LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity

Guidelines for applicants 2008

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 prepare the project proposal and fill in the application forms.

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1. Introduction to LIFE+

1. What is LIFE+?

LIFE+ is the European financial instrument for the environment, for the period from 1 January 2007 until 31 December 2013. The legal basis for LIFE+ is the ***Regulation (EC) No 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.

LIFE+ covers both the operational expenditure of DG Environment and the co-financing of projects. According to Article 6 of the LIFE+ Regulation, at least 78 % of the LIFE+ budgetary resources must be used for project action grants (= LIFE+ projects).

During the period 2007-13, the European Commission will launch one call for LIFE+ project proposals per year. The amount available for co-financing projects under the second call of LIFE+ proposals in 2008 has been set at EUR 207.500.000. Under this second call (LIFE+ 2008), the deadline for beneficiaries to submit their proposals to the national authorities is the **21st November 2008**. National authorities must then forward all proposals to the European Commission to be received, at the latest, by the deadline of **5 January 2009, 17 h 00**.

These guidelines for applicants only apply to this second call for LIFE+ project proposals ("LIFE+ 2008").

LIFE+ is open to public or private bodies, actors or institutions registered in the European Union. Project proposals can either be submitted by a single beneficiary or by a partnership which includes a coordinating beneficiary and one or several associated beneficiaries. They can be either national or transnational, but the actions must exclusively take place within the territory of the 27 Member States of the European Union.

2. Priority actions and projects to be co-financed under LIFE+

LIFE+ aims at co-funding actions in the field of nature conservation (LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity) as well as in other fields of the environment that are of European interest (LIFE+ Environment and Governance). A third component of LIFE+ aims specifically at co-funding information and communication activities for the environment (LIFE+ Information and Communication). More specifically, the following types of projects can be distinguished under LIFE+:

1. *LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity*

- Best practice and/or demonstration projects contributing to the implementation of the objectives of the Birds and Habitats Directives (Council Directives 79/409 EEC and 92/43/EEC).
- Demonstration and/or innovation projects contributing to the implementation of the objectives of the Commission Communication COM (2006) 216 final: "*Halting the loss of Biodiversity by 2010 – and beyond*".

2. *LIFE+ Environment Policy and Governance*

- Demonstration and/or innovation projects related to any of the "*priority areas of action*" set out in the document "LIFE+ Environment Policy and Governance, Guidelines for applicants 2008".
- Projects contributing to the monitoring of the environmental status of forests within the European Union territory.

3. *LIFE+ Information and Communication*

- Communication and awareness raising campaigns related to the implementation, updating and development of European environmental policy and legislation set out in the document "LIFE+ Information and Communication, Guidelines for applicants 2008".
- Awareness raising campaigns for the prevention of forest fires and training for forest fire agents.

Projects to be co-financed under the 2008 call for proposals can only take place within the territory of the European Union.

3. How, where and when to submit a proposal?

LIFE+ beneficiaries must submit their proposals to the competent national authority of the Member State in which the coordinating beneficiary is registered. **Annex 1** provides a list of the names and contact addresses of the national authorities for LIFE+ for the 27 Member States. The deadline for submitting the proposals to the national authorities is **21 November 2008**.

The national authorities will then forward the LIFE+ project proposals to the Commission, to be received before the deadline of **5 January 2009, 17 h 00**. The only address that national authorities shall use for submitting LIFE+ proposals to the European Commission is the contact address indicated in Annex 2. **Proposals sent directly by beneficiaries to the Commission will not be accepted**.

The proposal and all its obligatory annexes must be forwarded to the Commission on CD-ROM or DVD, in an electronic pdf format. Project beneficiaries must use a separate CD-ROM/DVD for each individual LIFE+ project proposal. The full title of the proposal should be clearly labelled on the CD-ROM/DVD. The proposal itself must be submitted as **two** *"black and white only"* (with the exception of maps provided in form B2b in LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity proposals) pdf documents, including all technical and financial forms. These two documents should be as follows:

> **1st pdf document:** Forms A1 to A7 (plus A8 for LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity proposals and for LIFE+ Information and Communication proposals aiming at contributing to forest fire prevention) should be scanned and submitted as a single pdf file of the original, printed, completed and signed (where applicable) size A4 paper forms. Applicants should ensure that the corresponding pdf file is of a readable quality (at a maximum resolution of 300 dpi - applicants must avoid sending files scanned at a higher resolution in order to keep file sizes manageable).
> **2nd pdf document:** All other technical forms (i.e. B and C forms), the financial forms and the output indicator forms should be submitted as a single pdf document generated directly from the electronic file of the proposal application forms (i.e. converted, not scanned) in order to ensure a relatively small file size and better quality.

The proposal must be printable on a black-and-white printer, and in an A4 format. Where proposal forms are signed, beneficiaries are strongly advised to check whether the signatures are still identifiable on a printout of the form. By way of exception, **maps** annexed to the proposal can be submitted as separate pdf documents that have been directly saved from their original format and should be clearly labelled as "maps" (filename). These annexed map files may be submitted in sizes A4 or A3, and may include colours.

In addition, mandatory financial annexes must be submitted, which vary depending on whether the coordinating beneficiary is a public body or not. These documents must be submitted as a separate Excel file (in the case of the "Simplified financial statement") and as separate pdf files printable in A4 format (in the case of the profit and loss account and the balance sheet, the audit report or auditor-certified balance sheet and profit and loss account, and the public body declaration). Please see section 5 below for further details on the mandatory financial annexes.

Additional documents/annexes submitted by applicants (e.g. brochures, CVs, additional information etc) will not be uploaded or evaluated and therefore applicants must not include any such material in the CD ROM/DVD.

Before submitting the proposals to the Commission, national authorities are strongly advised to check whether the CD ROM/DVD can be opened and read, whether it contains all the required electronic files, and whether the application forms and files provided are correctly filled in and complete.

4. How will LIFE+ projects be selected?

The following description is a short summary of the evaluation procedure; further details are found in the "Guide for the evaluation of LIFE+ project proposals 2008".

Guide for the evaluation of LIFE+ project proposals 2008

The project proposals received by the deadline of **5 January 2009, 17 h 00** from the national LIFE+ authorities are registered by the Commission and an acknowledgement of receipt is transmitted to the coordinating beneficiary.

The LIFE Unit of the Environment Directorate General is responsible for the evaluation procedure. It will verify the admissibility, exclusion and eligibility, the selection and the award criteria and propose to the LIFE+ Committee a list of project proposals for co-financing, according to the criteria outlined in the evaluation guide.

During the **Admissibility, exclusion and eligibility phase**, the European Commission will check whether the proposals submitted are complete and have been submitted in the required format. In case the proposal is found to be incomplete[1], coordinating beneficiaries may be contacted directly by the Commission, via e-mail, and asked to submit missing information within a deadline of **5 working days**. **The e-mail address specified by the applicant as the contact person's e-mail address in form A2 will be used by the European Commission for this and all other subsequent contact with applicants (<u>it should therefore correspond to an e-mail account which is valid, active and checked on a daily basis throughout the duration of the evaluation procedure</u>).** Only those proposals that are deemed complete and submitted within the requested format will be admitted to the following Selection phase.

During the **Selection phase**, the European Commission will check whether the proposals submitted comply with the general technical and financial selection criteria that are outlined in the evaluation guide. Only those proposals that are deemed to comply with the selection criteria will be admitted to the Award phase.

During the **Award phase**, a score will be given to each proposal on the basis of the following 6 award criteria applicable to all three branches of LIFE+ project funding:

1. Technical coherence and quality (max. 15 points, pass score 8 points)
2. Financial coherence and quality (max. 15 points, pass score 8 points)
3. Contribution to the general objectives of LIFE+ (max. 25 points, pass score 12 points)
4. European added value and complementarity and optimal use of the EC funding (max. 30 points, pass score 15 points)
5. Transnational character (max. 5 points, no pass score)
6. Compliance with national annual priorities and national added value according to the LIFE+ national authority (max. 10 points, no pass score)

[1] Please refer to the *Guide for the Evaluation of LIFE+ project proposals 2008* for more detailed information on the type of documents and/or missing information that may be requested from the coordinating beneficiary after the deadline of 5 January 2009

On the basis of the final award scores given to each proposal, the European Commission will then set up a "long list" of proposals to be admitted to revision. This long list takes into account the quality of the proposals and will also take into account that (1) at least 50% of the LIFE+ project budget must be allocated to projects for nature and biodiversity, (2) projects should be distributed amongst EU Member states according to the indicative national allocations published in the *Guide for the Evaluation of LIFE+ proposals 2008* and (3) at least 15% of the LIFE+ should ideally be allocated to transnational projects.

During the **Revision phase**, the Commission will ask the coordinating beneficiaries on the above long list to revise their proposals in order to bring them fully into line with the technical and financial provisions of the LIFE+ Regulation, the Common Provisions applicable to LIFE+ projects and the LIFE+ guidelines for applicants. If necessary, this may entail a reduction of a proposal's budget, its EC financial contribution and/or its proposed EC co-financing rate, as well as the modification or elimination of certain actions and their costs.

On the basis of the results of the revision, the Commission then submits to the LIFE+ Committee for its opinion a "short list" of proposals to be co-financed, and a "reserve list" of proposals.

The LIFE+ Committee is made up of representatives of the 27 Member States and is chaired by the Commission. Should this Committee give a favourable opinion, and within the limits of the funds available, the Commission will then decide upon a list of projects to be co-financed. After approval by the European Parliament, individual grant agreements are sent to each successful coordinating beneficiary for signature.

On the basis of the expected timing as outlined in the LIFE+ Evaluation Guide 2008, the individual grant agreements are expected to be signed between **early November and late December 2009** at the very latest (for a detailed timetable, see **Annex 3**).

The earliest possible starting date for projects is **1 January 2010**.

5. Administrative and financial information to be provided

The LIFE+ Regulation states that applicants must be public or private bodies, actors or institutions registered in the EU. This application guide categorises such applicants into three types of beneficiaries: (1) *public bodies*[2], (2) *private commercial organisations*[3] and (3) *private non-commercial organisations* (including NGOs)[4].

