

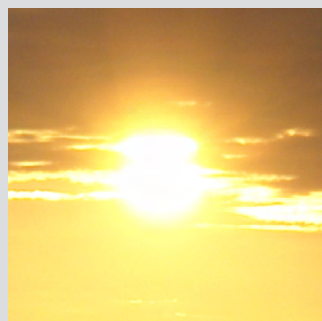
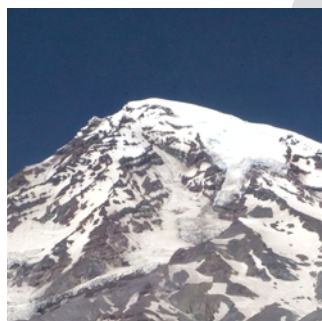
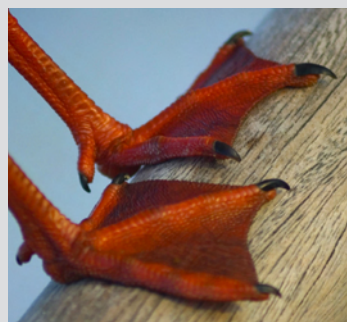
Directorate General Environment, Unit E.4. LIFE

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

Country-by-country analysis

Latvia

July 2009



COWI

COWI A/S

Parallevej 2
DK-2800 Kongens Lyngby
Denmark

Tel +45 45 97 22 11

Fax +45 45 97 22 12

www.cowi.com

Directorate General Environment, Unit E.4.
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1.1 Executive summary

Latvia has been involved in the LIFE Programme since 2000. A total of 23 (eight Environment and 15 Nature) projects have received support within the period covered by this evaluation (1996-2006). Of these, four Nature projects are still ongoing in 2008.

Latvian LIFE Nature projects, and the majority of the LIFE Environment projects, have been effective in delivering the expected results. One Environment project was terminated. The sustainability of the LIFE Nature projects is believed to be high, and the LIFE Environment projects are assessed as below the medium standard. Latvian LIFE Nature projects have mainly focused on habitat restoration and have had a significant impact on biodiversity conservation. LIFE Environment projects have been focused on strategic approaches, water, soil, natural resources and waste.

2 Introduction

This country report on the implementation of the LIFE Programme in Latvia 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 during the period 1996-2006. The overall objective of this 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 Latvia. The ex-post evaluation focuses on assessing the effects 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 Summary of environmental issues

The Latvian National Strategy for Sustainable Development (adopted in 2002), integrates economic, environmental and social dimensions and is based on ten objectives and principles. Those most directly related to environment and nature are: a) to ensure a safe and healthy environment for both the present and next generations; b) to take adequate measures aimed at preserving the biodiversity and protection of ecosystems; c) to constantly increase the efficient use of resources.

The national strategy is complemented by sector, or issue-specific, policies and plans, e.g. climate change, biodiversity etc. The main environmental challenges mentioned in the strategy include: water protection; climate change and protection of the ozone layer; the use of natural resources; the conservation of biodiversity; the management and reduction of waste, and the wider management of environment and health. The strategy encompasses four cross-cutting areas of action in a structure which is similar to the 6th EAP (see Box 1 below).

Box 1 Cross-cutting areas of action in Latvia's Sustainable Development Strategy

In relation to **climate change** it is noted that CO₂ emissions have decreased by 58 per cent between the years 1990 and 2005. The Kyoto target for Latvia is - 8 per cent, and Latvia is on track for meeting this commitment, as recent EU projections for 2010 show a figure of - 48.6 per cent compared to the base year.¹ The main priorities are: raising energy efficiency, design of an environmentally acceptable transport system, and implementing best and cleanest available technologies.

Concerning **nature and biodiversity**, Latvia is among those European countries which have the richest and most biodiverse resources. Latvia has 97 Special Protection Areas (9.6 per cent of the total terrestrial area) and 331 Sites of Community Importance (11 per cent of the terrestrial area) under the Natura 2000 network. Latvia has reached about 90 per cent of the minimum standards of the Habitats Directive.

Environment and health focuses on five main areas: 1) limiting the use of chemicals and phasing out the use of dangerous chemicals; 2) the quality of the Latvian environment; 3) food quality; 4) health and safety and 5) drinking water quality.

