Directorate General Environment, Unit E.4. LIFE

# **Ex-Post Evaluation of Projects and Activities Financed under the LIFE Programme**

Country-by-country analysis Ireland

July 2009







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Ireland

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The views expressed are those of the Consultant and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Commission.

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#### 1 Executive summary

Ireland has been involved in the LIFE programme since LIFE I. A total of 48 projects have been financed since the UK's participation in LIFE, of which 25 projects (17 Environment and eight Nature) fall within the period covered by this evaluation (1996 to 2006). Of these five (four Nature and one Environment) were still ongoing in 2008. Irish LIFE projects generally attain the expected results and are technically viable. The majority have addressed a variety of environmental and conservation priorities that find a context in the national and EU strategic frameworks, including habitat conservation and management, and offsetting negative suburban impacts on the environment in times of significant economic growth.

#### 2 Introduction

This country report on the implementation of the LIFE Programme in Ireland is part of the overall ex-post evaluation of the LIFE Programme. The evaluation was commissioned in July 2008 and covers all LIFE projects initiated in the period 1996-2006. The overall objective of the evaluation is to assess the relevance and impact of the activities and projects financed under the LIFE Programme. The evaluation comprises country studies in all Member States except Bulgaria, which has never had any LIFE projects. This report documents the analysis carried out concerning the implementation of the LIFE Programme in Ireland. The ex-post evaluation focuses on assessing the effect of the LIFE Programme on Europe's nature and environment through looking at results and impacts of LIFE projects implemented under the Nature (NAT) and Environment (ENV) components. The results and impacts have further been assessed along three main evaluation criteria:

- Effectiveness, i.e. the extent to which planned objectives have been reached;
- Sustainability, i.e. the extent to which positive impacts have continued or are likely to continue;
- Utility, i.e. the extent to which impacts address key environmental needs and priorities in the EU and for the stakeholders concerned.

#### 3 Environmental policy overview

Making Ireland's Development Sustainable (2002) is a five-year review of the original 1997 strategy, and takes account of the country's earlier significant economic growth, and changing population, consumption and settlement patterns. Overall strategic policy priorities directly related to environment and nature comprise reducing eutrophication of inland waters, protecting the urban environment particularly from transport-related pressures, controlling greenhouse gas emissions and biodiversity and natural resource protection. The sustainable development strategy is drawn up in the context of the  $6^{th}$  EAP, and its key environmental priorities.

The National Biodiversity Plan addresses the pressures of human influence on Ireland's biodiversity, and acknowledges the need to combine efforts with a nature conservation policy and the issues of general heritage. With regard to environment and health, the strategy targets water quality, and while it is building on recorded improvements in river and bathing water, it equally prioritises local contamination of groundwater and the tendency to eutrophication of tidal waters. Reference to the EU Water Framework Directive is paramount.

#### 4 Overview of LIFE projects in Ireland

In the period 1996 to 2006, the LIFE Programme has co-financed 25 projects in Ireland including eight Nature projects and 17 Environment projects. A full overview table of the projects is provided in Appendix 1. Table 4.1 provides a brief summary of the projects. This is supplemented with additional summary tables in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3.

Table 4.1 Overview of LIFE projects 1996-2006 in Ireland

	Number of projects	Total LIFE contribution (million EUR)	Main themes cov- ered <sup>1</sup>	Average LIFE con- tribution per project (million EUR)	Average project duration (years)
Environment	17	10.2	Natural resources and waste (65%)	0.6	3.8
Nature	8	11.8	Habitats (63%)	1.5	4.8

Source: BUTLER

The **LIFE Environment** projects co-financed by the LIFE Programme targeted innovation and demonstration technologies in various fields such as emissions, energy recovery, and waste. Projects also focused on improving urban environments. Common project beneficiary types include local authorities and SMEs, which accounted for nine projects in total.

The **LIFE Nature** projects co-financed by the LIFE Programme during 1996-2006 comprise habitat conservation and management, SACs and SPAs management and monitoring, plus wetlands, bogs and woodland protection. The average commitment per project of approximately EUR 1.5 million was nearly twice the overall LIFE average. Project beneficiary types comprise NGOs, public enterprises and national authorities, which nearly claim an equal share of projects, for eight projects in total.

