

Executive summary

The Environmental Projects Management Agency and the Ministry of Environment implemented the project ‘Building LIFE capacities in Lithuania’ financed by the LIFE programme since April 2016 until March 2021. The project had two main objectives:

- Develop Lithuania’s capacity to submit quality applications for funding under the sub-programmes for Environment and Climate Action;
- Make a better use of the LIFE programme by supporting on-going and closed projects and to make sure that the results of successful LIFE projects are disseminated and used widely.

The analysis of participation of Lithuania in LIFE programme until 2016 revealed that capacity building actions should be taken on raising awareness about LIFE programme in environmental business sector, additional events should be organised on less popular LIFE programme areas such as Environment and resource efficiency and Climate, direct guidance to potential applicants should be provided and the ability of national stakeholders to prepare LIFE integrated projects should be increased.

Thanks to the project, national LIFE Info day became a professional event that attracted not only environmentalists and municipalities, but also environmentally-oriented business and consultants as well as inspiring guest speakers from other countries. LIFE Fair dedicated to the 25th anniversary of LIFE programme was attended by the Minister of Environment and the EC representative and provided an opportunity for all finished and ongoing LIFE projects to present themselves and promote take-up of the results and future partnership.

The project participated in regional conferences or even initiated local seminars and round table discussions for business companies where LIFE programme opportunities for environmental technologies and close-to-market projects were presented and potential solutions for environmental problems were discussed. The project team together with the Ministry of Environment organised interdisciplinary conferences and seminars about climate policy, sustainable mobility, air pollution management in agriculture, where LIFE programme occupied a substantial part of the events and boosted discussions on project ideas in new-for-LIFE sectors and mainstreaming of environmental and climate priorities. Joint events with other national and EU financing programmes attracted new applicants to LIFE programme from SME and industrial companies and facilitated cooperation and complementarity among funding instruments.

Writers’ workshops and webinars improved the knowledge and skills of Lithuanian applicants on intervention logic, definition of environmental problem, planning of actions and budget, partnership, indicators and results, requirements and expectations for each form of the concept note or full proposal according to the evaluation criteria. Project staff consulted 392 potential LIFE applicants via email, phone, face-to-face and video meetings during 5 years period. The project provided 17 technical consultations by external experts that directly contributed to the quality of LIFE proposals as external experts could explain LIFE guidelines requirements based on the example of each applicant.

The project boosted awareness about the LIFE programme apparently. The project provided training to 2725 participants. Project webpage www.lifeprojektai.lt reached 139 767 visitors. There were 636 news posted on project Facebook ‘lifeprojektai’ that has 973 Facebook fans, the messages are read by approximately 235 visitors/week. 30 press releases and 12 press articles were published on LIFE programme, it’s priorities, calls, results and project events. The brochure “LIFE projektai Lietuvoje” introduced to the results of 21 Lithuanian LIFE projects in one publication for the first time. Video

clip about LIFE programme in Lithuania was broadcasted to 358 970 viewers in YouTube and Facebook.

LIFE project database <http://db.lifeprojektai.lt> provides information on more than 5000 LIFE projects in Europe and results of Lithuanian LIFE projects, thus allowing to search for a project and its beneficiary by thematic field, country and year. Interactive LIFE Guide <http://gidas.lifeprojektai.lt> accumulates guidance material on project idea, theme, indicators, budget and concept note and presents it in a easy-to-use Q&A format and self-assessment instrument for the applicants.

The number of Lithuanian LIFE applications augmented from 6 per year (the average of reference year 2010-2012) to 10 (the average of 2016-2020). The number of approved LIFE projects increased from 1 per year to 1,5 (the average of 2016-2019) and is expected to increase for Call 2020. Low success rate in 2018 and 2019 Call was partly influenced by reduced national co-financing that was solved by long-term planning of national budget allocations.

6 LIFE projects with Lithuanian coordinating beneficiary that were approved in 2016-2019 attracted environmental investment of 34 million EUR and that exceeds previous 21 years of LIFE programme by 31%. The variety of LIFE projects was supplemented by projects in new sectors - water and circular economy, a private company as project coordinator and new integrated project.