The term "public bodies" is defined as referring to national public authorities, regardless of their form of organisation – central, regional or local structure – or the various bodies under their control, provided these operate on behalf of and under the responsibility of the national pubic authority concerned.

All coordinating beneficiaries that have declared themselves as being public bodies in their proposal (application form A2) must provide as a financial annex a declaration (the "Public body declaration") stating that the coordinating beneficiary is a public body, fully completed, with a dated signature.

All beneficiaries must show their legal status (by completing application forms A2 or A5) confirming that they are legally registered in the EU. In addition they must declare that they are not in any of the situations foreseen under Article 93(1) and 94 of the Financial Regulation (by signing the application form A3 or A4);

In addition all coordinating beneficiaries other than *public bodies*, that is to say the beneficiary types (2) and (3), must provide, as annexes to their proposal, evidence that they comply with the selection criterion set out in the Article 176[5] of the Financial Regulation i.e. that:

"*the applicant has stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain his activity throughout the period during which the action is being carried out*"

Therefore, all coordinating beneficiaries other than *public bodies* will have to provide the following administrative and financial documents as annexes to their LIFE+ proposal:

1. The most recent balance sheet and profit and loss account. This document must be annexed to the LIFE+ proposal as a scanned pdf file, printable in A4 paper format. Where the coordinating beneficiary does not yet have a balance sheet and profit and loss account, because the organisation has been only recently created, it must provide a management plan (for at least 12 months in the future) with the financial data prepared in accordance with the standard required under national legislation.
2. Where the EU contribution requested exceeds 300.000 €, the most recent balance sheet and profit and loss account must either have an *independent audit report* certifying that they present a true and fair view of the coordinating beneficiary's financial situation or a *certification by an independent auditor* that the accounts give a

[2] Including public institutions which for the further purposes of these Guides are considered as public bodies
[3] Including similar commercial actors which for the further purposes of these Guides are considered as private commercial organisations
[4] Including similar non-commercial actors which for the further purposes of these Guides are considered as private non-commercial organisations
[5] Further details on how this criterion will be assessed are found in the *Guide for the Evaluation of LIFE+ project proposals 2008.*

true and fair view of the coordinating beneficiary's financial situation. This document must be annexed to the LIFE+ proposal as a scanned pdf file, printable in A4 paper format. In the case of a newly created organisation, the auditor's certificate provided is based on the management plan where the financial data are presented in accordance with relevant national provisions.

3. A "Simplified Financial Statement"; coordinating beneficiaries are requested to fill in the Excel table which is part of the application package**.** This document must be duly filled in and must be annexed to the LIFE+ proposal as an Excel file.

6. General recommendations for all LIFE+ beneficiaries

The current chapter replies to some frequently asked questions on how to conceive a project proposal, applicable to all three strands of LIFE+. Specific guidelines and recommendation on how to fill in the technical and financial forms for LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity follow in subsequent chapters.

6.1. In which language may the proposal be submitted?

LIFE+ proposals may be submitted in any of the official EU languages, except Irish or Maltese. The Commission nevertheless recommends to fill in the technical part of the proposal also or only in English.

Form B1 ("Summary description of the project") must always be submitted in English. It may **in addition** also be submitted in the language of the proposal.

6.2. Who may submit a proposal?

A proposal may be submitted by any legal person registered in the European Union, i.e. (1) public bodies, (2) private commercial organisations and (3) private non-commercial organisations (including NGOs).

Any coordinating beneficiary that is not a public body must provide evidence with the proposal about its financial viability during the project period and its capacity to manage the amounts proposed in the proposal budget. Such beneficiaries will therefore have to provide with their proposals a number of additional documents (see **Chapter 5** for further details). Failure to provide these additional documents leads to an exclusion of the proposal.

6.3. Who may participate in a project?

Once a proposal has been accepted for co-funding, the coordinating beneficiary will become legally and financially responsible for the implementation of the project. The coordinating beneficiary will be the single point of contact for the Commission and will be the only beneficiary to report directly to the Commission on the project's technical and financial progress.

The coordinating beneficiary receives the Community financial contribution from the Commission and ensures its distribution as specified in the partnership agreements established with the associated beneficiaries (if there are any – see below). The coordinating beneficiary must be directly involved in the technical implementation of the project and in the dissemination of the project results.

The coordinating beneficiary must bear part of the project costs and must thus contribute financially to the project budget. It cannot therefore be reimbursed for 100% of the costs that it incurs. Furthermore it cannot act, in the context of the project, as a sub-contractor to one of its associated beneficiaries.

In addition to the coordinating beneficiary, a LIFE+ proposal may also involve one or more associated beneficiaries and/or one or more project co-financiers.

An **associated beneficiary** must be legally registered in the European Union. It shall always contribute technically to the proposal and hence be responsible for the implementation of one or several project actions. An associated beneficiary must also contribute financially to the project. It cannot act, in the context of the project, as a sub-contractor to the coordinating beneficiary or to other associated beneficiaries. Furthermore it must provide the beneficiary with all the necessary documents required for the reporting to the Commission.

Projects involving partnerships between beneficiaries are only encouraged when this partnership brings an added value to the project. A meaningful collaboration can be expected for instance when the partnership strengthens the feasibility or the demonstration character of the proposal, its European added value and/or the transferability of its results and lessons learnt.

Overall, the experience of the previous LIFE programmes has shown that multi-beneficiary projects are more difficult to manage and involve higher technical and financial risks. It is therefore strongly advised to keep the number of associated beneficiaries in a proposal to the necessary minimum. *It is generally recommended not to involve more than 5 associated beneficiaries in a LIFE+ proposal. Should the proposal involve more, this should be explicitly justified.*

There is no obligation to involve associated beneficiaries in a LIFE+ proposal. A proposal that is submitted without any other participant other than the coordinating beneficiary itself is perfectly eligible. On the other hand, a beneficiary should not hesitate to associate other beneficiaries if this would bring an added value to the project.

A **project co-financier** only contributes to the project with financial resources, has no technical responsibilities and cannot benefit from the Community financial contribution. Furthermore it cannot act, in the context of the project, as a sub-contractor to any of the projects beneficiaries.

LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity proposals involving business-sector co-financing will be favourably considered during the evaluation process.

For specific tasks of a fixed duration, a proposal may also foresee the use of **subcontractors**. Subcontractors cannot act as beneficiaries or vice-versa. Subcontractors provide external services to the project beneficiaries who fully pay for the services provided. Sub-contractors should not be identified by name in the proposal and, even if they are, Article 8 of the Common Provisions still has to be respected (in particular paragraph 8.4 on the selection of sub-contractors).

For a more detailed description of the respective rules related to the coordinating beneficiary, associated beneficiaries, co-financiers and subcontractors, please refer to Articles 3 to 8 of the Common Provisions applicable to LIFE+ projects.

6.4. What is the optimal budget for a LIFE+ project?

There is no fixed minimum size for project budgets. Beneficiaries should however be aware that the European Commission favours the co-financing of large, ambitious LIFE+ proposals with a substantial budget. Historically, the average grant awarded has been in excess of 1 million €.

When preparing a project budget, beneficiaries should also take into account the maximum ceilings for the LIFE+ allocation per Member State: a project proposal from one single Member State that requests an EC financial contribution higher than the national allocation for that Member State may have a reduced probability of being selected for LIFE+ co-funding (for the national allocations see *Guide for the evaluation LIFE+ project proposals 2008*).

6.5. What is the maximum rate of Community co-financing under LIFE+?

The maximum Community co-financing rate for LIFE+ projects is 50% of the total eligible project costs.

By way of exception, a co-financing rate of up to 75% of the total eligible costs may be granted to *LIFE+ Nature* proposals that focus on concrete conservation actions for **priority** species or habitat types of the Birds and Habitats Directives.

6.6. How much should project beneficiaries contribute to the project budget?

The (coordinating) beneficiary and (if applicable) any associated beneficiaries are expected to provide a reasonable financial contribution to the project budget. A beneficiary's financial contribution is considered as a proof of its financial commitment to the implementation of the project objectives - a very low financial contribution may therefore be considered as an absence or lack of commitment.

A proposal will be automatically rejected in the project selection round if the financial contribution of any of the beneficiaries to the proposal budget is 0 €.

Moreover, where public bodies are involved as coordinating and/or associated beneficiaries in a project, the sum of their financial contributions to the project budget must exceed (by at least 2%) the sum of the salary costs of their staff charged to the project.

Finally, it is expected that all beneficiaries of a project receive a share of the EC financial contribution that is proportionate to the costs that they are expected to incur. Where the financial contribution of a beneficiary would be equal or superior to the costs that it would incur, this may indicate that the actions of this beneficiary would have been carried out anyway, even without LIFE+ co-financing. Such actions may therefore be deleted from the project during revision.

6.7. What is the optimal starting date and duration for a project?

When preparing the project's time planning, beneficiaries should be aware that the expected date of the signature of the grant agreements for the LIFE+ 2008 projects will be in late 2009. Therefore, the earliest possible starting date for these projects is **1 January 2010**. Any costs incurred before that starting date will not be considered eligible and cannot be included in the project budget.

There is no pre-determined project duration for a LIFE+ project. Generally speaking, the project duration must correspond to what is necessary to complete all of the project's actions and to reach all its objectives. Most projects last for 2-5 years.

The experience of the previous LIFE programme has shown that many projects had difficulties completing all actions within the proposed project duration, mostly due to unforeseen delays and difficulties encountered during the project. Beneficiaries are therefore strongly advised to build an appropriate safety margin (e.g. 6 months) into the timetable of their proposal.

On the other hand, since only 3 payments to a project will be made at most (first pre-financing, mid-term pre-financing and final payment), very long projects may be hard to manage from a financial point of view. Beneficiaries should also be aware that a project that has completed all of its actions prior to the expected end date can submit its final report ahead of schedule and receive its final payment before the official project end date mentioned in the grant agreement.

