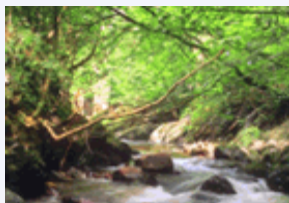




# Collaboration and communication with the EC and External Monitoring Team: What is expected of the Beneficiaries

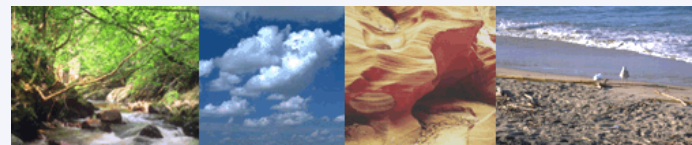


External Monitoring Team, SE Europe



# Main Players in LIFE

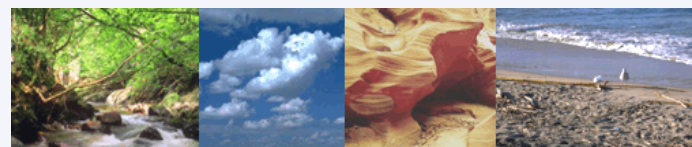
- *The European Commission - EASME*
- *External Monitoring Team*
- Beneficiaries
- Other stakeholders





# The Monitoring Team: Why ?

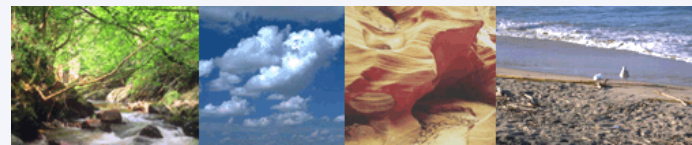
- Limited human resources at the EC
- LIFE projects cover a broad spectrum of themes
- The need for technical advice to evaluate projects' performance and outputs
- The need for a national/regional knowledge and physical presence





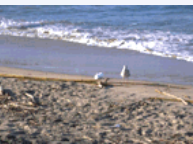
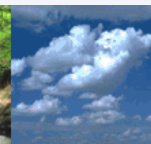
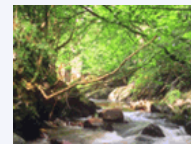
# The Monitoring Team: Role ?

- Assistance to the EC
- Advice to beneficiaries
- But do not make decisions on the Commission's behalf (art. II.1.4 of GC)
- Bound by a confidentiality and independence declaration





# ARTICLE II 1.4

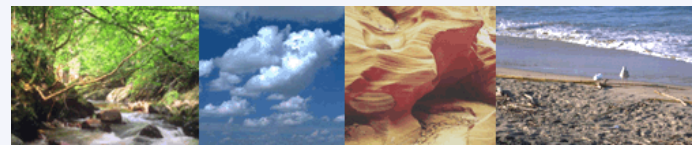




# Monitoring and Assessment

Includes:

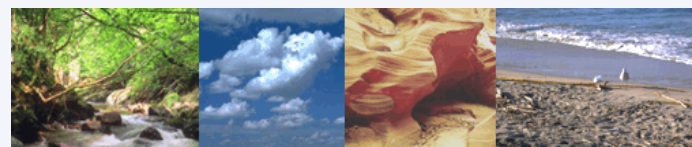
- Report/output evaluations (PR,MTR,FR,...)
- Monthly reporting to EC on individual projects
- Visits to projects at least once a year
- Technical and on site verification
- GC compliance
- Ex-post monitoring missions (closed projects)





# Communication support

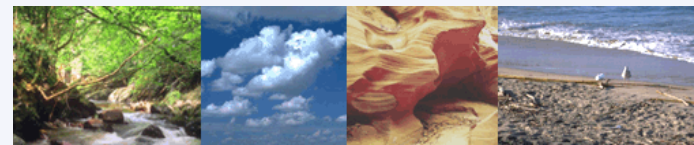
- Assist in liaising with other LIFE projects with similar objectives/themes => thematic networks
- Liaise with Communication Team for a wider dissemination of project's information
- Provides input for LIFE thematic brochures





## Working with the Monitoring Team (1)

- It is always necessary to send to the Monitoring Team **copy of all correspondence** sent to the Commission (same documents, same annexes).
- In case you need simple clarifications, it is better to send an email message **only to the Monitor**, without contacting directly the Commission. In case it is needed, the Monitor will involve the LIFE Unit/EASME.



