



LIFE Project Number
LIFE14 CAP/RO/000007

MIDTERM Report
Covering the project activities from **01/01/2016 to 29/09/2017**

Reporting Date
13/10/2017

LIFE+ PROJECT NAME or Acronym
LIFE Lab – Closer to You

Project Data

Project location	Romania
Project start date:	01/01/2016
Project end date:	< 31/12/2017 > Extension date: < 30/06/2018 > *)
Total Project duration (in months)	30 months (including Extension of 6 months *)
Total budget	€ 401,550.00
Total eligible budget	€ 333,468
EU contribution:	€ 333,468.00
(%) of total costs	
(%) of eligible costs	

Beneficiary Data

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*) Although the reply to the extension request submitted on 03 July 2017 has yet to be received from EASME, the project monitor informed the team the request has been accepted.

Glossary of keywords and abbreviations

ANANP = National Agency for Protected Areas
BRE = Bilateral relations expert
CO I/II/III = Communication officer I/II/III
EC = European Commission
EEN = Enterprise Europe Network
EUB = Ecological University of Bucharest
FB = Facebook
FO = Financial officer
GA = Grant agreement
EPA = Environmental Protection Agency
IncR = Inception Report
IRO = Irregularity reporting officer
MoE = Ministry of Environment
MoEWF = Ministry of Environment Waters and Forests
MEX = Monitoring expert
MO = Ministerial order
MoEc = Ministry of Economy, Commerce and Business Environment
MoEF = Ministry of European Funds
MoF = Ministry of Finance
MS = Member states
NAPP = National Agency for Public Procurement
NCP = National Contact Point
NEPA = National Environmental Protection Agency
NFA = National Forest Administration
NGO = Non-Governmental Organization
NWA = National Water Administration
PC = Project coordinator
PM = Project manager
RIncR = Revised Inception Report
SME = Small and Medium Enterprise
UB = University of Bucharest

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1. Executive Summary

The project's objectives are: answering queries and providing potential applicants with comprehensive, clear and updated information, in order to enable them to submit mature, viable proposals and to increase the number of Romanian submissions; identifying and assisting potential interest groups – SMEs, local authorities, NGOs, academia, governmental institutions, research institutes; raising the awareness of the general public regarding the potential benefits and results of the LIFE programme.

The project's key deliverables are: establishing the project team; baseline analysis - LIFE absorption-related weaknesses; procurement procedure for 3 LIFE application and project management guides; completion of the 3 support guides for LIFE project proposals; procurement procedure for training session planning; info days/trainings for potential beneficiaries/workshops/train-the-trainers sessions; participating at international events; establishment of an information centre; assessment of the assistance provided by the LIFE Info Centre.

After an initial delay in recruitment, the team was completed in October 2016 and now consists of a Project Coordinator (PC, non-budgeted), 1 Project Manager (PM), 1 Financial Officer (FO) and 3 Communication Officers (CO). The PC and PM share project management duties (the former handles delicate/big-picture issues and signs off on internal/external reports, while the latter manages everyday tasks and all project activities) and ensure the smooth implementation of the project. The FO weighs in on financial issues and contributes to reports.

The team submitted an amendment request in July 2017 in order to extend the project duration until 30 June 2018, update the beneficiary's name and correct a number of inaccuracies and errors found in the Grant Agreement.

Regarding the technical part, despite a slow start, with multiple delays (A1. Recruitment, A3. Support guides, A4. Procurement procedure for training planning services), all but one (video promotion clips – ongoing) procurement procedures were finalized successfully and several of the deliverables listed above were completed. Exceptions include the training sessions (ongoing activity) and the Info Centre assessment (scheduled for the project end).

In EASME letter no. Ares (2017) 2459413 - 15/05/2017, in response to the submission of the Revised Inception Report in March 2017, the project team was asked to modify/improve and resubmit deliverables from actions A2. Report on weaknesses of LIFE funds absorption, B2. Ex-ante evaluation, B4. Evaluation of impact on beneficiary behavior and population acceptance, and C1. Communication plan. The current status of completed and ongoing activities is detailed in section 5.1. Technical progress.

Regarding the financial part, the costs incurred for project activities did not exceed the foreseen budget, with one minor exception – promotional materials, which was discussed with the monitor and provisionally approved by email in April 2017.

The Midterm Report has a comprehensive list of annexes in support of the actions and results described below. The annexes consist of support guides, attendance lists, charts, photographs and scanned documents, which are all meant to illustrate the team's activity and help assessors gain insight into the project's implementation process.

2. Introduction

Background, problems and objectives

Given the limited national success of the LIFE Programme (low numbers in proposals and accepted projects), the project aims to increase the submission and approval rates of Romanian projects by raising awareness about this financing instrument in various interest groups and supporting interested parties with information throughout the entire application process.

Despite certain delays in early and mid-2016, the project structure is now fully set up – complete team, equipped info center, LIFE sessions are being held, dedicated page on the ministry's website and Facebook page up and running.

Procurement-related difficulties have delayed the procurement process of the support guidebooks (A.3) and training services (A.4). Given the parliamentary elections in December 2016 and the massive structural changes the process prompted (in January 2017, the Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests was divided into two separate governmental bodies – the Ministry of Environment, and the Ministry of Waters and Forests), the two procurement procedures were temporarily put on hold until all outstanding issues regarding budgets, organizational chart changes, personnel shuffling, and internal processes and workflows were resolved. The two procedures were finalized in June and July 2017, respectively.

Despite a slow start, the project is now progressing at a satisfactory pace and efforts are being made to counter the initial delays. The meetings and presentation sessions completed so far proved to be effective and potential applicants started to visit the Info Center and inquire about LIFE funding opportunities. However, in order to be able to meet the main object of the project, i.e. reach a high number of target groups countrywide, a 6-month extension request was submitted to EASME, which would enable the project team to organize the series of presentation events detailed in the revised communication plan.

Expected longer term results

After the project end, the LIFE Info Center will remain operational as part of the External Funds Directorate, and (at least) the civil servants who are part of the team will continue their LIFE-related activity and provide support for future potential applications. Moreover, another capacity building project application is foreseen.

The general management of the LIFE Programme is going to be assured on a permanent basis by the External Funds Directorate, with support from the Ministry's specialised technical directions. The Directorate will continue to organise yearly LIFE Info Day events in order to actively disseminate info on future LIFE calls.

The support guides, a project deliverable (Annexes A3.a, b, c), available on the MoE's website since July 2017, will be updated on a yearly basis, after the start of each new LIFE call for applications, in order to include any significant changes made to the LIFE regulation by the EC/EASME.

3. Administrative part

3.1 Description of the management system

Based on their previous experience in LIFE project implementation, a team of public servants and experts was established at the Ministry in 2016. The most important and relevant

phase of the project is to approach as many beneficiaries as possible and assist them with the application process. Unfortunately, not all of the project's planned tasks and activities could be carried out as initially planned, and several delays can now be noticed in the general timeline. Efforts are currently being made to counter the delays and meet all objectives.

Coordinating beneficiary

The project's coordinating beneficiary is the Romanian Ministry of Environment (former Ministry of the Environment, Waters and Forests), which acts to protect the country's environment and natural resources in order to preserve a clean environment for current and future generations, in harmony with economic and social progress. The Ministry promotes a unitary, coherent environmental policy that sets out to meet several ambitious objectives, such as:

- ensuring the integration of environmental requirements in sectorial strategies;
- ensuring the protection of the natural capital;
- monitoring and mitigation of climate change risks;
- ensuring appropriate risk management and prevention of flood-associated disasters;
- implementing the "polluter pays" principle;
- ensuring compliance with the environmental *acquis communautaire*: renewing the technology of central heating systems and increasing energy efficiency, promoting renewable energy sources, and overseeing the ecological rehabilitation of historically polluted areas;
- reporting to the EU on Romania's progress towards meeting its European environmental targets and responsibilities.

Project Coordinator/Project Manager

The project is supervised by the Project Coordinator (also LIFE NCP) and managed by the Project Manager. The former macro-manages and, when necessary, liaises with the MoE leadership and other ministries, while the latter micromanages the team and the project's day-to-day activities. Project members attend meetings on a weekly basis or whenever important matters occur, during which all outstanding issues are discussed.

