

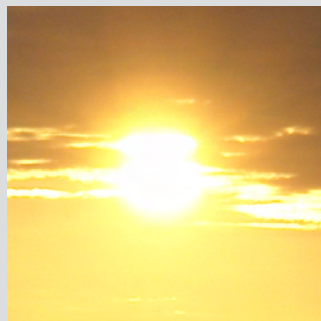
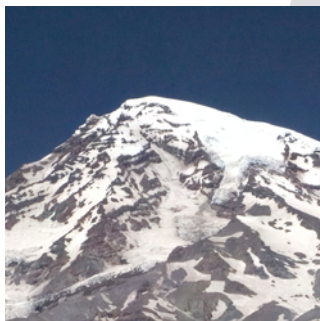
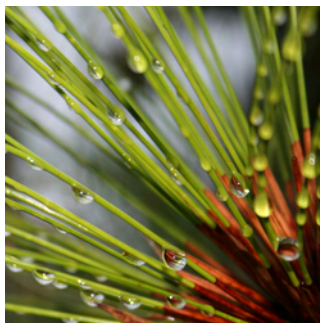
Directorate General Environment, Unit E.4. LIFE

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

Country-by-country analysis

Czech Republic

July 2009



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

## Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Environmental policy overview</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Overview of LIFE projects in the Czech Republic</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Effects of projects implemented</b>	<b>3</b>
5.1	Results and impacts for LIFE Nature projects	3
<b>6</b>	<b>The effectiveness of projects</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>The sustainability of projects</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>The utility of projects</b>	<b>4</b>

## Table of Appendices

Appendix 1	Comprehensive overview of LIFE Projects in Czech Republic
Appendix 2	Summary tables on LIFE Nature projects in Czech Republic

## 1 Executive summary

The Czech Republic's Ecology Policy is in line with European principles in four priority areas of action in the 6th Environmental Action Programme.

In the context of the LIFE Programme, which was implemented in the Czech Republic in 2004, only two LIFE Nature projects were co-financed in the Czech Republic, one of which is still ongoing. The LIFE Nature projects dealt with habitat projects which were fully in line with related EU directives.<sup>1</sup> The realisation of projects under LIFE Nature is important with regard to management of Natura 2000 areas in the Czech Republic. The effectiveness of the completed LIFE Nature project entitled: *"Restoration of thermophilous habitats in the Moravian Karst"* is assessed as high, while sustainability is assessed as medium.

## 2 Introduction

This country report on the implementation of the LIFE Programme in the Czech Republic 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 the evaluation is to assess the relevance and impact of activities and projects financed under the LIFE Programme. The evaluation comprises country studies in all Member States excepting Bulgaria, which has never carried out any LIFE projects. This report documents the analysis carried out on the implementation of the LIFE Programme in the Czech Republic. The ex-post evaluation focuses on assessing the effect of the LIFE Programme on Europe's nature and environment through looking at the results and impacts of LIFE projects implemented under the Nature (NAT) and Environment (ENV) components. The results and impacts have 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

The Czech Republic's environmental policy focuses on the accomplishment of assumed goals and ecological effects in the following key areas:

- Energy and natural resources consumption and production are almost four times higher than in other EU countries. The Czech Republic's target share for electricity gained from renewable energy sources for 2010 is 8 per cent. A priority of the Czech Republic's ecological policy is to increase energy effectiveness and use of renewable sources in order to attain EU targets;
- Regarding climate change and the Kyoto Protocol, the Czech Republic is committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions for the period 2008-2012 by 8 per cent, when compared to the 1990 level;
- Waste management is one of the most neglected aspects of environment protection in the Czech Republic. A key issue is the predominant use of landfills as a waste management option and the low recycling rate. The National Waste Management Plan sets the following targets for the increase of

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<sup>1</sup> Council Directive 79/409/EEC (Birds Directive) and Council Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive)

waste recovery and recycling: 55 per cent recycling of all waste produced by the year 2012; 50 per cent recovery of municipal waste by 2010; and a 20 per cent reduction by 2010 of landfill waste compared to the 2000 level;

- In the Czech Republic, 8.8 per cent of the total land area is designated for the bird protection while 9.2 per cent is designated for rare species and habitats.