### 5 Effects of projects implemented

#### 5.1 Results and impacts for Nature projects

LIFE Nature projects have primarily focused on site restoration and management, with emphasis on blanket bog, raised bog habitats, farmland and various types of woodland. General observations on LIFE Nature results and impact are difficult to make however as sources provided limited information for evaluation findings. Based on project studies and interviews with focal points and project managers, it is estimated that 4,900 hectares of Natura 2000 area in Ireland has been affected by LIFE. Project results have positively fed into the implementation of the Rural Environment Protection Scheme (REPS), by demonstrating cost efficiency of small-scale project activities and enhancing farmer ownership of agri-environmental improvements. LIFE Nature projects also targeted species with good results: Increased breeding and winter populations have been observed for Annex I birds, and an increased survival rate for the golden eagle. The management capacity of

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this evaluation, the LIFE projects were categorised according to the thematic structure of the LIFE+ Programme (ref. Regulation EC No. 614/2007, Annex II). The themes included for LIFE Nature: Habitat Directive, Birds Directive and Biodiversity. For LIFE Environment: Climate change, air, water, soil, forests, natural resources and waste, chemicals, urban environment, strategic approaches.

Natura 2000 has increased with LIFE Nature project outputs. A significant contribution to this has been made by an effective participatory approach of the local communities and stakeholders. A number of Nature projects have successfully integrated the replication potential of previous LIFE Nature projects in Ireland and the UK (e.g. bog restoration and SPA management planning). Yet public awareness and dissemination of LIFE Nature project outcomes have not been optimal, often due to limited time and resources.

#### 5.2 Results and impacts for Environment projects

LIFE Environment projects have developed new emission and energy technologies and approaches to waste recovering and recycling. General observations on LIFE Environment results and impact are difficult to make however, as sources provided limited information for evaluation findings. Systems to increase SO<sub>2</sub> removal and chemical use savings have proven effective. Coastal zone and suburban environmental management have been strengthened, with follow up provided to strategy recommendations. The environmental burden represented by the diary and farming sectors has been reduced, with less waste spread on agricultural land. Overall technical viability has been good. Concrete environmental improvements were achieved as a result of suburban participatory environmental planning, underlining the capacity of demonstrating a local Agenda 21 approach through effective involvement of local communities in environmental planning.

#### 6 The effectiveness of projects

Effectiveness can be assessed at two levels: the project level, which compares achievements with project objectives, and at programme level, which compares achievements with LIFE Programme objectives.<sup>2</sup>

The project-level effectiveness of **LIFE Environment** projects is assessed as medium. The majority of projects have contributed to the development of innovative and integrated techniques and methods, but rarely were project results adequately disseminated at national or international level. Projects often heavily relied on significant stakeholder participation and engagement, which proved essential to meet ambitious project goals. Innovative and bottom-up approaches have led to engaging community groups in suburban environmental planning, testing new participatory approaches to benefit conservation and awareness of the suburban (and coastal) environmental context.

**LIFE Nature** projects were able to effectively contribute to the Birds and Habitats Directives. Instrumental in their success has been the degree to which projects have successfully contributed to changing mindsets and engendering a prioritisation that favours conservation amongst community groups. LIFE Nature achieved a majority of targets and contributed to the conservation of habitats designated under the Habitat Directive, and provided innovative ways that allowed an empowerment, previously not seen, of local stakeholders most directly concerned with the habitat, in this case the farming community.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Specific objective for: LIFE Nature: to contribute to the implementation of Council Directive 79/409/EEC (Birds Directive) and Council Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive); LIFE Environment: to contribute to the development of innovative and integrated techniques and methods and to the further development of Community environmental policy.

#### 7 The sustainability of projects

**LIFE Environment** projects have achieved a medium degree of sustainability, yet this often depended on the type of project output. Tangible project outcomes generated greater sustainability than process-oriented ones. Local Planning Groups introduced new participatory methods for suburban environmental planning, integrating local knowledge into formal planning structures. At the same time, staff continuity at the time of project completion has proven crucial: maintaining enthusiasm and capacity very significantly contributed to rendering project outcomes sustainable.

**LIFE Nature** projects had NGOs, public enterprises and national authorities as lead partners, and medium sustainability has been achieved as projects have been able to maintaining momentum after completion by securing continued staff mobilisation and institutional arrangements to pursue the use of project outputs. Despite a generally strong ownership of project objectives by stakeholders, facilitating sustainability, the provision of follow up funding has proven to be the single most important element to guarantee sustained project outputs, yet this has only happened occasionally.

