

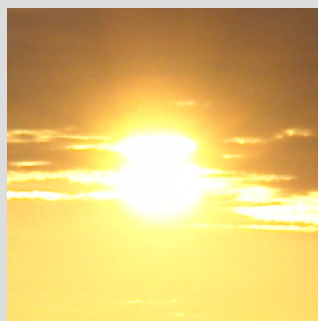
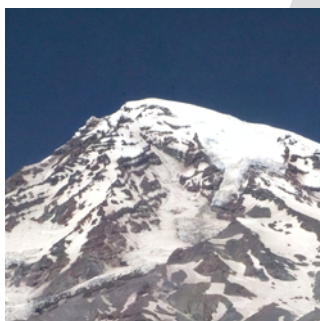
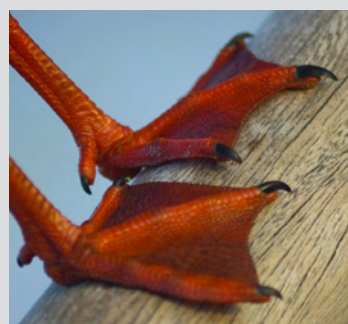
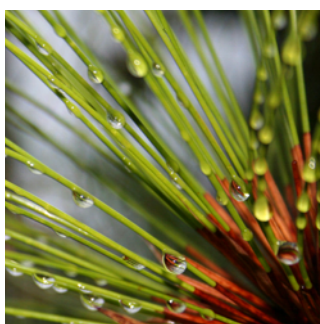
Directorate General Environment, Unit E.4. LIFE

Ex-Post Evaluation of Projects and Activities Financed under the LIFE Programme

Country-by-country analysis

Poland

July 2009



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The views expressed are those of the Consultant and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Commission.

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1 Executive summary

The LIFE Programme has financed five (1 LIFE Environment and four LIFE Nature) projects in Poland over a period of seven years; of these, three LIFE Nature projects are still ongoing. The LIFE Nature Programme is very important in relation to the establishment and management of Natura 2000 areas in Poland. However, taking into account the number of LIFE projects and number of Natura 2000 areas, the LIFE Nature Programme has not been carried out on a large scale in Poland.

The realisation of LIFE Nature projects has advanced work concerning the final delineation of protected areas in Poland. It has also contributed to the protection of threatened species and habitats.

The realisation of the LIFE Environment project "Environment Manager Internet Tool" resulted in the development of a tool to manage and to make available information, good practice and experience in environmental problem solving relevant to SME's in Poland.

2 Introduction

This country report on the implementation of the LIFE Programme in Poland is part of the overall ex-post evaluation of the LIFE Programme. The evaluation was commissioned in July 2008 and covers all LIFE projects initiated during the period 1996-2006. The overall objective of the evaluation is to assess the relevance and impact of the activities and projects financed under the LIFE Programme. The evaluation comprises country studies in all Member States, except Bulgaria, which has never had any LIFE projects. This report documents the analysis carried out concerning the implementation of the LIFE Programme in Poland. The ex-post evaluation focuses on assessing the effect of the LIFE Programme on Europe's nature and environment through looking at results and impacts of LIFE projects implemented under the Nature (NAT) and Environment (ENV) components. The results and impacts have further been assessed along three main evaluation criteria:

- Effectiveness, i.e. the extent to which planned objectives have been reached;
- Sustainability, i.e. the extent to which positive impacts have continued or are likely to continue;
- Utility, i.e. the extent to which impacts address key environmental needs and priorities in the EU and for the stakeholders concerned.