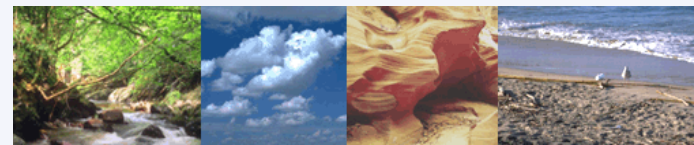




## Working with the Monitoring Team (2)

- It is advised to contact the Monitoring team **by email**.
- It is necessary to include **always** the **project reference** in the “subject” of the email messages, e.g.:

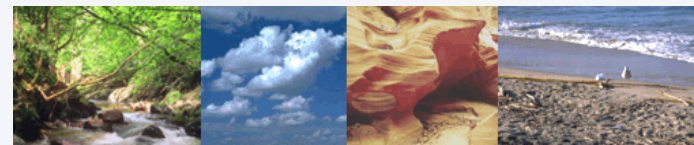
LIFE15/NAT/IT/000450 CENT.OLI.MED,  
or LIFE15/ENV/E/000388 CARBOMARK





## Working with the Monitoring Team (3)

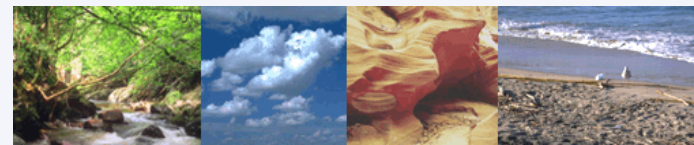
- Send a draft copy of reports to the Monitoring Team
  - > But note: the Monitoring Team provides support; their approval does not mean acceptance by the Commission services!



## Working with the Monitoring Team (4)

### Monitoring visits:

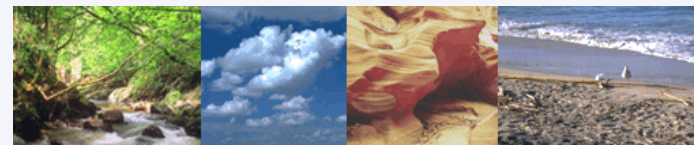
- make sure that **all beneficiaries** (at least the National ones) are represented;
- prepare the **needed documentation** (updated summary of expenses, timesheets, etc.);
- in case of joint visits with the EC Officers, foresee press releases, **invite the media**, etc.





## Working with the Monitoring Team (4)

- In case you foresee coordination meetings **with all beneficiaries** (also the foreign ones) or public events (conferences, workshops, etc.) please inform the Monitoring team in advance, to verify the possibility to carry out a monitoring visit on the same occasion.

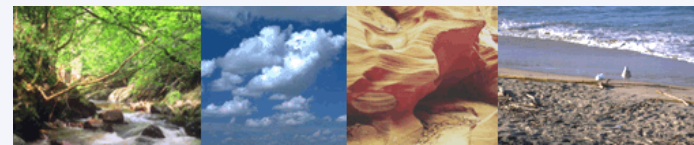




# General Conditions (GC)

→ Part A – Legal and Administrative Provisions

→ Part B – Financial Provisions and Reporting

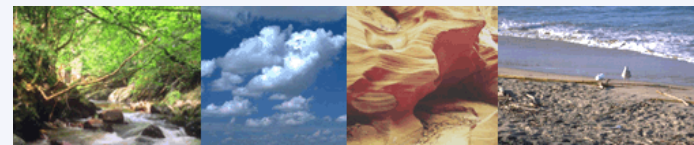




# Responsibilities of Project Beneficiaries

*art. II.1.1*

- All beneficiaries are jointly and severally responsible for project implementation
- Beneficiaries should make appropriate internal arrangements to ensure project implementation
- Ensure that all invoices bear reference to the project
- Not act as sub-contractor or supplier
- Contribute financially to the project

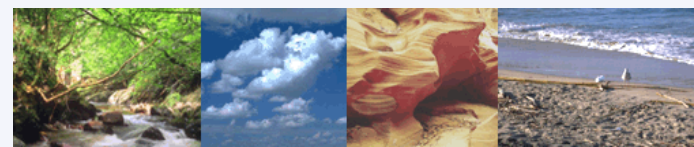




# The Coordinating Beneficiary

*art.II.1.3*

- ↓ Concludes agreements with the associated beneficiaries describing their technical and financial participation in the project
- ↓ It is granted a 'mandate' to represent all beneficiaries
- ↓ Single Contact point for the Commission/Agency
- ↓ Only participant reporting/establishing payment requests directly to the Commission/Agency
- ↓ Ensures that payments are made to all partners (30 days after receiving payment from the Agency/Commission)