Regarding **resources and resource efficiency** it is noted that whilst energy intensity is decreasing it still remains quite high. Growth in waste generation amounted to 6 per cent from 2000 - 2005 and in 2005 waste amounted to 1.3 million tons. Insufficient waste collection, sorting and recycling effort and insufficient infrastructure for solid and hazardous waste management are the main weaknesses related to waste management.

4 Overview of LIFE projects in Latvia

During the period from 1996-2006, the LIFE Programme co-financed 23 projects in Latvia, including 15 Nature projects and eight Environment projects. A full overview of the projects is provided in Appendix 1. In Appendices 2 and 3 a number of summary tables are provided for Environment and Nature, respectively.

Table 4.1 Overview of LIFE projects 1996-2006 in Latvia

	Number of projects	Total LIFE contribution (million EUR)	Main themes covered ²	Average LIFE contribution per project (million EUR)	Average project duration (years)
Environment	9	2.2	Strategic Approaches (56%)	0.2	3.4
Nature	15	11.4	Habitats (87%)	0.8	4

The **LIFE ENV** projects co-financed by the LIFE Programme were mainly strategic approaches or water management development projects within various sectors. The typical types of beneficiaries were NGO-Foundations and public entities, which accounted for six projects in total.

The **LIFE Nature** projects co-financed by the LIFE Programme during 1996-2006 comprise mostly habitat restoration projects. In most cases Natura 2000 areas were the focus of the projects, but in some projects the restoration was carried out to improve the conservation status of a group of species (meadow birds). The typical type of beneficiary was NGOs, which accounted for seven projects in total.

¹ Compared to the 1990 level.

² 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.

5 Effects of projects implemented

Latvian **LIFE Nature** projects have focused on restoration of nature types and on habitats for species. Many projects have had a high impact in relation to indicators such as habitats restored; improved conservation status of habitat types or species³; improved NATURA 2000 areas management; improved land management; land acquisition; land use agreements etc. LIFE Nature projects have contributed to the development⁴ and establishment of Natura 2000 network in Latvia and enabled larger areas to be acquired for restoration and redefined as conservation areas. Based on project studies and interviews with national focal points and monitoring experts, it is estimated that 286,877 ha of Natura 2000 area in Latvia have been affected by LIFE Projects. This corresponds to about 37 per cent of the entire Natura 2000 area of Latvia.

One important effect has been the increase in awareness about NATURA 2000 areas and environmental protection in general.⁵ LIFE Nature projects in Latvia promoted management systems of beneficiary organisations and increased cooperation between regional authorities and stakeholders within the area of the project. This also effected management of other (non-LIFE funded) projects in Latvian Natura 2000 sites. The experience gained from LIFE Nature projects has been used on other sites elsewhere.⁶ Without EU co-financing most of the Latvian Nature projects would have been delayed or the actions within acquired and protected areas smaller. LIFE Nature projects involved many new actors in the nature protection field, which otherwise would not occur, e.g. NGO's took part in the management of nature as well as project partners as local municipalities and other institutions.⁷

Most **LIFE Environment** projects have focused on the development of strategic approaches (see Table 1 in Appendix 40). This has led to the introduction of eco-labelling, consumer awareness, integrated environmental management on local authority level etc. approaches in Latvia. LIFE projects contributed to the development of sustainable rural tourism⁸, to the development of advanced energy rating scheme for buildings as well as to the public awareness towards importance of energy saving.⁹ The water theme projects have had impact on improved river basin management which did lead to environmental improvements - the pollution loads were reduced. In general, Environment projects are generating longer term effects as they are "opening doors" for new activities which need to take place in Latvia¹⁰.

³ The following species have been particularly targeted by LIFE Nature projects in Latvia: *Crex crex*, *Aquila clanga*, *Aquila pomarina*, *Ciconia nigra*, *Bubo bubo*, *Sterna hirundo*, *Grus grus*, *Gallinago media* etc. Protection of species in longer term is assured by the elaborated and approved management plans.

⁴ At least six new NATURA 2000 sites were designated within LIFE projects.

