

# Do's and don'ts for planning and implementing successful LIFE Projects

IV. LIFE Nature conservation training in English

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# Do's and don't's for planning and implementing successful LIFE Projects

## Do

Application guidelines  
E-proposal  
Special/general conditions  
Financial and administrative guidelines  
Templates (TSs, Financial Reporting etc.)

## Don't

Unprecise planning  
Deviations in achieved results  
Over/underspending  
Delays  
Wrong reporting procedures  
Problems with partners



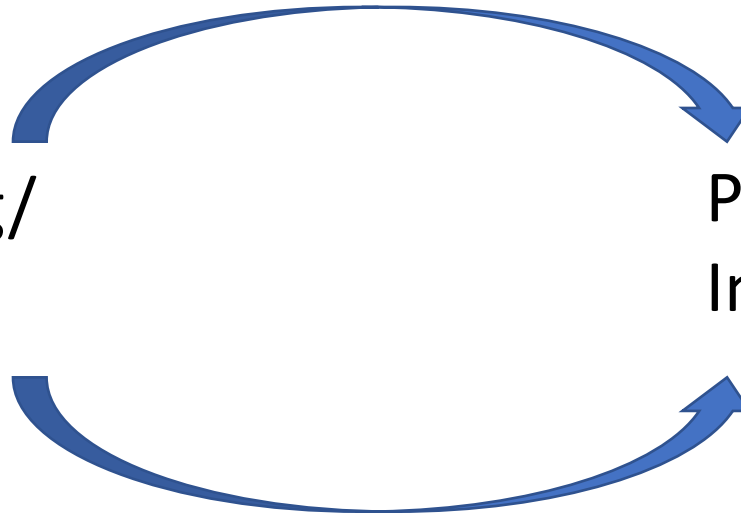
# Do's and don't's for planning and implementing successful LIFE Projects

Obtain funding

Project planning/  
application

Project  
Implementation

Achieve objectives  
Implement foreseen activities  
Meet deadlines



# Obtain funding

## Evaluation procedure

Award Criteria	Minimum pass score*	Maximum score
<b>Technical and Financial coherence and quality</b>		
1. Technical coherence and quality	10	20
2. Financial coherence and quality (including value for money)	10	20
<b>EU added value:</b>		
3. Extent and quality of the contribution to the specific objectives of the priority areas of the LIFE sub-programme for Environment	10	20
4. Sustainability (continuation, replication, transfer potential)	8	15
<b>Overall (pass) score</b>	<b>50*</b>	
<b>Bonus</b>		
5. Contribution to the project topics	-	0 or 5 or 10
6. Synergies (including multipurpose and integration/complementarity (max. 8 points), Green Public Procurement (max. 1 point), Ecolabel (max. 1 point), and uptake EU-research results (max. 1 point)) - Transnational (max. 4 points)	-	15
<b>Maximum score</b>		<b>100</b>

# Quality and precision of action descriptions

## **Evaluation criterion 1 :**

**Technical coherence and quality: clear and accurate action descriptions, coherence between threats, objectives and expected results, maps, timing, partnership etc.**

Action descriptions must be precise, quantified

- Provide numeric information about what will be done
- Provide precise geographic location
- Provide timing
- Provide technical/methodological details
- Tell by whom it will be carried out

Accurate action descriptions

But:

- Details are not known yet
- The description must be flexible enough to allow changes
- How to use the preparatory actions?

# Action descriptions - Example

E.g. LIFE STRADE (LIFE11BIO/IT/072):

Action: monitoring of damage and installation of road kill prevention tools:

Unknown factors:

Selection of road segments for monitoring, location of installation of devices etc.

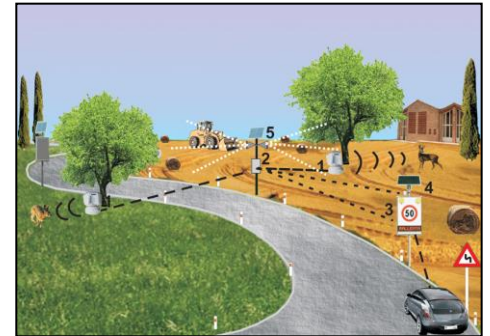
→ How to determine the road segments?

→ Include preparatory actions:

- Collect historical data about road kills to identify critical roads
- Monitor the road kills on sample segments
- Identify locations for prevention tools

But what to write in the action description?