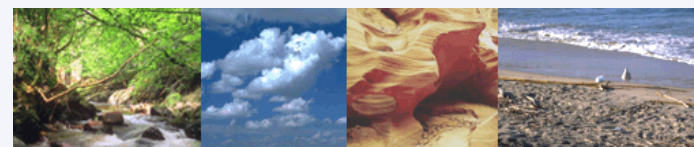




# The Associated Beneficiaries

*art.II.1.2*

- Provide the coordinating beneficiary with all supporting documents necessary for technical and financial reporting – information needed to write reports, financial statements, etc.
- Inform the CB of any change that might affect project implementation
- Inform the CB of any change in its legal, financial, organisational or ownership situation



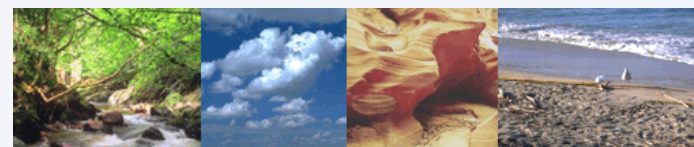




# The Sub-Contractors

*art. 11.9*

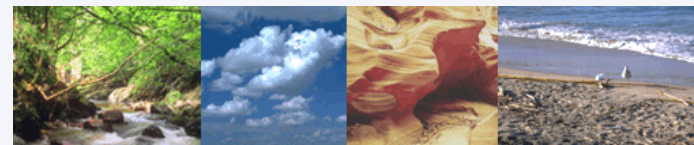
- ↓ Provide external services to the coordinating beneficiary / associated beneficiaries and receive the corresponding full price
- Best value for money
- No financial investment in the project
- ↓ Public tendering for Public coordinating beneficiary / Associated beneficiaries
- ↓ Private coordinating beneficiaries/Associated beneficiaries: for purchase exceeding € 130 000: open tendering procedure



# Technical Activity Reports

*art. 11.23*

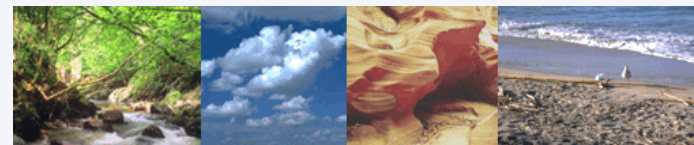
- Progress reports – every 18 months
- New Guidelines to become available soon on the LIFE website
- Progress reports (Mid-term) linked to payment:
  - + Statement on the use of the previous pre-financing payment
  - + Where required, a financial guarantee
- Final technical report – with final financial statement 3 months after the project end date





## Transmission of Reports to EASME/EC (1)

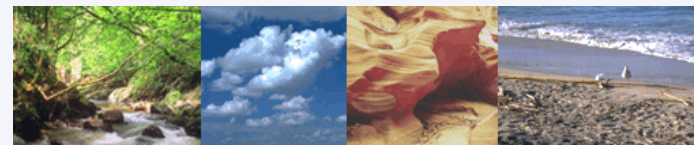
- Do not neglect any section of the report, as described in the available official templates, please note that templates for **2015 Call will be changed**;
- Quantify the achieved objectives and results, in comparison with what was foreseen in the project (avoid generic descriptions);
- Verify that all foreseen elements (deliverables and other) are annexed, easily identified and well ordered;
- Send draft reports to the TMO for comments before formal submission





## Transmission of Reports to EASME/EC (2)

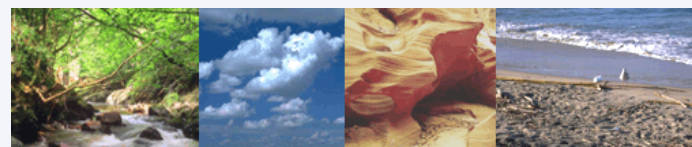
- It is necessary to send an electronic copy of all documents too (report + annexes);
- Always indicate the foreseen / actual start and end date of each project Action;
- Inform the EC/EASME and the Monitoring Team in case you foresee a delay in report transmission (deadline is often 31/12 or 31/08).





## Specific Instructions for Financial Reporting (1)

- Do not wait for the formulation of the mid-term or the final report before preparing the **summary of expenditures**. It is required:
  - **In all reports (Art. II. 23 of the GC)**
  - **For all Monitoring Visits**
- It is recommended to update the table of expenditures **on a monthly basis** (the Coordinating Beneficiary for all associated Beneficiaries).