Amendment to the Grant Agreement

The project team submitted an amendment request to EASME on 03.07.2017. The 4 categories of proposed changes are briefly described below.

a) Extension of project duration

Given the recruitment- and procurement-related delays the project experienced in 2016, detailed in the Revised Inception Report, several of the foreseen activities (especially A3, A4) could not advance as planned. Despite the team's efforts to make up for the aforementioned shortcomings, we expect to be unable to duly cover the full scope of the project in the time that remains. The team therefore proposed that the project end date be modified from 31.12.2017 to 30.06.2018, which would allow the completion of all activities foreseen in the grant agreement.

b) Coordinating Beneficiary name change

Following the parliamentary elections in December 2016, the Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests was renamed the Ministry of Environment (Government Decision No. 19/2017 of 12.01.2017, published in the Official Gazette of Romania "*Monitorul Oficial*" No. 47 on 17.01.2017).

c) *Schedule revision / Correction of material inconsistencies*

The project team proposed the correction of several scheduling and deliverable-related inconsistencies noticed in the Grant Agreement (forms B1b, C1a, C1c, C1d and C2).

d) *Budget changes*

Even though the 20% threshold was not reached, the project team decided to include several budget changes in the amendment request submitted in July 2017, detailed in the financial section.

3.2 Evaluation of the management system

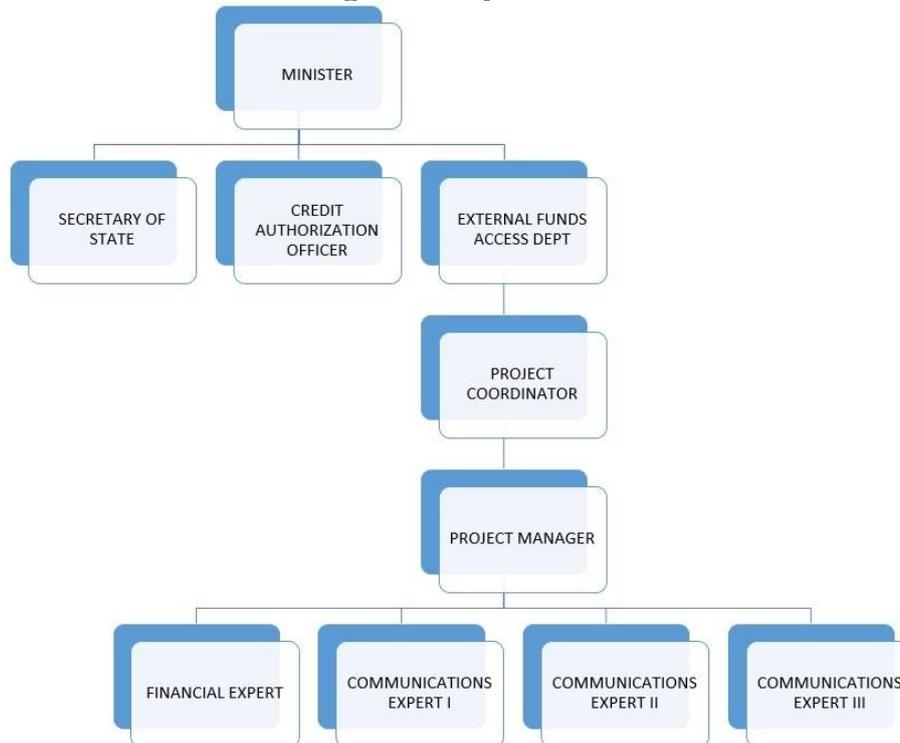


Fig. 1 Project management system

The project team consists of a Project Coordinator (the Director of External Funds Directorate and LIFE NCP), which is a non-budgeted position, 1 Project Manager, 1 Financial Expert and 3 Communication Experts.

The project team has weekly meetings during which upcoming events/activities and outstanding financial issues are discussed. The project coordinator weighs in on complex/delicate matters, and also liaises with the Ministry's leadership. Whenever there are legal-, procurement- or IT-related issues, separate meetings are called with representatives of the Ministry's specialized departments.

Given the novelty of this kind of project, the team believes the management system was developed and is being carried out adequately.

In the very beginning of the project, the scheduled activities could not be carried out as planned – in addition to the incomplete project team, difficulties mostly consisted of long wait periods for paper/document signing/validation by the Ministry's specialized departments.

The external monitoring team has provided constant, prompt and highly helpful support, and communication with the Commission was conducted in a very effective manner. All of the team's inquiries were addressed in a timely fashion.

4. Technical part

4.1. Technical progress, per task

A. Implementation actions

A.1 Recruitment

Foreseen start date	Actual start date	Foreseen end date	Actual end date
January 2016	January 2016	January 2016	October 2016
Team members involved: PM, CO I			

Due to unforeseen institutional delays and difficulties, the team members effectively started working (full-time) on the project in 2016 as follows: PM - March, CO I - March, FO - June, CO II&III - October. The Ministerial Order regarding the LIFE team structure was completed in February 2016, and the Ministerial Order regarding the setup of the core LIFE unit was completed in March 2016.

In addition to the 5 team members who were initially listed in the proposal, due to internal institutional requirements, the 3 following public servants were actively involved in the project on a part-time basis: irregularity reporting officer (March to May 2016), bilateral relations expert (March 2016 to May 2017), monitoring expert (March 2016 to May 2017). The costs for the 3 additional team members were declared ineligible by EASME in letter no. Ares (2017)2459413 - 15/05/2017, in response to the Revised IncR submitted in March 2017.

The first delay occurred at the very beginning of the project due to issues regarding the conditions in which civil servants could be included in EC-funded projects. The process took longer than anticipated, and similar problems were encountered with the external contract agent positions, filled in October. The contract agent competition announcement for the two remaining positions – CO II and CO III – was published on the ministry's website in July 2016. The two external contract agents effectively started their activity on October 10th.

A1 annexes are meant to recount the entire recruitment process and provide the official institutional markings on the overall timeline.

Annexes:

Annex A1.a*: MO – Setup of the core LIFE unit [RO] (deliverable)

Annex A1.b*: MO – LIFE team structure [RO] (deliverable)

Annex A1.c*: Recruitment procedures for civil servants [RO] (deliverable)

Annex A1.c'*: Recruitment procedures for external staff [RO] (deliverable)

* *submitted with the Revised Inception Report in March 2017*

A.2 Baseline analysis

Foreseen start date	Actual start date	Foreseen end date	Actual end date
June 2016	June 2016	June 2016	July 2016 + August 2017 (revised version)
Team members involved: PM, CO I			

The report on previous LIFE applications from Romania was written following discussions with applicants, potential applicants and LIFE project beneficiaries. Weaknesses

leading to low participation in the programme include the unavailability of co-financing sources, the lack of a national strategy for LIFE, frequent changes in MoE's policy and strategy/approach regarding the LIFE Programme's management process, the complex technical and financial requirements (that demand the expertise of specialized personnel which is not always easy to find and contract), the lack of implementation guides, limited resources allocated to large-scale dissemination (which affects the programme's overall visibility), insufficient networking between Romania and other member states.

In letter no. Ares (2017)2459413 - 15/05/2017, EASME requested that the analysis be revised and resubmitted.

As the programme's visibility grew, the team was able to use different evaluation instruments, enhance its interaction with past and potential beneficiaries and adjust its approach (the team used questionnaires and direct 1-on-1 dialogue in order to better describe the baseline state of affairs).

Annexes:

Annex A2.a*: Report on LIFE absorption difficulties [RO] (deliverable)

Annex A2.b: Report on LIFE absorption difficulties 2.0 (revised) [ENG] (deliverable)

* submitted with the Revised Inception Report in March 2017

A.3 Preparation of three implementation guides

Foreseen start date	Actual start date	Foreseen end date	Actual end date
March 2016	April 2016	April 2016	April 2017 (procurement documentation) June 2017 (delivery of guidebooks)
Team members involved: PM, FO, CO I/II/III			

As previously mentioned, although the procurement documentation for the 3 implementation guides was initially completed in April 2016, due to the entry into force of the new Government Decision HG 98/2016 on procurement procedures, new assessment factors for establishing the best price-quality ratio had to be identified. As a result, the call for tenders was belatedly published online in December. However, given the then upcoming parliamentary elections (December 11th 2016), all operations were put on hold until the end of the ministerial shift.

The contract was signed in April 2017 with the Centre for Environmental Research and Impact Studies (CCMESI) of the University of Bucharest, and the 3 guides were delivered in physical format (150 copies each) at the end of June 2017.

The project team has started distributing printed guides (28 of each) to interested parties (MoE directorates, MoEc, MoF, MoEF, EPA Bucharest, Bucharest Chamber of Commerce, ANANP, Ilfov County Council, Defileul Jiului National Park, Măgurele Institute of Atomic Physics, several SMEs) during presentation events, project-writing sessions and Info Center visits, and has uploaded the electronic versions on the ministry's website on July 11th 2017 (www.mmediu.ro/articol/materiale-suport-pentru-facilitarea-accesarii-fondurilor-de-la-nivelul-programului-life/2282).