#### 8 The utility of projects

Irish LIFE projects have been relevant to many of the objectives and provisions in the 6<sup>th</sup> EAP. **LIFE Environment** projects have contributed to meeting provisions in EC Directives, particularly in the areas of waste, industry and product policy, and air. A number of Environment project have also contributed to furthering Agenda 21. **LIFE Nature** projects comprised objectives that are coherent with Irish conservation priorities, and have often motivated national authorities to pursue Natura 2000 objectives, thus providing a positive impetus to the designation process, but gaps have occured where national authorities did not complete formalisation of the process. LIFE Nature has contributed to demonstrating that a pro-active approach in managing Habitat-designated areas is possible and productive. Coastal habitats contained in the Habitat and Birds Directive have been addressed in terms of enhanced suburban planning with the participation of local community groups and stakeholders, with the backing of local authorities and elected representatives. LIFE financing is predominantly seen as pivotal, in that it has allowed project beneficiaries to do more and reach out further than working solely with their own means.

## Appendix 1 Comprehensive overview of LIFE Projects in Ireland

In connection with the ex-post evaluation, data was extracted from the BUTLER database of the LIFE Unit. Table 1 and Table 2 below provide an overview of the information available on each project as well as the LIFE+ theme attached by the evaluation team to the project. The budget figures for LIFE co-financing do not necessarily correspond to the actual payments made.

Table 2 Overview of LIFE Environment Projects in Ireland

ld.	Title	LIFE generation	Funding year	Start year	End year	Total budget (EUR)	LIFE co- financing budget (EUR)	Beneficiary type	International partners (yes/no)	LIFE+ theme
LIFE96 ENV/IRL/000091	Development and demonstration of an integrated Emission Control System	LIFE II	1996	1996	2000	853,238	359,258	International enterprise	No	Air
LIFE96 ENV/IRL/000098	The Treatment of Landfill Leachate Using Peat	LIFE II	1996	1997	2001	776,254	318,467	Local authority	No	Natural re- sources and waste
LIFE97 ENV/IRL/000209	The Development of a consensus Based Integrated Coastal Zone Management Strategy for Bantry Bay.	LIFE II	1997	1997	2001	846,090	351,624	Local authority	No	Soil
LIFE97 ENV/IRL/000213	Development of a sustainable management strategy for packaging and packaging waste industry.	LIFE II	1997	1997	2001	1,574,367	657,292	Public enter- prise	Yes	Natural resources and waste
LIFE97 ENV/IRL/000224	Dublin City Eco Zone	LIFE II	1997	1997	1999	524,789	223,035		No	Urban envi-
LIFE98 ENV/IRL/000487	Demonstrating the feasibility to recover and reuse complex waste solvent streams	LIFE II	1998	1998	2000	10,840,027	1,296,018	International enterprise	No	Natural re- sources and waste
LIFE98 ENV/IRL/000495	Recovering and recycling construction and demolition waste	LIFE II	1998	1998	2003	2,330,966	563,179	Local authority	No	Natural re- sources and waste

ld.	Title	LIFE generation	Funding year	Start year	End year	Total budget (EUR)	LIFE co- financing budget (EUR)	Beneficiary type	International partners (yes/no)	LIFE+ theme
LIFE99 ENV/IRL/000605	Environmental Sustainability through solvent and energy recovery technologies	LIFE II	1999	1999	2003	1,884,084	468,090	International enterprise	No	Natural re- sources and waste
LIFE99 ENV/IRL/000610	Spatial and Community Environ- mental Management Systems in Action	LIFE II	1999	1999	2003	641,378	315,935		No	Strategic Approaches
LIFE99 ENV/IRL/000611	A.N.S.W.E.R (A New Solid Waste Environmental Response)	LIFE II	1999	1999	2003	973,043	431,034	Local authority	No	Natural re- sources and waste
LIFE99 ENV/IRL/000612	Suburban Environmental Management: a Participatory Approach (SEMPA)	LIFE II	1999	1999	2003	547,594	267,835	Local authority	No	Urban envi- ronment
LIFE00 ENV/IRL/000756	The application of Environmental Performance Evaluation and EMS to achieve and report re- gional environmental improve- ment	LIFE II	2000	2000	2003	2,415,910	1,152,443	SME	Yes	Strategic Approaches
LIFE00 ENV/IRL/000764	Project HEATSUN - Community- Based Action for Prevention, Re- use and Recycling of Waste Elec- trical and Electronic Equipment	LIFE II	2000	2001	2007	1,485,784	737,294		No	Natural resources and waste
LIFE03 ENV/IRL/000312	Development of a Processing Plant for Recycling of Duck Slurry	LIFE III	2003	2003	2006	1,601,300	490,000	SME	No	Natural re- sources and waste
LIFE05 ENV/IRL/000500	Design for Environmental Compliance in the Automotive Supply Chain	LIFE III Extension	2005	2005	2008	929,118	464,500	Research institutions	No	Natural resources and waste
LIFE05 ENV/IRL/000501	Manufacture of Composite Pallet Blocks using Waste Wood and Tyre-Derived Materials	LIFE III Extension	2005	2005	2010	5,020,144	1,175,000	SME	No	Natural resources and waste



