

The European Commission has approved an investment package of EUR 243 million from the EU budget for projects under the LIFE program supporting nature, the environment, and quality of life in Europe's transition to a more sustainable and low-carbon future, according to a press release from the EU executive.

Funds of EUR 196.2 million will go to projects in the field of environment and resource efficiency, nature and biodiversity, and environmental governance and information.

In the area of climate action, the EU will invest EUR 46.8 million to support climate change mitigation, adaptation and governance and information projects. This includes practical support for EU member states drafting their 2030 national climate and energy plans that will help them collectively reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels, according to the press release.

The EU funding will mobilize additional investments leading to a total of EUR 430.7 million going towards 142 new projects. With numerous trans-national projects funded, LIFE will have an impact in every EU Member State, according to the press release.

Project to establish protected areas for oceanic birds in Croatia

One of the projects funded under the LIFE program is to produce a list of proposed marine special protection areas for oceanic birds and suggested management measures for them.

The goals of the EUR 1.9 million LIFE Artina project include identifying marine SPAs in southern Croatia for the yellow shearwater (*Puffinus puffinus*) and Audouin's gull (*Larus audouinii*) - which both have unfavorable or declining conservation status - and for Scopoli's shearwater (*Calonectris diomedea*).

By understanding and assessing the main threats affecting oceanic bird populations on land and at sea in the project area, the project will be able to map out actions to mitigate them.

Making new products from old plastic and papers in Slovenia

Millions of tonnes of post-consumer plastic waste end up in landfill, or worse, in seas.

Under a EUR 1.8 million project, to be implemented by partners from four EU member states, including Slovenia, CEPLAFIB, a new material made from recycled plastics and pulp from old newspapers, is designed to be used in the packaging, automotive, and construction industries.

Four projects worth EUR 7 million to be implemented in Bulgaria

Four projects worth a total of EUR 7 million are to be implemented in Bulgaria under the LIFE program. One of these projects is to help protect bats as an important natural controller of pest insects.

Another project, worth EUR 2 million, is to help reduce energy and emissions in glassmaking. The LIFE Smart Oxy-Boost project is to help make adjustments to the melting

EU approves EUR 243 million package for birds, bats, other projects to protect nature, environment

furnace so that it uses 4.2% less natural gas and reduce CO2 emissions related to combustion by the same amount. The Bulgarian glass producer, Trakya Glass, calculates a return on investment of two to three years.

12 projects worth EUR 29.6 million to cover Greece

Of 12 projects worth EUR 29.6 million approved to cover Greece, one, like in Bulgaria, concerns habitats for bats, an endangered species.

The projects include those to restore trust in vehicle emissions measurement; safeguard Bonelli's eagle (*Aquila fasciata*) in Greece and Cyprus; contribute to greening urban freight transport; combat heat in cities; and monitor health impacts of nanomaterials.

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