6.8. Where can a LIFE+ proposal take place?

Proposals submitted under the 2008 call may only take place on the territory of the European Union Member States. Actions are not allowed to take place and costs are not allowed to be incurred outside the EU territory. The only exception to this rule may be related to a limited amount of travel and subsistence costs for the attendance of conferences, workshops or similar events, provided that these are useful to achieve the project objectives, and have been specifically foreseen in the proposal or have specifically been approved by the Commission.

Proposals aimed at implementing the objectives of specific European environmental legislation are only eligible for LIFE+ co-funding if they take place on the territory of the EU Member States where this specific legislation would be applicable. For that reason, LIFE+ Nature projects for implementing the objectives of the EU Birds and Habitats Directives are ineligible in the French overseas departments (DOMs).

6.9. Which project beneficiary should be in charge of the project management?

It is expected that the project management is carried out by the staff of the coordinating beneficiary. However on the basis of an appropriate justification it may be carried out by a subcontractor under its direct control. Any other arrangements for the project management would have to be adequately explained and justified. It is also strongly advised that each project has a full-time project manager.

While there is no obligation for the beneficiaries to include in the proposal budget any costs related to the project management, the proposal should nevertheless clearly describe who will be in charge of the project management, how much personnel and time will be devoted to this task and how and by whom decisions on the project will be made during the project period (i.e. how and by whom the project management will be controlled).

It is important to note that if an agency associated with the beneficiary carries out the technical and/or financial administration of the project, this body **MUST** be an associated beneficiary of the project in order for its costs to be eligible for co-financing.

6.10. To which extent are salary costs of public staff eligible for LIFE+ co-funding?

Article 5(5) of the LIFE+ Regulation states that civil servant's salary costs[6] may be funded only to the extent that they relate to the cost of project implementation activities that relevant public body would not have carried out had the project concerned not been undertaken. The staff in question must be specifically seconded to a project and they must represent an additional cost with respect to existing permanent staff.

Accordingly, any staff expenditure of public body beneficiaries may only be considered as eligible costs of the project if the staff in question has been specifically

[6] The definition of civil servant includes long term public employees from public bodies.

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 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.

The cost of temporary personnel specifically recruited for the duration of the project and exclusively dedicated to its implementation shall not be taken into account in the calculation of the minimum amount of the public bodies' contribution mentioned above, on condition that:

(a) The contracts of such personnel do not begin before the date of signature of the grant agreement, nor finish after the end date of the project.

(b) The contracts mention the LIFE+ project specifically.

(c) The personnel concerned are employed exclusively for the implementation of tasks foreseen in the LIFE+ project.

6.11. Outsourcing of project activities

The beneficiaries should have the technical and financial capacity and competency to carry out the proposed project activities. It is therefore expected that the share of the project budget allocated to external assistance should remain below 35% Higher shares may only be accepted if an adequate justification for this is provided in the project proposal.

If a beneficiary is a public body, any outsourcing (also including any outsourcing of the project management) must be awarded in accordance with the applicable rules on public tendering and in conformity with Community Directives on public tendering procedures.

For amounts exceeding 125.000 €, private beneficiaries shall invite competitive tenders from potential subcontractors and award the contract to the bid offering best value for money; in doing so they shall observe the principles of transparency and equal treatment and shall take care to avoid any conflicts of interest.

6.12. Under which conditions does LIFE+ favour transnational projects?

The LIFE+ Regulation indicates that, while selecting the projects to be co-funded, the Commission shall have special regard to transnational projects, when transnational cooperation is essential to guarantee environmental or nature protection. A transnational proposal should therefore be submitted only if the project proposal provides sufficient arguments for an added value of the transnational approach. If such evidence can be provided, the proposal 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.

When preparing a transnational proposal, the beneficiaries must clearly determine the share of the project costs to be spent by them in each of the EU Member States.

6.13. How voluminous should a LIFE+ proposal be?

A proposal should be as concise and clear as possible. Avoid voluminous proposals and do not provide excessively detailed descriptions of project areas, environmental technologies, lists of species, etc. The technical application forms of a LIFE+ proposal (i.e. the LIFE+ application forms, part B and C) should normally not encompass more than 50 pages.

Clear and detailed descriptions should however be provided for all project actions. Maps should be annexed wherever this would be useful to clarify the location of the proposed actions. Any double listing of information between the technical and financial forms should be avoided. Financial information should primarily be given in the financial forms only.

Brochures, CVs and similar documents should not be submitted and will be ignored if provided.

6.14. Recurring activities are ineligible for LIFE+ funding

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".

For that reason, any recurring site surveillance, monitoring or management actions that were already carried out prior to the project and/or need to be continued after the end of the project (at the same level of intensity, using the same techniques and material…) should not be included in the LIFE+ proposal budget.

Under LIFE+ Nature, investments necessary to facilitate recurrent management may be fully eligible. In any such cases, however, the costs related to the use of this equipment remain, as above, ineligible as they concern recurrent activities (see chapter 2 of the present guidelines for further details)

By way of exception, recurring actions with a clear demonstration value may be considered as eligible for funding. In such cases, the proposal must clearly justify and explain the demonstration character.

In addition, some flexibility in respect to recurring activities for projects developing and implementing Community objectives relating to broad based, harmonised, comprehensive and long-term monitoring of forests and environmental interactions, that avoid the financing of day to day operations, may be applied.

6.15. Complementarity with other EC funding instruments must be ensured

According to Article 9 of the LIFE+ Regulation, LIFE+ may not finance any "measures which fall within the eligibility criteria and main scope of, or receive assistance for the same purpose from, other Community financial instruments". These include, amongst others, the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme, the European Fisheries Fund and the seventh Research Framework Programme.

It is thus essential that, prior to submitting their proposal to the European Commission, beneficiaries check thoroughly that the actions proposed under their project **in practice cannot be and are not funded** through other European funds. Beneficiaries will be required to sign a declaration to this effect.

The beneficiaries must inform the European Commission about any related funding they have received from the Community budget, as well as any related ongoing applications for funding from the Community budget. The beneficiaries must also check that they are not receiving operating grants from LIFE+ (or other Community programmes) with respect to the on-going operations.

In addition, at the project revision stage, the national authority may also be required to indicate the steps taken to ensure the coordination and complementarity of LIFE+ funding with other Community financial instruments.

6.16. Efforts for reducing the projects "carbon footprint"

All beneficiaries will be asked to explain how they intend to ensure that the "carbon footprint" of their project remains as low as is reasonably possible. Details of efforts to be made to reduce CO_2 emissions during a project's life shall be included in the description of the project. However, beneficiaries should be aware that expenses for offsetting greenhouse gas emissions will not be considered as eligible costs.

6.17. Role of national annual priorities

Article 6 of the LIFE+ Regulation allows Member States to submit national annual priorities – for 2008 about half of the Member States have taken advantage of this possibility.

Proposals submitted to the Commission may receive an enhanced score during the evaluation process which may play a role in the proposal's success when the national indicative allocations are to be fulfilled. On the other hand, projects that do not meet a Member State's national annual priorities may also be selected on quality grounds alone.

National annual priorities can be viewed at the following web address: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/funding/lifeplus/call/index.htm#nap

7. Personal Data Protection Clause

The personal data supplied with your proposal, notably the name, address and other contact information of the beneficiaries and co-financiers, will be placed in a database named ESAP that will be made available to the Community Institutions, as well as to a team of external evaluators who are bound by a confidentiality agreement. ESAP is used exclusively to manage the evaluation of LIFE+ proposals.

The same personal data of successful projects will be transferred to another database, BUTLER, which will be made available to the Community Institutions and to an external monitoring team who are bound by a confidentiality agreement. BUTLER is used exclusively to manage LIFE projects.

A summary of each project, including the name and contact information of the coordinating beneficiary, will be placed on the LIFE website and made available to the general public. At a certain point the coordinating beneficiary will be invited to check the accuracy of this summary.

The Commission, or its contractors, may also use the personal data of unsuccessful applicants for follow up actions in connection with future applications.

Throughout this process, Regulation (EC) n° 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 "on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data" will be respected by the Commission and its sub-contractors. You will notably have the right to access data concerning you in our possession and to request corrections.

Submission of a proposal implies that you accept that the personal data contained in your proposal is made available as described above. It will not be used in any other way or for any other purposes than those described above.

2. LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity

1. What is LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity?

The LIFE+ Regulation[7]

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**[8], 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 Annex 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"[9]. 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 measures and practices that contribute to halting the loss of biodiversity on the territory of the Member States,

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[7] 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

[8] 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

[9] 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

other than those related to the implementation of the objectives of the Birds and Habitats Directives. 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.

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.

The only exception to this rule is that applicants 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	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 bodies 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 on halting the loss of biodiversity. 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 the guidelines for applicants 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 on halting the loss of biodiversity that is essentially 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[10].

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 …). Demonstration projects may therefore also have a higher added value if they are taking place on a national or transnational level, rather than on a local scale.

[10] Note that these two Directives do not apply to the French Overseas Departments (DOMs), and therefore LIFE+ Nature projects in the DOMs are not eligible

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 techniques and methods demonstrated in the project. Given the time required in many cases for restoration actions to have a measurable impact, it is 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[11].

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.

Such actions must be clearly identifiable (ie must be 100% concrete conservation and not contain parts that are not).

Monitoring of reintroduced species will only be considered as concrete if it can re-direct the course of the reintroduction action.

Legal protection or site designation is not considered in itself a concrete conservation action.

[11] Where a proposal includes actions that would normally be considered as recurring (e.g. mowing), the applicant must explain in detail why this is a restoration action and not a recurrent action.

Actions that aim to influence the behaviour of key stakeholders (e.g. farmers, hunters, fishermen, visitors), while they may indirectly benefit the site/species/habitats targeted, are not considered as concrete conservation actions.

Visitor management actions (e.g. fences, trails) will only be considered as concrete conservation actions if the proposal can show that the visitors already directly have a negative impact on the conservation status of the habitats/species targeted.