## 4 Overview of LIFE projects in the Czech Republic

During the period 1996 - 2006, the LIFE Programme only co-financed two LIFE Nature projects in the Czech Republic. The Czech Republic joined the LIFE Programme upon accession to the EU in 2004. A full overview of the projects is provided in Appendix 1. This is supplemented by detailed tables in Appendix 2 and 3. Annex 1 in Appendix 3 contains some qualitative information.

Table 4.1 Overview of LIFE projects 1996-2006 in the Czech Republic

	Number of projects	Total LIFE contribution (million EUR)	Main themes covered <sup>2</sup>	Average LIFE contribution per project (million EUR)	Average project duration (years)
Nature	2	1.1	Habitats (100%)	0.6	4

Source: BUTLER

The two **LIFE Nature** projects, co-financed by the LIFE Programme during 1996-2006, comprise site habitat restoration projects (restoration and sustainable management of sub-Pannonic steppic grasslands; Pannonic white oak woods; Pannonic oak-hornbeam forests; lime-alder forests including slopes; screes and ravines, and calcareous scree).

## 5 Effects of projects implemented

### 5.1 Results and impacts for LIFE Nature projects

Evaluation of results and impacts of LIFE Nature projects is limited because one project is still ongoing and it is difficult to assess its final value. In the case of the completed project "*Restoration of thermophilous habitats in the Moravian Karst*", the project was successful from a technical point of view and achieved its objectives. The Monitoring team evaluated activities carried out during the course of the LIFE Nature project and assessed results as high, particularly the economic effect and considers that it may, with the support of the Czech government, result in the expansion of Natura 2000<sup>3</sup>.

Although a proposed Natura 2000 site was suggested, the MOE backed out of their initial promise to designate this site to Natura 2000. A statement from the MOE was included in the initial application for the LIFE project, but the boundaries were subsequently revised. The Czech Republic is currently working on a correction and supplements to the Natura 2000 areas. Final execution of the project is expected once a governmental decision has been made on the site as the project is not eligible for

<sup>2</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.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with monitoring team,

funding if the ground is not recognized as part of Natura 2000. This demonstrates some of the difficulties in fully implementing the LIFE Programme.

Based on project studies and interviews with the National focal points and the Monitoring experts, it is estimated that only 0.01 per cent of Natura 2000 areas in the Czech Republic<sup>4</sup> have been affected by LIFE Projects.

## 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>5</sup>

Both projects are in line with the LIFE Programme and contribute to the implementation of Council Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive). The Monitoring team has evaluated the effectiveness of the implemented LIFE Nature project as high.

In the opinion of the Desk officer and the Monitoring team, the finalised LIFE Nature project "*Restoration of thermophilous habitats in the Moravian Karst*" has accomplished its goals. The second LIFE Nature project is still ongoing and is somewhat delayed, therefore it was difficult for the Desk officer and the Monitoring team to evaluate the project. Many project actions delivered better results than originally foreseen in the project application (both regarding quality and quantity) e.g. an area of land was purchased for the budgeted amount which was 2.5 times larger than anticipated.

## 7 The sustainability of projects

The Czech Republic is currently revising the Natura 2000 sites and the "*Restoration of thermophilous habitats in the Moravian Karst*" project area will, most likely, be included in the Natura 2000 area. It is currently waiting designation. Sustainability is therefore uncertain. Both the Monitoring team and the LIFE Unit Desk Officer considered that a common policy between the Beneficiary (NGOs) and the State administration concerning boundaries of protected areas was lacking thus creating an obstacle to the project's sustainability. It is concluded that the results of the Nature projects may be sustainable provided the results are used in the process of expanding Natura 2000 areas and their subsequent protection. In the view of the national coordinator, the other crucial factor is the availability of future financial resources.

## 8 The utility of projects

Implementation of LIFE Programme projects in the Czech Republic contribute towards solving environmental problems in Europe and towards achieving many of the EU's main priorities. The introduction of LIFE Programme projects is in compliance with the Czech Republic's main ecological policy goals. The implementation of the LIFE Nature projects also contributes towards finding solutions

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<sup>4</sup> The overall Natura 2000 areas (SPA) in the Czech Republic account for 1,046 square km (Natura 2000 European Commission DG ENV Nature Newsletter). The project concerned approximately 130ha which were classified as NATURA 2000.