3 Environmental policy overview

The Environmental Policy of Poland focuses on the accomplishment of assumed goals and ecological effects in the following areas:

- Sustainable use of resources, including increased effectiveness in the use of natural resources, and a 7.5 per cent share of renewable-source electricity in total gross electricity consumption. Energy consumption from renewable sources is low (2.1 per cent in 2004).¹ One of the priorities of Polish ecological policy and the Programme for the Energy Sector is to increase energy effectiveness and the use of renewable sources in order to adjust to EU assumptions;
- Climate change, including a 6 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (base year to 2008–2012). Under the Kyoto Protocol, Poland has committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions

¹ Official website of the Polish Ministry of Environment, www.mos.gov.pl

for the period 2008-12 by 6 per cent compared to the level in 1988. The further reduction of greenhouse gas emissions may result in huge problems for Poland, as the economy is based on 95 per cent energy production from coal burning;

- Waste management is one of the most neglected parts of environmental protection in Poland. The country still has some time to adjust to EU standards in waste management, but reducing the quantity of landfill waste by approximately 75 per cent by 2010 (compared to 2000) remains problematic.

4 Overview of LIFE projects in Poland

In Poland the LIFE Programme has financed five projects: one Environment and four Nature projects over period of seven years. So far only two LIFE Projects have been fully implemented in Poland (one Nature and one Environment). The subject of the only **one LIFE Environment** project concerned the development of the Environment Manager Internet Tool.

Table 4.1 Overview of LIFE projects 1996-2006 in Poland

	Number of projects	Total LIFE contribution (million EUR)	Main themes covered ²	Average LIFE contribution per project (million EUR)	Average project duration (years)
Environment	1	5.0	Strategic Approaches (100%)	0.5	3
Nature	5	6.4	Habitats (60%)	1.2	4.2

Source: Butler

The **LIFE Nature** projects comprise habitat conservation and protection of birds. The typical type of beneficiary was NGO-Foundations, which accounted for three projects in total.

5 Effects of projects implemented

All **LIFE Nature** projects dealt with priority tasks: the conservation and upgrading of habitats for rare butterflies of wet, semi-natural meadows; a new strategy for the sustainable conservation of European bison in the Białowieża Forest; management plans for Natura 2000 areas and the stabilization of the population of the aquatic warbler. Some of the projects also marked the beginning of international cooperation, and played a role in removing barrier demarcation (part of the Natura 2000 area go beyond Polish borders to Belarus which is not an EU member); to the generation of impacts mostly in trans-boundary and protected areas (e.g. the Białowieża Forest in Poland – LIFE06 NAT/PL/0105); and the survival of migratory bird species (e.g. Aquatic Warbler - LIFE05 NAT/PL/0101).

² For the purpose of this evaluation, the LIFE projects were categorised according to the thematic structure of the LIFE+ Programme (ref. Regulation EC No. 614/2007, Annex II). The themes included for LIFE Nature: Habitat Directive, Birds Directive and Biodiversity. For LIFE Environment: Climate change, air, water, soil, forests, natural resources and waste, chemicals, urban environment, strategic approaches.

Most LIFE Nature projects, especially those in recent years, aimed at: generating long term effects through the development of management/action plans; implementation of the non-recurring habitat management actions which are normally not financed by other financial instruments (e.g. first time restoration of the grassland habitats is not covered by agri-environmental schemes) and attracting and involvement of the landowners in the long term management of the habitats of EU importance by using other (permanent) financial instruments e.g. agri-environmental payments. In addition, habitat management actions themselves (e.g. hydrological restoration actions in wetlands, bogs and mires; grassland management activities – removal of bushes and trees) generate long-term positive effects for the restoration of the habitats and habitats of the protected species covered by EU legislation.³

It is estimated that approximately 1 per cent of SPA areas in Poland were affected by LIFE Nature projects. One out of four projects carried out in Poland concerned the Birds Directive and represented approximately 0.01 per cent of the total SPAs terrain. The three other projects were connected with the Habitats Directive and included 2.65 per cent of total SACs terrain.