Even though these deliverables had a considerable delay, we believe the guides remain highly useful for potential applicants for both the 2017 and upcoming calls for applications. The project team also received the editable versions of the files from the service provider –

once the printed copies are distributed, it will be possible to incorporate any significant future changes or additions into the downloadable electronic versions of the guides.

During the project team’s meetings with potential applicants, the guides were well received and appreciated in terms of both content and form.

Annexes:

Annex A3.a: LIFE Programme support guide - Best practices (deliverable)

Annex A3.b: LIFE Programme - Financial guide (deliverable)

Annex A3.c: LIFE Programme - Technical guide (deliverable)

A.4 Organizing training sessions for targeted beneficiaries

	Foreseen start*	Actual start date	Foreseen end*	Actual end
1) Procurement procedure for training planning services	June 2016	June 2016	June 2017	June 2017
2) Info Days	June 2016 / June 2017	June 2016 / June 2017	June 2016 + June 2017 + June 2018	June 2016 / June 2017
3) Thematic trainings	July 2016	July 2016	May 2018	ongoing
4) Writer workshops	July 2016	July 2016	May 2018	ongoing
5) Train the trainers sessions	July 2016	July 2016	May 2018	ongoing
6) International events	June 2016	June 2016	March 2018	ongoing
Team members involved: PC, PM, CO I/II/III				

* according to the amendment request submitted to EASME in July 2017

1) Procurement procedure

The same aforementioned procurement-related difficulties also delayed this procedure (session planning services - transportation, accommodation, venue), which was started in June 2016. All acquisitions are made by the MoE’s public procurement department, which follows the procedures set by the National Agency for Public Procurement (NAPP), in accordance with European regulations. With this particular activity, the delay was due to difficulties met in defining the selection criteria, as the initial ones, elaborated in May-June 2016, were deemed insufficiently strict by NAPP. The project team had to rewrite the tender book and selection criteria in collaboration with the MoE’s public procurement department according to NAPP requirements.

Despite the issues described above, following the completion of the recruitment process, the team started conducting LIFE sessions without external event-planning support in Bucharest and surrounding counties (Romania’s Southern Development Region - Muntenia), in venues provided by prefectures, city halls, county chambers of commerce and the University of Bucharest. Starting this series of sessions in the vicinity of Bucharest was a decision prompted by the unforeseen delays presented above. As this solution temporarily bypassed the need to have an external event planning service provider, the sessions were

consistent with the principles of a *more value for less money*-type approach. They were part of the envisaged thematic events, i.e. preparation for potential beneficiaries.

The procurement procedure was finalized in July 2017 and the tender winner is already assisting the project team.

2) LIFE Info Days

- The first event was held at the National Geology Museum in Bucharest on June 17th 2016 and was attended by 47 participants. Presentations were held by LIFE beneficiaries, experts who had already implemented LIFE Projects, university specialists, civil servants from several institutions and NGOs (detailed in Annex A4.a).

- The second Info Day event was held on June 8th 2017 at the Bucharest Botanical Garden. It was attended by 61 participants, including 14 SME representatives, 2 EASME officials and 1 NEEMO monitor (detailed in Annex A4.j). Presentations were held by the project team, EASME, NEEMO, the Ministry for Business Environment, Commerce and Entrepreneurship, the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority, EEN and the Bucharest Botanical Garden (detailed in Annex A4.j).

- The third Info Day event will be held in June 2018 in Bucharest (location will be set at a later time). The same target groups will be invited to attend and the project team intends for the event to be the most successful yet in terms of participants.

3) Thematic trainings / 4) Support sessions for project writing / 5) Train the trainers

As mentioned above, in section 1) *Procurement procedure*, until the event-planning contract was finalized in July 2017, the project team conducted a series of LIFE-themed sessions. In order to make the best of the foreseen actions and fit in as much information as possible, we have decided, according to the participants' wish, to split each event into a series of different types of activities that correspond to the three main training categories. As the method proved effective, it will be kept on until the project end.

Such events were held in July/August/November/December 2016 in Bucharest, Ilfov, Călărași, Alexandria, Giurgiu, and in June/July 2017 at Ilfov County Council and at the Bucharest Chamber of Commerce. The events were attended, in total, by ~250 representatives of the project's main interest groups. Detailed descriptions of events held up to March 2017 (submission of Revised IncR) are featured in Annexes A4.c-h. Events held in June/July 2017 are detailed in Annexes A4.k, l.

In addition to the events above, after the submission of the RIncR in March 2017, the team started focusing on project writing sessions with potential applicants it came into contact via the LIFE Info Center or during previous sessions. The team is confident that at least 5 proposals will be submitted by the end of the 2017 call for applications. Attendance lists, photos and more detailed descriptions are featured in Annex A4.m and the main meetings are listed below in Table 1, in chronological order. While the team had one or more follow-up meetings in most cases, the table only mentions each potential applicant once.

No.	Activity – short description	Location and date	No of participants
1.	Project-writing workshop Potential applicant: Ecology University, Bucharest Topic: INF project centered around an environmental publication written in several European languages	Info LIFE Center - MoE 02.03.2017	3

2.	Project-writing workshop Potential applicant: MoE - Waste and hazardous substances Directorate, NEPA Topic: ENV - Strategy and management of waste containing mercury compounds	Info LIFE Center- MoE 27.04.2017	5
3.	Project-writing workshop Potential applicant: MEDIA Promotion SRL (SME), Bucharest Topic: INF - series of clips and a documentary on LIFE projects and the Natura 2000 Network	Info LIFE Center – MoE 25.05.2017	1
4.	Project-writing workshop Potential applicant: Defileul Jiului Natural Park Topic: NAT - evaluation of ecosystem services / conservation of protected fish species in Defileul Jiului.	Info LIFE Center – MoE 20.06.2017	1
5.	Project-writing workshop Potential applicant: Bioelectronic (SME), Ploiești Topic: ENV - device for measuring interior air quality (prototype), improving an existing model and expanding distribution	Info LIFE Center – MoE 22.06.2017	1
6.	Project-writing workshop Potential applicant: Oradea City Hall consultant Topic: ENV - best practices to separately collect the humid fraction from waste	Info LIFE Center – MoE 10.07.2017	6
7.	Project-writing workshop Potential applicant: San Rafaelo (Hunting Association), Babadag, Tulcea Topic: NAT - the reintroduction of the bustard (<i>Otis tarda</i>) in the eastern region of Romania, Dobrogea	Info LIFE Center – MoE 10.07.2017	2
8.	Project-writing workshop Potential applicant: MoE - Climate Change Directorate Topic: ENV - waste (selective collection), reforestation and restauration of degraded soils	Info LIFE Center – MoE 17.07.2017	4
9.	Project-writing workshop Potential applicant: Tresoil Biofuels (SME), Bucharest Topic: ENV - upscale production and distribution for a technology for thermal waste treatment (H2020 Excellence Certificate)	Info LIFE Center – MoE 21.07.2017	2
10.	Project-writing workshop Potential applicant: SETCAR (company), Brăila Topic: ENV - waste management / decontamination and hazardous waste treatment (mercury)	Info LIFE Center – MoE 24.07.2017	4
11.	Project-writing workshop Potential applicant: Bucharest Biology Institute (Romanian Academy) Topic: ENV - Integrated Project on nanoplastics in collaboration with other European research institutions and ministries	Info LIFE Center – MoE 25.07.2017	4
12.	Project-writing workshop Potential applicant: 3R Ecologic (SME), Brăila Topic: ENV - electronic platform for waste tracking	Info LIFE Center – MoE 26.07.2017	2
13.	Project-writing workshop (follow-up to no.4 – 27.04.2017) Potential applicant: RECOLAMP (SME), Bucharest Topic: ENV - mercury waste management project proposal	Info LIFE Center – MoE 02.08.2017	2
14.	Project-writing workshop Potential applicant: MoE - Ministerial Advisors on forestry and	Info LIFE Center –	5

	climate change Topic: ENV/NAT - soil restoration (through reforestation and the use of innovative greening techniques)	MoE 03.08.2017	
15.	Project-writing workshop Potential applicant: Ilfov County Council Topic: INF - 2 proposals on green energy and food waste	Info LIFE Center – MoE 10.08.2017	2
16.	Project-writing workshop Potential applicant: Stericycle Romania (SME), Jilava Topic: ENV - mercury collection from dental amalgam	Info LIFE Center – MoE 12.08.2017	1
17.	Project-writing workshop Potential applicant: RO Invest Capital, CLUSTERO and the Magurele Physics Institute Topic: ENV - 2 proposals on electric public transportation (2017) and radiation monitoring (2018).	Info LIFE Center – MoE 18.08.2017	4

Table 1. Project writing session record

In addition to the foreseen project-writing workshops listed above, the team (including the PC/LIFE NCP) also held additional general presentations that focused on introducing various interest groups to the LIFE Programme.