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 **offshore marine Natura 2000** sites do not need to include concrete conservation actions. Any such proposal must, however, include a commitment from the Competent Ministry/Authority to designate the site(s) concerned as Natura 2000 sites before the end of the project **and the Competent Ministry/Authority must be a beneficiary of the project** (coordinating beneficiary or associated beneficiary).

  This exception only applies to **preparatory inventories and planning for the designation of new / additional offshore** marine Natura 2000 sites. Inventories for extending or designating additional coastal sites or terrestrial sites of marine/coastal animals will not be considered.

  Proposals that gather data for other purposes (e.g. inventories of existing marine Natura 2000 sites or inventories for the designation of other types of marine protected areas) will be rejected.

- *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 concrete conservation actions.

  In any such cases, the Competent Authority in charge of the Article 11 monitoring must be a beneficiary of the project (coordinating beneficiary or associated beneficiary). Proposals for routine monitoring or for merely local improvement in monitoring will not be considered as qualifying for this exception.

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, one-off compensation payments, 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 the beneficiary can demonstrate that the site clearly does not yet qualify for *Natura 2000* designation AND 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 be considered on areas that will not be designated under *Natura 2000*. In such cases, evidence must be provided that the investments foreseen contribute to an improvement of the "ecological coherence of the *Natura 2000* network". 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 eligibility of conservation actions for species listed in **Annex IV** of the Habitats Directive (that are not listed in Annex II) is not dependant on the Natura 2000 status of the areas concerned. However, the long-term sustainability of any such investments will have to be secured by an appropriate legal conservation status of these areas, to be achieved at the latest by the end date of the project. Land purchase is not possible in this context.

Complementarity with other EC funding instruments

Applicants must take full note of the corresponding section in chapter 1 of the present guidelines.

Amongst others, actions to inform third parties in the project area (e.g. farmers, landowners, forest managers, …) of other sources of EU funding are ineligible if such information activities are foreseen in the corresponding programme (e.g. the Rural Development Programme).

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. If you have any doubts as to whether a habitat is a priority habitat, you are advised to consult the Interpretation Manual of EU Habitats:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/habitatsdirective/docs/2007_07_im.pdf

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 new offshore 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.
- 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.

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 body 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 body).
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 in general 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, unless there are specific reasons for doing so).

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 are not recurring actions and 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 may be 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 become Natura 2000 sites;
- Certain actions for improving the ecological coherence / connectivity of the Natura 2000 network;

- Certain actions for improving the conservation status of species listed on Annex IV, but not on Annex II of the Habitats Directive

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

A strategic spot is defined here as an area with little or no 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 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 all such cases, the Competent Authority must be a 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 be considered in areas that will not be designated under Natura 2000. Evidence must be provided that the investments foreseen contribute to an "improvement of the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network", i.e. the applicants must demonstrate how these corridors or stepping stones will improve the conservation status of the species targeted. 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 legal protection status** at the national/regional level before the end of the project. When submitting the proposal, the applicant must provide detailed information on the proposed protection status and explain why it is considered as being sufficient for securing the long-term sustainability of the investments. 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. Land purchase is not possible in this context.

Actions for the creation of "corridors" may also include the construction of infrastructures 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.

- Actions for improving the conservation status of species listed in Annex IV, but not in Annex II of the Habitats Directive

The eligibility of the costs for land-based conservation actions for the conservation of Annex IV species not listed in Annex II is not conditional upon a Natura 2000 site status of the lands targeted. However, a guarantee must be provided for the sustainability of any such investments, in the form of a commitment for giving these sites **the highest possible legal protection status** at the national/regional level before the end of the project. When submitting the proposal, the applicant must provide detailed information on the proposed protection status and explain why it is considered as being sufficient for securing the long-term sustainability of the investments. Land purchase is not possible in this context.

Actions for the creation of "corridors" may be considered eligible if the applicant can 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. 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 a beneficiary of the project (coordinating beneficiary or associated beneficiary); applicants should be aware that land purchase within these future Natura 2000 sites is only eligible if they are designated as such before the end of the project;

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, 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", other than those already covered by LIFE+ Nature. They must thus be clearly 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. **Any LIFE+ Biodiversity proposal consisting essentially of best practice actions will be rejected.** Moreover, all LIFE+ biodiversity projects must 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 techniques and methods demonstrated in the project for halting the loss of biodiversity.

An "**innovative**" **project** applies a 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 techniques and methods for halting the loss of biodiversity 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 techniques and methods successfully tested in the project.

In order to be considered innovative/demonstration, **all** of the core project actions must be innovative/demonstration. A proposal presenting a mixture of best practice and innovation/demonstration will be rejected.

Examples (from the 2007 call for proposals) that were considered demonstration / innovation include:

- Restoration / reconstitution of endangered endemic semi-xerophylous habitats on an island in a French Overseas Department, involving the cultivation and re-planting of native plants and the elimination of invasive alien species, and testing several experimental techniques for these actions.

- A comprehensive approach to enhance the biodiversity of ancient olive-groves, including demonstrating various conservation and management techniques, developing and implementing guidelines and an innovative model of governance for olive groves and an action plan for their preservation at the Mediterranean level.

- Developing and implementing a comprehensive methodology for the ex situ seed conservation of vascular wild plants of the Pannonian biogeographical region, including experimenting for endemic plants of this region.

- Development and demonstration eradication and control methods for high impact aquatic invasive species in tandem with remediation of natural communities, involving concrete conservation actions coupled with a cross-sectoral stakeholder engagement programme aimed at preventing reinvasion, together with a programme of policy development and dissemination.

- Demonstrating an integrated approach to invasive riparian and aquatic weed management that has not been used before in the EU, involving combining current techniques with natural control.

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+ Biodiversity* 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.

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 <u>*directly*</u> *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*.

Such actions must be clearly identifiable (ie must be 100% concrete conservation and not contain parts that are not).

Monitoring of reintroduced species will only be considered as concrete if it can re-direct the course of the reintroduction action.

Legal protection or site designation is not considered in itself a concrete conservation action.

Actions that aim to influence the behaviour of key stakeholders (e.g. farmers, hunters, fishermen, visitors), while they may indirectly benefit the site/species/habitats targeted, are not considered as concrete conservation actions.

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 concrete conservation actions. Such proposals should normally be submitted by the national or regional authorities in charge of monitoring. If not, they should at least be associated beneficiaries.

  The core of such a project must focus on the development and testing of **new biodiversity indicators**. Proposals that, for example, involve much data collection or research, of which only a part is related to the development and testing of new indicators, will not benefit from this exception. Any such project should also provide clear operational guidelines on how these indicators should be applied.

  Routine monitoring actions or harmonisation/standardisation of established monitoring techniques/indicators will not benefit from this exception.

  Proposals that only develop and test new indicators for local use and that do not have a much wider applicability (e.g. at national or EU level) or that do not contain sufficient actions to disseminate their use on a wide scale will not benefit from this exception.

- *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. Any such project should also provide clear operational guidelines on how these methodologies should be applied.

Note however that, as for any other *LIFE+ Biodiversity* projects, projects that fall under either of these two exceptions cannot involve recurrent activities (see above).

Complementarity with other EC funding instruments

Applicants must take full note of the corresponding section in chapter 1 of the present guidelines.

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).

Some lessons from the 2007 Call for Proposals

- A number of LIFE+ Biodiversity proposals were rejected because they were not innovation/demonstration. The core actions were best practice presented incorrectly as being innovation/demonstration.

- Some of these best practice proposals targeted mainly Natura 2000 sites/species/habitats. Had they been clearly presented as a LIFE+ Nature proposal (excluding as appropriate those actions outside Natura 2000 sites or targeting other species/habitats), they may well have been accepted.

- Some proposals were rejected because they presented essentially best practice techniques applied on a large scale outside Natura 2000 sites. For example, simply applying best practice techniques at the scale of a river basin that are already applied in Natura 2000 sites, is not demonstration.

- Some proposals whose core actions were clearly demonstration/innovation were nevertheless rejected because they did not contain a coherent and sufficient set of actions for the evaluation and dissemination of the results to those stakeholders that could use the lessons learnt.

- Some proposals that sought to be exempted from the 25% concrete conservation actions requirement by presenting themselves as developing new biodiversity indicators were rejected because much of the effort concerned data collection / research unrelated to the testing and development of new indicators.

- Some proposals that were to take place on essentially agricultural/forest land were rejected because the measures proposed could have been financed by agri-environment / Rural Development Programmes.

- A number of proposals were rejected because they were not directly related to biodiversity or because the measures were poorly described.

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).

<u>Preparatory actions</u>

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 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);

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.

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

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 long-term lease *payments are not eligible*.

Concrete actions aimed at halting the loss of biodiversity

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 implementation of biodiversity action plans;
- the conservation management of species, habitats and ecosystems;
- 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.

Communication and dissemination actions (obligatory)

LIFE+ Biodiversity projects are innovative or demonstration projects. As such they **must include a significant set of actions to evaluate and disseminate the results of the project** so that the knowledge gained is actively communicated to those stakeholders that may apply the lessons from the project. Proposals that are insufficient in this respect will be rejected. A crucial element is active networking with, and dissemination to, other stakeholders that could apply the results.

LIFE+ Biodiversity projects should therefore typically include 2 distinct types of communication actions:

- information and awareness raising activities regarding the project to the general public and stakeholders. These actions should in general begin early on in the project.
- more technical dissemination actions aimed at transferring the results and lessons learnt **to those stakeholders that could usefully benefit from the project's experience** and implement themselves the actions demonstrated in the project.

The range of possible actions for both types of communication 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. 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, 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. Note: LIFE+ Biodiversity projects, being demonstration/innovation, must have a clear set of actions for evaluating the main project findings and results. Proposals that are insufficient in these respects will be rejected.
- 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.

3. 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 A4) 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 strongly advised to indicate "not applicable" or "none" or "no relevant information" or an equivalent indication.

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 the 1st January 2010. 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

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 3 choices: *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 chapter 1 of the present guidelines.