WHERE will the actions take place?



# Action descriptions - Example

## Possibility 1:

- a. Indicate very long roads, very vague information OR
- b. Make a «guesstimate» and choose road segments as well as possible



## THEN:

- a. The data is too vague and not accepted
- b. During the project it results that the selected segments are not suitable

Risks: the changes are is not accepted

→ The costs are not considered eligible

→ The project as a whole is considered not well planned, inconsistent, too many changes are made etc.

# Action descriptions - Example



## Possibility 2:

«The monitoring will presumably take place on the following road segments: XYZ

These segments have been determined on the basis of what is already known to the people who are contributing to the planning of the proposal.

However, Action AX foresees the collection of the historical data of the damage in the project areas.

*- The information that will be collected and analysed will help to narrow down the areas to 10 km for each road.*

*- Also, according to the results of the analysis the road segments might be changed, if it is seen that other segments are more critical and therefore more suitable to be targeted in the project»*

→ During the project numbers are rearranged



# Action descriptions - Example

E.g. LIFE EX-TRA:

Action: development of a participatory process to reduce conflicts with the with assistance of external experts

Unknown factors:

- How will the experts want to structure the meetings?
- How many stakeholders will be identified?
- How many persons will be willing/interested to attend the meetings?
- How will the meetings be perceived? Is a new meeting feasible in short term or should it be postponed?

→ Include preparatory actions:

- Make a stakeholder analysis
- Contract HD experts and develop a common calendar, in function also of the responses of the stakeholders

But what to write in the action description?



# Action descriptions - Example

Possibility 1:

Make a «guesstimate»

«We will make 1 meeting with stakeholders every 3 months with at least 25 participants in each meeting...»



THEN:

- During the project make amendments, e.g. revise the calendar of the meetings
- The foreseen calendar might not be respected
- The number of meetings might not be achieved
- The number of participants might not be reached.

Risks: the changes are considered not acceptable

- The lower number of participants is interpreted as an indicator that the objective was not achieved
- The costs are not considered eligible
- The project as a whole is considered not well planned, inconsistent, too many changes are made etc.

# Action descriptions - Example

Possibility 2:

Explain the scenarios:

***Please note:*** *The number and type of meetings described in this action are preliminary ideas of how this action could be developed. However, until we have the results of action AX it will be difficult to make a definitive plan of the structure and timing of the meetings, the persons targeted etc.*

*When it comes to many people of different groups of persons, with different interests, it is not possible to determine with precision at the beginning the end result of such a process. One of the typical characteristics of negotiation processes is that you have a basic idea of an objective in general, but you may not know precisely what will be the final result. This is caused by the fact that the negotiation process allows to take into account all the views and needs of potential interest groups and therefore may not move within pre-defined patterns.*

→ The action can be restructured and readapted with a certain margin of flexibility.

# Partnership structure

Are the beneficiaries needed?

- Are the partners REALLY needed? E.g. for permits, know-how, cofunding
- Are the partners responsible for project activities?
- Suitability to implement the project actions
- Can they be involved with an A8-form?

Are the beneficiaries reliable?

- Sufficient staff and know-how to manage a project
- Political willingness
- Stability (public bodies)
- Cofunding capacity

## Partnership structure - example

Associated beneficiary MOEW

Bulgarian Ministry of Environment and Water

Responsibility:

Purchase of 60 electric fences

Development of BET

Problem:

- Change of government
- New Ministers
- Various changes of responsibilities inside Ministry
- 18 months delay



# Value for money

## **Evaluation criterion 2:**

**Financial coherence and quality (including value for money): e.g. reasonable costs, detailed cost description, no exaggerated costs, no ineligible costs, budget in balance**

## **Value for money: Conservation benefit vs. cost of the project**

*How is the “conservation benefit” evaluated?*

*Direct results of the project:*

Increase of populations in numbers of individuals; decrease of number of individuals of invasive species, increase of nr. hectares of habitats etc.

