

WHAT IS THE EU LIFE PROGRAMME AND WHAT DOES LIFE IP MEAN?



The LIFE Programme is the funding instrument of the European Union for nature, environment and climate action since 1992.

The so-called 'Integrated Projects' were introduced in 2014 to be able to implement environmental legislation and goals on a wider scale and to increase the impact of the LIFE Programme. They provide funding for plans, programmes and strategies developed on the regional, multi-regional, national or trans-national level.

The LIFE IP 'Atlantic Region DE' is the first integrated project in Germany within the LIFE priority area 'Nature and Biodiversity'.

WHAT IS „NATURA 2000“?



Natura 2000 is a network of nature protection areas to preserve endangered or typical habitat types and species across the European Union. It constitutes the first detailed legal instrument for habitat and species protection in the European Union. It is made up of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA) designated under the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) and the Birds Directive (Council Directive 2009/147/EC) respectively. With at present more than 27,000 protected areas, which cover almost 20 percent of the European Union, the Natura 2000 network is the largest coordinated transnational protected area network of the world and contributes significantly to the conservation of biological diversity within the EU. In Germany, there are currently 5,206 Natura 2000 sites (of which 4,557 are SAC) covering 80,773 square kilometres and preserving about 15.4 percent of the total area.

THE LIFE INTEGRATED PROJECT Atlantic Region DE

(LIFE15 IPE/DE/007)

COORDINATING BENEFICIARY

Ministry for Environment, Agriculture, Conservation and Consumer Protection of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (MULNV)

ASSOCIATED BENEFICIARY

Ministry for the Environment of Lower Saxony (MU)

OVERALL COORDINATION AS WELL AS PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION IN NORTH RHINE-WESTPHALIA

District Government of Münster, Department 51

SUPPORTING PARTNERS

State Agency for Nature, Environment and Consumer Protection (LANUV) in North Rhine-Westphalia

Lower Saxony Water Management, Coastal Defence and Nature Conservation Agency (NLWKN, project management and implementation in Lower Saxony)

PROJECT DURATION

01.10.2016 – 30.09.2026 (four project phases)

TOTAL BUDGET

16,875,000 €, European Union (about 60 %), States of North Rhine-Westphalia and Lower Saxony (about 20 % each)

The LIFE Project 'Atlantic Region DE' is the first integrated project in Germany within the LIFE priority area 'Nature and Biodiversity'. The integrated approach facilitates the implementation of strategies on the national or trans-national level. Furthermore, complementary actions and additional policy fields have to be included.

The Atlantic region in Germany (light green)



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Front page: Room 76 Photography/Fotolia;
Background of inside page: chatgunner/Fotolia

Ecological print on 100% recycled paper, awarded the 'Blue Angel'



Atlantische Sandlandschaften
LIFE IP Atlantic Region DE

LIFE INTEGRATED PROJECT

Nature Conservation in North Rhine-Westphalia and Lower Saxony

www.atlantic-region.de





ONE IMPORTANT GOAL IS TO INCREASE THE PUBLIC AWARENESS FOR THE LOSS OF BIODIVERSITY.

OUR GOAL TO IMPROVE THE CONSERVATION STATUS

With this cross-national project, the federal states North Rhine-Westphalia and Lower Saxony aim at preserving important landscapes within the Atlantic region and working against the loss of biodiversity. To turn the tide, on the one hand a methodological conceptual approach to improve all non-marine habitat types and species within the Atlantic region shall be developed. On the other hand, concrete actions for improving the conservation statuses of 15 selected habitat types and 10 species in sand landscapes in North Rhine-Westphalia and in Lower Saxony, with a focus on Natura 2000 sites, but also outside of protected areas, are to be implemented.