No.	Activity – short description	Location and date	No of participants
1.	LIFE Programme presentation Potential applicant: MoEc Topic: funding opportunities	MoEc (Bucharest) 21.02.2017	7
2.	LIFE Programme presentation Potential applicant: Ministry of Public Finances Topic: funding opportunities	Ministry of Public Finances 30.03.2017	4
3.	LIFE Programme presentation Potential applicant: National Agency for Protected Areas (ANANP) Topic: presentation of the LIFE Programme (possibility to submit a NAT proposal in 2017/2018)	Info LIFE Center - MoE 10.07.2017	6
4.	LIFE Programme presentation Potential applicant: Mehedinți Natural Parc Topic: NAT project funding opportunities	Info LIFE Center - MoE 19.07.2017	1
5.	LIFE Programme presentation Participants: LIFE NCP (MoE) + EPA Sibiu Topic: Identifying LIFE project themes on large carnivore management	EPA Sibiu 26.07.2017	20
6.	LIFE Programme presentation Participants: LIFE NCP (MoE) + EPA Oradea + Aqua Crisius Association 13 Topic: LIFE project themes on fish conservation	EPA Oradea + Aqua Crisius Association 13 15.07.2017	3
7.	LIFE Programme presentation Potential applicant: MoEc - Industry Department Topic: funding opportunities for ENV projects & establishing dedicated clusters	MoEc 01.08.2017	10

Table 2. General LIFE presentations

The revised Communication Plan features the event schedule below, which covers the remaining project duration and which will allow the project team to reach target groups located in each of the country's main regions.

Nr. crt.	Period	City	Type of action*	Location
1	Oct 2017	Galați, Brăila	Thematic training / Project writing / Train the trainers sessions	Brăila
2	Oct 2017	Focșani		Focșani
3	Oct 2017	Piatra Neamț, Bacău		Piatra Neamț
4	Oct 2017	Iași		Iași
5	Oct 2017	Suceava, Botoșani		Suceava
6	Nov 2017	Timișoara	Thematic training / Project writing / Train the trainers' sessions	Timișoara
7	Nov 2017	Arad		Arad
8	Nov 2017	Oradea		Oradea
9	Dec 2017	Bucharest	Thematic training/ Project writing / Train the trainers' sessions	Bucharest
10	Feb-Mar 2018	Brașov	Thematic training / Project writing / Train the trainers' sessions	Brașov
11	Feb-Mar 2018	Sibiu		Sibiu
12	Feb-Mar 2018	Deva		Deva
13	Feb-Mar 2018	Târgu Mureș		Târgu Mureș
14	Feb-Mar 2018	Cluj-Napoca		Cluj-Napoca
15	Apr-May 2018	Ploiești	Thematic training / Project writing / Train the trainers' sessions	Ploiești
16	Apr-May 2018	Târgoviște		Târgoviște
17	Apr-May 2018	Pitești		Pitești
18	Apr-May 2018	Craiova		Craiova
19	Apr-May 2018	Constanța		Constanța
20	Apr-May 2018	Târgu Jiu, Râmnicu Vâlcea		Târgu Jiu
21	June 2018	Bucharest	Info Day	Bucharest
<i>* will be chosen based on the participants' number and preferences/interests</i>				

Table 3. Event schedule: October 2017 – June 2018

The event schedule described in Table 3 is illustrated in Figure 2 below.

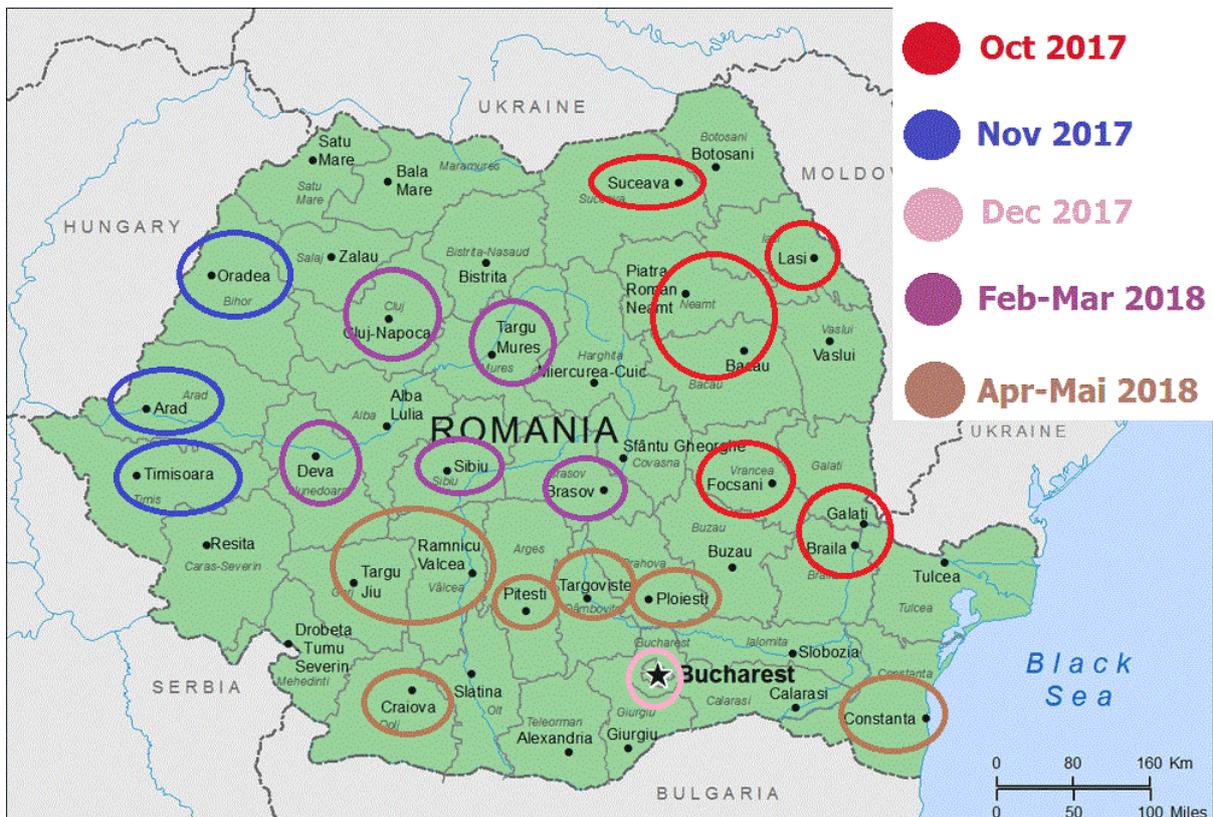


Fig. 2 Event schedule: October 2017 – June 2018

In July 2017, a LIFE work group, informally referred to by the project team as the “Elders’ council”, consisting of 14 members of various institutions with extensive experience with LIFE projects (MoE, EPAs, universities) was officially appointed (MO 981/03.07.2017) by the Minister of Environment. The members, together with representatives of MoE directorates, will meet in order to identify each department’s priorities and agree upon the topics on which the MoE should focus during the 2018 LIFE call for applications. (Annex A4.n)

For the train the trainers sessions, the 14 aforementioned experts identified countrywide, in addition to the meetings that will be held at the MoE, will take turns in joining the project team during the series of events listed above. Where appropriate, these train the trainers sessions will be held with EPA and local government representatives, who will be given information on proposal writing/submission and project management, and who will be expected to pass on that information to their colleagues and to other local entities.

6) International conferences

3 such meetings were attended in January, June and July 2016 in Brussels, Belgium, and 1 in Budapest, Hungary in November 2016. These meetings were initiated by the EC, with the support of DG ENV, EASME, DG CLIMA and other institutions. The sessions provided an overall view on the implementation of CAP projects throughout member states, and highlighted the way in which such initiatives can contribute to a more efficient ministerial/national management of the LIFE Programme.

2 team members and 1 MoE representative attended the LIFE NCP training in March 2017 in Brussels, Belgium. The team took part in a highly useful evaluation exercise that focused on certain key elements of award criteria for two potential proposals in Environment and Resource Efficiency close-to-market (ENV) and Climate Governance and Information

(GIC). Moreover, participants had a preliminary debate regarding the possibility to submit a collective project proposal (several or, ideally, all member states) on NCP networking.

