

**LIFE projects in Hungary**

The LIFE programme has financed 31 projects in Hungary over the past six years. Fifteen of these focus on environmental innovation, and 16 on nature conservation. There are currently 23 ongoing LIFE projects, representing a total investment of €31 million, of which €17.3 is contributed by the European Community. This document provides an overview of LIFE and LIFE projects in Hungary, and where to find further information.

# LIFE – an overview

Launched by the European Commission in 1992, LIFE (The Financial Instrument for the Environment) is one of the spearheads of the European Union’s environmental policy. LIFE contributes to the implementation, development and enhancement of the Community’s environmental policy and legislation, as well as to the integration of the environment into other EU policies. It supports the development of new solutions to environmental problems facing the EU, and works towards the implementation of Community policy defined by the [Sixth Action Programme for the Environment](http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/newprg/index.htm).

The current phase of the programme is ‘LIFE III’. Its initial period ran from 2000-2004, with a budget of

€640 million. LIFE III has been extended to 2006, with an additional budget of €317 million. Beneficiaries from LIFE projects include small, medium, large and international enterprises, national and local authorities, NGOs, research institutions and inter-governmental bodies.

The programme is divided into three components, LIFE-Environment, LIFE-Nature and LIFE-Third Countries, each with a distinct focus.

# LIFE – Environment

LIFE-Environment co-finances innovative, environmental demonstration projects in the European Union and in accession candidate countries. The purpose of LIFE-Environment is to bridge the gap between research and development results and their large-scale application. Emphasis is placed on the dissemination of results. Five areas are eligible for funding: land-use development and planning; water management; reduction of the environmental impact of economic activities; waste management; and reduction of the environmental impact of products through an integrated product policy.

## LIFE-Environment in Hungary

**An example of a successful LIFE- Environment project in Hungary**

**Utilisation of hazardous wastes**

The project beneficiary, Körte-Organica Rt, developed a technology converting the spent hydrochloric acidic solution generated during the treatment of steel materials into iron chloride, a product of commercial quality fit for use in the chemical and metallurgy industry. The process is an eco-friendly alternative to the usual neutralisation of spent acidic solutions, that generates high amounts of sludge that need to be disposed of, as well as salt solutions that pollute surface waters.

Winner of the Hungarian “Pro Environmental Protection 2003” award

Info: [www.korte-organica.hu](http://www.korte-organica.hu/)

Project number: LIFE02 ENV/H/000435

To date, the LIFE-Environment programme has co- financed 15 projects in Hungary. These projects represent a foreseen total investment of €24.5 million of which €7.6 million to be contributed by the European Community.

Seven projects are currently being implemented in Hungary, representing an estimated total investment of

€10.4 million, of which the Community is contributing around 43%. The projects are tackling a wide range of environmental issues, from water and waste management to eco-management and climate-friendly technologies.

The following projects are examples of these seven current LIFE-Environment initiatives. A full list of all nine, where possible including the project or beneficiary's websites, is presented in Annex I.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Removal of toxic heavy metals from waste water by special yeast produced by bioconversion on food byproducts - an integrated solution for wastewater treatment**  **- RETOXMET -** | |
| Duration | From 15/10/2004 to 15/06/2007 |
| Description | An isosugar-producing plant in Hungary generates 2000m³ of wastewater daily. The wastewater has high carbohydrate and suspended matter content. This is currently flushed into clean water streams, resulting in a daily deposit of 80m³ of activated sludge and continuously increasing yeast mass. This product is hazardous because neither the amount nor the type of symbiosis-forming organisms can be precisely determined. The project will develop two semi-industrial plants. One will be suitable for bio-conversion of food industry waste or wastewater into a new kind of yeast mass. The second will be a demonstration plant removing heavy metals from wastewater. It is estimated that the project will be able to purify or treat at least 15 percent of food-industry by-products produced annually in Hungary. The project will therefore aim to process, reuse and bio- convert locally food industry by-products, wastes and wastewater into yeast mass. It will also develop an effective system to neutralise wastewater containing hazardous heavy metals. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Sustainable management and treatment of arsenic bearing groundwater in Southern Hungary**  **- SUMANAS -** | |
| Duration | From 01/11/2005 to 30/11/2008 |
| Description | Groundwater pollution by arsenic and associated components is a common problem in the entire Carpathian Basin, with Hungary being the most seriously affected of the EU and accession states. Approximately 400 towns and villages in Hungary have arsenic levels significantly exceeding those set by EU and WHO guidelines. Within the project area, 170,000 people are supplied with drinking water derived from groundwater which contains arsenic levels 30 times higher than specified by EU norms, as well as variable amounts of methane, ammonia, iron and manganese. The EU has determined that water quality in Hungry must fulfil EU norms by 2009. The project’s first objective is to create a groundwater-management decision-support system, based on hydro-geological models, local needs analysis, cost analysis and best practices. Using the Gyula region of Hungary as its main test site, the project will develop a management plan for Southern Hungarian regions that suffers from high arsenic contents in groundwater. The second objective is to demonstrate an innovative arsenic-removal technology which can treat the groundwater types of southern Hungary. Finally, the project will seek to disseminate the methodology and technology to other regions in the EU, as well as in accession countries. |