The main result of the **LIFE Environment** project "Environment Manager Internet Tool" Project is an operational version of the Environment Manager Internet Tool (www.eko-spec.pl), which continues to be used and tested by the 348 SMEs presently operating in the Clean Business Programme (higher than the original target of 250). Since September 2006, the Tool (available in both Polish and English) has been made available to any company or organisation that wishes to use it. The tool was designed to manage and to make available information, good practice and experience in environmental problem solving relevant to SMEs. In 2006, 75 per cent of companies participating in Clean Business declared that environmental improvement was a source of their business competitiveness, which represented an increase of 11 per cent from 2004. Also in 2006, 67 per cent of Clean Business companies declared that they were undertaking or planning to undertake environmental investments. All 348 companies directly participating in the project undertook some practical actions to reduce their environmental impacts and planned to continue to do so after completion of the LIFE project; no wider impact outside this circle of companies has been reported. However, the project did not succeed in the implementation and registration of EMAS in ten SME's. By the end of the project nine companies had started implementation of EMAS, and one had subsequently completed the registration process by February 2007. The other eight plan to continue the process beyond the end of the project.

6 The effectiveness of projects

Effectiveness can be assessed at two levels: project level, which compares achievements with project objectives, and programme level, which compares achievements with LIFE Programme objectives.⁴

The effectiveness of the completed LIFE Nature projects is assessed as high, as within a comparatively short time period (approx. four years) these projects have delivered results which are important for the long term management of the project sites⁵. These include: production of the management/action plans; initiation of crucial and urgent habitat management activities and raising public awareness on Natura 2000 sites with a set of dissemination tools (project website, information boards and a Layman's report are minimum obligatory deliverables in this respect).

³ Interview with a Monitoring Team representative

⁴ Specific objective for: LIFE Nature: to contribute to the implementation of Council Directive 79/409/EEC (Birds Directive) and Council Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive); LIFE Environment: to contribute to the development of innovative and integrated techniques and methods and to the further development of Community environmental policy.

⁵ Interviews with the LIFE Unit Desk Officer and representative of the Monitoring Team confirm this.

The LIFE Environment project contributed to both innovative and integrated environmental management of companies that implemented the developed IT system. The effectiveness was high as the tool was used by a higher number of enterprises than originally anticipated.

The effectiveness of Nature and Environment projects at programme level is assessed as high. The Nature projects (both completed and on-going) contribute, to a large extent, to the implementation of Council Directive 79/409/EEC (the Birds Directive) and Council Directive 92/43/EEC (the Habitats Directive). The LIFE Environment projects contributed towards the development of innovative and integrated techniques and methods e.g. integrated environment management for Polish SME's through the Environment Manager Internet tool (LIFE04 ENV/PL/000673).

7 The sustainability of projects

Sustainability of Nature projects is assessed high by the Desk Officer and Monitoring Team representative. However, a final assessment is difficult as only three out of four LIFE Nature projects have as yet been completed. Sustainability of the LIFE Environment project is assessed as high by the Desk Officer and Monitoring Team and could be improved in the future (this is dependent upon further and broader improvement of IT tools).

8 The utility of projects

The number of LIFE projects already implemented, and projects currently under implementation, is small when considering the seriousness and number of environmental problems in Poland, the diversity of its nature, the number of protected areas and the size of country.⁶

The implementation of LIFE projects in Poland contributes towards solving environmental problems in Europe and implementation of main EU priorities. The implementation of the LIFE Programme projects in Poland is in compliance with the main goals of ecological policy for Poland, the Policy for Sustainable Development, and it also fulfils the conditions of the EU Access Treaty. Moreover, according to the beneficiaries interviewed, it would not have been possible to implement the LIFE Nature and LIFE Environment projects without co-financing via the LIFE Programme. Without LIFE Nature funding, for example, implementation would be delayed, resulting in the loss or destruction of valuable protected areas. The project activities are also expected to contribute towards the development of Polish Natura 2000 areas by expanding the areas and number of sites.

⁶ No specific explanation for the low number of LIFE projects could be given by the National Focal Point as the responsibility for this position has recently been transferred from the Ministry of Environment to the coordination centre. Some beneficiaries have complained that the procedure is too complicated. Furthermore, funds for the financial contribution by the beneficiaries are scarce. (Interview with National Focal Point)

Appendix 1 Comprehensive overview of LIFE Projects in Poland

In connection with the ex-post evaluation, data was extracted from the BUTLER database of the LIFE Unit. Table 1 and Table 2 below provide an overview of the information available on each project as well as the LIFE+ theme attached by the evaluation team to the project. The budget figures for LIFE co-financing do not necessarily correspond to the actual payments made.