⁵ Achieved by stakeholders' (local municipalities, landowners, authorities etc.) involvement in projects as well as by dissemination - different publications (booklets, summary management plans, Layman's Reports, publications in different media etc.); workshops and seminars, project films, TV stories, campaigns and other public information and educational activities, information panels, web-sites etc.

⁶ For example, the experience from "Teici" project was used in "Kemeris", "Lubana wetland" and "Mires" projects in Latvia as well as in "Eagle" project in Estonia.

⁷ Evaluation by national focal point.

⁸ Sustainable tourism improves the life quality of the local residents and preserves the rural heritage, including the nature, farming and local traditions.

⁹ The results of the "ENERLAB" and "ENCERB" projects can be used for the implementation of the Directive 2002/91/EC on energy performance of buildings in Latvia and other EU countries with a similar context.

¹⁰ I.e. energy efficiency, eco-labelling, green procurement, and EMAS (according to interview with the LU desk officer).

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.¹¹ The project-level effectiveness of Latvian LIFE Nature projects is assessed¹² as high. The most effective nature projects reflected a well balanced project planning approach in terms of the number and scale of the project actions, with the foreseen project budget and with good time planning.¹³ Effectiveness at programme level is also assessed¹⁴ as high for nature projects, which have been instrumental in implementing the Birds and Habitats Directives in Latvia.

For environment projects, project level effectiveness is assessed as medium¹⁵. National focal point and the monitoring expert rated the effectiveness of Environment projects at an average of 2.8 on a scale from 1-5 where 5 is the highest. The main factors influencing effectiveness was the quality and realism of the initial project planning and the personality of the project manager.¹⁶ In terms of programme level effectiveness, the projects have certainly contributed to innovative and integrated techniques and to the further development of Community Environmental Policy, but the dissemination of these techniques to a wider EU audience has been limited.

7 The sustainability of projects

The sustainability of the **LIFE Nature** projects is assessed as high¹⁷. Most of the LIFE Nature projects generated long term effects through the purchase of land for protective areas, elaboration of the management/action plans, and the wide dissemination and implementation of the non-recurring habitat management actions which are normally not financed by other financial instruments (e.g. by agri-environmental funding). The habitat management actions (included in the management plans) also generated long-term positive effects for the restoration of the habitats and habitats of protected species of EU importance. On average, the sustainability of the **LIFE Environment** projects is assessed as medium.¹⁸ The main factors influencing the sustainability of Environment projects were: good project proposal itself, successful results, stakeholder involvement during the project and available financing in the period after project finalization.¹⁹

¹¹ 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.

¹² Assessment according to interviews with Latvian national focal point, monitor and the LU desk officer.

¹³ Good examples are the “Teici” and “Meadows” projects.

¹⁴ Assessment according to the project studies (summaries as well as in-depth) and interviews with Latvian national focal point, monitor and the LU desk officer.

¹⁵ Assessment from project studies and from interviews with national focal point and the LU desk officer.

¹⁶ Good examples are the “Green Certificate” and “Enerlab” projects which are recognized as two of the 24 Best LIFE-Environment projects 2004-2005. The “Ecovent” project was a failure.

¹⁷ Assessment according to interviews with Latvian national focal point, monitor, the LU desk officer and from project studies.

¹⁸ Assessment according to interviews with Latvian national focal point, monitor, the LU desk officer and from project studies. A positive example is the “Green Certificate” project. Today (about 5 years after finalization of the project) the “Green Certificate” is developed at the national level as an eco-label for rural tourism accommodations and continues to be issued. Provisions for the Green Certificate are approved by Ministry of Environment.

¹⁹ According to the national focal point.

8 The utility of projects

Latvian LIFE projects have contributed towards addressing many goals and aims set forth in the 6th EAP as well as addressing the national priorities as these are correlated. Links to EU environmental policies are guaranteed through adherence to the application guidelines. In the LIFE Nature projects, problems and priorities relating to the Birds and Habitats Directives were addressed to a considerable degree. Environment projects also contributed towards addressing both EU and national environmental policy implementation.²⁰ Because of LIFE, Nature projects were much larger and more comprehensive than would have been expected without LIFE funding. Environment projects without LIFE funding would be implemented at a lower scale and at a later stage or would be not implemented at all.