<sup>5</sup> Specific objectives of 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.

to environmental problems such as: eliminating the negative impacts of spontaneous succession on priority habitats realized on 130ha; increasing areas high biodiversity and concentration of about 100 nationally endangered thermophilous species; saving endangered priority habitats and two priority species populations endangered by impact of industrial exploitation; restoration of traditional grazing as well as public environmental education and comprehensive information about NATURA 2000 biotopes.

However, experience regarding the LIFE Programme is very limited as only two projects have been implemented to date. The low application rate was a barrier for new EU Member Countries. Furthermore, LIFE Programme funding competes against structural funds where a greater amount of money is more easily available with a lower national co-financing rate. According to the beneficiary, it would not be possible to implement LIFE Nature projects without co-financing within the LIFE Programme framework, and the implementation process would be delayed, which could result in the loss or destruction of valuable protected areas.

## Appendix 1 Comprehensive overview of LIFE Projects in Czech Republic

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 1 Overview of LIFE Nature Projects in Czech Republic

<b>Id.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>LIFE generation</b>	<b>Funding year</b>	<b>Start year</b>	<b>End year</b>	<b>Total budget (EUR)</b>	<b>LIFE co-financing (EUR)</b>	<b>Beneficiary type</b>	<b>International partners (yes/no)</b>	<b>Directive (Birds, Habitats) or biodiversity</b>
LIFE04 NAT/CZ/000015	Restoration of thermophilous habitats in the Moravian Karst	LIFE III	2004	2004	2008	549,675	412,256	NGO- Foundation	No	Habitats
LIFE06 NAT/CZ/000121	Preservation of alluvial forest habitats in the Morávka river Basin	LIFE III Extension	2006	2007	2011	1,014,720	704,000	Regional au- thority	No	Habitats



## Appendix 2 Summary tables on LIFE Nature projects in Czech Republic

Table 2 Overview of LIFE NAT projects in Czech Republic, 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
	<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>
LIFE III	2000	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2002	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2003	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2004	1	0.5	0.4	4.0	0.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>0.4</b>
LIFE III extension	2005	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2006	1	1.0	0.7	4.0	0.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>0.7</b>
<b>Grand total</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>0.6</b>
Comparative figures for all NAT projects		771	1,224.1	637.2	4.2	0.8

Table 3 Categories of LIFE NAT projects in Czech Republic, 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	2	100%	1.6	100%	1.1	100%
Birds Directive	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Biodiversity projects	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4 Czech Republic 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
<b>Public entities</b>						
National authority	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Regional authority	1	50%	1.0	65%	0.7	63%
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%
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>63%</b>
<b>Public and private enterprises</b>						
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%
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>NGOs and research</b>						
NGO-Foundation	1	50%	0.5	35%	0.4	37%
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%
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>37%</b>
None indicated	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>100%</b>

## **Annex 1 Brief information about the LIFE projects realized in Czech Republic:**

The **2 LIFE Nature** projects co-financed by the LIFE Programme during 1996-2006 comprise the habitat conservation projects described below:

- **Restoration of thermophilous habitats in the Moravian Karst**

The Beneficiary is a small local NGO from Brno (Moravia). The project is completed. The subject of the project is protection of habitats of one of most interesting crass areas in the Central and Eastern part of Europe - Moravian Crass, which is located to the North-East of Brno city. This area has a large value for tourism. Approx. 9,000 ha of Moravian Crass is assumed as Protected Landscape. The main objective of the NAT project is protection of rare plant habitats like *Echium russicum* and *Pulsatilla grandis* within an area of 150 ha, out of which 85% (130 ha) is proposed to be part of Natura 2000. The project was realized among 2004 - 2007. The entire cost was 549,675 EUR and 75% (EUR 412,256) was financed by LIFE NAT.

- **Preservation of alluvial forest habitats in the Moravka river Basin**

The beneficiary is the regional authority (the Moravian – Silesian Region In Ostrava). The subject of the project is rare species and habitats on the area of Protected Landscape (Beskidy Mountains in NE part of Czech Republic) protection.

Main goals of the project are: fight against invasive flora (mainly japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) and habitats revitalizations, biodiversity restoring, creation rules and conditions for various entities cooperation. as well as popularize and disseminate project results..

Project is just at the interim report phase. There have been minor delays in the deliverables.

Execution of project is predicted for period 2007- 2010. Entire budget is 1.015 mln EUR, 70% (EUR 704,000) is financed from LIFE-Nature fund.