



Illustration: iStock

The EU is striving to become climate-neutral by 2050. Involving people, communities and organisations is key to achieving this ambitious target, and in 2020, the EU launched the European Climate Pact to help make this happen. Several LIFE projects support the Climate Pact's ambitions.

The **Climate Pact** is a European Commission initiative to engage people in climate action and more sustainable behaviour.

The LIFE Programme community has implemented a wide range of projects with a positive climate impact. These projects have showcased innovative technologies, raised citizen awareness, provided accurate information and laid the foundations for a people-centred approach to climate action.

The '*LIFE and the Climate Pact: Awareness and Engagement for Lasting Climate Action*' platform meeting brought together LIFE project beneficiaries and climate action practitioners from across Europe to discuss their experience of engaging communities in climate action and to recommend approaches, actions and good practices.

Guidance for climate action

The platform meeting evolved around the three themes below, which are closely related to the key pillars of the Climate Pact:

Informing and communicating on climate

Engaging citizens and stakeholders and facilitating participation and co-creation

Supporting action

Informing and communicating on climate



Knowing the Local Situation

Effective action cannot be implemented in an unclear context:

- Get to know your local context
- Understand the priorities and concerns of local citizens and politicians
- Ask yourself why engaging citizens and local communities is important for your project
- Gather information on similar past awareness-raising campaigns

Engaging citizens and stakeholders and facilitating participation and co-creation



Targeting Stakeholders

- Develop a strategy based on a precise stakeholder mapping
- Start with 'supporters' and 'ready-to-go' communities to create a snowball effect but do not exclude anyone
- Involve authorities, policymakers, and local communities in the process - doing this gives them a sense of ownership of the process
- Go beyond preaching to the converted; also target difficult to reach communities
- Employ a variety of strategies and digital tactics to reach your audience

- Engage stakeholders with opposing ideas which then can result in realistic and acceptable solutions for the majority
- Consider other targets like media outlets, business owners and financial institutions



Ensuring Adequate Resources

- Plan and look to the longer-term: enduring commitment is vital for change to happen
- Ensure that you have enough resources (financial, people and time) to reach your goals
- Put these resources in place early in the process
- Offer financial incentives when possible but only if necessary
- Take advantage of available complementary funding or subsidies, but bear in mind that for long term sustainability, tailored communication is needed



Transmitting the Right Messages

- Define clear key messages for each target audience
- Always have a positive narrative and underline that fighting climate change benefits everyone
- Ensure that your actions align with local, regional and national climate policy objectives
- Take time to explain the challenges and potential solutions
- Combine climate action messages with other societal challenges like ageing and gender issues
- Integrate artistic elements and storytelling into the process to target non-experts
- Present data from reliable sources and use real-life examples such as the climate impacts that the local population is already experiencing
- Address misinformation

Supporting action



Implementing your Project

- Don't present a fixed plan to stakeholders - instead, co-design or start from scratch to involve everyone in the process

- Develop communication tools tailored to different audiences and situations
- Spread your campaign across multiple channels (including online tools like mobile applications) to reach all of your targets
- Design actions that build trust and long-term relationships with stakeholder groups
- If appropriate, involve a mediator to manage potential negative views, avoid conflicts and build consensus
- Use artists, religious leaders, sports organisation representatives, NGO heads, mayors, local politicians, storytellers, and other social multipliers as spokespersons to transmit your messages
- Get ambassadors on board - but keep in mind that they may require training and financial compensation
- Use conventional and social media to increase awareness and enhance key messages
- Get to know what tools and media your audience uses and adapt; for instance, develop a short movie rather than a PowerPoint presentation, develop mobile apps or online tools, etc.
- Hold events like press conferences and festivals to garner public/official support
- Provide feedback on your project to policymakers as soon as possible



Providing Progress Updates

- Be patient. Getting people to take climate action takes time and is a medium to longer-term process
- In the meantime, promote short term achievements for public and political support
- Provide regular updates on the co-creation process and the goal - this is necessary to ensure inclusiveness and long-term participation



Adapting your Strategy

- Don't panic - you can tweak your strategy based on initial results and experiences
- Have no fear of making mistakes - listen to feedback, adapt and learn for next time

How *Life* is supporting the Climate Pact

Many LIFE projects are well versed in communicating, raising awareness and engaging citizens on the environment and climate action. Here are some examples for inspiration.