The training and information sessions provided valuable information and know-how to participants, thus contributing to an even better understanding of the LIFE Programme. Relevant project management and implementation-related issues were raised and efficient solutions were identified.

Annexes (photos, attendance lists, questionnaire answers):

Annex A4.a*: Info Day 2016 [RO];

Annex A4.b*: July/August 2016 sessions [RO];

Annex A4.c*: November/December 2016 sessions summary [ENG];

Annex A4.d*: Ilfov 2016 session report [RO];

Annex A4.e*: Călărași 2016 session report [RO];

Annex A4.f*: Alexandria 2016 session report [RO];

Annex A4.g*: University of Bucharest 2016 session report [RO];

Annex A4.h*: Giurgiu 2016 session report [RO];

Annex A4.i*: International 2016-2017/participation reports [RO/ENG];

Annex A4.j: Info Day 2017 [RO/ENG];

Annex A4.k: Ilfov County Council 2017 session;

Annex A4.l: Bucharest Chamber of Commerce 2017 session;

Annex A4.m: Project writing sessions photos and attendance lists 2017;

Annex A4.n: “Elders’ council” - MO 981/03.07.2017.

* submitted with the Revised Inception Report in March 2017

A.5 Development of an information centre facility

	Foreseen start*	Actual start date	Foreseen end*	Actual end
1) Procurement procedure for architectural services and info centre equipment	July 2016	July 2016	January 2017	January 2017
Team members involved: PM, FO, CO I/II/III				
2) Establishment of an Info Centre	February 2017	January 2017	February 2017	February 2017
Team members involved: PM, FO, CO I/II/III				
3) Overview of assistance provided by the LIFE Info Centre	February 2017	February 2017	June 2018	ongoing
Team members involved: PM, FO, CO I/II/III				

* according to the amendment request submitted to EASME in July 2017

1) Procurement procedure for architectural services and info centre equipment

Starting with May 2016, the MoE provided a room on the ground floor for the establishment of the LIFE Info Centre. Given the nature of the space, a complex and substantial architectural change was deemed excessive. The room was cleaned, painted by the MoE, which also provided desks for all team members. The reallocation of the architectural services budget to another action (training services) was accepted by EASME in letter no. Ares(2017)2459413 - 15/05/2017.

Chairs were purchased in September 2016, a large LCD screen was purchased in December 2016 (in order to display images and clips from successful LIFE projects; if deemed necessary for certain events, the dismountable display can be relocated temporarily in a more visible place in the Ministry), and the room was furnished (wall-mounted filing cabinets with sliding doors) in January 2017. 4 team members (PM, FO, CO II/III) are permanently based in the Info Centre. Moreover, the ministry's main meeting room is always available for LIFE events/meetings.

The costs incurred for furnishing and equipping the Centre did not exceed the foreseen budget.

2) Establishment of an Info Centre

The centre is fully operational and incoming queries are being processed and answered on a regular basis. A direct phone line is dedicated to the LIFE Info Centre (+4021.408.96.09). The permanent schedule (Monday through Thursday from 11:00 to 14.00) was published online in early February. The Centre is becoming increasingly visible, both physically, in the Ministry (schedule posted at the entrance, wall-up/roll-up/desk mounted in the lobby), and electronically (dedicated post on the MoE website and FB page).

On average, during the 2017 LIFE call for applications, the Info Center received 1-2 phone calls/emails per day, either from new interested parties or follow-up inquiries on previous discussions.

We have increased our visibility by posting an ad on the website of the Ministry for Affairs, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, which is linked to the MoE website's LIFE page (Annex C2).

Especially after the launch of the 2017 LIFE call for applications in April, the Info Center started receiving numerous inquiries and visits, which resulted in a series of project writing sessions. A record of these meetings is detailed in section A.4 (Organizing training sessions for targeted beneficiaries). Scanned copies of attendance lists are included in Annex A4.m.

In addition to the aforementioned inquiries that were followed up with meetings and project writing sessions (listed in section A4), the Info Centre also received several requests for information via email or phone calls, which were promptly addressed by the team, but which did not have any follow-up meetings at the MoE. The team hopes the solicitants obtained the information they needed and went on to work on project proposals that would be submitted independently, without the MoE's assistance. A record of the requests is featured in Annex A5.b.

Moreover, in addition to the progress described above, since mid-2016 the project team has been making a constant effort to improve institutional communication with regard to LIFE, which resulted in a better understanding of the programme within the MoE and other governmental bodies (e.g. MoF, MoEF, chambers of commerce, Regional Offices for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises).

The ministry only has a record of the LIFE projects and proposals in which it was actively involved, as applicants who submit independent proposals are under no obligation to inform the ministry on the outcome of their endeavors. However, the entities that requested information from the Info Center were asked to keep the MoE team informed on their progress in order to help with the end-of-project statistics. And, moreover, all existing LIFE projects have been contacted, informed about the helpdesk and consulted via questionnaires.

With the newly-established info center, the team hopes to be able to update the ministry’s records and include information about Romanian LIFE projects that are implemented without the financial support of the MoE. The LIFE team is highly interested in identifying and disseminating best practices, and is, at the same time, open to all queries and requests.

Annexes:

- Annex A5.a*: LIFE Info Center (deliverable) – photos
- Annex A5.b: LIFE Info Center – Request record (no follow-up)
- * submitted with the Revised Inception Report in March 2017

B. Monitoring of the project actions’ impact

B.1 Report on project indicators

Foreseen start date	Actual start date	Foreseen end date	Actual end date
February 2016	July 2016	February 2016	July 2016
Team members involved: PM, CO I			

* according to the amendment request submitted to EASME in July 2017

The mentioned project staff has elaborated a report to detail the indicators to be followed during the project implementation. No external contractor needed.

The report describes the indicators foreseen in the GA: national conferences and workshops, public campaigns, personnel, best practice exchange, number of submitted proposals, media coverage, website, promotional materials. The PM is in charge of assessing, on a regular basis, if and to what extent the indicators are reached in actions A4, A5, C2, C3.

Annexes:

- Annex B1*: Report on project indicators [RO]
- * submitted with the Revised Inception Report in March 2017

B.2 Ex-ante evaluation

Foreseen start date	Actual start date	Foreseen end date	Actual end date
July 2016	July 2016	July 2017	July 2017
Team members involved: PM, CO I			

The report presents the state of affairs before 2014/2015 (number and types of implemented projects, queries submitted to the National Contact Point) and how the MoE’s LIFE capacity building project aims to tackle the identified issues. No external subcontractor was needed.

In letter no. Ares(2017)2459413 - 15/05/2017, EASME requested that the deliverable be revised and resubmitted, and that information regarding the impact of the programme be

included. As such, the report partly overlaps Report B.4 *Evaluation of impact on beneficiaries' behaviour, on population acceptance and socio-economic impact*.

The questionnaires used by the project team (which also comprised questions for reports A2 and B4) are included in Annex B2.c. The LIFE project database is featured in Annex B2.d.

Annexes:

- Annex B2.a*: Ex-ante report [RO]
- Annex B2.b: Ex-ante report 2.0 (revised) [ENG]
- Annex B2.c: Questionnaires
- Annex B2.d: LIFE project database 1992-2017
- * submitted with the Revised Inception Report in March 2017

B.3 Ex-post evaluation

Foreseen start date*	Actual start date	Foreseen end date*	Actual end date
June 2018	-	June 2018	-
Team members involved: PC, PM, CO I/II/III			

* according to the amendment request submitted to EASME in July 2017

In order for an ex-post report to show the project's performance, further progress needs to be made, especially in activities A3 and A4. However, considering the nature of this deliverable and the relevance of its contents for the final report, the team is actively monitoring the project's implementation.

B.4 Evaluation of impact on beneficiary behaviour and population acceptance

Foreseen start date*	Actual start date	Foreseen end date*	Actual end date
December 2016	December 2016	December 2016 / May 2018	December 2016 + August 2017 (revised version)
Team members involved: PM, CO I/II/III			

* according to the amendment request submitted to EASME in July 2017

The genuine interest we noticed people have in European funds in general and in the LIFE Programme in particular seemed however to be accompanied by a dose of scepticism that resulted from various past difficulties encountered while accessing or attempting to access European funds.

In letter no. Ares(2017)2459413 - 15/05/2017, EASME requested that the deliverable be revised and resubmitted, and that information regarding the impact of the programme be added in Report B.2 *Ex-ante evaluation*. As such, the two reports partly overlap.

