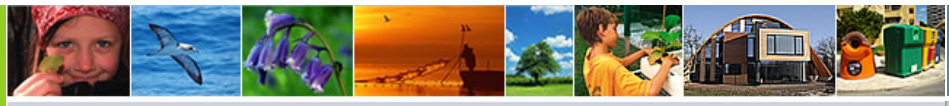
LIFE Programme



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- Project database
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- Best projects
- Integrated projects
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- Natura 2000 sites

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News: October 2017

Bringing zero emission nature protection areas to life

Car converted to electric power
Photo: IfaS

24 October 2017 Can nature protection be climate-friendly? Can climate-friendly nature protection create jobs and growth? How can EU countries achieve their commitments to halt climate change? **LIFE IP-ZENAPA** is a pioneering LIFE Integrated Project that is helping to answer all those vital questions. It is doing so by putting innovation into practice to cut greenhouse gas emissions in nature protection areas across Germany and parts of Luxembourg.

The scope and scale of the project is enabling wind turbines, solar arrays, biogas, district heating, electric vehicles, energy-efficient lighting and other clean technologies to be deployed in nature parks and neighbouring towns and villages as never before. And these investments are expected to have benefits in terms of creating jobs, lowering the cost of lighting, transport and heating and enabling sustainable development of rural communities, as **this new video** from the LIFE Communications Team shows.

Solar arrays
Photo: IfaS

"**ZENAPA** aims at proving that the protection of our ecosystems, protection of resilience can be done together with climate protection implementation," explains project leader, Professor Peter Heck. "Wind turbines, solar technologies, biomass technologies like biogas can be introduced into our systems without compromising nature protection issues.

It's actually vice versa, we can help nature by properly introducing those technologies in the system and saving the climate."

Meeting big environmental challenges

"Meeting the big environment challenges of today is not easy. As part of its climate protection plan Germany has committed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 95% by 2050.

How do you realise such a strategy? That's where LIFE Integrated Projects can help. They can secure the funds and coordination needed to make this vision a reality," says Angelo Salsi of EASME.

For more information about Integrated Projects, visit these **dedicated pages** on the LIFE website.

All I need is the air I can't breathe

Awareness campaign in schools
Photo: LIFE Index-Air

23 October 2017 LIFE projects are helping bring down the number of premature deaths linked to low air quality. Recent statistics from the European Environment Agency show that nearly 400 000 people died as a result of air pollution in Europe last year. Those numbers remain high, but they are falling.

In its latest **report**, the European Environmental Agency shows that the EU has reduced its emission of toxic gases and particulate matter. It states that most forms of air pollution have followed a downward trend in Europe for over a decade. This is partly due to the development of more efficient technology that allows cars and factories to run while burning less fuel. Still, not all regions have benefited equally from this technological progress. According to the report, air quality policies have proven instrumental in bringing about improvements.

"We can both tackle pollution and improve our quality of life," said EEA Executive Director Hans Bruyninckx. But doing so, he says, will require investment in cleaner transport, energy and agriculture.

- News
  - News archive: 2018
  - News archive: 2017
  - News archive: 2016
- LIFE newsletter
- Events
- Press room

Given strains on national treasuries and the urgency of the matter, governments are looking for practical solutions to keep their citizens safe.

Eyes on the skies

Sampling campaign in Lisbon
Photo: LIFE Index-Air

Dr Marta Almeida at the Instituto Superior Técnico in Lisbon, Portugal, argues that the most efficient way of solving the problem is to first understand it. Europe has gotten better at reducing overall emissions of gases and small particles in urban areas. But as scientists weed out the most toxic of pollutants, they must now pinpoint which of the remaining suspects harm public health the most.

As part of the LIFE-funded **Index-Air project**, Dr Almeida is helping policy makers put numbers on the health impact and well-being of the EU population. To do so, the project is combining mathematical models with data on the particles and chemical compounds found in our environment – both indoors and outside.

"Current understanding is that particles smaller than 10 micrometres harm people when inhaled, but we don't know which of these particles are the most dangerous and what measures can be taken to reduce exposure to them" said Dr Almeida. The tool LIFE Index-Air is developing will look at the full picture, from emissions and the atmosphere to health impacts, exposures and doses. According to Dr Almeida, studying what life-threatening particles are made of, rather than just looking at their size, may reveal which communities face the highest risk and how to protect them.

This knowledge will help policy makers focus their efforts. With one in 20 city dwellers in Europe living in areas with levels of particulate matter above EU limits, and four out of every five exposed to concentrations above the World Health Organisation's guidelines, plenty more can be done to reduce the impact of EU air pollution. Over the coming 3 years, the **LIFE Index-Air project** will roll out the monitoring tool across European cities, making it easier to cooperate both internationally and locally towards this objective.

LIFE experience at COP23

Photo:MaxiMiseR

23 October 2017 Civil society is helping climate negotiators thrash out plans to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions. From 6-17 November, nearly 200 countries will meet at the COP23 climate talks in Bonn. Together they must figure out how to keep the temperature on Earth within two degrees of what it was before the industrial revolution. The scale of this challenge calls on new planning skills. As part of the LIFE-funded project MaxiMiseR, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) is providing countries with tools to craft **long-term strategies** for reducing their carbon footprint.

The Paris Agreement in 2015 has clarified how little greenhouse gas world leaders, and the public that they represent, are still prepared to emit. But as countries scramble to clean up their act, policy makers must answer thorny questions on who will get to emit it, and who should pay for the damage that climate change is already causing. On 8 November, a side event at COP23 will introduce the insight of the **MaxiMiseR project** on the matter.

Carbon markets

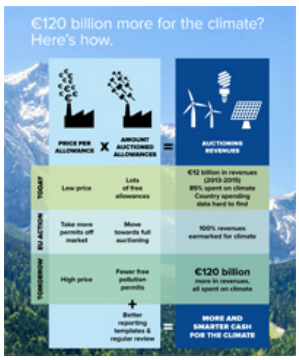

Photo:MaxiMiseR

The economical way of dividing these rights and duties is to issue limited numbers of emission permits and share them out on the basis of how much each polluter is prepared to pay for them. Climate laws could then invest the funds collected from permits in technologies needed to phase out greenhouse gases altogether, or in measures to help emerging economies adapt to a climate that others have changed for them. In principle, this market approach should wind down greenhouse gas emissions while also financing the shift towards a fairer, more sustainable way of style.

In practice, markets can also fail. The EU launched the world's biggest Emissions Trading System in 2005, and its results have so far proven underwhelming. MaxiMiseR calculates that over the 2013-2015 period, it raised just €12 billion and has yet to dent the region's overall greenhouse gas emissions. Under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, developed nations agreed to jointly mobilize $100 billion per year to fight climate change.

"Stop saying that the EU is implementing the Paris Agreement," said Bas Eickhout, a Green MEP. "We are not on track. We have to do more."