

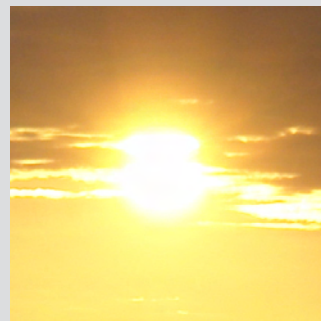
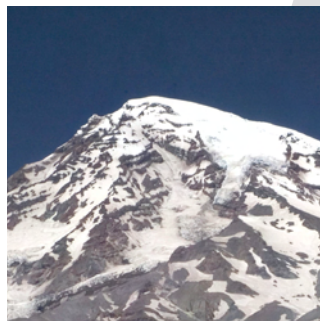
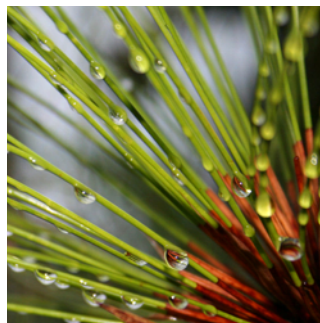
Directorate General Environment, Unit E.4. LIFE

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

Country-by-country analysis

Slovakia

July 2009



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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

The LIFE Programme has financed 11 (three LIFE Environment and eight LIFE Nature) projects in Slovakia during the period 1996-2006.¹ The process of implementing LIFE projects started in 2003. The programme is very important for environmental problem solving. LIFE Environment projects concern various issues (air – one project; natural resources and waste – one project; urban environment – one project). The LIFE Nature projects, targeting both the Habitats and the Birds Directives, are significant as well. It should be noted that both that the number of projects as well as the level of funds granted are high based on the size of the country (population) compared to other new Member States (i.e. Poland and the Czech Republic).

2 Introduction

This country report on the implementation of the LIFE Programme in Slovakia 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 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 Slovakia. 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

According to the "Environment Policy Review Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament COM (2008) 409", Slovak environmental policy focuses on accomplishing planned goals and ecological effects with special emphasis on the following issues:

- Climate change: in 2007 the government approved an action plan on energy efficiency for the period 2008-2010. It also approved a strategy of increased use of renewable sources of energy. In 2005 greenhouse gas emissions were 33.6 percent below the base year level, so the Slovak Republic is currently well on track to meet the Kyoto target for greenhouse gas emissions. By 2010, its emissions are expected to be some 12 per cent below the Kyoto target.
- Nature and biodiversity: the government approved the National Forest Programme. In January 2008 Slovakia adopted a Law on Protection of and Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which changes and complements domestic law.² The European Commission opened an infringement case on non-sufficient designation of Special Protection Areas for birds (SPA). Out of 38 areas to be designated according to the Birds Directive only 5 have been

¹ After the entry of Slovakia in the LIFE programme in 2003.

² As above

protected to date, and the government indicates that an additional 15-16 SPA's are to be designated soon. According to the Natura 2000 barometer, a total of 382 SCIs have been designated in Slovakia, totalling an area of 5,739 km² or 11.8 percent of the total area.³

- Waste: the level of waste in Slovakia collected separately is low but is increasing. Only 6 percent of household waste is currently being recycled. The majority of the waste is land filled. Many landfills in Slovakia do not comply with EU requirements. In July 2006, the government presented an “Agenda of Better Regulation in the Slovak Republic”, according to which new legislative proposals should be accompanied by a Regulatory Impact Assessment, including an environmental impact assessment.⁴

4 Overview of LIFE projects in Slovakia

During the period 1996 to 2006, the LIFE Programme co-financed 11 projects, starting in 2003. A full overview is presented in *Tables 1 and 2*, Appendix 1. Additional summary tables are provided in Appendices 2 and 3.

Table 4.1 Overview of LIFE projects 1996-2006 in Slovakia

	Number of projects	Total LIFE contribution (million EUR)	Main themes covered ⁵	Average LIFE contribution per project (million EUR)	Average project duration (years)
Environment	2	1.2	Climate change, urban environment	0.6	3
Nature	8	4.8	Habitats (63%)	0.6	4.6

Source: Butler

The two **LIFE Environment** projects concerned climate change/energy efficiency. The were both implemented by NGOs as the beneficiary.

The **LIFE Nature** projects co-financed by the LIFE Programme during 1996-2006 comprise habitat restoration projects and bird conservation projects. The typical beneficiaries were national authorities (half of the projects) and NGOs (one third of projects).

