

LIFE III, financial instrument for the environment: extension until 31 December 2006

2003/0260(COD) - 15/09/2004 - Final act

PURPOSE : to amend the LIFE Regulation.

LEGISLATIVE ACT : Regulation 1682/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation 1655/2000/EC concerning the Financial Instrument for the Environment (LIFE).

CONTENT : this Regulation extends the current LIFE Regulation in order to ensure continuity until a new approach is developed in view of the new post-2006 financial perspectives. The extension avoids a legal gap between the end of the LIFE III phase on 31 December 2004 and the introduction of the new financial perspectives. The extension covers 2 years until 31 December 2006.

The main points of this Regulation are as follows:

- the committee procedure to which the implementation measures of the Life Regulation are subject is modified to take account of the judgement issued by the Court of Justice in January 2003;
- the financial framework for the implementation of the Regulation is set at EUR 317.2 million;
- there is an increase for accompanying measures from 5 to 6% of the budget to allow for a further improvement in the dissemination and monitoring activities;
- by 30 September 2005, the Commission will submit a report evaluating the implementation of the Regulation, and, if appropriate, a proposal for the further development of LIFE or a financial instrument exclusively in the environmental field that will take account of the recommendations of the review of LIFE, to apply from 2007 onwards;
- a special scheme is introduced to allow for the continuation of monitoring activities of projects still active after 2006;
- the salary costs of a civil servant will be considered eligible only to the extent that they relate to the cost of activities that the relevant public authority would not carry out if the project concerned were not undertaken;
- a grant for the acquisition of land is subject to the condition that the land purchased is reserved in the long term for uses of land consistent with the objective of LIFE-nature. Member States must ensure the long-term reservation of such land for nature conservation purposes;
- projects receiving aid provided for under the Structural Funds or other Community budget instruments will not be eligible for financial assistance under this Regulation. The Commission must ensure that applicants' attention is drawn to the fact that they cannot cumulate subsidies from different Community funds. Appropriate measures will be put in place to prevent the possibility of double funding.

ENTRY INTO FORCE : 08/10/04.