## Specific Instructions for Financial Reporting (2)

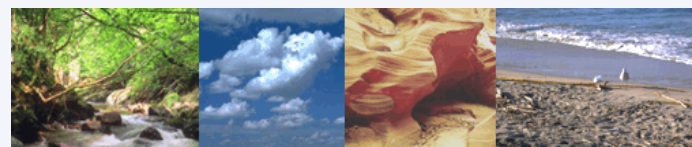
- Be careful: **self-invoicing** and invoicing among beneficiaries is not allowed.
- Verify that all columns of the financial forms are **properly filled-in** without omitting any data.
- Send as soon as possible the declaration for the **non-recoverability of VAT** by the public beneficiaries.





## Specific Instructions for Financial Reporting (3)

- Be careful: a possible mistake is to ask the suppliers to issue a “**VAT-exempted invoice**” because of the European Project. This procedure **does not apply to LIFE Projects**.
- VAT for provision of goods or services might be recoverable or not recoverable, but **must always be included in the invoices**.

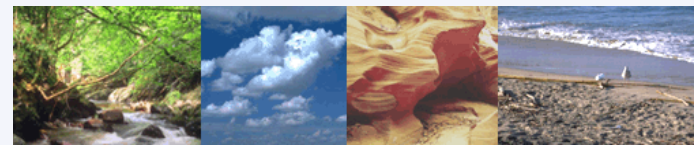




# Amendments to the Agreement

*art. II.12*

- Significant changes to nature or content of actions and/or deliverables
- Changes of the legal status of coordinating or associated beneficiary
- Changes in partnership structure
- Changes in project duration
- Changes in provisional budget (transfer between or within cost categories) exceeding 20% of the overall estimated costs



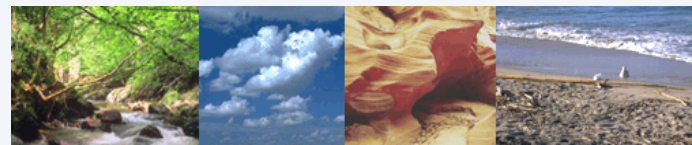




# Request for an Amendment

*art. 11.12*

- Fundamental changes in overall objectives will NOT be accepted!
- At least one month before the project end date
- Guidelines: see the LIFE website





# Language of the Reports

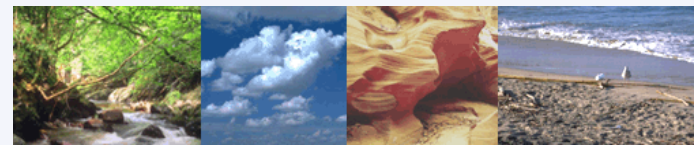
*art. 1.4.3*

## In English only:

- Technical activity reports
- Requests for payments and financial reports

## Official EU languages:

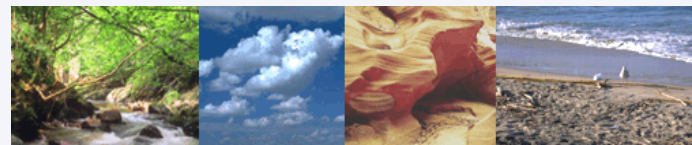
- Technical annexes
- Supporting documents





# We haven't talked about...

- ↕ Civil liability
- ↕ Conflict of interests
- ↕ Spatial data
- ↕ Delayed performance
- ↕ Reduction in performance and technical failures
- ↕ Termination of the project
- ↕ Confidentiality
- ↕ Protection of data
- ↕ Ownership and exploitation of results
- ↕ Applicable law and competent court





# Financial Provisions





# Payment of EU Contribution

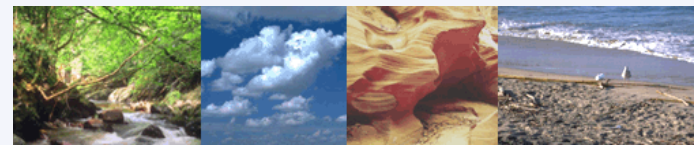
General rule - 3 installments:

*art. I.4.1*

- 1st pre-financing = 30 % of contribution max. amount
- 2nd pre-financing = 40 % of contribution max. amount
- Final payment = Balance (maximum 30 %)

Small projects with an implementation period  $\leq$  24 months or a Union contribution  $\leq$  300 000 €:

- 1st pre-financing = 70 % of contribution max. amount
- Final payment = Balance



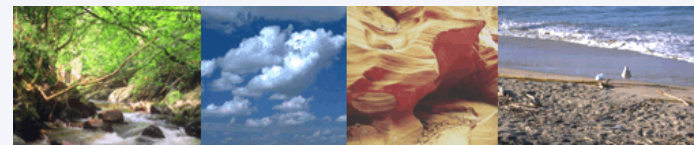


# Payment of EU Contribution

*art. I.4.1*

Big projects with an implementation period  $> 48$  months and a union contribution  $> 4\,000\,000$  €:

- 1<sup>st</sup> pre-financing = 30 % of contribution max. amount
- 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> pre-financing = 20 % of contribution max. amount
- Final payment = Balance (maximum 30 %)

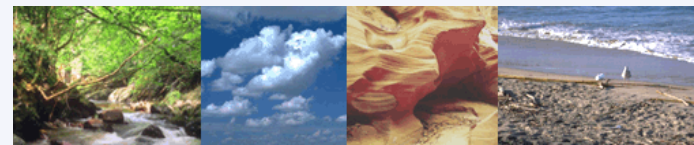




# Further pre-Financing Payment

*art. 14.1*

- After at least 100 % of 1st pre-financing has been used + for 2<sup>nd</sup> pre-financing: submitting the details re. auditor (Art. 11.24.2) in case certificate on financial statement is required with final financial statements.
- Paid upon approval by the Agency/Commission of:
  - a request for payment
  - Technical progress report + statement of expenditure



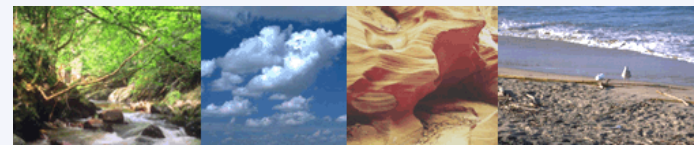


# Payment of the Balance

*art. 14.1*

Upon the Agency/Commission approval of:

- the final technical report
- the final statement of expenditure and income (+ all categories except personnel/travel/indirect costs, copies of the 3 highest invoices and proof of payment need to be supplied)
- the audit report if required



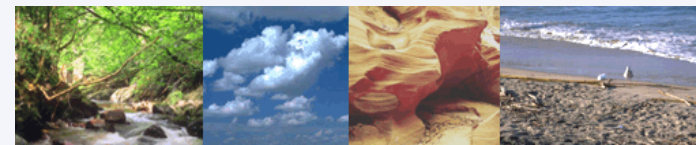




# Audit

*art.II.27*

- Can be initiated by the Agency/Commission during project implementation and up to 5 years after the project end
- On the spot visits by the Agency/Commission or external monitoring team – all financial documents have to be available

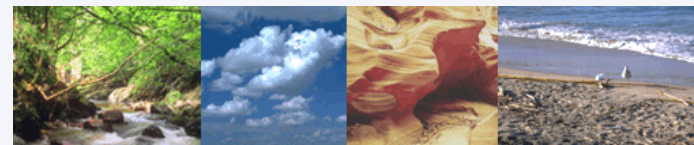




# Eligible Direct Costs (1)

*art. II.19.2*

- ➔ Provided for in the budget of the project or have been authorized (when required) through an amendment to the grant agreement
- ➔ Directly linked to, and necessary for, carrying out the project
- ➔ Reasonable and comply with the principles of sound financial management
- ➔ Compliant with applicable tax and social legislation





## Eligible Costs (2)

*art.II.19.1*

- Incurred and recorded in the beneficiaries accounts during the lifetime of the project (except costs related to request for payment of balance & audit)
- Indicated in the estimated budget and accepted by the Contracting Authority as necessary for project implementation
- Costs are identifiable and verifiable (recorded in the accounting system)
- They comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation
- Reasonable and justified





# Costs of Personnel (1)

- Related to employees salaries (direct personal cost - no external assistance)
- Service contracts – under condition of working in the participant premises and under its supervision
- Non-additional personnel salary costs: sum of public bodies' contributions must exceed by at least 2 % the sum of public body employees who are not considered 'additional'
- 'Additional' personnel includes permanent or temporary employees specifically seconded/assigned to the project or employees whose contracts start at the same time as the project

