

Financial Instrument for the Environment (LIFE+) 2007-2013

2004/0218(COD) - 29/09/2004 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : to establish a financial instrument for the environment referred to as "LIFE+".

PROPOSED ACT : Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

CONTENT : the decision to establish this instrument flows from the Lisbon/Gothenburg policy goals. These involve the development of a European economy that delivers growth and social cohesion while reducing negative impacts on the environment. In order to complement main funding programmes, a new Financial Instrument for the Environment, LIFE + is proposed.

The general objective of LIFE + is to contribute to the development, implementation monitoring, evaluation and communication of Community environment policy and legislation as a contribution to promoting sustainable development in the EU. LIFE+ will support, in particular, the implementation of the 6th Environmental Action Programme which aims at combating climate change, halting the decline in nature and bio-diversity, improving environment, health and the quality of life, promoting the sustainable use and management of natural resources and wastes and developing strategic approaches to policy development, implementation and information/awareness raising.

LIFE+ will support those activities which have:

- European added value: it will intervene only where there is a clear EU value added and contributes to economies of scale on a European level;
- leverage or multiplier effect: it will provide a co-funding mechanism with Member States, regional or local authorities and other public and private operators;
- catalytic or demonstrative character: LIFE + will support actions that show novel ways to approach and implement environment policy;
- long term perspective: LIFE + interventions will be investments for the future. They will aim at setting the foundations for sustainability.

LIFE + will have two strands:

LIFE+ Implementation and Governance will:

- contribute to the development and demonstration of innovative policy approaches and instruments including promotion of successful research results.
- contribute to consolidating the knowledge base for the development, assessment, monitoring and evaluation, including ex-post evaluation of environmental policy and legislation (through studies, modelling and scenario building);
- support the design and implementation of approaches to monitoring and assessment of the state of the environment and the drivers, pressures and responses that impact on it;

- facilitate the implementation of Community environment policy, with a particular emphasis on implementation at local and regional level, through capacity building, exchange of best practice and networking, development of training modules and/or programmes;
- provide support for better environmental governance, broadening stakeholder involvement, including that of environment non-governmental organisations, in policy consultation and implementation.

LIFE+ Implementation and Governance will facilitate networking and exchange of best practice on a European scale.

LIFE+ Information and Communication will actively promote EU environmental policies by means of information, communication, awareness-raising and dialogue, thereby helping to empower individuals and groups in European civil society to participate in the protection of the environment and the sustainable use of resources. By building up effective mechanisms for co-operative awareness raising and dialogue with networks of relevant stakeholders, LIFE Information and Communication will enhance ownership of EU environmental policies and contribute to more effective implementation. The programme will bring EU policies closer to the citizen.

There are currently several different programmes - the LIFE programme, a sustainable urban development programme, a NGO programme, Forest Focus, a general policy development and implementation facility (which has an internal and external dimension) and a budgetary transfer to the EEA. Each of these different programmes has its own application/administration and comitology procedures, the management of which demands considerable resources. Most of these programmes will be merged to fall under the single instrument for the environment. The basic objectives and scope of some of these programmes will continue to be covered under LIFE+. For example, the scope of the current Forest Focus regulation will be reflected in the LIFE+ programmes and the activities will be covered by both strands of LIFE+. Support for NGOs and local and regional authorities will continue under LIFE+. The budgetary envelope is sufficient to facilitate funding of these activities in line with past commitments. The subsidy to the EEA will be made under the same Budgetary Expenditure Heading but not under the LIFE+ regulation.

However, the single instrument is not a simple extension of the current LIFE programme. The environmental technology and eco-innovation component of the current LIFE programme will be integrated in the EU's competitiveness framework programme which is under preparation. The LIFE Third Countries strand under the current LIFE programme and the external actions which were financed out of the general implementation facility will be funded under the external assistance instruments in the future. Civil protection will continue to be funded separately, under a separate solidarity instrument.

For further information concerning the financial implications of this measure, please refer to the financial statement.