Focus species

- yellow-spotted whiteface
- crested newt
- common spadefoot*
- natterjack toad*
- European tree frog
- pool frog
- moor frog
- sand lizard*
- smooth snake*
- floating water-plantain*

Habitat types

- dry sand heaths with *Calluna* and *Genista**
- dry sand heaths with *Calluna* and *Empetrum nigrum**
- inland dunes with open *Corynephorus* and *Agrostis* grasslands*
- oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (*Littorelletalia uniflorae*)*
- oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the *Littorelletea uniflorae* and/or of the *Isoeto-Nanojuncetea**
- natural dystrophic lakes and ponds
- Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix**

- European dry heaths
- *Juniperus communis* formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands
- species-rich *Nardus* grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas*
- active raised bogs
- degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration
- transition mires and quaking bogs
- depressions on peat substrates of the *Rhynchosporion*
- bog woodland

AREA IN FOCUS WHY THE 'ATLANTIC REGION'?

The European Union has nine biogeographical regions, each with its own characteristic ecological and climatic conditions. The Atlantic region covers about 70,000 square kilometres in Germany, corresponding to 20 per cent of the terrestrial land cover and stretching over the western part of the North German Plain. The majority (about 80 percent) lies within North Rhine-Westphalia and Lower Saxony (see map on the rear page) and is marked with dense human population and intensive agriculture. Therefore, the habitats and species within these landscapes are threatened by a multitude of interests. Characteristic elements of the Atlantic region are nutrient poor habitats on sandy soils. These can get lost for endangered species through changes in use and nutrient inputs.

IMPLEMENTATION ON THE GROUND OPTIMISATION AND RECREATION OF HABITAT

The actions include various activities to improve or re-create habitat types as well as to improve the habitats for species of the sandscapes, for example:

- creation of nutrient-poor waterbodies
- desludging of waterbodies
- clearance of water's edges
- clearance of heaths
- nutrient removal (sod plugging, mowing)
- thinning out bogs or inland dunes
- restoration of peatlands and bogs
- creation of pioneer habitats
- activation of existing seed material
- habitat optimization through structural improvement
- creation of a biotope network with stepping stone biotopes
- stabilisation and promotion of local populations
- conservation breeding and reintroduction of the common spadefoot

PLANNING AND SUPERVISION OF ACTIONS SUPPORT ON SITE

The concrete activities on site are implemented in cooperation with numerous institutions and organisations, amongst others:

- District Governments and Lower Nature Conservation Authorities of North Rhine-Westphalia
- Lower Nature Conservation Authorities of Lower Saxony
- Biological Stations in North Rhine-Westphalia
- Ecological Stations in Lower Saxony
- North Rhine-Westphalia's State Enterprise for Forests and Wood as well as the Regional Forestry Offices
- Lower Saxony State Forests
- Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU), regional associations and local chapters
- Friends of the Earth Germany (BUND), regional associations and local chapters
- State Working Group on Conservation and Environment NRW (LNU)
- Nature conservation foundations and local nature conservation associations
- The BINGO Environmental Foundation of Lower Saxony
- The German Federal Environmental Foundation (DBU) and its subcompany DBU Naturerbe GmbH
- Institute for Federal Real Estate (BImA)
- The Regional Association Ruhr (RVR)
- Agricultural Chamber North Rhine-Westphalia
- Agricultural Chamber Lower Saxony
- Westphalia-Lippe Agricultural Association (WLV)
- Rhenisch Agricultural Association (RLV)
- Lower Saxony Regional Farmers' Association
- The Forest Farmer Association NRW
- and numerous cities, communes and other land owners

In Lower Saxony, targeted habitat measures are only implemented for the focus species and habitat types marked with an asterisk (*). In North Rhine-Westphalia, the habitat type 'dry sand heaths with *Calluna* and *Empetrum nigrum*' does not exist inherently.

THE ACTIONS SHALL IMPROVE THE CONSERVATION STATUS OF SELECTED HABITAT TYPES AND ANIMAL AND PLANT SPECIES IN THE ATLANTIC REGION.