*Impact at population level/at EU level:*

Large increase of a small population/surface vs. small increase of a large population/surface

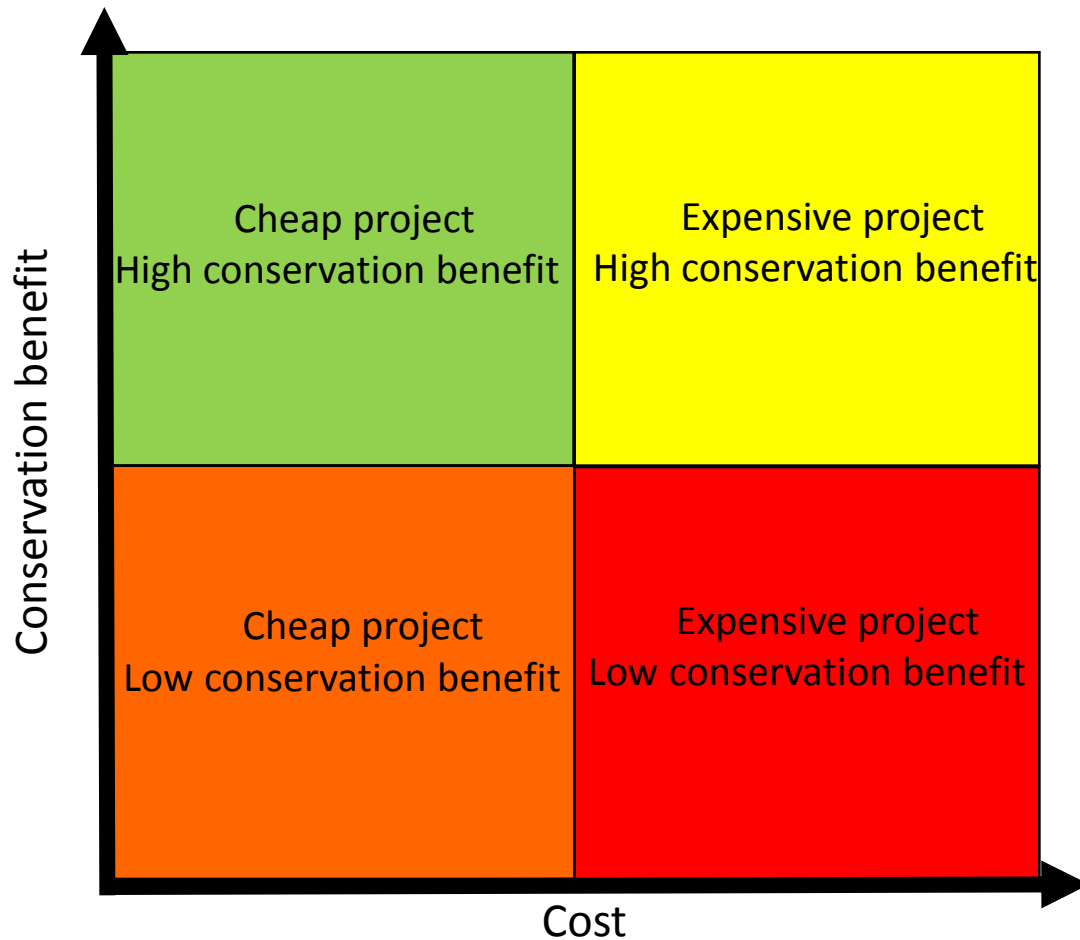
*Indirect impact:*

Through replication Through further development of best practices, application on other issues

# Value for money

## Evaluation criterion 2:

Financial coherence and quality (including value for money)



# Expected results

## **Evaluation criterion 3:**

**Extent and quality of the contribution to the specific objectives of the priority areas of the LIFE sub-programme for Environment**

**The project must have significant impact on conservation**

To be quantified, e.g.:

- Increase of at least 100 ha of habitat 6120\*
- Increase of the Black vulture population by at least 20%
- Damage prevention tools know and used by at least 50% of the farmers
- At least 15 communes use new grazing regulations
- 50% of the population has stopped to throw away cigarette stumps



**BUT.....will this really be achieved?**



# Sustainability

## **Evaluation criterion 4:**

### **Sustainability: (continuation, replication, transfer potential)**

*Continuation:* how will the activities developed during the project be continued afterwards?