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 bodies"** 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).

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 A3

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 in which it will participate: 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 co-financing). List all the actions in the implementation of which the coordinating beneficiary will participate and indicate the total cost (in euros) of the coordinating beneficiary's part (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 dated.

Form A4

If the project foresees associated beneficiaries, this form becomes compulsory. Complete one form per associated beneficiary (A4/1, A4/2, A4/3, 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 in which it will participate: 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 co-financing). List all the actions in the implementation of which the associated beneficiary will participate and indicate the total cost (in euros) of the associated beneficiary's part (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 dated.

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 A2.**

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 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 A3 that you have to sign) and provide the fullest possible information in their answers. Supporting documents (e.g. extracts from the texts of the relevant programmes) should be provided (as far as possible and appropriate).

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 **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 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.
- **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.

➢ ***For projects without actions targeting a well-defined area:***

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.

Form B2b – Map of the general location of the project area

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.

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

➢ ***For LIFE+ Nature projects:***

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 species 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**.

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.
- **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 <u>all</u> 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.

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. Should more than one beneficiary be implicated, please give full details of which beneficiary is responsible for what.
- **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.

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

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.

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

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 **each** 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 presented in English and in the project's language. 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".

For LIFE Nature projects: The coordinating beneficiary must produce an "After-LIFE Conservation Plan" as a separate chapter of the final report. It shall be presented in the beneficiary's language and (optionally) in English, in paper and electronic format. This plan shall set out how it is planned to continue and to develop the actions initiated in your LIFE project in the years that follow the end of the project, and how the longer term management of the site(s)/habitats/species will be assured. It should give details regarding what actions will be carried out, when, by whom, and using what sources of finance. A new and separate E action for this plan should be added to the proposal (with a cost of 0 €) and the plan must be added to the list of deliverables.

For LIFE Biodiversity projects : The coordinating beneficiary must produce an "After-LIFE Communication Plan" as a separate chapter of the final report. It shall be presented in the project's language and (optionally) in English, in paper and electronic format. It shall set out how you plan to continue disseminating and communicating your results after the end of the project. It should also indicate how you plan to continue / develop your actions in favour of biodiversity in the coming years. A separate action must be added to the proposal (with a cost of 0 €) and the plan must be added to the list of deliverables.

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. 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. Additional "Progress reports" should also be foreseen in order 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+ 2008 project cannot start before 1 January 2010. 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, as pdf documents**.

Note: A site-based LIFE+ Nature proposal may be rejected if the maps are of insufficient detail or quality to allow the evaluators to determine if the key actions will be implemented inside Natura 2000 sites.

4. Output indicator forms

Introduction

All applicants are required to define output indicators in their proposal. For this purpose, applicants should follow the instructions provided below and complete the relevant tables with the monitoring indicators that apply to their proposal. The monitoring indicator tables (in the form of an Excel file) are available on the LIFE+ website as part of the application package.

Article 15 of the Regulation (CE) n. 614/2007 foresees an evaluation of the implementation of the LIFE+ programme through a regular monitoring. This evaluation will concur to assess "*the contribution, both specifically and in general, that actions and projects financed under this Regulation have made to the implementation, updating and development of Community environmental policy and legislation and the use made of the appropriations*".

In order to make this evaluation possible, the European Commission will regularly gather information and statistical data from the LIFE+ projects.

These information and data will essentially permit to evaluate the concrete effects of the programme after its implementation in the fields of "Nature & Biodiversity", "Environment Policy & Governance" and "Information & Communication".

It is important to observe, that the information gathered from the beneficiaries in the frame of the monitoring of the LIFE+ programme will exclusively represent a statistical base for a further elaboration.

The Commission, in a different exercise, will evaluate the success of a project and the eligibility of its cost through the reports the beneficiary will provide and through the visits of the Commission staff and of the external team.

Guidance for the compilation of the tables

Generalities

In order to be able to evaluate the contribution of the LIFE+ projects to the implementation of the programme, it is essential for the Commission to define both the initial situation (i.e. at the beginning of a LIFE+ project) and the situation after its implementation (i.e. after the end of a project).

Thus, the present tables will include information, which should be compiled <u>at the beginning</u> of a LIFE+ project.

At the end of a project, the beneficiary will receive similar tables, which will be compiled with data describing the actual results of the measures implemented and enable a comparison with the initial situation.

Only the electronic version (Excel sheet) of the tables provided by the Commission should be used and the lay out of these tables must remain unchanged (i.e. do not add lines or columns or modify the format).
Beneficiaries will fill in only the tables (Part 1 and Part 2) foreseen for the component of the programme corresponding to their project ("Nature", "Biodiversity", "Environment Policy & Governance" and "Information & Communication").

The tables included in Part 3 (Awareness raising and communication) are identical for all the components and should be completed by every beneficiary.

Beneficiaries should fill in only the items, which are relevant to their project. For example, if a LIFE+ Nature project does not include any land purchase, the corresponding cell in the table should be left void.

Instructions for the compilation of the tables

LIFE+ Nature

Part 1 – Preparatory actions

Table 1
OUTPUTS
Types of preparatory actions foreseen (A, B actions)

For every preparatory action, where applicable, indicate the number of measures you intend to implement during the project, the list of species and/or habitats included in the Directives 'Habitats' and 'Birds', the number of sites, the total surface every type of measure will involve and the respective budgeted cost.

Example: Your project foresees the preparation of 2 management plans benefiting the species X and Y together with the habitat Z, i.e. 2 species and 1 habitat. These management plans will cover 3 sites for a total surface of 1000 ha. The budgeted cost for preparing the management plans and have them approved is 30.000 €.

Part 2 – Concrete actions

Table 2
OUTPUTS
Best practices/concrete techniques/conservation actions/methods planned (C actions)

Fill in the table with the number of every kind of C actions your project include, the type and the number of species and habitats your C actions will benefit, the number of Natura 2000 sites involved, the surface which these C actions will benefit (i.e. not only the surface on which the actions are directly implemented but the total surface on which the effects of this action are widespread). Finally, fill in the budgeted cost of every action.

Example: Your project include two improvement actions, one involving two forest habitats (X and Y), the second one river habitat (J) with two species (W and Z) included in the European Directives, i.e. 3 habitats and 2 species. These improvement actions will take place in 4 different Natura 2000 sites, will be directly implemented on 20 ha but will actually benefit a total surface of 120 ha. The budgeted cost of the first action is 500.000 € and the one of the second is 300.000 €.

Table 3
OUTPUTS
Training

Indicate the number of training sessions you plan to implement during your project, the number of persons to be trained, the budgeted cost for these sessions.
Please note that all training sessions, both preparatory and linked to the implementation of concrete measures, must be included in the table.

Example: During your project, you intend to implement 10 training sessions. The expected number of attendants is 200 persons and the budgeted cost 10.000 €.

LIFE+ Biodiversity

Part 1 – Preparatory actions

Table 1
OUTPUTS
Types of preparatory actions foreseen

For every preparatory action, where applicable, indicate the number of measures you intend to implement during the project, the list of the most important species and/or habitats targeted by your project, the number of sites and the total surface every type of measure will involve.

Example: Your project foresees the preparation of 2 guidelines for the conservation of the biodiversity in two sites for a total surface of 1000 ha. These guidelines will mostly benefit the species X and Y and the habitat Z. The budgeted cost for preparing the guidelines is 30.000 €.

Part 2 – Concrete actions

Table 2
OUTPUTS
Best practices/concrete techniques/conservation actions/methods planned

Fill in the table with the number of every kind of concrete actions your project include, the type and the number of species and habitats targeted, the number of sites involved, the surface which these C actions will benefit (i.e. not only the surface on which the actions are directly implemented but the total surface on which the effects of this action are widespread) and their budgeted cost.

Example: Your project includes two actions which will improve the biodiversity. The first action will involve two forest habitats (X and Y), the second one river habitat (J) mainly benefiting two species (W and Z) , i.e. 3 habitats and 2 species. These improvement actions will take place in 4 different sites, will be directly implemented on 20 ha but will actually benefit a total surface of 120 ha. The budgeted cost of the first action is 500.000 € and the one of the second is 300.000 €.

Table 3
OUTPUTS
Training

Indicate the number of training sessions you plan to implement during your project, the number of persons to be trained and the total budgeted cost.
Please note that all training sessions, both preparatory and linked to the implementation of concrete measures, must be included in the table.

Example: During your project, you intend to implement 10 training sessions. The expected number of attendants is 200 persons and the budgeted cost 10.000 €.

For both LIFE+ Nature <u>and</u> LIFE+ Biodiversity

<u>Part 3 – Awareness raising and communication (same form for all LIFE+ components)</u>

Table 4
OUTPUTS
Workshops, seminars, and conferences

Indicate, for every type of action, the number of attendants expected, divided in the suggested categories (Local/Regional, National, EU/International and General public, specialised, very specialized) and the total budgeted cost.

Example: You plan to organise 3 <u>local</u> information meetings to which you expect an attendance of 250 citizens, which you would describe as 'General public', one <u>national</u> seminar aimed at the awareness raising of institutional staff (expected 100 persons), which could be defined as 'Specialized', and one <u>international</u> scientific congress, in which you would like to gather 50 university experts ('Very specialized'). The budgeted cost is 50.000 €.

Table 5
OUTPUTS
Media and other dissemination work

You should indicate here the number of articles, broadcasts, films etc. you expect as a result from your communication work in the frame of your project, together with the total budgeted cost for these actions. You should also indicate the average number of visitors per month you expect to your web-site during the lifetime of your project.

Example: Your project includes the production of one documentary and you expect that the national TV will broadcast it at least once during the project lifetime. Furthermore, you evaluate that your communication work through press releases will bring about at least ten national press articles. At the same time, you expect at least 300 visitors/month to your project web-site. These actions will cost 30.000 €.

Table 6
OUTPUTS
Publications

You should indicate here the number of different publications (No. published) and the number of copies of each type of publication (No. of copies) you expect to produce during the lifetime of your project. Furthermore, fill in the language of each type of publication and the total budgeted cost.