The questionnaires on which the evaluation is (for the most part) based are featured in Annex B2.c, and the LIFE project database in Annex B2.d. The project team is currently working on the second impact evaluation report, which will be submitted with the Final Report after the project end.

Annexes:

- Annex B4.a*: Impact on beneficiary behaviour [ENG]
- Annex B4.b: Impact on beneficiary behaviour 2.0 (revised) [ENG]
- * submitted with the Revised Inception Report in March 2017

C. Actions for communication and for dissemination

C.1 Preparation and dissemination of a Communication Plan

Foreseen start date	Actual start date	Foreseen end date	Actual end date
August 2016	August 2016	August 2017	August 2016 (Romanian version) + August 2017 (revised Romanian / English versions)
Team members involved: PM, CO I/II/III			

The communication plan presents the project's objectives and details the communication strategy in terms of event scheduling (format, date, location), website, publications, media reach.

In letter no. Ares(2017)2459413 - 15/05/2017, EASME requested that the plan be translated into English, revised and resubmitted. The revised and translated versions of the communication plan are attached to the Midterm Report in annexes C1.b and C1.c. The event schedule (final pages of each version) was changed according to the extended project duration.

Annexes:

Annex C1.a*: Communication plan [RO] (deliverable)

Annex C1.b: Communication plan 2.0 (revised) [RO] (deliverable)

Annex C1.c: Communication plan [ENG] (deliverable)

* submitted with the Revised Inception Report in March 2017

C.2 Development of a website

Foreseen start date	Actual start date	Foreseen end date*	Actual end date
June 2016	August 2016	June 2018	The page was online in August 2016 (constant updates until project end)
Team members involved: PM, CO I/II/III			

* according to the amendment request submitted to EASME in July 2017

A dedicated LIFE page was created on the Ministry's website in August 2016, and a FB page was created in October 2016. The content is managed by the project team (instead of an external contractor, as foreseen in the grant agreement – the change does not affect the budget, as the action was not budgeted) and will, from now on, be updated on a regular basis. While FB posts are published directly by the PM, website entries must be approved by the ministry's communications department and operated by the ministry's IT unit, which results in certain delays.

The ministry's website page dedicated to the LIFE Programme features pictures, attendance graphs and short description of the events held by the LIFE team.

Although the FB page has been constantly updated with photos and information from the unit's sessions, the number of "Likes" is still quite low. The team expects it to go up once more sessions are held throughout the country.

In accordance with EASME letter no. Ares (2017) 2459413 - 15/05/2017, the website content was translated into English, and FB posts are being published in both Romanian and English (screenshots featured in Annex C2).

Annexes:

Annex C2: MoE website (deliverable) and FB page posts

C.3 Development of promotional materials

Foreseen start date	Actual start date	Foreseen end date	Actual end date
May 2016	May 2016	June 2016 / March 2017	June 2016 / June 2017
Team members involved: PM, FO, CO I/II/III			

The wall-up, roll-up and mini-desk, mounted in the MoE's main entrance lobby in order to ensure optimal visibility, were designed using photos from successful LIFE projects. They were produced and started being used in June 2016, as were the customized t-shirts (284 pcs) and caps (284 pcs) that are offered to training participants and partners. T-shirts and caps were sent to EASME and the monitor in August 2016. All promotional materials are meant to increase awareness and the visibility of the LIFE Programme.

Having received a high number of LIFE leaflets (text language: Romanian) from EASME in June 2016, the project team considered it was no longer necessary to print new ones.

The initial allocated budget was quite low (1.350 Euro), which led the team, in early April 2017, to request an additional 10.000 Euro for ordering LIFE-branded notebooks and caps (photos in Annex C3) for the Info Day 2017 event and other communication activities. Samples were sent to EASME with this report. The change was deemed acceptable by the monitor and confirmed via email on April 7th 2017. The changes are presented in section 5.1. *Summary of Costs Incurred.*

Regarding the remaining promotion-related activities/deliverables, i.e. video/audio presentation clips, the procurement procedure was started in June 2017. Approximately 10 service providers expressed interest in the procedure, and the procurement department is currently in the process of assessing their technical and financial offers.

Annexes:

Annex C3: Promotional materials photos 2016+2017

C.4 Organisation of the LIFE caravan

Foreseen start date*	Actual start date	Foreseen end date*	Actual end date
March 2018	-	April 2018	-
Team members involved: PM, PC, CO I/II/III			

* according to the amendment request submitted to EASME in July 2017

This activity is foreseen for the final stage of the project and is meant to bring the finishing touch to the MoE's capacity building project. The caravan will stop in a series of locations countrywide, and the project team will hold general presentations and also provide any information participants may request. The route and duration will be set depending on the regions that will be visited by the LIFE team in the following months (ideally, the caravan will mainly stop in cities in which no previous LIFE-themed sessions were held) and on the interest the activity generates (if a contact informs the team of a high number of potential participants, the location will probably be added to the list even if another session had already been held there).

D. Project management and quality control

D.1 Procurement of external consultancy services for project management, dissemination, technical study socio-economic impact evaluations, etc.

Foreseen start date	Actual start date	Foreseen end date	Actual end date
-	-	-	-
Team members involved: -			

No external consultancy service provider was contracted for project management, dissemination and technical study socio-economic impact evaluations. Considering that all these activities are inherently part of the project and it is in the LIFE team's best interest to be as closely involved as possible in the actual implementation of activities and actions, it was decided that the activities would be managed internally. As already shown in the above description (B4), the socio-economic impact evaluation was assessed through questionnaires.

The explanation above was included in the RInCR submitted in March 2017 and, in EASME's report acceptance letter dated 15.05.2017, the team was asked to confirm that the action would indeed not be implemented. We hereby confirm the procurement procedure is no longer necessary.

D.2 Project management

Detailed in the administrative part - Section 4.

D.3 Coordination and monitoring of project results

Foreseen start date	Actual start date	Foreseen end date*	Actual end date
November 2016	November 2016	June 2018	ongoing
Team members involved: PC, PM			

* according to the amendment request submitted to EASME in July 2017

All activities that are prepared and completed within the project are monitored by the Project Coordinator and Project Manager. The two closely follow project activities, procedures, press briefs and conferences, and weigh in on the implementation of all actions. Meetings are held with the project team on a weekly basis, during which problems are identified and discussed.

Whenever deemed necessary, separate meetings are called with members of the Ministry's specialized procurement, legal and IT departments.

D.4 Networking with other projects

Foreseen start date	Actual start date	Foreseen end date*	Actual end date
November 2016	November 2016	April 2018	ongoing
Team members involved: PM, CO I/II/III			

* according to the amendment request submitted to EASME in July 2017

The project team is in constant touch with other LIFE projects (implemented in Romania and other MS) as the Project Coordinator is also Romania's LIFE NCP. The team provides support to any interested party and promptly replies to incoming queries. E.g. the NCP was contacted by the Slovenian Ministry of Environment in March 2016, which requested assistance with a LIFE project focusing on the restoration of the local Lynx population. The Slovenian Ministry was given the necessary documentation and, seeing as the proposal was accepted, the MoE will provide the Slovenian team with the necessary number of Lynx individuals for repopulation.

In August 2016, the MoE was invited by the Finnish LIFE team to apply in a common food-saving project. Unfortunately, the proposal did not pass the assessment phase.

Following the proposal made by the Cyprus LIFE team in December 2016 regarding a project on NCP networking, a proposal is being drafted together with other interested member states.

For the 25-year celebration of the LIFE Programme and the Habitats Directive, the Ministry, together with several EPAs that are LIFE project beneficiaries, organized a LIFE caravan (which does not overlap with project action C4, scheduled for the project end) that passed through four cities and comprised a series of LIFE-related events that attracted hundreds of people in (or in the vicinity of) Târgu-Jiu (also attended by a EU official from DG Environment), Braşov, Sasca Română and Bucharest. All these are locations of currently ongoing LIFE projects, which supported the event. Members of the Ministry's LIFE project team attended all events and got the opportunity to talk at length with their hosts about their ongoing projects.

In early August 2017, the project team provided WWF Bulgaria, partner in the project titled LIFE FOR DANUBE STURGEONS (LIFE15 GIE/AT/001004) - *Sustainable protection of lower Danube sturgeons by preventing and counteracting poaching and illegal wildlife trade*, with photos from the LIFE Info Day event held in June 2017 at the Bucharest Botanical Garden. The event was attended by another project partner, the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority, and the photos were used for an article featured on the project's website (<http://danube-sturgeons.org/life-infoday-bucharest/>).