5 Effects of projects implemented

On the basis of analysing **LIFE Nature** projects in Slovakia as well as stakeholder interviews,⁶ LIFE Nature projects are assessed to contribute primarily to the improvement of management of Natura

³ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/info/pubs/natura2000n1_en.htm (Natura 2000, brochure, Dec 2008)

⁴ Environment Policy Review, Communication of the European Communities, Commission Staff Working Document, COM(2007)195 final

⁵ 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.

2000 areas. For example, the execution of the projects Danube floodplains (LIFE03 NAT/SK/000097); Slovak Paradise (LIFE04/NAT/SK/000244); and Wetlands in Zahorska Nizina (LIFE05/NAT/SK/000112) seem to have been particularly effective. The results of these projects are included in the development of the adjustment and supplement the Natura 2000 areas in Slovakia. However, there are projects (e.g. the project Sur Fen⁷) which, despite a good initial proposal have not achieved the envisaged results due to developers who have started construction works to build housing on areas intended for the protection of water sources. Based on the available information, it is estimated that around 2 percent of Natura 2000 (SPA) areas in Slovakia were affected directly by LIFE Projects.

Two of the three **LIFE Environment** projects were very innovative, bringing new ideas to the sector in which they were realised. One project (LIFE03 ENV/SK/00057) was awarded the Energy Globe Award. So the impact of LIFE Environment project was very significant. The implementation of LIFE Environment projects also contributed to fulfilling Slovakia's Ecological Policy by reducing CO₂ emissions as well as increasing the renewable sources of energy in total country consumption.

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.⁸

The effectiveness of **LIFE Nature** projects is assessed as good in a both levels; the projects contributed to the implementation of the Bird and Habitat Directives, as well as the protection of species and habitats under national regulations. For the two projects, Aquila heliaca (Slovakian LIFE03 NAT/SK/000098) and Falco cherrug (Hungarian LIFE03/NAT/H/000096), a synergy effect is observed (both project areas partially overlap).⁹

Similarly, the effectiveness of **LIFE Environment** projects is assessed as good at both levels. The national focal point and desk officer rated the effectiveness of Environment projects highly at an average of 4.5 - 5 on a scale from 1-5 where five is the highest. The assessment by the monitoring team is also good (4). Both of the projects were well prepared and presented. The LIFE03 ENV/SK/000577 project connected with biomass used the experiences and solutions of Austrian researchers with excellent experience in the use of biomass as renewable energy.¹⁰ This project was awarded an Energy Globe Award. Thus, the two LIFE Environment projects concern climate change. However, no synergy effects were observed, as one project is connected with CO₂ emissions, and the objective of the other is to support the mitigation of global warming consequences in urban areas.

⁶ Interviews with national coordinator (on the phone and in person, January 2009) and desk officer (in person, January 2009)

⁷ Interview with LIFE Unit desk officer national coordinators and monitoring teams

⁸ 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.

⁹ According to the LIFE desk officer, there are three related projects in Slovakia, Hungary and Austria. These projects have had regular meetings twice a year, and perform common counting. Initially, the three projects were intended as one, but the participants decided not to carry out individual projects, but collaborate.

¹⁰ Interview carried out with National Focal Point and LIFE Unit desk officer

7 The sustainability of projects

The sustainability of **LIFE Nature** projects was dependent on several factors: government approval of new protected areas proposed by the projects; the possibility of purchasing land intended for protection, and the handing over and approval of the management plans developed during the projects. The most sustainable projects are Wetlands in Zahorska Nizina (LIFE05/NAT/SK/000112) and the Danube floodplains (LIFE03 NAT/SK/000097).¹¹ The overall assessment of the sustainability of LIFE Nature projects is high.¹²

The sustainability of **LIFE Environment** projects is considered variable – medium to high. The project sustainability connected with using of biomass seems to be ensured in the long term, while the sustainability of the LIFE 04 ENV/SK/00797 project will depend on the future decisions of local authorities.¹³

8 The utility of projects

The implementation of the LIFE Programme projects in Slovakia contributed to solving environmental problems in Europe and the implementation of the main priorities of the 6th Environmental Action Programme. A number of the projects implemented are well in line with the main goals of ecological policy for Slovakia i.e. increased use of renewable sources of energy and reduction of CO₂ emissions.