Example; Your project includes the publication of two manuals and one scientific book, together with one poster to be distributed in the local schools and two different kinds of leaflet to be mailed to the local population and distributed during a few events. The planned actions will cost 50.000 €.

Table 7
OUTPUTS
Educational actions

Fill in the table with your forecast of the number of students to be involved through your educational actions, divided into different levels of school (kindergarten and primary school, secondary school, higher education). Indicate also the total budgeted cost for these actions.

Example: You plan to present your project to 250 student of the local secondary school. The total budgeted cost is 10.000 €.

5. Financial application forms

The financial part of the *LIFE+ Nature and 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.

Important: 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.

Cover page:

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

Form FA - Budget breakdown and project funding

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 (and the overheads themselves, which are indirect costs). The cell background will become red if the value entered exceeds this threshold. Applicants benefiting from an operating grant are not entitled to claim overheads.

Form FB – Cost breakdown for actions

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**.

This form is very useful in order to link technical outputs and costs. Particular attention should be given to the coherence of the presented costs with the costs included in forms F1-F7.

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 **A2** and **A5**.

Beneficiaries' short name: As in the *LIFE+* technical forms **A2** 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 **A3** and **A4**.

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 **A3**.

Associated beneficiary contribution: Indicate the financial contribution from each associated beneficiary, as in the *LIFE+* technical form **A4.** 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[12] may be funded only to the extent that they relate to the cost of project implementation activities that relevant the public body would not have carried out had the project concerned not been undertaken. The staff in question must be specifically seconded

[12] The definition of civil servant includes permanent employees from public bodies.

to a 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 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 during both the selection phase and at the time of the final payment.

The cost of temporary personnel specifically recruited for the duration of the project and exclusively dedicated to its implementation shall not be taken into account in the calculation of the minimum amount of the public bodies' contribution mentioned above, on condition that:

(a) The contracts of such personnel do not begin before the date of signature of the grant agreement, nor finish after the end date of the project.

(b) The contracts mention the LIFE+ project specifically.

(c) The personnel concerned are employed exclusively for the implementation of tasks foreseen in the LIFE+ project.

Beneficiary N°: Please use the number given in the Coordinating beneficiary and Associated beneficiary profiles in the *LIFE+* technical forms **A2** and **A5**.

Action N°: Please insert the number of the action/s in which this member of personnel will be involved.

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. Indicating both details is absolutely necessary. (Ex. Temporary contract/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/Role in the project: You should identify each professional category in a clear and unambiguous manner to enable the Commission to monitor the labour resources allocated to the project. When the professional category is not explanatory of the role that the person will play in the project, you should also include this information.. *Examples of staff categories/roles in the project are: senior engineer/project manager; technician/data analysis, administrative/financial management 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. Please note that any daily rate over 400€ should be justified.

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
Less illness/other (when relevant)	10 days
= Total productive days	215 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 **A2** and **A5**.

Action N°: Please insert the number of the action/s to which the costs are related.

Destination (From / To): Identify the origin and destination of the trips. 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'). Identify the number of trips foreseen and the number of people who will be travelling as well as the duration of the travel in days.

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.

In absence of internal rules governing the reimbursement the use of an organisation's own cars (in opposition to private cars) costs related to the use these 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, edition of a book or renting of material 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 **A2** and **A5**.

Action N°: Please insert the number of the action/s to which the costs are related.

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.

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 **A2** and **A5**.

Action N°: Please insert the number of the action/s to which the costs are related.

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 **A2** and **A5**.

Action N°: Please insert the number of the action/s to which the costs are related.

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

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

A prototype is an infrastructure and/or equipment specifically created for the implementation of the project and that has never been commercialised and/or is not available as a serial product. It may not be used for commercial purposes during the life of the project and for five years after the project ends. See article 25.7 of the Common Provisions.

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.

Beneficiary N°: Please use the number given in the Coordinating Beneficiary and Associated Beneficiary profiles in the *LIFE+* technical forms **A2 and A5**.

Action N°: Please insert the number of the action/s to which the costs are related.

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

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

Costs for land purchase or long-term lease of lands/use rights are only eligible for Life+ Nature projects.

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.**Beneficiary N°**: Please use the number given in the Coordinating Beneficiary and Associated Beneficiary profiles in the *LIFE+* technical forms **A2** and **A5**.

Action N°: Please insert the number of the action/s to which the costs are related.

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.

Form F6 – Costs for consumables

General: Consumables declared on this form must relate to the purchase, manufacture, repair or use of 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, repair of durable goods given that this is not capitalised and that they are purchased for the project or used 100% for the project etc.). 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.

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 **A2** and **A5**.

Action N°: Please insert the number of the action/s to which the costs are related.

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, , insurance costs when these costs originate solely from the project implementation), etc. should be placed here. 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 and to the evaluation guide for more information

Beneficiary N°: Please use the number given in the Coordinating beneficiary and Associated beneficiary profiles in the *LIFE+* technical forms **A2** and **A5**.

Action N°: Please insert the number of the action/s to which the costs are related.

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 inadmissible 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 or signatures are missing**

   Forms A1, A2, A3, A7, A8, B1, B2a, B2b, B2c, B2d, B3, B4, B5, C1a, C1b, C1c, C1d, C1e, 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, forms A4 (associated beneficiary declaration) and A5 (associated beneficiary profile) are 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.

   All mandatory signatures should be present.

   NB Where technical application 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.
4. **The coordinating beneficiary is a private body, but has not submitted the obligatory balance sheet and profit and loss account and, where relevant, an audit report or auditor-certified balance sheet and profit and loss account.**
5. **The coordinating beneficiary is a public body, but has not submitted the obligatory public body declaration.**
6. **The coordinating beneficiary or any of the associated beneficiaries is not established in the European Union.**
7. **The project proposal was submitted to the European Commission after the deadline.**

Inadmissible 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 guidelines for applicants).

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 A3, A4, A6 and A8 signed and dated?
4. Is form B1 at least in English?
5. Have you included detailed maps (size 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 1/1/2010?
8. Have you included a safety margin at the end of the project to allow for unforeseen delays?
9. Are all beneficiaries legally registered in the EU?
10. Have you determined whether they are "public bodies" or "private commercial organisations" or "private non-commercial organisations (including NGOs)"?
11. Have you included the mandatory annexes (annual balance sheet and profit and loss account, audit report or auditor-certified balance sheet and profit and loss account, simplified financial statement for coordinating beneficiaries that are not public bodies; public body declaration for coordinating beneficiaries that are public bodies)?
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 (or does your proposal fall under the possible exceptions)? 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 the correct file format? Don't forget the financial forms and obligatory annexes (where required)!

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? 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?

7. ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: list of national authorities for LIFE+

Note: unless indicated otherwise in the following table, the deadline for submitting LIFE+ proposals to a national authority is the 21st November 2008.

Member State	Name and address
Austria	**Nature & Biodiversity** • Burgenland Amt der Burgenländischen Landesregierung Abt. 5/III, Natur- und Umweltschutz Europaplatz 1 7000 Eisenstadt Tel +43 2682 600 2812 post.abteilung5@bgld.gv.at • Kärnten Amt der Kärntner Landesregierung Abteilung 20 Landesplanung Unterabteilung Naturschutz Wulfengasse 13 9021 Klagenfurt Tel +43 463 536 32041 post.abd20@ktn.gv.at • Oberösterreich Amt der OÖ Landesregierung Naturschutzabteilung Bahnhofplatz 1 4010 Linz Tel +43 732 7720 11877 n.post@ooe.gv.at • Niederösterreich Amt der NÖ Landesregierung Naturschutzabteilung Landhausplatz 1 3010 St. Pölten Tel +43 2742 9005 14243 postru5@noel.gv.at • Salzburg Amt der Salzburger Landesregierung Naturschutzabteilung Postfach 527 5010 Salzburg Tel +43 662 8042 5537 naturschutz@salzburg.gv.at

	• Steiermark Amt der Steiermärkischen Landesregierung Fachabteilung 13C Naturschutz Karmeliterplatz 2 8010 Graz Tel +43 316 877 2652 fa13c@stmk.gv.at • Tirol Amt der Tiroler Landesregierung Abteilung Umweltschutz Eduard Wallnöfer Platz 1 6020 Innsbruck Tel +43 512 508 4350 umweltschutz@tirol.gv.at • Vorarlberg Amt der Vorarlberger Landesregierung Abteilung Umweltschutz Jahnstrasse 13-15 6901 Bregenz Tel +43 5574 511 24505 umwelt@vorarlberg.at • Wien Umweltschutzabteilung - MA 22 Dredsner Strasse 4 1200 Wien Tel +43 1 4000 73566 / 73797 post@ma22.wien.gv.at • for general information on LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity, please consult: Mr Gerhard SIGMUND-SCHWACH Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management Abteilung II/4 Stubenbastei 5 A – 1010 Vienna Tel +43 1 51522 1416 gerhard.sigmund-Schwach@lebensministerium.at **Environment Policy & Governance, Information & Communication** Ms. Margareta STUBENRAUCH Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management Abteilung V/8 Stubenbastei 5 A – 1010 Vienna Tel +43 1 51522 1311 margareta.stubenrauch@lebensministerium.at

