslands on sub-site X", "one-off compensation for peat exploitation rights on sub-site Y", etc. Use different rows for different land uses/habitat types/sub-sites, if their prices diverge significantly.

Estimated Cost per hectare: Estimated cost, excluding taxes and other charges, rounded to the nearest €.

Your proposal has to include a letter from the competent authority or from a registered notary confirming that the price per hectare is not above the average for the types of land and locations concerned.

<u>Form F6 – Costs for consumables</u>

General: Consumables declared on this form must be items which are not placed in the inventory of durable goods of the beneficiaries (such as materials for experiments, animal feeding stocks, materials for dissemination, etc.).

They must also be specifically related to the implementation of project actions (**general consumables/supplies**, such as office material, water, gas etc. are covered by the overheads category).

Beneficiary N°: Please use the number given in the Coordinating Beneficiary and Associated Beneficiary profiles in the *LIFE+* technical forms **A4** and **A5**.

Procedure: Specify the procedure foreseen to sub-contract the work, e.g. 'public tender', 'direct treaty', 'framework contract', etc. Subcontracts must be awarded in accordance with Article 8.4 of the Common Provisions.

Description: Provide a clear description of the type of consumable materials, linking it to the technical implementation of the project, e.g. 'raw materials for experiments action 2', 'stationery for dissemination products (deliverable 5) ', etc.

Form F7 – Other costs

General: Direct costs which do not fall in any other cost category should be placed here. Costs for bank charges, conference fees, equipment repairs (when the equipment is purchased for the project or used 100% for the project), insurance costs when these costs originate solely from the project implementation, etc. should be placed here. Should the project include a significant dissemination activity in which substantial mailing, photocopying, or other communication forms are used, the corresponding costs may also be declared here. However, **general consumables/supplies** (as opposed to direct costs), such as telephone, communication costs, photocopies, etc. are covered by the overheads category.

Catering costs/meals/coffees related to dissemination activities, such as presentations of the project, workshops or conferences should be reported here. However, please note that if the whole organisation of the conference is subcontracted, the corresponding cost should all be budgeted under external assistance.

The bank guarantee shall always be reported in this category. A bank guarantee covering the first pre-financing payment might be necessary. Please refer to Articles 25.1, 25.12 and 28.2 of the Common Provisions.

Beneficiary N°: Please use the number given in the Coordinating Beneficiary and Associated Beneficiary profiles in the *LIFE+* technical forms **A4** and **A5**.

Procedure: Specify the procedure foreseen to sub-contract the work, e.g. 'public tender', 'direct treaty', 'framework contract', etc. Subcontracts must be awarded in accordance with Article 8.4 of the Common Provisions.

Description: Give a clear description of each item, linking it to the technical implementation of the project.

6. Admissibility checklist

A project may be declared ineligible for one or more of the following reasons:

1. **Forms are partly or completely hand-written**
2. **Non-standard forms have been used**

   This does not refer to changes in font, size and layout, but to modifications of the format and content of the forms as presented in this application file.
3. **Obligatory forms are missing**

   Forms A1, A2, A4, A7, A8, B1, B2a, B2b, B2c, B2d, B3, B4, B5, C1, C2, C3, FA, FB, FC, F1, F2, F3, F4 a, b and c, F5, F6 and F7 are obligatory for all projects.

   Detailed maps are mandatory where there are site-related actions (one map per site).

   If the project involves associated beneficiaries, a form A3 (associated beneficiary declaration) and A5 (associated beneficiary profile) is obligatory for each associated beneficiary.

   If the project involves co-financiers (other than the European Commission), a form A6 (co-financier profile and commitment) is obligatory for each co-financier.

   Obligatory forms which are blank, which are only partially completed or which do not carry a mandatory signature, date and stamp will be considered as being incomplete.

