

4. Projects addressing the **marine component** of the implementation of the Habitats and Birds Directives and related provisions under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive descriptor 1, in particular where such projects focus on one or several of the following actions:
 - a. completing and finalising national inventories for setting up the offshore marine Natura 2000 network of sites;
 - b. restoration and management of marine Natura 2000 sites, including the preparation and implementation of site management plans;
 - c. actions addressing species-, habitat- or site-related conflicts between marine conservation and fishermen or other "marine users", as well as actions which combine conservation measures with a sustainable use of Natura 2000 sites;
 - d. demonstrative or innovative approaches to assess or monitor the impact of human activities on critical marine habitats and species as a tool to guide active conservation measures.
5. Projects for improving the conservation status of habitat types or species of Community Interest (including bird species), the actions of which correspond to the **actions** identified in the relevant national or EU-level species or habitat action plans
6. Projects targeting **invasive alien species**, where these are likely to deteriorate the conservation status of species (including birds) or habitat types of Community Interest in support of the Natura 2000 network.

LIFE Regulation Annex III

- (b)** *Thematic priorities for Biodiversity: activities for the implementation of the Union Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, in particular:*
- (i) Activities aimed at contributing to the achievement of Target 2;*
 - (ii) Activities aimed at contributing to the achievement of Targets 3, 4 and 5.*

The following project topics focus on the implementation of Targets 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, in as far as they can be funded under the LIFE programme.

Priority will be given to the project topics listed below:

1. Projects aimed at implementing Target 2 of the Biodiversity Strategy, through the integration of actions to maintain and enhance ecosystems and their services into the activities of the public or private sectors, by **establishing Green as well as Blue Infrastructure and restoring degraded ecosystems**. These projects should test and apply approaches aimed at:
 - a. mapping and assessing (including valuation) of ecosystems including marine ecosystems and their services to contribute to a priority setting for restoration, Green or Blue Infrastructure or No Net Loss;
 - b. restoring ecosystems including coastal and marine ecosystems and their services by applying the Restoration Priority Framework;
 - c. developing methodologies for valuation of and payment for ecosystem services (including tangible and intangible services); or

practices and solutions or develop, test and demonstrate new approaches, best practices and solutions. With regard to projects falling within the thematic priority **biodiversity**, however, **priority will generally be given to pilot and demonstrative projects**, unless otherwise stated in the respective project topic.

LIFE has been a key tool supporting the implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directives during the past 20 years. This small programme has been instrumental and in some cases crucial to ensure the establishment of the Natura 2000 network. The co-legislators have expressed their clear wish to keep the focus of LIFE on this strategic issue, in particular at the time when all Member States are required to ensure the favourable conservation status of all habitats and species. In most cases, this can only be achieved by active management of the sites and their connectivity or that of the relevant species. For this reason LIFE Nature and Biodiversity will continue to focus its limited financial resources on Natura 2000 to ensure full delivery of the commitments concerning target 1 of the Biodiversity strategy. At the same time, following the positive experience of LIFE+, LIFE 2014-2020 will promote Biodiversity projects mostly aimed at testing and demonstrating new ways to address wider biodiversity concerns. LIFE Nature and LIFE Biodiversity are intended to complement each other.

LIFE Regulation Annex III

- (a) ***Thematic priorities for Nature: activities for the implementation of Directives 92/43/EEC and 2009/147/EC, in particular:***
- (i) *Activities aimed at improving the conservation status of habitats and species, including marine habitats and species, and bird species, of Union interest;*
 - (ii) *Activities in support of the Natura 2000 network bio-geographical seminars;*
 - (iii) *Integrated approaches for the implementation of prioritised action frameworks.*

The following project topics contributing to Target 1 of the Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 to fully implement the Birds and Habitats Directives are given priority:

1. Projects aimed at improving the conservation status of habitat types or species (including bird species) of Community Interest²¹, targeting the **Natura 2000 sites** proposed or designated for these habitat types or species.
2. Projects aimed at improving the conservation status of habitat types in Natura 2000 sites or species (including bird species) of Community Interest, provided, their **status is not “favourable/secure and not declining” or “unknown”** according to the most recent overall assessments that Member States have provided at the relevant geographic level according to Article 17 of the Habitats Directive or to the most recent assessments according to Article 12 Birds Directive and EU-level bird assessments.
3. Projects implementing one or several **actions** foreseen in the relevant **Prioritised Action Framework (PAF)**, as updated by the Member States or concrete actions identified, recommended or agreed in the framework of the Natura 2000 bio-geographical seminars.

²¹ The reference to the term "Community interest" used in this context is to be understood as "Union interest".

- d. innovative management schemes addressing, in particular, water related ecosystem services, which could provide potential funding mechanisms to achieve the Biodiversity Strategy targets and contribute to aims of the Water Framework Directive and the Floods Directive.
2. Projects implementing actions targeting **Invasive Alien Species** (under Target 5 of the Biodiversity Strategy or in view of contributing to reaching the level of protection set out in descriptor 2 - Non-indigenous species of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive²²) through actions testing and applying approaches aimed at:
 - a. preventing the introduction of invasive alien species, in particular by tackling pathways of unintentional introduction,
 - b. establishing an early warning and rapid response system, and
 - c. eradicating or controlling established invasive alien species on an appropriate spatial scale.

These projects shall address with their actions the three steps (prevention; early warning and rapid response; eradication/control) in a comprehensive framework, or, where one of the steps has already been addressed, their actions shall at least be clearly situated in a broader framework that links all three steps. They should be set up to improve existing – or introduce new – technical, administrative or legal frameworks on the relevant level; they should aim at preventing the broader establishment of IAS within the EU.

3. Projects targeting **threatened species** that are not included in the annexes of the Habitats Directive but that have a status of "**endangered**" or **worse** in the European Red Lists (http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/redlist/index_en.htm) or in the IUCN Red List for those species that are not covered by the European Red Lists (<http://www.iucnredlist.org/>).
4. Pilot or demonstration projects using **innovative ways of direct or indirect financing** (including public and private partnerships, fiscal instruments, biodiversity offsets etc.) for Biodiversity-related activities in the public and private sector.
5. Pilot or demonstration projects testing and then implementing **Green Infrastructure actions** focusing on:
 - a. innovative technologies and the development and application of technical standards regarding them;
 - b. the preservation or restoration of ecosystems for the benefit of human health; or
 - c. cost-efficient technologies and methods that minimise the impact of existing energy and transport infrastructures on biodiversity by strengthening the functionality of spatially linked ecosystems.

3.3. PRIORITY AREA ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE AND INFORMATION

Pursuant to Article 12 (a) of the LIFE Regulation, the project topics corresponding to this priority area and the related thematic priorities listed in Annex III to the LIFE Regulation, shall pursue the specific objective “to promote awareness raising on environmental matters, including generating public and stakeholder support of Union policy-making in the field of the

²²Annex I (2) Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive), OJ L164/19