²⁰ Assessment from interview with national focal point and from project studies.

Appendix 1 Comprehensive overview of LIFE Projects in Latvia

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 Latvia

Id.	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
LIFE00 ENV/LV/000956	Livonian Green Coastal Region - 21	LIFE II	2000	2001	2005	216,055	183,957	Local authority	No	Soil
LIFE00 ENV/LV/000959	Development of the criteria for the Green Certificate, implementation and control in rural areas and small towns in Latvia	LIFE II	2000	2001	2005	311,150	149,000	Development agency	No	Strategic Approaches
LIFE00 ENV/LV/000961	Innovative methods of Barta river basin management system	LIFE II	2000	2001	2005	514,900	203,150	Development agency	No	Water
LIFE02 ENV/LV/000478	Energy labelling of apartment buildings	LIFE III	2002	2002	2005	466,940	203,720	SME	No	Strategic Approaches
LIFE02 ENV/LV/000481		LIFE III	2002	2002	2006	1,042,825	508,412	Regional authority	No	Water
LIFE03 ENV/LV/000448	Treatment of Biodegradable Organic Municipal Waste Using Composting Technologies	LIFE III	2003	2003	2006	933,805	431,890	NGO-Foundation	No	Natural resources and waste
LIFE04 ENV/LV/000631	Innovative approach in EMAS II implementation in the local authorities of new member states	LIFE III	2004	2004	2007	400,043	191,397	Development agency	No	Strategic Approaches
LIFE04 ENV/LV/000633	Ecologically friendly ventilation system design	LIFE III	2004	2004	2007	361,186	177,343	Public enterprise	No	Strategic Approaches
LIFE04 ENV/LV/000634	Building energy certification in the light of the Directive 2002/91/EC	LIFE III	2004	2004	2007	301,331	150,665	Public enterprise	No	Strategic Approaches

Table 3 Overview of LIFE Nature Projects in Latvia

Id.	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
LIFE00 NAT/LV/007124	Protection and management of two Important Bird Areas of Latvia	LIFE II	2000	2001	2004	264,265	198,199	National authority	No	Birds
LIFE00 NAT/LV/007127	Measures to ensure the nature conservation management of Teici Area	LIFE II	2000	2001	2006	833,929	625,447	Park-Reserve authority	No	Habitats
LIFE00 NAT/LV/007134	Implementation of management plan for Lake Engure Nature Park	LIFE II	2000	2001	2005	520,270	390,203	NGO-Foundation	No	Habitats
LIFE02 NAT/LV/008496	Conservation of wetlands in Kemeru National Park	LIFE III	2002	2002	2007	1,321,210	990,908	Park-Reserve authority	No	Habitats
LIFE02 NAT/LV/008498	Protection and management of coastal habitats in Latvia	LIFE III	2002	2005	2006	2,270,860	1,703,145	University	No	Habitats
LIFE03 NAT/LV/000081	Lake Pape - conservation, preservation and evolution	LIFE III	2003	2003	2008	911,744	683,808	NGO-Foundation	No	Habitats
LIFE03 NAT/LV/000082	Protection and management of the Northern Gauja Valley	LIFE III	2003	2003	2008	1,526,000	1,142,974	NGO-Foundation	No	Habitats
LIFE03 NAT/LV/000083	Management of the Lubana Wetland Complex, Latvia	LIFE III	2003	2003	2007	1,346,208	969,270	Regional authority	No	Habitats
LIFE2003NAT/CP/LV/000010	Experience exchange on habitat management among Baltic LIFE-Nature projects	LIFE III	2003	2003	2005	75,830	71,000		No	Biodiversity