The implementation of the LIFE Nature projects also contributed to solving various concrete environmental problems in Slovakia and implemented actions related to the protection of many habitats and species. With reference to the information obtained during the visit to the Ministry of Environment in Bratislava, it would not be possible to implement these projects without co-financing in the framework of the LIFE Programme. Without LIFE implementation would have been delayed, potentially resulting in the loss or destruction of valuable protected areas. LIFE Environment projects also demonstrate their high relevance, efficiency and durability – particularly the biomass project.¹⁴

¹¹ Interview carried out with National Focal Point

¹² Interview carried out with National Focal Point, Monitoring teams LIFE Unit desk officer

¹³ Interview carried out with National Focal Point

¹⁴ Interview carried out with representative of Monitoring Teams

Appendix 1 Comprehensive overview of LIFE Projects in Slovakia

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 Slovakia

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
LIFE03 ENV/SK/000577	Integrated Logistics for Use of Biomass Energy	LIFE III	2003	2003	2006	6,185,050	1,011,900	NGO-Foundation	No	Air
LIFE04 ENV/SK/000797	Sustainable Development of Cities and Mitigation of Impacts of Climate Change on Quality of Life and on Environment in Urban Areas	LIFE III	2004	2004	2007	355,739	170,945	NGO-Foundation	No	Urban environment

Table 3 Overview of LIFE Nature Projects in Slovakia

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
LIFE03 NAT/SK/000096	Restoration of Water Regime in Sur Fen Nature Reserve	LIFE III	2003	2003	2007	400,000	300,000	NGO-Foundation	No	Habitats
LIFE03 NAT/SK/000097	Conservation and management of Danube floodplain forests	LIFE III	2003	2003	2007	570,000	370,500	NGO-Foundation	No	Habitats
LIFE03 NAT/SK/000098	Conservation of Aquila heliaca in the Carpathian basin	LIFE III	2003	2003	2007	492,000	369,000	NGO-Foundation	No	Birds
LIFE04 NAT/SK/000244	Conservation of habitat diversity in Slovenský Raj National Park	LIFE III	2004	2004	2009	500,244	250,122	National authority	No	Habitats
LIFE05 NAT/SK/000112	Restoration of Wetlands at Zahorie Lowland	LIFE III Extension	2005	2005	2009	624,000	312,000	National authority	No	Habitats
LIFE05 NAT/SK/000115	Conservation of Otis tarda in Slovakia	LIFE III Extension	2005	2005	2010	2,040,000	1,500,000	National authority	No	Birds
LIFE06 NAT/SK/000114	Conservation of Senne and Medzibodrozie SPAs in Slovakia	LIFE III Extension	2006	2005	2011	1,325,556	662,778	National authority	No	Birds
LIFE06 NAT/SK/000115	Restoration and Management of Sand Dunes Habitats in Zahorie Military Training Area	LIFE III Extension	2006	2006	2011	1,538,438	1,076,900	Research institutions	No	Habitats

Appendix 2 Summary tables on LIFE Environment projects in Slovakia

Table 4 Overview of LIFE ENV projects in Slovakia 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	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2002	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2003	1	6.2	1.0	3.0	1.0
	2004	1	0.4	0.2	3.0	0.2
	Total	2	7	1	3.0	0.6
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		2	6.5	1.2	3.0	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 Slovakia 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	50%	6.2	95%	1.0	86%
Water	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Soil	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Forests	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Natural resources and waste	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Chemicals	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Urban environment	1	50%	0.4	5%	0.2	14%
Strategic approaches	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Total	2	100%	6.5	100%	1.2	100%

Table 6 Slovakia 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	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	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
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	2	100%	6.5	100%	1.2	100%
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	2	100%	6.5	100%	1.2	100%
None indicated	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Total	2	100%	6.5	100%	1.2	100%

Appendix 3 Summary tables on LIFE Nature projects in Slovakia

Table 7 Overview of LIFE NAT projects in Slovakia, 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	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2002	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2003	3	1.5	1.0	4.0	0.3
	2004	1	0.5	0.3	5.0	0.3
	Total	4	2	1	4.3	0.3
LIFE III extension	2005	2	2.7	1.8	4.5	0.9
	2006	2	2.9	1.7	5.5	0.9
	Total	4	5.5	3.6	5.0	0.9
Grand total		8	7.5	4.8	4.6	0.6
Comparative figures for all NAT projects		771	1,224.1	637.2	4.2	0.8

Table 8 Categories of LIFE NAT projects in Slovakia, 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%	3.6	48%	2.3	48%
Birds Directive	3	38%	3.9	52%	2.5	52%
Biodiversity projects	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Total	8	100%	7.5	100%	4.8	100%

Table 9 Slovakia 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	4	50%	4.5	60%	2.7	56%
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	4	50%	4.5	60%	2.7	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	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	3	38%	1.5	20%	1.0	21%
Research institutions	1	13%	1.5	21%	1.1	22%
University	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Training centre	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Sub-total	4	50%	3.0	40%	2.1	44%
None indicated	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Total	8	100%	7.5	100%	4.8	100%