

Environmental protection and management

Europe has some of the highest environmental standards in the world. Yet challenges remain. In response, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway have set aside more than €150 million for environmental protection and management.

WHY FOCUS ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT?

Protecting biodiversity is essential for healthy ecosystems. The EU has called biodiversity loss the most critical global environmental threat alongside climate change – and the two are inextricably linked. Figures show that, driven mainly by human activities, species are currently being lost 100 to 1 000 times faster than the natural rate.¹

More than half of the lakes in the EEA and Norway Grants beneficiary countries are classified as having bad, poor or moderate water status, according to the EU. To improve this, continued efforts are required to curb pollution and strengthen capacity to manage Europe's vast marine and inland waters.

Hazardous waste from chemical production continues to increase and poses a serious threat if not disposed of or treated in an appropriate manner. Ensuring compliance with EU hazardous waste requirements is a challenge for several beneficiary countries.

WHAT WILL WE ACHIEVE?

Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway have allocated a total of €154.6 million to programmes dealing with environmental protection and management in Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Slovenia. The programmes contribute to:

- > Reaching good environmental status in European marine and inland waters
- > Halting the loss of biodiversity

1. European Commission (2011) EU biodiversity strategy to 2020

2. Natura 2000 is an EU wide network of more than 26 000 protected areas established to assure the long-term survival of Europe's most vulnerable and threatened species and habitats.



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- > Preventing injury and harmful health-related and environmental effects caused by chemicals and hazardous waste
- > Improving compliance with European environmental legislation and international agreements

HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE IT?

Types of activities supported by the programmes include:

- > Improving environmental monitoring and industry compliance
- > Strengthening capacity to manage marine and inland water resources and meet EU targets
- > Monitoring impact of chemicals and heavy metals on water quality
- > Mapping and evaluation of ecosystems and their services and studies on the impacts of climate change on biodiversity
- > Restoring and improving protection of habitats covered by Natura 2000² conservation areas
- > Cataloguing and increasing protection of native ecosystems against 'alien invasive species' (animals or plants that are introduced into natural environments where they are not normally found)

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Projects on environmental protection and management are supported under dedicated programmes in 12 EU countries as well as under the NGO and research programmes.

While some are predefined, generally projects are selected following calls for proposals organised by the programme operator in each country. Calls for proposals are published on the websites of the programme operators and on www.eeagrants.org

BILATERAL COOPERATION

Pooling expertise helps tackle shared challenges. To enhance knowledge exchange and mutual learning, partnerships between organisations in the donor and beneficiary countries are taking place. Several public bodies from the donor countries are involved as partners in various programmes.

Entities from the donor countries also participate in individual projects as project partners. Funding is available to encourage cooperation, support networking and foster project partnerships.

COUNTRY OVERVIEW: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT

Country	Integrated marine and inland water management	Biodiversity and ecosystem services	Environmental monitoring and integrated planning and control	Reduction of hazardous substances	Partner: Norwegian Environment Agency	Grant amount (€ million)
Bulgaria	●	●			■	16.0
Cyprus		●				1.2
Czech Republic		●	●		■	15.4
Estonia	●		●		■	5.9
Greece	●					9.5
Latvia			●			2.1
Lithuania	●	●	●		■	11.3
Malta	●					0.9
Poland		●	●		■	36.1
Portugal	●					19.2
Romania		●	●	●	■	33.2
Slovenia		●	●			3.9
Total						154.6

ABOUT THE EEA AND NORWAY GRANTS

Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway provide funding to:



reduce disparities in Europe



strengthen bilateral relations



AREAS OF SUPPORT

- Environmental management
- Climate change
- Civil society
- Cultural heritage and diversity
- Human and social development
- Green industry innovation
- Justice and home affairs
- Research and scholarships
- Decent work and social dialogue

* EEA Grants €993.5 million (Norway 95.7%, Iceland 3.2%, Liechtenstein 1.1%) – Norway Grants €804.6 million, financed by Norway alone