# LIFE – Nature

[LIFE-Nature](http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/life/life/nature.htm) co-finances projects that aim to restore and conserve threatened natural habitats and protect species in the European Union and Romania. The objective of LIFE-Nature is to contribute to the implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directives. It focuses on habitats and species found in the EU- wide Natura 2000 network. This network is comprised of Sites of Community Interest (SCIs) for species and habitats, and of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for birds. It is a unique effort by the EU Member States to protect and conserve nature and biodiversity in Europe. It comprises over 18,000 sites, covers approximately 17.5% of the territory of the 15 original EU Member States, and is now being extended to the 10 new Member States.

## LIFE-Nature in Hungary

To date, the LIFE-Nature programme has co-financed 16 projects in Hungary. These projects represent a total foreseen investment of €20,7 million of which €12.8 million is to be contributed by the European Community.

All of these 16 are currently ongoing. The projects concentrate on the conservation of birds and habitats such as marshes and grasslands, reflecting the kind of biotopes for which the maintenance of a favourable conservation status in this country is crucial. In Hungary, 12.2% of the total land area is designated for the protection of birds while 14% is designated for rare species and habitats, with some of the designated areas overlapping.

The following two projects are examples from the current LIFE-Nature initiatives in Hungary. A full list, where possible including the project or beneficiary's website, is presented in Annex II.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Conservation of Otis tarda in Hungary**  **- OTISHU -** | |
| Duration | From 01/10/2004 to 30/09/2008 |
| Description | The Hungarian population of the globally threatened great bustard (*Otis tarda*) has decreased dramatically over the last 40 years, from 8,557 in 1941 to 1,100-1,300 individuals by 1988. The project aims to increase the population size in Hungary by 10% during the project duration and 50% within 10 years. This target is to be reached through the joint cooperation of five National Parks, four NGOs, one university and the Ministry of Environment, and through dove-tailing project actions with those already ongoing at national level for the species. The project will focus on habitat conservation measures in nine regions (Mosoni-síkság, Kiskunsági szikes puszták, Solti-síkság, Dévaványai-sík, Kis-Sárrét, Bihari-síkság, Hortobágy, Borsodi-Mezőség and Hevesi- sík), all to be classified as Special Protection Areas under the Birds Directive. Within the framework of the project, management plans will be drawn up for these SPAs and land will be purchased at key locations. The project will undertake actions to reduce key factors of mortality, notably through the establishment of a national network of regional field officers in charge of locating and safeguarding nests threatened by agricultural work. Egg and chick mortality is also to be reduced by formulating and implementing a national Predator Management Plan. Adult mortality is to be reduced by removing dangerous sections of power line crossing traditional display or wintering grounds. Finally, winter mortality is to be reduced by growing oilseed rape and alfalfa and clearing snow from foraging areas in emergency situations. The present project complements recently started great bustard LIFE projects in the neighbouring countries of Austria and Slovakia. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Habitat management on the Pannonian grasslands in Hungary**  **- GRASSHABIT -** | |
| Duration | From 1/01/2006 to 31/12/2009 |
| Description | The Pannonian grasslands were formed through centuries of extensive grassland management practices, especially through extensive grazing. The grasslands and steppes found in Hungary are of a unique character and are listed as priority habitats in the Habitats Directive. The project targets six of these habitat types, including Pannonic steppic grasslands, sand steppes and salt steppes. As a result of the EU accession negotiations, Hungary receives very few structural funds favouring extensive and nature conservation-friendly management practices (CAP II pillar), and mainly receives funds for intensive agricultural practices (CAP I pillar). Consequently, farmers feel encouraged to change the management of their grasslands by either intensifying use, ploughing and applying fertilisers, or abandoning all management and letting the grasslands revert to forest. Both courses of action are threatening the existence of the Pannonian grasslands. The objectives of the project are to: explore and test the best possible grassland management methods; to ensure ecological and economical sustainability of grassland management; and to ensure availability of management information to practitioners. The project aims to restore, conserve and sustainably manage 720 ha of six characteristic grasslands and steppes in the Pannonian Biogeographic Region. The development of economically and ecologically sustainable management plans is foreseen for each habitat type and practical management with grazing, mowing, hydrological works and clearing of overgrowth are envisaged. The aim is to disseminate information on best practice management to land managers, farmers and the general public, and to encourage the application of these practices on patches of existing habitats as well as in agricultural areas. Based on the project results, the Land Stewardship Advisory Service of BirdLife Hungary (LSAS) aims to provide information and consultation services to the managers of the project sites and to farmers in buffer zones around the Natura 2000 areas. |