   NB Where technical application forms are not obligatory or where you have no specific information to put on certain parts of obligatory forms (eg for "previous conservation efforts"), you are advised to indicate "not applicable" or "none" or "no relevant information" or an equivalent indication. A technical application form with totally blank sections may be assumed to be incomplete and may render your application ineligible.
4. **The coordinating beneficiary is a private body, but has not submitted the obligatory profit and loss account and, where relevant, an audit report.**

   The profit and loss account of the last available accounting year and an audit report are obligatory for all private coordinating beneficiaries (see application guidelines for further information on how to assess whether your organisation is considered as public or private).
5. **The coordinating beneficiary or any of the associated beneficiaries is not established in the European Union.**
6. **The project proposal was submitted to the European Commission after the deadline.**

Ineligible proposals will not be assessed any further and will be rejected.

Informal check list for LIFE+ Nature an Biodiversity proposals

Note: The questions below aim to help you check that your application is as well prepared as possible. Your answers should in all cases be "yes". However, the list of questions is not exhaustive and the questions do not provide all the detailed information necessary (you must see the application guides).

1. Have you checked whether your project is a LIFE+ Nature project or a LIFE+ Biodiversity project?
2. Have you completely filled in all the obligatory forms?
3. Are forms A2, A3, A5, A6 and A8 signed, stamped and dated?
4. Is form B1 at least in English?
5. Have you included detailed maps (format A3 or A4)? Do they include a readable scale, title and background details (e.g. village names, rivers, etc.)?
6. In case some forms or sections are blank, have you indicated "not applicable", "no relevant information" or an equivalent mention?
7. Is the start date not earlier than 1/1/2009?
8. Have you included a safety margin at the end of the project to allow for unforeseen delays?
9. Are all beneficiaries legally established in the EU?
10. Have you determined whether they are "public authorities" or "other public bodies" or "private commercial organisations" or "private non-commercial organisations (including NGOs)"?
11. If the coordinating beneficiary is not a "public authority" have you included the obligatory financial annexes (audit report, annual account balance sheet and profit and loss account, simplified financial statement)?
12. Is the EC co-financing rate requested no greater than 50% (or no greater than 75% for Nature projects focussing on priority species / habitats)?
13. Is more than 25% of the budget devoted to concrete conservation actions (exceptions only possible for marine Natura 2000 sites and for monitoring)? Have you allowed a safety margin?
14. For each action have you detailed the expected results as far as possible in quantitative terms?
15. For land purchase/compensation payments have you clearly explained how you meet all of the 11 eligibility conditions?
16. Have you excluded recurring activities (except where these are innovative or have clear demonstration value)?
17. Have you excluded preparatory actions that do not produce practical recommendations?
18. Have you included a coherent package of communication and dissemination actions?

19. Have you included indicators and actions to monitor the impact of the project and its actions on the species/habitats targeted?
20. Is the project management team sufficient? Is an organigramme provided? Is there a full time project coordinator (not obligatory but strongly recommended)? Is there a financial coordinator?
21. Have you excluded all actions that can be funded by other EU funds? In case of doubt, have you foreseen complementary actions or objectives?
22. Have you detailed your efforts towards carbon neutrality?
23. Have you and your associated beneficiaries read the Common Provisions in full?
24. Is your application on a CD-ROM/DVD in A4 printable pdf format (Excel for simplified financial statement")?

Nature projects only:

1. Do all concrete conservation actions take place within officially designated Natura 2000 sites? If not, do they fall into the exceptions foreseen (e.g. habitat restoration, species reintroduction, etc.)? Are the actions clearly located with respect to the Natura 2000 sites on the maps provided?
2. Do these actions target exclusively Natura 2000 species and habitats (for site based actions: Annex I of the Birds Directive and/or Annexes I or II of the Habitats Directive; for species based actions: Annex I or II of the Birds Directive and/or Annexes II, IV or V of the Habitats Directive)?
3. Do the actions all take place in the European territory of the EU, where the Birds and Habitats Directives apply?

Biodiversity projects only:

1. Does your project integrate monitoring, evaluation and active dissemination of the project's results and lessons learnt (see definitions of "demonstration" and "innovation")?
2. Do the actions all take place in the European territory of the EU?