- Actions are planned to be self-sustainable at the end of the project
- Continuation of the actions is guaranteed

*Replication:* Activities are implemented

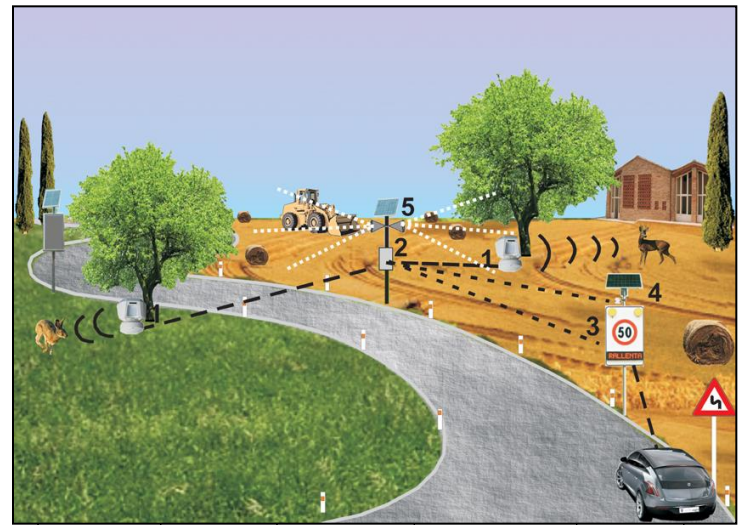
- In the same area after the end of the project by other actors
- In other areas

*Transfer potential:* Actions/methods can be applied

- By other actors
- For other objectives (e.g. on other species)
- Under other conditions

# Sustainability

## Example LIFE STRADE



# Dissemination and replicability

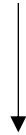
## Example participatory process EX-TRA

LIFE COEX – Recognition of the need of involving stakeholders

LIFE EX-TRA – Development of a methodology for stakeholder consultation



LIFE PRATERIE –  
Continuation of the  
participatory process



Application of the  
methods in other LIFE  
Projects with other  
objectives



Application of the  
methods for other  
needs (e.g. design of  
NP management plan)



Large-scale replication + transferability of a tool  
developed in the frame of LIFE EX-TRA

# Project planning/application

Obtain funding



Detailed planning

High value for money

Significant expected results

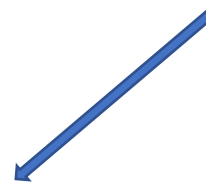
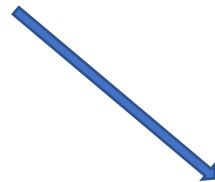
Sustainability

Sufficient flexibility?

Are the funds sufficient?

Can they be achieved for sure?

What happens afterwards?



Balance «attractiveness» with feasibility

# Project implementation

Common project management:

- Produce time plans
- Coordinate the technical implementation of the project
- Monitor the implementation, the timing, deliverables, milestones etc.
- Reporting to the EC
- Monitoring expenses and production of financial reports
- Keeping relationship with EASME (monthly reports, monitoring visits etc.)

This is the easy part.....

But what to do when...

- Delays
- Deviations from the planned actions
- Unforeseen costs, requests of budget changes
- Problems caused by single partners



# Project implementation – changes and delays

## Substantial changes

Significant changes to the nature of actions or deliverables

Changes to the duration of the project period

Changes to the provisional project budget, shifting more than 20 % of the maximum amount between two or more categories of actual costs

Changes of the legal status of a beneficiary

Changes to the project partnership structure

## Non substantial changes

Minor changes in details of actions, locations, timing etc.

Minor changes in the duration of one or more actions, without affecting the objectives

Adjustments of budget, minor transfers between cc, between actions and between beneficiaries, replacement of purchases

# Project implementation

```
graph TD; A[Project implementation] --> B["Action development<br/>Achieve objectives<br/>Handling changes"]; A --> C["Reporting<br/>Communication with EASME<br/>Achieve funds"]; B --> D["Balance between what is really needed and feasible and the expectations of EASME"]; C --> D;
```

Action development  
Achieve objectives  
Handling changes

Reporting  
Communication with EASME  
Achieve funds

Balance between what is really needed and feasible and the expectations of EASME

# Project implementation – reporting to the EC

*How to report/request changes?*

Explain in detail why the delay/problem appeared

Explain the impact of the delay/problem on the actions/objectives

Provide clear information on how the delay/problem will be solved

Provide details of changes to be made

e.g. detailed information on alternative activities

If budget transfers: where is budget taken from, where transferred to

What will be done with the budget?

**IMPORTANT:**

Always explain clearly why this does NOT affect the output of the



## Final recommendations

*While in the hurry of writing the proposal take time to:*

Consider critically the expected results – significance vs. feasibility

Make sure there is good «value for money»

Include sufficient margin of flexibility into the action descriptions

Make an own assessment of the evaluation criteria