# Where to find out more

## LIFE website

The LIFE website provides a wealth of information on the LIFE programme: [**http://ec.europa.eu/life/**](http://ec.europa.eu/life/)

## LIFE database

For further information on LIFE projects in Hungary or LIFE projects in general, please consult the online LIFE database.

**h**[**ttp://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cf**](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm)**m**

The easy-to-use database is the authoritative source of information on all completed and on-going LIFE projects. It contains information on projects’ backgrounds, objectives, methods, legislative references, funding details, as well as (for concluded projects) descriptions of their results. The database will also provide you with information on the beneficiaries, their contact details, and the projects’ websites.

## LIFE – Hungary Team

For additional information, please contact the national LIFE external monitoring team:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **LIFE-Environment Astrale GEIE - Prospect** Prospect C&S  9, quai à la Houille B-1000 Brussels BELGIUM  Tel: +32 2 514 55 34  Fax : +32 2 514 01 97  E-mail: p[rospect@astra](mailto:prospect@astrale.org)le.org Contact person:  **Zsuzsanna Kocsis-Kupper** | | **LIFE-Nature**  **Astrale EEIG – Particip GmbH**  Glonner Str. 10  D - 85567 Grafing bei Muenchen GERMANY  Tel: +49 8092 232650  Fax:+49 8092 232651  E-mail: j[an.sliva@astrale.o](mailto:ile@astrale.org)rg  Contact person:  **Jan Sliva** |
|  | Astrale-GEIE is the consortium of 10 international companies from the European Union who monitor, evaluate and disseminate information about LIFE projects for the European Commission.  Astrale can be contacted at [coordination@astrale.org](mailto:coordination@astrale.org) | |

## Annex I

**Ongoing LIFE-ENV projects in Hungary**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Project Title** | **Project Number** | **Website** | **Total budget** | **EU Co-**  **finance** | **Start date** | **Expected end date** |
| 1 | Modern and environmental friendly composting methods of agricultural waste | LIFE04 ENV/HU/000372 | <http://www.imperialeagle.hu/> | 1.681.127 | 340.683 | 1/12/2003 | 31/12/2005 |
| 2 | Integrated (Multi-level inundation) water management system solving flood-protection, nature conservation and rural employment challenges | LIFE03 ENV/H/000291 | <http://www.e-misszio.hu/> | 861.880 | 257.358 | 1/08/2003 | 31/03/2006 |
| 3 | Implementing an Integrated Decision Support System for the Sustainable Management of Tourism in the Lake Balaton Region - An innovative Solution for Sustainable Tourism | LIFE03 ENV/H/000273 | [http://www.hnp.hu/~life2002/en/html/hnpframe.html](http://www.hnp.hu/%7Elife2002/en/html/hnpframe.html) | 1.492.150 | 744.950 | 1/10/2003 | 1/04/2006 |
| 4 | Sustainable use and management rehabilitation of flood plain in the Middle Tisza District | LIFE03 ENV/H/000280 | <http://www.dinpi.hu/eudipl/lifenew/hun/lifesz/center.htm> | 1.399.116 | 691.508 | 1/12/2003 | 31/12/2006 |
| 5 | Implementation of an innovative Decision Support Tool for the Sustainable water and land-use management planning and Flow Suppelmentation of the Hungarian-Slovakian Transboundary Danube Wetland Area (SzigetkÇôz) | LIFE04 ENV/HU/000382 |  | 2.168.645 | 1.078.652 | 1/11/2004 | 1/05/2007 |
| 6 | Removal of toxic heavy metals from waste water by special yeast produced by bioconversion on food byproducts - an integrated solution for wastewater treatment | LIFE04 ENV/HU/000374 |  | 1.143.871 | 565.175 | 15/10/2004 | 15/06/2007 |
| 7 | Sustainable management and treatment of arsenic bearing groundwater in Southern Hungary | LIFE05 ENV/HU/000418 |  | 1.658.000 | 808.514 | 1/11/2005 | 31/11/2008 |

