

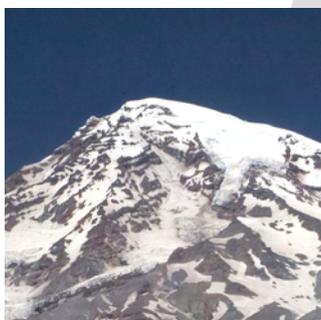
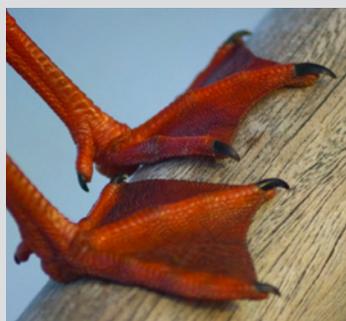
Directorate General Environment, Unit E.4. LIFE

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

Country-by-country analysis

Lithuania

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

Lithuania has been involved in the LIFE Programme since 2005. A total of two LIFE Nature projects have received support. Both Nature projects are still ongoing in 2008.

The effectiveness of Lithuanian LIFE projects is assessed as medium to high. The sustainability of the projects is believed to be quite high. Lithuanian LIFE Nature projects have focused on habitat restoration and have significant impact on biodiversity conservation.

2 Introduction

This country report on the implementation of the LIFE Programme in Lithuania 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 Lithuania. 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) component. 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

The Lithuanian National Strategy for Sustainable Development from 2003 integrates economic, environmental and social dimensions and is based on eleven priorities. The ones most directly related to environment and nature are: a) minimization of the impact from the main sectors (transport, industry, energy, agriculture, housing, tourism) on the environment; b) efficient use of natural resources and waste management; c) minimization of impact on human health; d) mitigation of global climate change and its consequences; e) effective protection of biodiversity; e) effective protection of the landscape and rational landscape management.

The National Strategy is complemented by sector, or issue-specific, strategies and action plans, e.g. for biodiversity, waste, housing etc. The Strategic Action Plan of the Ministry of Environment for 2007-2009 focuses on a safe and healthy residential environment for its citizens. The main tasks are: reduction of water, soil and air pollution, minimizing environmental pollution from waste and improvement of drinking water. The strategy encompasses four cross-cutting areas for action in a structure resembling that of the 6th EAP (see **Error! Reference source not found.** below).

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

In relation to **climate change**, Lithuania has undertaken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions for the period 2008-2012 to, on average, 8 per cent below the level of 1990¹. The data on greenhouse gas emissions show that Lithuania, as a new member of the EU, shall make appropriate efforts to reduce emissions and achieve the Kyoto Protocol emission reduction targets.

Concerning **nature and biodiversity** Lithuania is rich in biodiversity. As part of the Natura 2000 network, there are 77 Special Protection Areas and 267 Sites of Community Importance covering respectively 8.1 per cent and 9.9 per cent of the land area. Progress in establishing the Special Protection Areas is not yet complete, while requirements under the Habitats Directive have only been met by 60 per cent.

Environment and health focuses on implementation of environment protection measures and on reducing the negative impact of energy, natural resources utilisation and economic activities on the environment. The main efforts go into renovation and development of water supply and waste water treatment systems and air quality improvement.

Regarding **resources and resource efficiency** it is noted that in Lithuania whilst energy intensity is decreasing it remains quite high. Municipal waste generation is about 400 kg per capita. The strategy emphasises that more drastic steps are needed to ensure the sustainable use of natural resources in the future.

4 Overview of LIFE projects in Lithuania

During the period 1996-2006, the LIFE Programme co-financed only two Nature projects in Lithuania. An overview of those projects is provided in Appendix 1. In Appendix 3 a number of summary tables are provided for the Nature projects.

Table 4.1 Overview of LIFE projects 1996-2006 in Lithuania

| | Number of projects | Total LIFE contribution (million EUR) | Main themes covered ² | Average LIFE contribution per project (million EUR) | Average project duration (years) |
|--------|--------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| Nature | 2 | 1.4 | Habitats (100%) | 0.7 | 4.5 |

Source: BUTLER

The **LIFE Nature** projects co-financed by the LIFE Programme during 1996-2006 comprise habitat restoration/management and biodiversity.