Table 2 Overview of LIFE Environment Projects in Poland

Id.	Title	LIFE generation	Funding year	Start year	End year	Total budget (EUR)	LIFE co-financing budget (EUR)	Beneficiary type	International partners (yes/no)	LIFE+ theme
LIFE04 ENV/PL/000673	Integrated environment management for Polish small and medium-sized enterprises through Environment Manager Internet tool.	LIFE III	2004	2004	2007	1,002,510	500,000	NGO- Foundation	No	Strategic Approaches

Table 3 Overview of LIFE Nature Projects in Poland

Id.	Title	LIFE generation	Funding year	Start year	End year	Total budget (EUR)	LIFE co-financing (EUR)	Beneficiary type	International partners (yes/no)	Directive (Birds, Habitats) or biodiversity
LIFE2003NAT/CP/P/000008	Evaluation of bustard conservation best practice in Western Europe	LIFE III	2003	2004	2006	106,762	100,084	NGO-Foundation	No	Birds
LIFE04 NAT/PL/000208	Conservation of Baltic raised bogs in Pomerania, Poland	LIFE III	2004	2003	2008	968,337	681,080	NGO-Foundation	No	Habitats
LIFE05 NAT/PL/000101	Conserving Acrocephalus paludicola in Poland and Germany	LIFE III Extension	2005	2005	2010	5,457,109	4,092,832	NGO-Foundation	No	Birds
LIFE06 NAT/PL/000100	Conservation and upgrading of habitats for rare butterflies of wet, semi-natural meadows	LIFE III Extension	2006	2006	2010	1,278,164	639,082	NGO-Foundation	No	Habitats
LIFE06 NAT/PL/000105	European Bison conservation in the Bialowieza Forest, Poland	LIFE III Extension	2006	2006	2011	1,381,700	956,000	Research institutions	No	Habitats

Appendix 2 Summary tables on LIFE Environment projects in Poland

Table 4 Overview of LIFE ENV projects in Poland by year, 1996-2006

Generation	Year	Number of projects	Total budget (EUR million)	Total LIFE co-financing budget (EUR million)	Average duration (years)	Average LIFE funding per project (EUR million)
LIFE II	1996	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	1997	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	1998	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	1999	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Total	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
LIFE III	2000	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2002	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2003	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2004	1	1.0	0.5	3.0	0.5
	Total	1	1	1	3.0	0.5
LIFE III extension	2005	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2006	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Total	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Grand total		1	1.0	0.5	3.0	0.5
Comparative figures for all ENV projects		1,076	1,947.7	615.9	3.3	0.6

Table 5 Overview of LIFE ENV projects in Poland 1996-2006 by theme

LIFE+ theme	No. of projects	In % of total	Total budget (EUR million)	In % of total	LIFE contribution (EUR million)	In % of total
Climate change	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Air	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Water	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Soil	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Forests	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Natural resources and waste	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Chemicals	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Urban environment	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Strategic approaches	1	100%	1.0	100%	0.5	100%
Total	1	100%	1.0	100%	0.5	100%

Table 6 Poland LIFE ENV projects 1996-2006 according to beneficiary type

Beneficiary type	No. of projects	In % of total	Total budget (EUR million)	In % of total	LIFE contribution (EUR million)	In % of total
Public entities						
National authority	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Regional authority	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Local authority	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Development agency	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Intergovernmental body	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Park-reserve authority	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Sub-total	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Public and private enterprises						
International enterprise	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Large enterprise	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
SME Small and medium sized enterprise	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Mixed enterprise	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Public enterprise	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Sub-total	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
NGOs and research						
NGO-Foundation	1	100%	1.0	100%	0.5	100%
Research institutions	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
University	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Training centre	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Sub-total	1	100%	1.0	100%	0.5	100%
None indicated	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Total	1	100%	1.0	100%	0.5	100%