*art.II.19.2*





# Costs of Personnel (2)

## Principles

## Supporting documents

Based on actual time devoted to the project

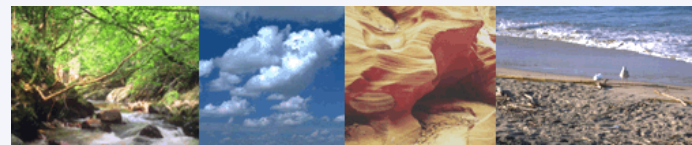


Timesheets

Based on actual gross salary / wages  
+ obligatory social charges



Pay slips





# 2% Rule

*Example of budget:*

**Personnel:**

**Non-additional staff**                      105 €

**Additional staff**                              20 €

**External Assistance**                      50 €

**Equipment**                                  25 €

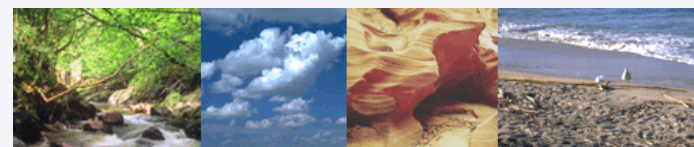
**Total**    200 €

**Life contribution = 50%**

**but**

**Minimum own contribution  
from public beneficiaries  
= 105 € + 2 % = 107,10 €**

**Maximum Life contribution  
= 92,90 €**





# Travel Costs

*art.II.19.2*

## Principles

Charged in accordance with internal rules of the beneficiary



## Supporting Documents

Flight tickets, hotel bills,....  
Journeys by car : based on distance and internal rules

- Costs incurred by employees (not by external consultants)
- Not for journeys between home and work place





# External Assistance Costs

*art.II.19.2*

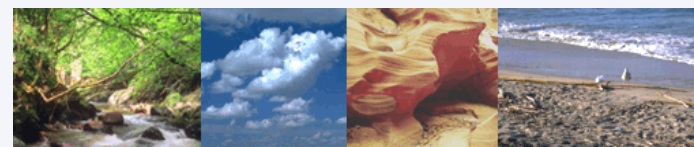
## Principles

- Follow applicable rules on tendering
- Includes short term lease of land (expires prior to project end date, for Life NAT only)



## Supporting Documents

Detailed invoices issued by the sub-contractor, with clear reference to the LIFE project and to the purchase order or the contract







# Durable Goods (1)

*art.II.19.2*

- Depreciation charges relating to durable goods are eligible when the goods are :
  - placed on the beneficiary's inventory of durable goods
  - treated as capital expenditure
  - purchased or leased at normal market rates

Depreciation of durable goods already owned by beneficiaries at the start of the project is not eligible for LIFE funding

Each beneficiary shall apply its internal accounting standard/rules to calculate the actual depreciation charge

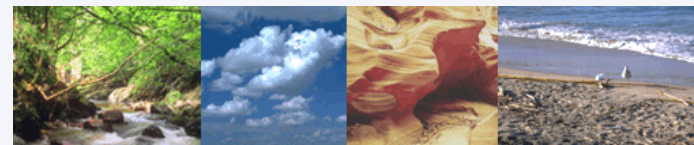




## Durable Goods (2)

*art.II.19.2*

- ➔ Eligible depreciation charges will be limited to the following ceilings:
  - Infrastructure costs: 25% of the total purchase cost
  - Equipment costs: 50% of the total purchase cost
  - Prototype : 100% (not eligible for GIE projects and LIFE NAT)

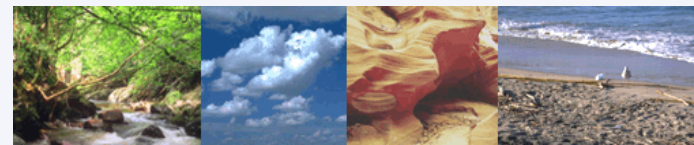




# Durable Goods (3)

*art.II.19.2*

- ➔ Exception for LIFE NAT
  - Infrastructure, equipment :
    - 100% for public or non commercial beneficiaries
    - depreciated for other beneficiaries
  - Land purchase & long term lease (of at least 20 years), art. 25





# Other Budget Categories

## Budget Categories

## Supporting Documents

- Consumables and supplies

General office supplies are covered by Overheads



Detailed invoices

- Other Costs

Costs necessary for the project, not falling within a defined category



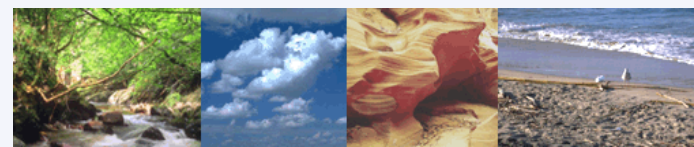
Detailed invoices

- Overheads – indirect costs

maximum 7 % of the total amount of eligible direct costs per beneficiary, excluding land purchase costs