ld.	Title	LIFE generation	Funding year	Start year	End year	Total budget (EUR)	LIFE co- financing budget (EUR)	Beneficiary type	International partners (yes/no)	LIFE+ theme
LIFE06 ENV/IRL/000532	Recovery of Clean Wood from Dirty Wood	LIFE III Extension	2006	2006	2010	3,323,864	947,300	SME	No	Natural re- sources and
										waste

Table 3 Overview of LIFE Nature Projects in Ireland

ld.	Title	LIFE generation	Funding year	Start year	End year	Total budget (EUR)	LIFE co- financing (EUR)	Beneficiary type	International partners (yes/no)	Directive (Birds, Habitats) or biodiversity
LIFE96 NAT/IRL/003240	Management planning, monitor- ing, auditing of management and land acquisition for SPAs in Ire- land	LIFE II	1996	1997	2000	4,882,176	1,513,475	National au- thority	No	Birds
LIFE00 NAT/IRL/007128	Restoration Management for Annex I Birds at Termoncarragh Lake SPA	LIFE II	2000	2001	2006	787,117	584,041	NGO- Foundation	No	Birds
LIFE00 NAT/IRL/007145	The re-introduction of Golden eagle into the Republic of Ireland	LIFE II	2000	2001	2006	309,217	103,314	NGO- Foundation	No	Birds
LIFE02 NAT/IRL/008490	Restoring Active Blanket Bog in Ireland	LIFE III	2002	2002	2008	4,195,693	3,146,770	Public enter- prise	No	Habitats
LIFE03 NAT/IRL/000107	Restoration and management of the Murrough wetlands for Annex I Habitats and Waterbirds	LIFE III	2003	2003	2008	2,129,864	1,597,398	NGO- Foundation	No	Habitats
LIFE04 NAT/IE/000121	Restoring raised bogs in Ireland	LIFE III	2004	2004	2009	2,500,000	1,875,000	Public enter- prise	No	Habitats
LIFE04 NAT/IE/000125	Farming for conservation in the Burren	LIFE III	2004	2004	2009	2,230,487	1,672,865	National au- thority	No	Habitats
LIFE05 NAT/IRL/000182	Restoring Priority Woodland Habitats in Ireland	LIFE III Extension	2005	2006	2010	2,595,148	1,304,861	Public enter- prise	No	Habitats

# Appendix 2 Summary tables on LIFE Environment projects in Ireland

Table 4 Overview of LIFE ENV projects in Ireland by year, 1996-2006

Generation	Year	Number of projects	Total budget (EUR million)	Total LIFE co-financing budget (EUR million)	Average duration (years)	Average LIFE funding per project (EUR million)
LIFE II	1996	2	1.6	0.7	4.0	0.3
	1997	3	2.9	1.2	3.3	0.4
	1998	2	13.2	1.9	3.5	0.9
	1999	4	4.0	1.5	4.0	0.4
	Total	11	21.8	5.3	3.7	0.5
LIFE III	2000	2	3.9	1.9	4.5	0.9
	2002	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2003	1	1.6	0.5	3.0	0.5
	2004	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Total	3	6	2	4.0	0.8
LIFE III extension	2005	2	5.9	1.6	4.0	0.8
	2006	1	3.3	0.9	4.0	0.9
	Total	3	9.3	2.6	4.0	0.9
Grand total		17	36.6	10.2	3.8	0.6
Comparative figures for all ENV projects		1,076	1,947.7	615.9	3.3	0.6