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

Only 1³ Lithuanian **LIFE Nature** project has been finalised so far. Implementation of the project “Natura 2000 site conservation and management on the Lithuanian coast” (LITCOAST) has led to improved status of priority habitats and species⁴. The most important areas of the Curonian Lagoon for the protection of habitats and species have been designated as new Natura 2000 sites. Management plans and monitoring schemes for five coastal Natura 2000 sites have been prepared and four have been adopted so Natura 2000 areas management will be improved. The local community has been involved in the management of the territories.

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 objectives⁵. The project-level effectiveness of Lithuanian LIFE projects is assessed as medium to high⁶. The “LITCOAST” project has been effective with the set objectives having been achieved. The “NELEAP” project is international and still ongoing. Due to project management problems it may possibly be less effective.

7 The sustainability of projects

Both LIFE Nature projects had a public entity as their lead organisation and mainly involved public land. The sustainability of the projects is believed to be quite high⁷. Management activities have been incorporated in the management plans for the Natura 2000 areas (“LITCOAST” project) and should be able to ensure sustainable results.

8 The utility of projects

Lithuanian LIFE Nature projects have contributed towards addressing goals and aims set forth in the 6th EAP as well as national priorities as both are correlated. Links to EU environmental policies are guaranteed through adherence to the application guidelines. Stakeholders consider that the LIFE-Nature program represents the major financial and technical tool for implementing the European directives on nature protection.

³ Project “Protection of Emys orbicularis and amphibians in the north European lowlands” is still ongoing in 2009.

⁴ Favourable conditions have been secured for the survival of the most important European significance habitats and species in Lithuanian seaside (seven habitats; four species of birds and one plant species of the Community importance, listed in appropriate annexes of the EU Birds and Habitats Directives).

⁵ 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.

⁶ Assessment according to interviews with Lithuania national focal point, monitor and LU desk officer.

⁷ Assessment according to interviews with Lithuania national focal point, monitor and LU desk officer.

Appendix 1 Comprehensive overview of LIFE Projects in Lithuania

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 Lithuania

| 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 |
|-------------------------|--|------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|--|--|
| LIFE05 NAT/LT/000094 | Protection of Emys orbicularis and amphibians in the north European lowlands | LIFE III Extension | 2005 | 2005 | 2010 | 2,346,185 | 1,161,373 | NGO- Foundation | No | Habitats |
| LIFE05 NAT/LT/000095 | Natura 2000 site conservation and management on the Lithuanian coast | LIFE III Extension | 2005 | 2005 | 2009 | 642,045 | 321,022 | Development agency | No | Habitats |

Appendix 2 Summary tables on LIFE Nature projects in Lithuania

Table 2 Overview of LIFE NAT projects in Lithuania, 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 | 0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| | 2004 | 0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| | Total | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| LIFE III extension | 2005 | 2 | 3.0 | 1.5 | 4.5 | 0.7 |
| | 2006 | 0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| | Total | 2 | 3.0 | 1.5 | 4.5 | 0.7 |
| Grand total | | 2 | 3.0 | 1.5 | 4.5 | 0.7 |
| Comparative figures for all NAT projects | | 771 | 1,224.1 | 637.2 | 4.2 | 0.8 |

Table 3 Categories of LIFE NAT projects in Lithuania, 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% | 3.0 | 100% | 1.5 | 100% |
| Birds Directive | 0 | 0% | 0.0 | 0% | 0.0 | 0% |
| Biodiversity projects | 0 | 0% | 0.0 | 0% | 0.0 | 0% |
| Total | 2 | 100% | 3.0 | 100% | 1.5 | 100% |

Table 4 Lithuania 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 | 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 | 1 | 50% | 0.6 | 21% | 0.3 | 22% |
| Intergovernmental body | 0 | 0% | 0.0 | 0% | 0.0 | 0% |
| Park-reserve authority | 0 | 0% | 0.0 | 0% | 0.0 | 0% |
| Sub-total | 1 | 50% | 0.6 | 21% | 0.3 | 22% |
| 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 | 1 | 50% | 2.3 | 79% | 1.2 | 78% |
| 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 | 50% | 2.3 | 79% | 1.2 | 78% |
| None indicated | 0 | 0% | 0.0 | 0% | 0.0 | 0% |
| Total | 2 | 100% | 3.0 | 100% | 1.5 | 100% |