Annexes:

Annex D4: 25-year LIFE celebration

D.5 Audit

Foreseen start date*	Actual start date	Foreseen end date*	Actual end date
April 2018	-	June 2018	-
Team members involved: external			

* according to the amendment request submitted to EASME in July 2017

The audit costs (<10.000 E) will be covered from the other costs budget. The audit will result in a comprehensive understanding of all qualitative and financial aspects of the

project. To this end, LIFE team members will provide all necessary documents and assist the auditors in any way they will be required to. The tender procedure will be coordinated by the MoE’s procurement department.

D.6 Preparation of the after-LIFE communication plan

Foreseen start date*	Actual start date	Foreseen end date*	Actual end date
March 2018	-	May 2018	-
Team members involved: PM, CO I/II/III			

* according to the amendment request submitted to EASME in July 2017

In order to have a clear image of how the after-LIFE plan is going to be implemented, we have started to identify the activities that will be carried out after the project end. So far, we have planned and are lobbying for the following:

- Continuation of the Information Center’s activity to ensure support for all potential applicants from 2018 onwards;
- Using the know-how of the people trained during the implementation period;
- Taking advantage of the good practices and good examples evinced by previously implemented projects.

D.7 Reports

Inception Report	IncR - June 2016 / Revised IncR - March 2017
Midterm Report	October 2017
Final Report	July-August 2018 *)
Team members involved: PC, PM, FO, CO I/II/III	

* according to the amendment request submitted to EASME in July 2017

The IncR was submitted to EASME in August 2016, but was rejected in February 2017. The Revised IncR was submitted in March 2017 and accepted by EASME with letter no. Ares(2017)2459413 in May 2017.

The Final Report will be submitted after the project end.

Annexes:

Annex D7: Cover letters IncR + RIncR, Rejection letter

4.2 Dissemination actions

4.2.1 Objectives

The general objective of the LIFE14CAP project's dissemination actions consists of increasing the target groups' level of awareness with regard to the LIFE Programme by building a viable information and training network in order to ensure the necessary national-scale support for applicants and beneficiaries.

The specific objectives are:

1. Developing an appropriate communication framework aimed at reaching the target groups.
2. Informing potential beneficiaries on financing opportunities for environmental infrastructure projects, as well as on dissemination and promotion responsibilities.
3. Informing the general public on the objective, importance and priorities of environmental Directives.
4. Informing the target groups on the effects/results of projects funded by the LIFE Programme.
5. Ensuring an efficient coordination of dissemination and promotion activities of the LIFE Programme with the communication activities of the other management bodies that implement operational programmes.
6. Ensuring transparency of funding obtained through the LIFE Programme.

4.2.2 Dissemination: overview per activity

An overview of the project's dissemination actions, including targets and indicators is provided below, in section 4.3 Evaluation of project implementation.

Annex 4.2 (project deliverables) features photos and printscreens that document the use of the LIFE logo, the project website, equipment, support guides and press cuttings. The events and sessions organized by the project team are described in detail in Annexes A4.a-m.

Annexes:

Annex 4.2: Project deliverables (photos)

4.3 Evaluation of Project Implementation

While there is still room for improvement, the project is advancing satisfactorily in almost all sectors. A point-by-point assessment is featured in the table below.

Sector	Indicator	Progress	Aim	Comments
Human resources	No. of new employees working on LIFE	5	5	Target met. Most team members will continue their LIFE-related activity after the project end.
	No. of trained MoE employees	~30	57	Ongoing. MoE (including the institutions it coordinates) employees are showing great interest in LIFE sessions. The target will be reached by the end of the project.
	No. of best practice exchanges between member states	3	3 / year	The international events the team attended (detailed in Section 5.A4) provided valuable insight into other ongoing capacity building projects. Other such events will follow.
	No. of employees attending exchange	4	57	So far, 4 members of the LIFE team (out of a total of 6, including the PC)

	programmes with other MS			attended exchange programmes / international events. Travel costs of MoE personnel that is not part of the project cannot be covered by the project budget, according to the MoE's internal regulation.
Proposals	No. of proposals (potential applicants) requesting the assistance of the info centre	10 / 2016 20 / 2017	100 / first year* 100 / second year* 50 / third year**	Target met. The info centre is becoming increasingly visible and the team expects these numbers to grow consistently.
	No. of attendants at training sessions	~150 / 2016 ~160 / 2017	150 / first year 250 / second year 200 / third year**	Target for 2016 met, and 2017 advancing satisfactorily.
	No. of submitted proposals submitted, compared to previous years	12 / 2016	150-200 / first year* 200-300 / second year* 15 / third year**	As information on proposals in which the MoE is not involved is not available, the project team intends to request it from EASME.
	No. of accepted proposals compared to previous years	2 / 2016	4 / first year 8 / second year 6 / third year**	The no. of accepted proposals for 2017 will be communicated after the end of the call for applications.
	Multinational consortia	0	1	
Dissemination activities	No. of media mentions	6	15	The team plans to make an effort to further increase the number of media mentions. The target will be met by the end of the project.
	No. of potential beneficiaries accessed via media	5	20	Target not met. The team plans to be more active with online posts and local media coverage to improve performance.
	No. of people, companies, governmental bodies, NGOs or other entities reached by the project team	~300 people: ~80 SMEs ~45 NGOs ~20 governmental bodies	200	Target met. The communication plan will be carried out as foreseen. The progress will be documented and presented in the Final Report.
Integration, synergies, replication	No. of cases when LIFE project results were integrated into policies, economic activities or other programmes	-	3	While no such cases were recorded yet, the team is confident the targets will be met by the end of the project.
	No. of proposals that combine LIFE financing with other sources	-	4	
	No. of projects with actions that aim to replicate project results (transnationally)	-	1	

Table 4. Project progress

* These initially proposed aims are not realistic and cannot possibly be met;

** Proposed target for 6-month project extension.

Before the event planning contract was signed in July 2017, the LIFE-themed sessions were organized with the support of local chambers of commerce and local administrations, which helped reduce costs all while allowing the project team to carry out the foreseen actions.

Due to the initial delay with the actions' implementation, the project team would not have been able to meet its objectives had the 6-month extension not been agreed upon. In addition to the foreseen actions, the extension will also allow for the 2018 Info Day event to be included in the project's action plan.

4.4 Analysis of long-term benefits

The main long-term benefit is the establishment of a LIFE dedicated team and of the MoE-based LIFE Info Centre, which will continue its activity after the project end. At least a part of the team (civil servants) will stay on and address any incoming queries and assist potential applicants.

Moreover, the support guides (available in electronic format on the MoE website) will be updated by the LIFE team every year in order to reflect any relevant changes brought about by future calls for applications.

5. Comments on the financial report

5.1. Summary of Costs Incurred

PROJECT COSTS INCURRED				
No.	Cost category	Budget according to the Grant Agreement	Costs incurred within the project duration	%
1.	Personnel	197.800	65.510,66	33,12
2.	Travel	90.000	5.337,08	5,93
3.	External assistance	75.000	11.544,89	15,39
4.	Durables: total <u>non-depreciated</u> cost	22.400	20.807,62	92,89
	- <i>Infrastructure sub-tot.</i>			
	- <i>Equipment sub-tot.</i>	22.400	20.807,62	92,89
	- <i>Prototypes sub-tot.</i>			
5.	Consumables			
6.	Other costs	1.350	541,81	40,13
7.	Overheads	15.000	13.736,00	91,57
	TOTAL	401.550	117.478	29,26

Table 5. Initial project budget

The project's budget and related expenses are regulated by public finance law 500/2002, which establishes the principles, general framework and procedures regarding the management and use of public funds, as well as the responsibilities of the public institutions involved in the budgetary process. The procurement framework is regulated by public procurement law 98/2016 and government decision 395/2016. Once a contract is signed, all invoices are regulated by accounting law 82/1991 and ministerial order 1792/2002.

Budget item	Original budget			Revised budget			Variation eligible costs	
	Total costs in € (A)	Eligible costs in € (B)	% of total eligible costs (C)	Total costs in € (D)	Eligible costs in € (E)	% of total eligible costs (F)	In € (G=E-B)	In % (H=[E/B-1]x100)
1. Personnel	197.800	155.918	46,76	197.800	155.918	46,76	0	0
2. Travel and subsistence		90.000	26,99		78.000	23,39	-12.000	-13,33
3. External assistance		75.000	22,49		70.000	20,99	-5.000	-6,67
4.1 Infrastructure								
4.2 Equipment	22.400	11.200	3,36	24.400	13.200	3,96	2.000	17,86
4.3 Prototypes						0,00		
5. Consumables		0	0		0	0,00	0	0
6. Other costs		1.350	0,4		16.350	4,90	15.000	1.111,11
7. Overheads	15.000			15.000				
TOTAL	401.550	333.468	100	401.550	333.468	100		

Table 6. Form FA (initial + revised budgets)

According to Art. II.22 - Budget Transfer, beneficiaries are allowed to adjust the estimated budget up to a limit of 20% of the overall eligible cost. The project's eligible costs are 333.468,00 Euro, 20% of which equals 66.693,60 Euro.