Appendix 3 Summary tables on LIFE Nature projects in Poland

Table 7 Overview of LIFE NAT projects in Poland, 1996-2006

Generation	Year	Number of projects	Total budget (EUR million)	Total LIFE co-financing budget (EUR million)	Average duration (years)	Average LIFE funding per project (EUR million)
LIFE II	1996	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	1997	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	1998	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	1999	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Total	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
LIFE III	2000	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2002	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2003	1	0.1	0.1	2.0	0.1
	2004	1	1.0	0.7	5.0	0.7
	Total	2	1	1	3.5	0.4
LIFE III extension	2005	1	5.5	4.1	5.0	4.1
	2006	2	2.7	1.6	4.5	0.8
	Total	3	8.1	5.7	4.7	1.9
Grand total		5	9.2	6.5	4.2	1.3
Comparative figures for all NAT projects		771	1,224.1	637.2	4.2	0.8

Table 8 Categories of LIFE NAT projects in Poland, 1996-2006

LIFE NAT themes	No. of projects	In % of total	Total budget (EUR million)	In % of total	LIFE contribution (EUR million)	In % of total
Habitats Directive	3	60%	3.6	39%	2.3	35%
Birds Directive	2	40%	5.6	61%	4.2	65%
Biodiversity projects	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Total	5	100%	9.2	100%	6.5	100%

Table 9 Poland LIFE NAT projects 1996-2006 according to beneficiary type

Beneficiary type	No. of projects	In % of total	Total budget (EUR million)	In % of total	LIFE contribution (EUR million)	In % of total
Public entities						
National authority	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Regional authority	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Local authority	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Development agency	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Intergovernmental body	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Park-reserve authority	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Sub-total	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Public and private enterprises						
International enterprise	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Large enterprise	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
SME Small and medium sized enterprise	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Mixed enterprise	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Public enterprise	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Sub-total	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
NGOs and research						
NGO-Foundation	4	80%	7.8	85%	5.5	85%
Research institutions	1	20%	1.4	15%	1.0	15%
University	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Training centre	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Sub-total	5	100%	9.2	100%	6.5	100%
None indicated	0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Total	5	100%	9.2	100%	6.5	100%

Annex1 Information about LIFE Projects in Poland

Protection of Aquatic warbler (Lat. *Acrocephalus paludicola*) in Poland and in Germany

The Beneficiary of the project is the National Polish Association for Protection of Birds - the Polish partner for BirdLife International. The subject of the project is protective measures for protection of the rarest singing bird of the European Continent– the **Aquatic warbler**. **Aquatic warbler** is the species threatened to die out in the scale of the Globe. Poland is one of 3 countries where its habitats survived. The population of the **Aquatic warbler** in Poland is assessed at 3.500 singing males. This corresponds to 17% of the World population and 80% of the population in Europe.

The project has been implemented within the European plan for protection of the **Aquatic warbler**. In the project take part 6 partners (5 NGOs and protected areas administrative units from 3 EU countries). The project comprises area of 9 locations indicated as Areas for Special Protection of Birds.

The project shall lead to stabilization of the population of **Aquatic warbler** in the areas of its presence in Poland and Germany. The project will be implemented until 2010. This is the largest and the most expensive habitats protection project in Poland and it is financed in 75% by the LIFE-Nature Programme. The value of the project equals to EUR 5.4 mill.

Project „Butterfly Meadows”

The Beneficiary of the project is the Polish Office - the Regional Environmental Center (REC).

The subject of the project is protection and improvement of nesting sites of rare butterfly of wet, semi - natural meadows. 7 species of rare butterfly of the precious value is threatened .The population of wet, semi - natural meadows butterflies are threatened primarily due to degradation of the natural nesting sites and extensive use of meadows.

Besides the main objective which is protection of rare butterflies, the project will have positive effect on a number of other protected habitats (primarily birds).