Invoices not needed

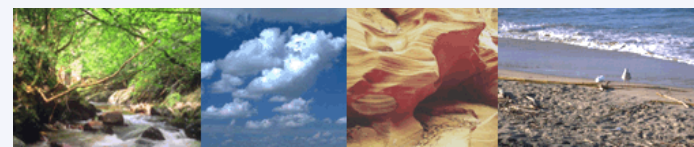




# Ineligible Costs (1)

*art. II 19.4*

- ↓ Costs in any category of expenditure over and above that foreseen in the budget (budget transfers accepted in line with art II.22)
- ↓ Recoverable VAT and VAT of public authorities (unless public authorities provide an official certificate stating that VAT cannot be recovered for costs related to the project)
- ↓ Costs incurred in relation to activities not foreseen in the project
- ↓ Costs incurred for the purchase of durable goods or communication material not bearing the LIFE logo (and the Natura 2000 logo, when applicable)
- ↓ Costs incurred for an action which benefits from aid under other Union financial instruments



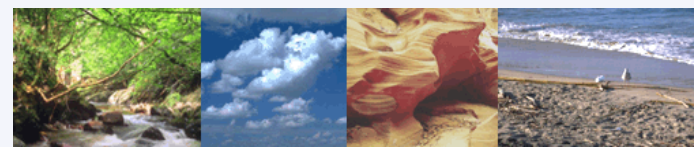


# Ineligible Costs (2)

*art. II 19.4*

- ↕ Costs for which a beneficiary already receives an operating grant from the Union during the period in question (in that case, there is no flat rate for indirect costs)
- ↕ Costs related to any action considered as a compensatory measure
- ↕ Costs related to management plans, action plans and similar plans, drafted or modified in the context of a LIFE project, if the related plan is not legally operational before the project end date
- ↕ Exchange losses

....the list is not exhaustive

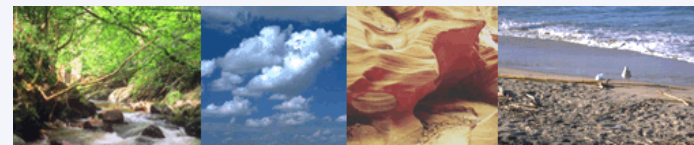




# A Few Reminders

## All beneficiaries:

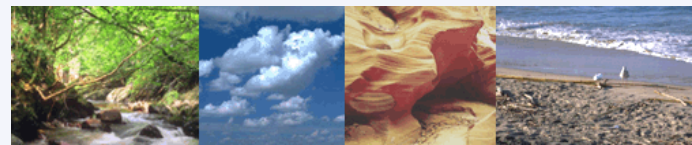
- Must contribute financially to the project's costs
- Must comply with applicable tender rules
- Shall maintain up to date books of accounts
- Shall keep all supporting documentation for all expenditure and income for at least 5 years after the final payment
- Ensure that all invoices include a clear reference to the project in all categories and a link to the analytical accounting system
- May not act as sub-contractor/supplier to each other (no invoicing among partners !!)





## A FEW MORE HINTS ...

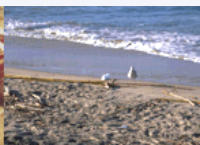
- Read and re-read the Common Provisions !!
- Give the Common Provisions to all your associated beneficiaries and make sure they read and understand them.
- Make sure your associated beneficiaries send you accounting documentation on a regular basis.
- Follow the expenses, compare them against the budget.
- Problems shall neither be ignored nor hidden







# Communication and dissemination of project information and results





# LIFE Communication Tools

1. Website
2. LIFEnews
3. Thematic brochures
4. Best projects brochure
5. Project database
6. New projects compilation
7. General dissemination material
8. Multimedia archive
9. Communication assistance to projects (e.g. factsheets)

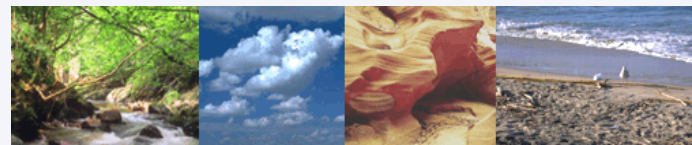
The screenshot shows a webpage titled 'Soil, land-use & agriculture' with a 'Videos' link circled in red. The page features a navigation menu on the left with categories like 'Nature, Biodiversity', 'Air', 'Energy, climate', 'Environmental management', 'Industry, production', 'Urban environment, quality of life', 'Soil, land-use, agriculture', 'Waste', and 'Water'. The main content area lists three video projects: 'Habitats-Birds', 'Integrated (Multi-level inundation) water management system', and 'ECORICE'. A sidebar on the right contains links for 'Introduction', 'LIFE programme publications', 'Projects', 'Best Projects', 'Videos', 'LIFEnews features', and 'LIFE project publications'. A box at the bottom right of the sidebar encourages visiting the LIFE project database for more examples.





