

Annex

LIFE Awards: Finalists 2020

Nature category

Belgium (BE)

Restoring an estuary to its former glory

The **LIFE+SCALLUVIA** project has restored the alluvial forests and creeks at a river Scheldt estuary site near Antwerp. The team revived habitats and populations and boosted the populations of several different species. There is now a healthy population of European bitterling, while the European beaver uses the site for breeding and the purple heron for resting. The site now has a good conservation status and functions as an effective flood defence and recreational area. The project is a blueprint for similar initiatives. The team also developed a guide called “10 keys to project co-ownership”, which gives valuable engagement tips on themes like how to communicate effectively and how to involve locals in project activities. This guide can be used by other projects wanting to make a lasting impact in their communities.

[Web summary](#)

Bulgaria (BG)

Saving the imperial eagle

LIFE for Safe Grid has increased the imperial eagle population in Bulgaria. Many of these birds were being killed when perched on uninsulated electricity poles. The team behind the project identified around 5000 hazardous electricity poles and insulated nearly half of them to protect the bird. 69 km of overhead power lines were replaced with underground cables. As a result of these measures, the imperial eagle population has grown by 10%. Furthermore, the new cables and lines mean fewer power outages, and this offers a more secure electricity supply for local communities and businesses. Public awareness of the bird, and the dangers it faces, has also significantly risen.

[Web summary](#)

Germany (DE)

Protecting an endangered butterfly

The **LIFE-Aurinia** project has improved the habitat of the Marsh fritillary butterfly in the German state of Schleswig-Holstein. The project team transformed 234 hectares of agricultural land into grasslands full of different species, an area approximately the size of 440 football fields. In addition, nine different types of the endangered butterfly were reintroduced to the area. Several kinds of nectar plant species were also grown for the Marsh fritillary to feed on and pollinate. A number of post-LIFE conservation plans were developed that set out how to continue communicating results after the end of the project. Crucially, the international network of experts that was set up under the project will protect this butterfly well into the future.

[Web summary](#)

Romania (RO)

A better life for wolves in the Carpathians

The **WOLFLIFE** project has been successful in boosting wolf populations in the Carpathian Mountains. The project team developed a National Action Plan for the wolf, which was approved by Romania's Ministry of Environment and Climate Change. The team measured the size of the wolf population and tracked the animals closely. It also monitored the impact of poaching and minimised the risk of the wolves' habitats being divided into smaller areas, so-called habitat fragmentation. As a result, there has been a rise in the wolf population as well as more harmony between wolves and humans. Through a public awareness campaign, the negative image of the species has lessened, with more emphasis being placed on the important role that wolves play in nature.

[Web summary](#)

Slovenia (SI)

Ensuring bears have their bare necessities

LIFE DINALP BEAR has managed and monitored brown bear populations in the northern Dinarides and southeastern Alps. Overall, there has been a 43% reduction in sheep attacks, while the number of bears being hit by traffic is also down by a quarter. Human-bear conflicts have also decreased due to the installation of new electric fences as well as bear-proof compost and garbage bins. A bear-friendly label was developed to award practices that lead to more harmony between bears and humans. Attitudes towards bears have improved in the partner countries of Croatia, Italy, Austria, and Slovenia due to an effective communication and information campaign.

[Web summary](#)

Environment category

Greece (EL)

Cutting plastic bag use in Greece

In the EU, more than eight million plastic bags end up as litter every year. **LIFE DEBAG** raised awareness in Greece about plastic bag pollution in the marine environment, reaching around 600 000 people with its media campaign. Voluntary agreements to reduce plastic bag consumption were signed with 215 shops on the island of Syros and with Greece's major supermarket chains. And, an educational programme was launched in schools across the country. Thanks to the project, the number of plastic bags decreased by 80% on Syros' surveyed beaches and 60% on the seafloor. Following the team's recommendations, a fee on single-use plastic bags has been introduced across Greece. Next, the team is planning to establish an Observatory on Plastic Marine Litter on the Aegean Sea.

[Web summary](#)

Spain (ES)

A new eco-approach to paving

The **LIFESURE** project developed a method of manufacturing eco-asphalt on site, using reclaimed asphalt pavement as a raw material. Its eco-asphalts are cheaper than conventional ones and cause fewer carbon emissions, while minimising the use of natural resources. The technology also offers better conditions for construction workers, as temperatures rise only to half of those of conventional asphalts. The project paved 18 000 m² of surfaces with eco-asphalt, an area approximately the size of 70 tennis courts. 10 EU cities including Paris, Rome, and Berlin have been identified to potentially repeat the approach.

