



Programme area n°11 Environment and Ecosystems

OBJECTIVE

Improved environmental status in ecosystems and reduced adverse effects of pollution and other human activities

AREAS OF SUPPORT

- > Environmental strategies, management plans, action plans and/or protection plans
- > Environmental monitoring and modelling
- > Systems for the sharing and the dissemination of environmental information
- > Management and control of hazardous substances
- > Compliance with environmental legislation

SUGGESTED MEASURES

- > Implementation of marine, inland water and terrestrial management plans and targets
- > Development and implementation of action plans on threatened species and habitats and/or invasive alien species
- > Mapping and monitoring of the ecological status in marine and inland waterways, and in terrestrial areas
- > Mapping and assessment of ecosystems and their services
- > Exploration of the impact of climate change on marine, aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems
- > Promoting natural heritage as a basis for sustainable tourism and local development
- > Promoting resource efficiency in use of natural resources
- > Management and control of import, export and use of hazardous substances
- > Promoting capacity development in relation to integrated planning and control
- > Restoration of degraded habitats and ecosystems, including the development of green corridors
- > Development and implementation of plans and measures to avoid fragmentation of ecosystems
- > Encouraging investments in green infrastructure
- > Environmental education and awareness-raising

RELEVANCE OF SUPPORT

Quality of life, economic competitiveness, employment and security all rely on the natural capital of our ecosystems. Europe's ecosystems are under increasing pressure, and the natural resources on which social and economic development is based are under threat. Intensive agriculture practices, infrastructure development causing land-use change, pollution, use of chemicals, over-exploitation of forests, inland and marine waters, and climate change are some of the main threats.

Addressing environmental issues requires the integration of policies on protection and the sustainable use of biodiversity in fresh water, oceans, terrestrial ecosystems, and on hazardous substances with sectoral policies such as agriculture, fisheries, forestry, energy and transport to ensure the resilience of ecosystems and provision of ecosystem services. Management plans may facilitate value creation while also maintaining our ecosystems.

Reports from the European Environment Agency indicate that almost half of Europe's water bodies have poor ecological status. Water use often exceeds water availability, resulting in water stress across Europe. Biodiversity, crucial for the ecosystem services we rely on, is at risk. Ecosystem services are essential for maintaining the long-term viability of forestry, agriculture and fisheries, and are the basis of many industrial processes and the production of new medicines. In addition, pollution and hazardous substances are adversely affecting human health and the environment.

The programmes shall contribute to coherent implementation of EU environmental strategies and legislation. The 7th Environmental Action Programme is the guiding environmental policy of the EU until 2020.

It lists nine priority objectives and identifies three priority areas where more action is needed: protect nature and strengthen ecological resilience; boost resource-efficient, low-carbon growth; and reduce threats to human health and well-being.

Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway are committed to international efforts to address environmental challenges, a commitment shared with the EU. The EEA and Norway Grants will fund programmes focusing on environment and ecosystems in line with the Europe 2020 strategy targets.

PROGRAMME AREA SPECIFICS

- > The programmes shall contain small grant scheme(s) targeting, among others, civil society including non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
- > Priority shall be given to bilateral partnerships offering added value

BILATERAL INTEREST

The donor and beneficiary countries share considerable knowledge and experience within this programme area. The donor countries have competence on integrated marine management, ecosystems management, and integrated planning and control. The sharing of this expertise is important to accelerate knowledge development in the area of environment and ecosystems.