Table 5 Overview of LIFE ENV projects in Ireland 1996-2006 by theme

LIFE+ theme	No. of projects	In % of total	Total budget (EUR million)	In % of total	LIFE contribution (EUR million)	In % of total
Climate change	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Air	1	6%	0.9	2%	0.4	4%
Water	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Soil	1	6%	0.8	2%	0.4	3%
Forests	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Natural resources and waste	11	65%	30.7	84%	7.5	74%
Chemicals	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Urban environment	2	12%	1.1	3%	0.5	5%
Strategic approaches	2	12%	3.1	8%	1.5	14%
Total	17	100%	36.6	100%	10.2	100%

Table 6 Ireland LIFE ENV projects 1996-2006 according to beneficiary type

Beneficiary type	No. of projects	In % of total	Total budget (EUR million)	In % of total	LIFE contribution (EUR million)	In % of total
Public entities						
National authority	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Regional authority	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Local authority	5	29%	5.5	15%	1.9	19%
Development agency	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Intergovernmental body	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Park-reserve authority	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Sub-total	5	29%	5.5	15%	1.9	19%
Public and private enterprises					•	
International enterprise	3	18%	13.6	37%	2.1	21%
Large enterprise	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
SME Small and medium sized enterprise	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Mixed enterprise	1	6%	1.6	4%	0.7	6%
Public enterprise	4	24%	12.4	34%	3.8	37%
Sub-total	8	47%	27.5	75%	6.5	64%
NGOs and research						
NGO-Foundation	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Research institutions	1	6%	0.9	3%	0.5	5%
University	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Training centre	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Sub-total	1	6%	0.9	3%	0.5	5%
None indicated	3	18%	2.7	7%	1.3	12%
Total	17	100%	36.6	100%	10.2	100%

# Appendix 3 Summary tables on LIFE Nature projects in Ireland

Table 7 Overview of LIFE NAT projects in Ireland, 1996-2006

Generation	Year	Number of projects	Total budget (EUR million)	Total LIFE co-financing budget (EUR million)	Average duration (years)	Average LIFE funding per project (EUR million)
LIFE II	1996	1	4.9	1.5	3.0	1.5
	1997	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	1998	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	1999	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Total	1	4.9	1.5	3.0	1.5
LIFE III	2000	2	1.1	0.7	5.0	0.3
	2002	1	4.2	3.1	6.0	3.1
	2003	1	2.1	1.6	5.0	1.6
	2004	2	4.7	3.5	5.0	1.8
	Total	6	12	9	5.2	1.5
LIFE III extension	2005	1	2.6	1.3	4.0	1.3
	2006	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Total	1	2.6	1.3	4.0	1.3
Grand total		8	19.6	11.8	4.8	1.5
Comparative figures for all NAT projects		771	1,224.1	637.2	4.2	0.8

Table 8 Categories of LIFE NAT projects in Ireland, 1996-2006

LIFE NAT themes	No. of projects	In % of total	Total budget (EUR million)	In % of total	LIFE contribution (EUR million	In % of total
Habitats Directive	5	63%	13.7	70%	9.6	81%
Birds Directive	3	38%	6.0	30%	2.2	19%
Biodiversity projects	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Total	8	100%	19.6	100%	11.8	100%

Table 9 Ireland LIFE NAT projects 1996-2006 according to beneficiary type

Beneficiary type	No. of projects	In % of total	Total budget (EUR million)	In % of total	LIFE contribution (EUR million)	In % of total
Public entities						
National authority	2	25%	7.1	36%	3.2	27%
Regional authority	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Local authority	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Development agency	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Intergovernmental body	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Park-reserve authority	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Sub-total	2	25%	7.1	36%	3.2	27%
Public and private enterprises					•	
International enterprise	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Large enterprise	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
SME Small and medium sized enterprise	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Mixed enterprise	3	38%	9.3	47%	6.3	54%
Public enterprise	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Sub-total	3	38%	9.3	47%	6.3	54%
NGOs and research					•	
NGO-Foundation	3	38%	3.2	16%	2.3	19%
Research institutions	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
University	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Training centre	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Sub-total	3	38%	3.2	16%	2.3	19%
None indicated	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Total	8	100%	19.6	100%	11.8	100%