[Web summary](#)

Ireland (IE)

Breathing new life into an iconic Dublin building

WISER LIFE retrofitted a disused boiler house building in Ballymun, a suburb of Dublin. The building was transformed into an educational '3D textbook' for social and sustainable building renovation. It is also home to several resource-efficient social enterprises. Overall, the project is a living lab for a circular economy and collaboration. A social value of more than two million euro was generated through new jobs and vocational courses. In addition, over the project's lifetime, 54.9 tonnes of waste were diverted from landfill, equivalent to the weight of 30 cars. Well received locally, WISER LIFE is a great example of waste reuse in building construction and renovation, while supporting socio-economic renewal in the EU.

[Web summary](#)

Poland (PL)

Helping towns obtain energy from waste

LIFE COGENERATION PL developed a technology that can produce electricity and heat from waste and sewage sludge. This waste can be converted into energy, but it usually goes to landfill, making up four-fifths of waste disposal in Poland. The technology provides a waste-to-energy solution for small and medium-sized municipalities, supporting the EU Waste Framework Directive. And, each installation has the potential to create up to 15 new local jobs. The solution will soon be tested in Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania.

[Web summary](#)

Portugal (PT)

Embracing flawed fruit and vegetables

One million tonnes of food is wasted every year in Portugal. The **Flaw4Life** project team worked with farmers, delivery points, volunteers, and students to change consumption habits. It did this by creating an alternative market for fruit and vegetables that were too small, too large, or too "ugly" to sell in regular outlets. The work under the project has reduced food waste by more than 2300 tonnes to date, comparable to the annual amount of unused food from 13 000 people. Flaw4Life played a key part in the design of Portugal's National Strategy to Fight Food Waste. The team is also

creating a network to cut food waste, and its approach is being used as far afield as the Netherlands, the United States, and Brazil.

[Web summary](#)

Climate category

France (FR)

Making dairy more environmentally friendly

LIFE Carbon Dairy is promoting a new approach to milk production that could cut the sector's greenhouse gas emissions by up to 20% over 10 years. The project team assessed more than 3900 farms in France using a specially developed tool for calculating carbon emissions. The resulting figures made farmers more aware of the impact dairy production has on the environment and inspired them to take action. As a result, emissions on these farms dropped by 127 000 tonnes, which is equivalent to those from around 90 000 cars yearly. The team also developed a climate roadmap that can be used by the entire dairy sector. In addition, the project's findings are now being used by the beef farming industry with sheep farmers expected to do the same.

[Web summary](#)

Italy (IT) (2 projects)

Cutting-edge roof tiles that cool buildings

LIFE HEROTILE has produced two new types of clay roof tiles that can passively remove heat. This reduces the energy used for cooling buildings by up to 50% while decreasing greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution. The innovative tiles have great potential to help prevent climate change in the Mediterranean. The project team also developed an online tool for assessing the cooling performance of roofs. It plans to repeat the project across the EU by working with brick and roof associations. This can help the construction sector achieve its energy efficiency and emissions targets. It should also encourage market uptake of EU's eco-innovation products by consumers.

[Web summary](#)

Italy (IT)

Two technologies to cut EU landfill emissions

When organic matter in landfill sites decays, it generates biogas, which creates a major challenge for climate change mitigation. **LIFE RE Mida** tested two technologies for treating biogas, to reduce its contribution to the greenhouse effect. Both technologies had high-efficiency rates – of 80-90% – when treating methane and reducing odours. They could also reduce the cost of landfill post-treatment by up to two-thirds. The findings prompted a revision of Italy's implementation of the EU Landfill Directive, to overcome barriers preventing the use of these technologies. If widely applied, they have great potential to reduce methane emissions across the EU.

[Web summary](#)

Hungary (HU)

Preventing forest fire devastation in Hungary

Less rain, higher temperatures and a series of winters without snow mean forest fires are on the rise in Hungary. **FIRELIFE** provided relevant information to teachers, social workers, farmers, and forest fire prevention experts to enhance forest fire prevention across the country. The FIRELIFE team participated in 60 events and carried out an impressive media campaign, reaching more than 80% of Hungary's population. Thanks to the project, the number of forest fires decreased by nearly a third, and the size of the area burnt fell by nearly 90%. Other countries can follow FIRELIFE's checklist for developing their own fire-prevention systems and tools.

[Web summary](#)

Finland (FI)

Protecting Europe's precious peatlands

Peatlands are unique ecosystems home to many rare and threatened species, found nowhere else. These ecosystems can control our climate by storing massive amounts of carbon. Despite their high environmental, economic, and social importance, peatlands continue to be destroyed. To reduce this decline in Finland, the **LIFEPeatLandUse** team looked at how peatlands, directly and indirectly, contribute to human wellbeing, by providing water, food, fuel, and recreation spaces. The team's work is helping planners and policymakers make sustainable decisions on how best to use the land. Findings show that harvesting tree biomass provides farmers with income, while helping the biodiversity on peatlands to recover. The project's approach is ideal for land use planning in other countries.

[Web summary](#)