**Annex II - Ongoing LIFE NAT projects in Hungary**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Project Title** | **Project Number** | **Website** | **Total budget** | **EU Co-**  **finance** | **Start date** | **Expected end date** |
| 1 | Funding the base of long-term large-carnivore conservation in Hungary | LIFE01NAT/H/007162 | [www.vvt.gau.hu](http://www.vvt.gau.hu/) | 390.793 | 254.015 | 1/05/2001 | 1/05/2006 |
| 2 | Conservation of Aquila heliaca in the Carpathian basin | LIFE02NAT/H/008627 | <http://www.imperialeagle.hu/> | 585.475 | 439.106 | 1/10/2002 | 31/12/2005 |
| 3 | The practical protection of Angelica palustris habitats | LIFE02NAT/H/008630 | <http://www.e-misszio.hu/> | 1.330.000 | 665.000 | 1/07/2002 | 1/07/2007 |
| 4 | Restoration of pannonic steppes, marshes of Hortobágy National Park | LIFE02NAT/H/008634 | [http://www.hnp.hu/~life2002](http://www.hnp.hu/%7Elife2002) | 780.744 | 546.521 | 15/05/2002 | 15/11/2005 |
| 5 | Habitat management of Hortobágy eco-region for bird protection | LIFE02NAT/H/008638 | <http://www.hortobagyte.hu/06-life-h.html> | 829.534 | 622.151 | 1/07/2002 | 1/07/2006 |
| 6 | Restoration of Pannonic forests and grasslands on the Szénás hills | LIFE03NAT/H/000167 | <http://www.dinpi.hu/eudipl/lifenew/hun/lifesz/center.htm> | 847.283 | 635.482 | 1/08/2003 | 1/08/2007 |
| 7 | Conservation of Otis tarda in Hungary | LIFE04NAT/H/000109 | [http://www.tuzok.hu](http://www.tuzok.hu/) | 4.431.206 | 1.957.187 | 1/10/2004 | 30/09/2008 |
| 8 | Establishing the background of saving the Hungarian Meadow Viper (Vipera ursinii rakosiensis) from extinction | LIFE04NAT/H/000116 | [www.mme.hu/rakosivipera](http://www.mme.hu/rakosivipera) | 649.000 | 324.500 | 1/01/2004 | 31/12/2007 |
| 9 | Complex habitat rehabilitation of the Central Bereg Plain, Northeast Hungary | LIFE04NAT/H/000118 | [http://www.lifebereg.hnp.hu](http://www.lifebereg.hnp.hu/) | 1.226.178 | 858.325 | 1/01/2005 | 31/12/2008 |
| 10 | Grassland restoration and marsh protection in Egyek-Pusztakócs | LIFE04NAT/H/000119 | [www.hnp.hu/Life2004/](http://www.hnp.hu/Life2004/) | 1.040.000 | 700.302 | 1/09/2004 | 31/12/2008 |
| 11 | Habitat management on the Pannonian grasslands in Hungary | LIFE05NAT/H/000117 | [http://www.mme.hu](http://www.mme.hu/) | 1.082.424 | 666.774 | 1/01/2006 | 31/12/2009 |
| 12 | Conservation of Falco vespertinus in the Pannonian Region | LIFE05NAT/H/000122 | <http://www.kmnp.hu/> | 1.546.580 | 772.190 | 1/01/2006 | 31/12/2009 |
| 13 | Conservation of Falco cherrug in the Carpathian basin (Falco cherrug-Hu/SK) | LIFE06NAT/H/000096 | - | 2.152.042 | 1.606.715 | 1/10/2006 | 30/09/2010 |
| 14 | Conservation of Euro-siberian steppic woods and Pannonic sand steppes in "Nagykörösi pusztai tölgyes (HUNSTEPPICOAKS) | LIFE06NAT/H/000098 | - | 1.863.236 | 1.397.427 | 1/09/2006 | 31/08/2011 |
| 15 | Restoration and grassland management of Felsö-Kongó meadows (GRASS-TAPOLCA) | LIFE06NAT/H/000102 | - | 288.045 | 143.245 | 1/01/2007 | 31/12/2009 |
| 16 | Conservation of the Pannon endemic Dianthus diutinus (HUNDIDI) | LIFE06NAT/H/000104 | - | 1.630.784 | 1.223.088 | 1/09/2006 | 31/08/2011 |