In the scope of the project there is implemented improvement of life conditions of protected habitats through enlargement of the area of wet, semi - natural meadows.

One of the objectives of the project is also the educational aspect. The project was launched in 2006 and will be continued until 2010. The total value of the project is equal to EUR 1.278.164, and 50 % (EUR 639.082) is financed just LIFE-Nature funds.

Protection of Bison in Białowieża Reserve

The Beneficiary of the project is the Mammal Research Institute Polish Academy of Sciences. The Patronate over the project takes the Forest Administration (Regional Directorate of the State Forest in Białystok and the Forest Authority of Białowieża).

The subject of the project is improvement of the life conditions of Bison at Podlasie Area and securing of long term protection to survive the species.

Despite that the population of Bison in the Białowieża Reserve reached about 350 more than 10 % of the World population, the habitats is still seriously threatened. The main reasons for that are: limited area of its presence, and limited possibilities for natural food, isolation of free existing Bison herds, low immunity for diseases and lack of considerations for current needs of the Bison species.

Most of the activities of the project is directed towards improvement of natural food resources and access to water. The project was launched in 2006 and will be implemented until 2010. The total project value is EUR 1.381.700, and 70 % (EUR 956.000) is co-financed from LIFE-Nature Programme.

Conservation of Baltic raised bogs in Pomerania

Project beneficiary was NGO "Naturalist Club". State and forest administration was a partner. Aim of project was protection of Baltic peat bogs. Baltic type high peat bogs are regional subtype of high peat bogs. In Poland Baltic type high peat bogs appear in north part of country in coastal regions. Generally there are huge (at least 100 ha) beds and number of objects this type in Poland is over 70. Only 9 from them are comprehensive protected (as a nature reserve) and following 2 are in borders of National Parks. 18 of beds are partly protected by nature reserve. Project was directed to taking inventory, document and schedule of peat bogs protection, improvement of water and environmental conditions as well as education activities. Project was conducted during 2004 - 2007. Entire cost of was 968,337 EUR. Approx. 70 % (EUR 681,080) was financed from LIFE-Nature fund.

LIFE ENV "Environment Manager Internet Tool"

The main objective and result of "Environment Manager Internet Tool" Project is an operational version of the Environment Manager Internet Tool (www.eko-spec.pl), which continues to be verified and tested through use by the 348 SME's now operating in the Clean Business Programme (higher than the original target of 250).

The Tool was initially used only by Clean Business members participating in the LIFE project. But from September 2006, was made available to any company or organization that wishes to use it. An English version of the tool was also prepared and is also available on-line for use by companies, government agencies and NGO's in other EU member states. Environment Manager is an internet tool designed to manage and make available information, good practice and experience in environmental problem solving relevant to SME's.

Environment Manager enables users to:

- Access publicly available information and training resources relevant to the environmental needs of small and medium sized enterprises;
- Collect and analyze data related to a specific company's environmental performance, assuring awareness of EMAS among Polish SME's. security and confidentiality (following log-in);
- Administer a Clean Business Program, providing on-line services to logged in users, organizing reporting, and monitoring Clean Business Club operations.

Using Environment Manager, companies can assess and monitor their environmental performance and learn from the practical experience of other companies. Users can access information resources and Clean Business support services, including a help-line and news service.

In 2006, 75% of companies participating in Clean Business declared that environmental improvement was a source of their business competitiveness, which represented an increase of 11% from 2004.

Also in 2006, 67% Clean Business companies declared that they were undertaking or planning to undertake environmental investments. All 348 companies directly participating in the project undertook some practical action to reduce their environmental impacts and planned to continue to do so after completion of the Life project.

The project did not succeed in the implementation and registration of EMAS in 10 SME's. By the end of the project nine companies had started implementation of EMAS, and one of these had completed the registration process by February 2007. The other eight plan to continue the process after the end of the project. Several seminars and meetings were also organized to disseminate information on EMAS and on the potential benefits of its implementation. The project succeeded in enhancing awareness of EMAS among Polish SME's.