# Why Communicate?

- Improve participation of relevant stakeholders
- Share knowledge and experience
- Achieve synergies with other projects
- Promote yourself and your product
- Communication activities are mandatory





# Website

art. 13.4

- Create a new or use an existing website
  - should be online the latest 6 months after project start and kept for at least 5 years after project end
  - shall be regularly updated
- Disseminate project activities, progress and results
- Web address must be indicated in the reports





# LIFE Logo

*art. 11.7*

- Should appear on all documents, media, and durable goods
- LIFE Nature projects shall also use the Natura 2000 logo
- However
  - LIFE logo may not be referred to as a certified quality label or eco-label
  - Use of the LIFE logo is restricted to dissemination activities

*Please note: the costs of products not bearing the logos are considered ineligible*



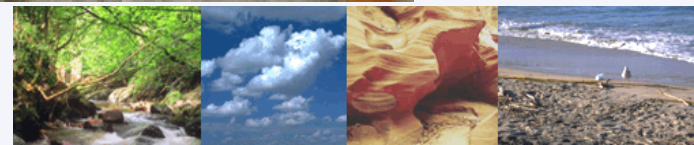


# LIFE Notice Boards

Erect and maintain notice boards describing project

- display at visible places
- carry LIFE logo
- Coordinating beneficiary
- Associated beneficiaries

*art. 11.7*

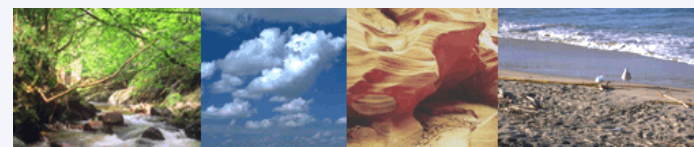




# Layman's Report

Contractual obligation:

- In electronic and paper format
- To present the project, its objectives, its actions and its results to a general public
- For decision-makers and non-technical parties
- 5-10 pages
- In English and in the beneficiary's language



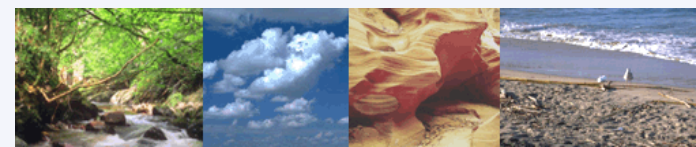
# Use the External Communications Team

Send:

- News of your project
- Meetings and events
- Prizes the project has won, etc.

Products (in e-format):

- Photos (captions, credits)
- DVDs
- Guidelines and recommendations
- Newspaper clippings, etc.



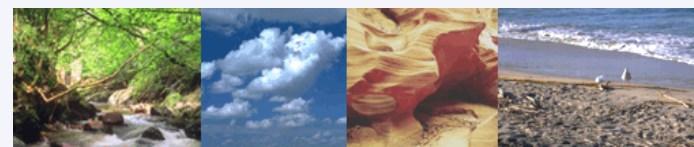
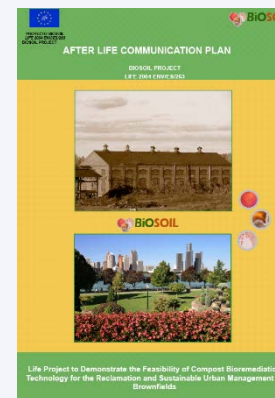


# After-LIFE Communication Plans

Contractual obligation:

- as a separate chapter of the final report
- in paper and electronic format
- sets out plans for continued dissemination and communication of results after the project's end
- In the project's language and (optionally) in English

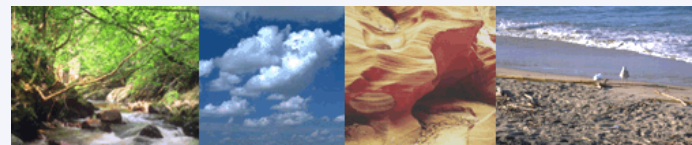
*Please note: LIFE Nature projects have to produce an "After-LIFE Conservation Plan"*





# Further Requirements

- Networking activities
- Potential for replicability
- Marketable prototypes and project results
- Impact on the implementation and enforcement of EU policies and legislation
- Environmental, social and economic impact – sustainability principle





# Good luck!



<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/toolkit>