Belgium	**Nature and Biodiversity** Ms Els MARTENS Agentschap voor Natuur en Bos Centrale Diensten Koning Albert II-laan 20 bus 8 1000 Brussel Tel +32 2 553 76 86 els.martens@lne.vlaanderen.be **Environment Policy & Governance, Information & Communication** Ms Herlinde VANHOUTTE Santé publique, sécurité de la chaîne alimentaire et environnement Direction Générale Environnement Affaires internationales et horizontales place Victor Horta 40 bte 10 B-1060 Bruxelles Tel +32 2 524 96 14 herlinde.vanhoutte@health.fgov.be
Bulgaria	**Nature and Biodiversity** Ms Raina HARDALOVA Head of Biodiversity Department National Nature Protection Service Directorate Ministry of Environment and Water 22 Maria Louisa Blvd BG-1000 Sofia Tel +359 2 940 6163 hardalovar@moew.government.bg **Environment Policy & Governance** Ms Ganya HRISTOVA Head of Environment Strategy and Programmes Department Strategy, EU Affairs Coordination and International Cooperation Directorate Ministry of Environment and Water 67 Gladston Street BG-1000 Sofia Tel +359 2 940 6245 ganyah@moew.government.bg **Information & Communication** Ms Nelly ILIEVA State Expert Strategy, EU Affairs Coordination and International Cooperation Directorate 67 Gladston Street BG-1000 Sofia Tel +359 2 940 6299 IlievaNelly@moew.government.bg
Cyprus	Ms. Eleni STYLIANOPOULOU Environment Officer Environment Service

	Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment CY - 1411 Nicosia Tel +357 22 40 89 29 estylianopoulou@environment.moa.gov.cy
Czech Republic	Mr Michal PETRUS EU programmes Unit Head Senior Programme Officer for Environment Sector Department of EU Funds Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic Vrsovicka 65 CZ -100 10 Prague 10 Tel +420 267 122 577 Michal_Petrus@env.cz
Denmark	**Nature and Biodiversity, Information & Communication** Mr Olaf G. CHRISTIANI Management Division - Nature Management Section Danish Forest and Nature Agency Ministry of Environment Haraldsgade 53 DK - 2100 København Ø Tel + 45 72542207 sns@sns.dk **Environment Policy & Governance** Mr Gert SØNDERSKOV HANSEN Danish Environmental Protection Agency Ministry of Environment Strandgade 29 DK - 1401 København K Tel + 45 72544589 gesha@mst.dk Official e-mails should be sent to: mst@sns.dk
Estonia	Ms Annika VAHERSALU Senior Officer Foreign Financing Department Ministry of the Environment Narva mnt 7a EE - 15172 Tallinn tel +372 6262 961 annika.vahersalu@envir.ee
Finland	Mr Pekka HARJU-AUTTI Ministry of Environment, Physical Planning & Public Works Kasarminkatu 25 FIN - 00023 Valtioneuvosto Tel +358 50 365 2359 (mobile) pekka.harju-autti@ymparisto.fi
France	Mr Nicolas SORNIN-PETIT Ministère de l'écologie, du développement et de l'aménagement durables Secrétariat général Service des affaires internationales Bureau des affaires européennes

	20, avenue de Ségur F - 75007 Paris Tel +33 1 42 19 16 06 lifeplusfrance@ecologie.gouv.fr
Germany	**Nature and Biodiversity** Herr Holger GALAS Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz und Reaktorsicherheit Robert-Schuman-Platz 3 D - 53175 Bonn +49 228 305 2623 holger.galas@bmu.bund.de Regional contact points Mr Bodo KRAUKß Ministerium für Ernährung und Ländlichen Raum Baden-Württemberg Referat 57 Kernerplatz 10 D - 70182 Stuttgart Tel.: +49 711 126 2351 Bodo.Krauss@mlr.bwl.de Mr Harald LIPPERT Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Umwelt, Gesundheit und Verbraucherschutz Rosenkavalierplatz 2 D - 81925 München Tel.: +49 89 9214 3207 harald.lippert@stmugv.bayern.de Mr Holger BRANDT Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung Berlin Referat I E 21 Am Köllnischen Park 3 D - 10179 Berlin Tel.: +49 30 9025 1123 Holger.Brandt@senstadt.berlin.de Ms Brigitta HAASE Ministerium für Ländliche Entwicklung, Umwelt und Verbraucherschutz des Landes Brandenburg Referat 45 Heinrich-Mann-Allee 103 D - 14473 Potsdam Tel.: +49 331 866 7178 brigitta.haase@mluv.brandenburg.de Ms Elke KAHRS-MINK / Mr Henrich KLUGKIST Senator für Umwelt, Bau Verkehr und Europa der Freien Hansestadt Bremen Naturschutzabteilung Ansgaritorstraße 2 D - 28195 Bremen

	Tel.: +40 421 361 6660; +49 421 361 6661 Henrich.Klugkist@umwelt.bremen.de; Elke.Kahrs-Mink@umwelt.bremen.de Mr Volker SCHMÜLLING Hessisches Ministerium für Umwelt, ländlichen Raum und Verbraucherschutz Referat VI 7 A Mainzer Straße 82 D - 65189 Wiesbaden Tel.: +49 611 815 1676 volker.schmuelling@hmulv.hessen.de Mr Olaf OSTERMANN Ministerium für Landwirtschaft, Umwelt und Verbraucherschutz Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Abteilung Naturschutz und Landschaftspflege Paulshöher Weg 1 D – 19053 Schwerin Tel.: +49 385 588 6641 o.ostermann@lu.mv-regierung.de Ms Dr. Renate THOLE Niedersächsisches Ministerium für Umwelt und Klimaschutz Archivstraße 2 D - 30169 Hannover Tel.: +49 511 120 3386 renate.thole@mu.niedersachsen.de Ms Ingrid RUDOLPH Ministerium für Umwelt und Naturschutz, Landwirtschaft und Verbraucherschutz Nordrhein-Westfalen Referat III 5 Schwannstraße 3 D - 40476 Düsseldorf Tel.: +49 211 4566 547 Ingrid.Rudolph@munlv.nrw.de Mr Joachim GERSTNER Ministerium für Umwelt des Saarlandes Referat D/2 Keplerstraße 18 D - 66117 Saarbrücken Tel.: +49 681 501 4747 j.gerstner@umwelt.saarland.de Ms Karin APPLER Sächsisches Staatsministerium für Umwelt und Landwirtschaft Referat 23 Archivstraße 1 D - 01097 Dresden Tel.: +49 351 564 6851 Karin.Appler@smul.sachsen.de Ms Jutta HARTMANN / Ms Christine GAUDITZ

	Ministerium für Landwirtschaft und Umwelt des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt Olvenstedter Straße 4 D - 39108 Magdeburg Tel.: +49 391 567 3485; +49 391 567 3428 jutta.hartmann@mlu.sachsen-anhalt.de; christine.gauditz@mlu.sachsen-anhalt.de Mr Thorsten ELSCHER / Ms Heike ROSE Ministerium für Landwirtschaft, Umwelt und ländliche Räume des Landes Schleswig-Holstein Referat 50 Mercatorstraße 3 D – 24106 Kiel Tel.: +49 431 988 7330; +49 431 988 7123 Thorsten.Elscher@mlur.landsh.de; Heike.Rose@mlur.landsh.de Ms Hilke HÖHN Thüringer Ministerium für Landwirtschaft, Naturschutz und Umwelt Referat „Europa, Internationales Beethovenstraße 3 D - 99096 Erfurt Tel.: +49 361 379 9131 Hilke.Hoehn@tmlnu.thueringen.de **Environment Policy & Governance** **Information & Communication** Ms Andrea DEGNER Umweltministerium Baden-Württemberg Referat 14 Kernerplatz 9 D – 70182 Stuttgart Tel: +49 711 126-2719 / +49 711 126-2718 E-mail: andrea.degner@um.bwl.de Mr Siegfried HEISE / Mr Ernst POLLETER Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Umwelt, Gesundheit und Verbraucherschutz Rosenkavalierplatz 2 D – 81925 München Tel: +49 89 9214-2403, +49 89 9214-2165 E-mail: siegfried.heise@stmugv.bayern.de E-mail: ernst.polleter@stmugv.bayern.de Ms Sybille SCHULTZ-HÜSKES Berliner Senatsverwaltung für Gesundheit, Umwelt und Verbraucherschutz Brückenstr. 6 D – 10179 Berlin Tel: +49 30 9025-2492 Fax: +49 30 9025-2518 E-mail: sybille.schultz-hueskes@senguv.berlin.de

	Ms Dr. Silvia RABOLD Ministerium für Landwirtschaft, Umweltschutz und Raumordnung des Landes Brandenburg Referat 12 Heinrich-Mann-Allee 103 D - 14473 Potsdam Tel: +49 331 866-7317 E-mail: silvia.rabold@mlur.brandenburg.de Ms Rita WHALLEY / Ms Gertrud SCHUMPP Der Senator für Umwelt, Verkehr und Europa der Freien Hansestadt Bremen Referat 20 Ansgaritorstraße 2 D - 28195 Bremen Tel: +49 421 361-59504, +49 421 361-2990 E-mail: rita.whalley@umwelt.bremen.de E-mail: gertrud.schumpp@umwelt.bremen.de Mr Klaus de BUHR Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg Behörde für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt Präsidialabteilung, Bundes- und Europaangelegenheiten - P31 Stadthausbrücke 8 D - 20355 Hamburg Tel: +49 40 42840 2584 E-mail: klaus.debuhr@bsu.hamburg.de Mr Günter LANS Hessisches Ministerium für Umwelt, ländlichen Raum und Verbraucherschutz Referat I1 Mainzer Straße 80 D - 65189 Wiesbaden Tel: +49 611 815-1153 Fax: +49 611 815-1941 E-mail: guenter.lanz@hmulv.hessen.de Mr Helmut UNGER HA Hessen Agentur GmbH Abteilung Außenwirtschaft Abraham-Lincoln Straße 38-42 D – 65189 Wiesbaden Tel: +49 611 774 86 50 Fax: +49 611 774 83 13 E-mail: helmut.unger@hessen-agentur.de Mr Stephan FÖRSTER Umweltministerium Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Schloßstraße 6-8 D – 19053 Schwerin Tel: +49 385 588-8411 Fax: +49 385 588-8042 E-mail: stephan.foerster@um.mv-regierung.de