In Table 6, amounts were moved from one chapter to another as follows:

2. Travel and Subsistence

12.000 Euro - transferred as follows:

- 2.000 Euro to **(4.2) Equipment** for the purchase of a *Video projection screen*. This was deemed necessary for completing the set-up of the LIFE Info Center. The screen will be used for presentations held for internal and external audiences.

- 10.000 Euro to **(6) Other costs** for the purchase of *Promotional materials* (cotton bags, pencils, PC mice, USB hubs). The initial budget for Promotional Materials was 1.350 Euro (T-shirts and Caps), which proved to be insufficient. For the Infoday event held in June 2017, the team ordered additional LIFE-branded notebooks and caps (photos in Annex C3 and samples joined to the report) totaling 943,39 euro.

According to the revised Communication plan, the team will hold a series of 20 training sessions, which, on average, are expected to be attended by 20 participants (total = 400), and an additional LIFE Info Day event in June 2018, which will be attended by at least 50 participants. The promotional materials, bearing the LIFE logo, will help increase the programme's visibility and will surely be useful to participants, all while promoting LIFE's values (the bags and pencils will be made of eco-friendly materials).

No.	Product	Quantity	Total value incl VAT (Euro)	Total value excl VAT (Euro)
1	Cotton bags 38(h) x 41 cm	300	831,6	693,0
2	Pencils made of recycled paper	300	75,7	63,1
3	Mouse Manhattan	300	3.982,3	3.318,6
4	USB hub TP-LINK UH400	300	3.982,3	3.318,6
Total		1.200	8.872	7.393

Table 7. Proposed promotional materials

As mentioned in section C.3 *Development of promotional materials*, the team has already received a large number of LIFE leaflets (written in Romanian) from EASME and, as such, printing new ones is no longer necessary.

3. External assistance

This budget item initially foresaw 10.000 Euro worth of *Architectural services* that will no longer be commissioned. Instead:

- 5.000 Euro will be transferred to **(6) Other Costs** and will be used for *Audit services*. Although audit services were initially mentioned in the Grant Agreement (page 58), they were not explicitly budgeted.

- 5.000 Euro will be reallocated within the same budget item to *Seminar/Conference planning services*, which will now total 55.000 Euro.

7. Overheads

- The 3 extra team members (Monitoring expert, Bilateral relations expert, Compliance reporting officer) were declared ineligible in EASME letter no. 2459413-15.05.2017. As a result, the costs (€13.746) recorded until 15.05.2017, corresponding to these 3 civil servants, will be covered from the Overheads budget.

- Consumables (ink cartridges, paper and stationery), initially unbudgeted, which are necessary for most of the project activities, will be purchased from the overheads budget.

5.2. Accounting system

The project's budget and related expenses are regulated by public finance law 500/2002, which establishes the principles, general framework and procedures regarding the management and use of public funds, as well as the responsibilities of the public institutions involved in the budgetary process. The procurement framework is regulated by public procurement law 98/2016 and government decision 395/2016. Once a contract is signed, all invoices are regulated by accounting law 82/1991 and ministerial order 1792/2002.

Time recording system

The project team uses the LIFE timesheet model. Team members fill in their activities / hours worked in the project, and the information is subsequently checked by the person in charge of keeping track of scheduled/completed activities.

Payment procedures

All documents that confirm delivered services and provided services are subject to a validation decision expressed by the signing of a "passed for payment" voucher by the authorising officer responsible or by an official or other servant technically competent, empowered by formal decision of the authorising officer. The "passed for payment" voucher certifies that contract provisions were fully met.

5.3. Auditor's report/declaration

N/A – the audit will be conducted after the project end.

5.4. Summary of costs per action

Action no.	Short name of action	1. Personnel	2. Travel and subsistence	3. External assistance	4.a Infrastructure	4.b Equipment	4.c Prototype	5. Purchase or lease of land	6. Consumables	7. Other costs	TOTAL
A	Implementation action	€70.000	€40.000	€70.000		€22.400					€202.400
B	Monitoring of the impact of the project actions	€25.000									€25.000
C	Actions for communication and for dissemination	€75.000	€50.000	€5.000						€1.350	€131.350
D	Project management and monitoring of project progress	€27.800									€27.800
Overheads											€15.000
TOTAL		€197.800	€90.000	€75.000	0	€22.400	0	0	0	€1.350	€401.550

Table 8. Form FB - Summary of costs per action according to the GA

Action no.	Short name of action	1. Personnel	2. Travel and subsistence	3. External assistance	4.a Infrastructure	4.b Equipment	4.c Prototype	5. Purchase or lease of land	6. Consumables	7. Other costs	TOTAL
A	Implementation action	€32.794,64	€2.676,09	€11.544,89		€20.807,62					€67.823
B	Monitoring of the impact of the project actions	€3.144,51									€3.145
C	Actions for communication and for dissemination	€7.520,62	€2.660,99							€541,81	€10.723
D	Project management and monitoring of project progress	€22.050,89									€22.051
Overheads											€13.736
TOTAL		€65.511	€5.337	€11.545	0	€20.808	0	0	0	€542	€117.478

Table 9. Summary of costs per action in October 2017

Discrepancies between Tables 8 and 9

1. Personnel

The daily rates listed in the Grant Agreement cannot be respected due to the national legislation in force, i.e. Law 153/2017, article 16, which stipulates that civil servants working in European projects can only receive a salary increase of up to 50%.

2. Travel and subsistence

- LIFE team members attended international events in Brussels and Budapest, the costs of which were covered by the European Commission, which resulted in savings in this budget category;
- the possibility to organize study visits for all team members in December 2017 and March-April 2018 is currently being considered.

3. External assistance

As explained in section 4.1.A4, the event planning contract was belatedly finalized in July 2017. The new Communication Plan (Annex C1.c) foresees a countrywide series of events that will help bring this category's costs back on track.

6. Annexes

6.1 Dissemination annexes

6.1.1 Layman's report

The Layman's report will be submitted with the Final Report.

6.1.2 After-LIFE Communication plan

The After-LIFE Communication plan will be submitted with the Final Report.

6.2 Technical annexes

- Annex 4.2 - Project deliverables (photos)
- Annex A2.b - Report on LIFE absorption difficulties 2.0 (revised)
- Annex A3.a - LIFE Programme support guide ~ Best practices
- Annex A3.b - LIFE Programme ~ Financial guide
- Annex A3.c - LIFE Programme ~ Technical guide
- Annex A4.j - Info Day 2017
- Annex A4.k - 2017 21 06 Ilfov County Council
- Annex A4.l - 2017 07 18 Bucharest Chamber of Commerce
- Annex A4.m - Project writing sessions photos and attendance lists 2017
- Annex A4.n - "Elders council", MO 981, 03.07.2017
- Annex A5.b - LIFE Info Center Info request record (no follow-up)
- Annex B2.b - Ex-Ante report 2.0 (revised) [ENG]
- Annex B2.c - Questionnaires
- Annex B2.d - LIFE project database 1992-2017
- Annex B4.b - Impact on beneficiary behaviour 2.0 (revised) [ENG]
- Annex C1.b - Communication plan 2.0 (revised) [RO]
- Annex C1.c - Communication plan [ENG]
- Annex C2 - Website and FB
- Annex C3 - Promotional materials 2016+2017
- Annex D4 - LIFE 25-year celebration
- Annex D7 - Cover letters IR & Revised IR, Rejection letter

6.3 Samples

- Support guides (1 x Best practices, 1 x Financial guide, 1 x Technical guide)
- T-shirt (x 1) + cap (x 1)
- Notepad + pencil

6.4 Final table of indicators

The Final table of indicators will be submitted with the Final Report. A provisional one is featured above, in section 4.3 *Evaluation of project implementation*.

7. Financial report and annexes

- Standard Payment Request and Beneficiary's Certificate - duly signed original must be submitted

- Financial Statement of the Individual Beneficiary
 - Personnel costs
 - Travel costs
 - External assistance
 - Equipment
 - Consumable material
 - Other direct costs
 - Overheads

- Supporting documents.