Id.	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
LIFE04 NAT/LV/000196	Implementation of mire habitat management plan for Latvia	LIFE III	2004	2004	2009	1,055,682	791,762	NGO-Foundation	No	Habitats
LIFE04 NAT/LV/000198	Restoration of Latvian floodplains for EU priority species and habitats	LIFE III	2004	2004	2008	1,600,366	1,144,184	NGO-Foundation	No	Habitats
LIFE04 NAT/LV/000199	Protection of habitats and species in Nature Park "Razna"	LIFE III	2004	2004	2008	678,740	339,370	University	No	Habitats
LIFE05 NAT/LV/000100	Marine protected areas in the Eastern Baltic Sea	LIFE III Extension	2005	2005	2009	3,111,316	1,555,658	NGO-Foundation	No	Habitats
LIFE06 NAT/LV/000110	Restoration of Biological Diversity in Military Training Area and Natura 2000 site "Adazi"	LIFE III Extension	2006	2006	2010	905,307	452,653	National authority	No	Habitats
LIFE06 NAT/LV/000196	The improvement of habitats management in Natura 2000 site - Vestiena	LIFE III Extension	2006	2006	2011	714,601	357,300	Development agency	No	Habitats

Appendix 2 Summary tables on LIFE Environment projects in Latvia

Table 4 Overview of LIFE ENV projects in Latvia 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	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	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	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
LIFE III	2000	3	1.0	0.5	4.0	0.2
	2002	2	1.5	0.7	3.5	0.4
	2003	1	0.9	0.4	3.0	0.4
	2004	3	1.1	0.5	3.0	0.2
	Total	9	5	2	3.4	0.2
LIFE III extension	2005	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2006	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Total	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Grand total		9	4.5	2.2	3.4	0.2
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 Latvia 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	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Water	2	22%	1.6	34%	0.7	32%
Soil	1	11%	0.2	5%	0.2	8%
Forests	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Natural resources and waste	1	11%	0.9	21%	0.4	20%
Chemicals	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Urban environment	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Strategic approaches	5	56%	1.8	40%	0.9	40%
Total	9	100%	4.5	100%	2.2	100%

Table 6 *Latvia 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	1	11%	1.0	23%	0.5	23%
Local authority	1	11%	0.2	5%	0.2	8%
Development agency	3	33%	1.2	27%	0.5	25%
Intergovernmental body	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Park-reserve authority	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Sub-total	5	56%	2.5	55%	1.2	56%
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	2	22%	0.7	15%	0.3	15%
Public enterprise	1	11%	0.5	10%	0.2	9%
Sub-total	3	33%	1.1	25%	0.5	24%
NGOs and research						
NGO-Foundation	1	11%	0.9	21%	0.4	20%
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	1	11%	0.9	21%	0.4	20%
None indicated	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Total	9	100%	4.5	100%	2.2	100%

Appendix 3 Summary tables on LIFE Nature projects in Latvia

Table 7 Overview of LIFE NAT projects in Latvia, 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	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	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	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
LIFE III	2000	3	1.6	1.2	4.0	0.4
	2002	2	3.6	2.7	3.0	1.3
	2003	4	3.9	2.9	4.0	0.7
	2004	3	3.3	2.3	4.3	0.8
	Total	12	12	9	3.9	0.8
LIFE III extension	2005	1	3.1	1.6	4.0	1.6
	2006	2	1.6	0.8	4.5	0.4
	Total	3	4.7	2.4	4.3	0.8
Grand total		15	17.1	11.4	4.0	0.8
Comparative figures for all NAT projects		771	1,224.1	637.2	4.2	0.8

Table 8 Categories of LIFE NAT projects in Latvia, 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	13	87%	16.8	98%	11.1	98%
Birds Directive	1	7%	0.3	2%	0.2	2%
Biodiversity projects	1	7%	0.1	0%	0.1	1%
Total	15	100%	17.1	100%	11.4	100%

Table 9 Latvia 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	13%	1.2	7%	0.7	6%
Regional authority	1	7%	1.3	8%	1.0	8%
Local authority	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Development agency	1	7%	0.7	4%	0.4	3%
Intergovernmental body	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Park-reserve authority	2	13%	2.2	13%	1.6	14%
Sub-total	6	40%	5.4	31%	3.6	31%
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	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Public enterprise	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Sub-total	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
NGOs and research						
NGO-Foundation	6	40%	8.7	51%	5.7	50%
Research institutions	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
University	2	13%	2.9	17%	2.0	18%
Training centre	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Sub-total	8	53%	11.7	68%	7.8	68%
None indicated	1	7%	0.1	0%	0.1	1%
Total	15	100%	17.1	100%	11.4	100%