	Ms Dr. Renate THOLE Niedersächsisches Umweltministerium Archivstraße 2 D - 30169 Hannover Tel: +49 511 120-3386 E-mail: renate.thole@mu.niedersachsen.de Mr Dr. Uwe WOLF / Ms Tanja TYRANN-WEYERS Ministerium für Umwelt und Naturschutz, Landwirtschaft und Verbraucherschutz des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen Referat VII-3 (Europa und Internationale Angelegenheiten) Schwannstraße 3 D - 40476 Düsseldorf Tel: +49 211 4566-607, +49 211 4566-638 E-mail: uwe.wolf@munlv.nrw.de E-mail: tanja.tyrann-weyers@munlv.nrw.de Ms Ilona MENDE-DAUM Ministerium für Umwelt, Forsten und Verbraucherschutz des Landes Rheinland-Pfalz Kaiser-Friedrich-Straße 1 D – 55116 Mainz Tel: +49 6131 16-2627 E-mail: ilona.mende-daum@mufv.rlp.de Mr F. WARKEN Ministerium für Umwelt des Saarlandes Keplerstraße 18 D – 66117 Saarbrücken Tel: +49 681 501-4725 E-mail: f.warken@umwelt.saarland.de Ms Petra DÖRFEL Sächsisches Staatsministerium für Umwelt und Landwirtschaft Referat 23 (Förderstrategie) Archivstraße 1 D – 01097 Dresden Tel: +49 351 564-6830 E-mail: poststelle@smul.sachsen.de Ms Jutta HARTMANN / Ms Christine GAUDITZ Ministerium für Landwirtschaft und Umwelt des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt Olvenstedter Straße 4 D – 39108 Magdeburg Tel: +49 391 567-3485, +49 391 567-3428 Fax: +49 391 567 3409 E-mail: jutta.hartmann@mlu.sachsen-anhalt.de E-mail: christine.gauditz@mlu.sachsen-anhalt.de Mr Norbert HÖLCKER / Ms Karin PFAFF Ministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz und Landwirtschaft des Landes Schleswig-Holstein Mercatorstraße 3

	D – 24106 Kiel Tel: +49 431 988-7151, +49 431 988-7108 E-mail: norbert.hoelcker@mlur.landsh.de E-mail: karin.pfaff@mlur.landsh.de Ms Hilke HÖHN / Mr Uwe LENZER Thüringer Ministerium für Landwirtschaft, Naturschutz und Umwelt Referat 16 Beethovenplatz 3 D – 99096 Erfurt Tel: +49 361 3799-156, +49 361 3799-178 hilke.hoehn@tmlnu.thueringen.de uwe.lenzer@tmlnu.thueringen.de
Greece	Ms Artemis GRYLLIA Ministry for the Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works Division of the Air Pollution and Noise Control Patission 147 str. Greece - 11251 Athens Tel +30 1 210 8646065, 301 210 8650053 a.grillia@dpers.minenv.gr
Hungary	Ms Zsuzsanna CZEGER Ministry of Environment and Water Development Directorate PO Box 351 HU-1394 Budapest Tel +36 224 9120 czeger@mail.kvvm.hu
Ireland	Mr Brian EARLEY Sustainable Development Unit Room 251 Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government Custom House, Room 251 Dublin 1 Ireland Tel: +353 1 8882486 brian.earley@environ.ie
Italy	Ms. Giuliana GASPARRINI Ministero dell'Ambiente e della Tutela del Territorio e del Mare Direzione per la Ricerca Ambientale e lo Sviluppo Direttore Divisione V Via Cristoforo Colombo 44 I - 00147 Roma Tel: +39 06 57228252 e-mail: lifeplus@minambiente.it
Latvia	Mr. Valdis BISTERS Ministry of the Environment Peldu iela 25 LV – 1494 Riga Fax: +371 7026 417 E-mail: valdis.bisters@vidm.gov.lv
Lithuania	Ms Sigita UMBRASAITÉ

	Chief Desk Office of the EU Funds Management A. Jaksto St 4/9 LT - 01105 Vilnius Tel +370 5 266 35 34 s.umbrasaite@am.lt
Luxembourg	Mr Frank WOLFF / Ms Sandra CELLINA Ministère de l'Environnement 18 Montée de la Pétrusse L - 2918 Luxembourg Tel +352 478 68 27 / +352 2478 6820 frank.wolff@mev.etat.lu / sandra.cellina@mev.etat.lu
Malta	Mr Emanuel BORG Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment Barriera Wharf MT – Valletta CMR02 Tel + 356 2295 2213 emanuel.borg@gov.mt
Netherlands	**Nature and Biodiversity** Ms. Maaike BELD SenterNovem EG-Liaison Postbus 93144 NL - 2509 AC Den Haag Tel: +31 (70) 373 50 52 m.beld@egl.nl Ms Marjan VAN MEERLOO Ministerie van Landbouw, Natuur en Voedselkwaliteit Directie Natuur Postbus 20401 NL - 2500 EK Den Haag Tel: +31 (70) 378 43 64 m.van.meerloo@minlnv.nl **Environment Policy & Governance** Mrs Nicole KERKHOF-DAMEN SenterNovem Postbus 8242 NL - 3503 RE Utrecht Tel: +31 (30) 214 71 23 n.kerkhof@SenterNovem.nl Ms Marjan VAN MEERLOO Ministerie van Landbouw, Natuur en Voedselkwaliteit Directie Natuur Postbus 20401 NL - 2500 EK Den Haag Tel: +31 (70) 378 43 64 m.van.meerloo@minlnv.nl **Information & Communication** Ms. Madelon DE RUITER SenterNovem

	EG-Liaison Postbus 93144 NL - 2509 AC Den Haag Tel: +31 (70) 373 51 54 m.de.ruiter@egl.nl Ms Marjan VAN MEERLOO Ministerie van Landbouw, Natuur en Voedselkwaliteit Directie Natuur Postbus 20401 NL - 2500 EK Den Haag Tel: +31 (70) 378 43 64 m.van.meerloo@minlnv.nl
Poland	Mr Bartosz SZESZKO Ministerstwo Środowiska, Departament Infrastruktury i Środowiska ul. Wawelska 52-54 PL-00922 Warszawa Tel. (+48) 22 57 92 417 bartosz.szeszko@mos.gov.pl
Portugal	Ms Julieta SÃO MARCOS Agência Portuguesa do Ambiente rua do Murgueira Zambujal 9/9A P-2611-865 Amadora Tel.: +351 214 728 287 E-mail: julieta.marcos@iambiente.pt
Romania	Ms Nicoleta DOBRE Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MESD) 12 Libertatii Blvd, district 5 RO – Bucharest 040129 Tel: +40 21 311 71 54 nicoleta.dobre@mmediu.ro
Slovakia	Ms Silvia HALKOVA Ms Katarina LINKESOVA Department of Project Management The Division of Environmental Programmes and Projects Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic Namestie L. Stura 1 SK – 812 35 Bratislava Tel +421 2 59 56 2400 halkova.silvia@enviro.gov.sk linkesova.katarina@enviro.gov.sk
Slovenia	Ms Julijana LEBEZ LOZEJ Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning Dunajska c. 48 SI - 1000 Ljubljana Tel + 386 1 309 4556 julijana.lebez-lozej@gov.si
Spain	Mr Miguel AYMERICH HUYGHUES Ministerio de Medio Ambiente Subdirector General de Vida Silvestre

	Gran Vía de San Francisco 4 E - 28071 Madrid Tel: +34 91 5964614 maymerich@mma.es
Sweden	Ms Anita MOBERG Swedish Environmental Protection Agency Valhallavagen 195 S - 106 48 Stockholm Tel +46 8 698 10 52 anita.moberg@naturvardsverket.se
United Kingdom	Mr Thomas HUDSON Beta Technology Ltd Area 1B Barclay Court, Doncaster Carr UK-Doncaster DN4 5HZ Tel: +44 1302 322 633 Mobile: +44 7501 463 316 tom.hudson@betatechnology.co.uk

ANNEX 2: Contact address of the European Commission

All LIFE+ project proposals must be submitted via the national competent authorities.

The following address shall be used:

LIFE+ 2008 call for proposals DG Environment BU-9 2/1 B – 1049 Brussels BELGIUM

Envelopes, parcels or packages delivered by private courier should be sent to the Central Mail Service:

LIFE+ 2008 call for proposals Avenue du Bourget, n° 1 (BU-9 2/1) B - 1140 Brussels BELGIUM

ANNEX 3: Calendar of the LIFE+ 2008 evaluation and selection procedure

Date or period	Activity
21/11/2008	Deadline for applicants to send proposals to Member State authorities
05/01/2009	Deadline for the Member States to forward proposals to the European Commission
January to July 2009	Admissibility, exclusion and eligibility, evaluation and revision of the proposals
31/12/2009	Deadline for signing grant agreements
01/01/2010	Earliest possible starting date for the 2008 projects

ANNEX 4: Important links

a) *General documents for all beneficiaries:*

- **Regulation 614/2007 of the European Parliament and the Council of 23/05/2007 (LIFE+)**
- **Guide for the evaluation LIFE+ project proposals 2008**
- **LIFE+ 2008 - Financial application Forms**
- **"Simplified Financial Statement" (to be submitted if the coordinating beneficiary is not a public body)**
- **Public body declaration (to be submitted if the coordinating beneficiary is a public body)**
- **Model Grant agreement**
- **Common Provisions for LIFE+ projects**
- **Link to the LIFE+ Communication toolbox**
- **Project output indicator tables**
- **National Annual Priorities**
- **Financial Regulation**

b) *LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity:*

- **LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity – Guidelines for applicants 2008**
- **LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity 2008 – Technical application forms**
- **Commission Communication COM (2006) 216 final: Halting the loss of Biodiversity by 2010 – and beyond**
- **Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna**
- **Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds**
- **List of priority bird species of Directive 79/409/EEC considered as priority for funding under LIFE+**

c) *LIFE+ Environment Policy and Governance:*

- **LIFE+ Environmental Policy and Governance – Guidelines for applicants 2008**
- **LIFE+ Environmental Policy and Governance 2008 - Technical application Forms**

d) *LIFE+ Information and Communication:*

- **LIFE+ Information and Communication – Guidelines for applicants 2008**
- **LIFE+ Information and Communication 2008 - Technical application Forms**