Keeping city dwellers cool in the summer

LIFE Tree Check involves partners from Czechia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia, who want to increase green infrastructure like trees and water bodies in their cities.

Actions:

- The team developed a mobile application that recognises specific types of plants and trees when photographed and shows the user how these species can help improve a city's climate.

- They also set up an online database featuring green infrastructure projects like green buildings, a bus stop draped in ivy and a sustainable drainage system.
- The Tree Check manual explained how climate change impacts our cities.
- A series of training workshops were offered to lawmakers and those working in urban development.

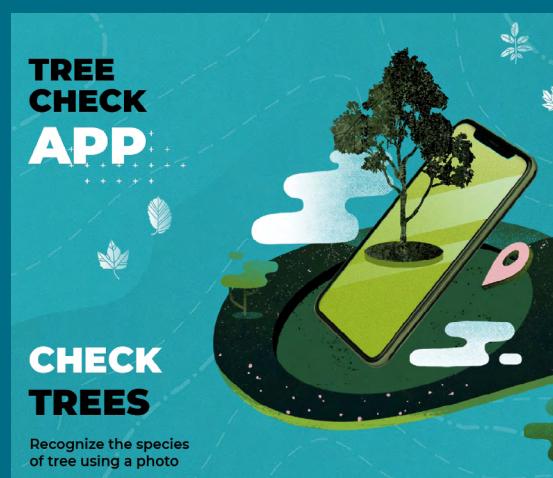


Photo: LIFE17 GIC/CZ/000107

Public support for energy-efficient buildings



With public help, **LIFE DELIVER** is developing resilient and low carbon solutions for Slovakia's urban areas.

Actions:

- The team renovated an entire school and a kindergarten using energy-efficient materials, which will provide cleaner air and more greenery to occupants.
- They set up a climate and biodiversity education centre involving local communities, helping raise awareness of the need to combat and adapt to climate change.

- They also published a catalogue of **selected adaptation and mitigation measures**.
- The public was encouraged to actively participate in the project through information sessions, planning meetings and surveys.
- Amendments were proposed to improve Slovakia's current nature and public buildings' laws.

Saving the climate on a tight budget



Photo: LIFE15 GIC/AT/000092/DoppelPlus

LIFE_WZROST_PL ran an information campaign on Poland's climate change and sustainable development. There was a particular focus on shifting from a coal-based to a green economy.

Actions:

- The team raised public awareness of the need to boost renewables, improve energy efficiency and consume sustainably.
- More than eight million people viewed ten short films made by the project, which were broadcast on the Discovery Channel and associated networks.
- The project worked with bloggers to build substantial public interest in its five-minute clips and award-winning documentary film.
- This approach contributed to increased support for climate action and renewable energy at regional and national level.

Raising climate awareness through film



Photo: LIFE14 GIC/PL/000008

Making better use of Rotterdam's roofs



LIFE@Urban Roofs aims to stimulate multifunctional roofs and climate adaptation investments in Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

Actions:

- The team encouraged real estate developers and building owners to invest in climate change adaptation.
- The project tested multifunctional roofs with greater benefits for property owners than traditional green roofs.
- They completed the longest green roof in the Netherlands on an iconic social housing building called the Peperklip.
- Other multifunctional roofs were constructed on De Doelen Congress and Concert Hall, the Valentijn School, the De Heuvel building, and others.

Learn more

- ec.europa.eu/life
 [LIFE programme](#)
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How to apply for LIFE funding

The European Commission organises annual calls for proposals.
Full details are available at ec.europa.eu/life

Contact

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