



INTERNATIONAL
LAND CONSERVATION
NETWORK

European Networks for Private Land Conservation – Looking Back and Looking Ahead

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In December 2020, the European Union LIFE Programme funded the project “European Networks for Private Land Conservation” (LIFE ENPLC). The LIFE Programme is the EU’s funding instrument for the environment and climate action. The newly funded LIFE ENPLC project was designed to bring together European NGO and landowner networks for private land conservation to protect and restore private land for nature and the climate in Europe.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, LIFE ENPLC was forced to shift its planned in-person meetings in 2021 online. Despite the bumpy start, the LIFE ENPLC project team- representing 18 partner organizations from 11 European countries- has been able to build a strong network of private landowners and conservationists. The reason: regardless of different backgrounds, the network shares a passion for preserving land for nature and future generations.

Highlights from last year underscore the cooperative spirit of the project: as one of the first activities, LIFE ENPLC founded the “Conservation Landowners Coalition” (CLC), a partnership of European landowners and conservationists represented by Eurosite and the European Landowners Organization (ELO) respectively. The CLC and the project team are now working together to tackle various questions about how to best protect and restore private land.

The LIFE ENPLC project focused on topics of direct concern to practitioners. For example, the Volunteering Working Group of LIFE ENPLC held a webinar in November 2021 on the topic “[Working with volunteers on private land – How to get started](#)”. Presentations focused on practical examples of volunteering programmes from various conservation organizations and on their experiences and lessons learnt. The big question: how to adapt these programmes for private landowners interested in conservation? The webinar kicked off a fruitful conversation between private landowners and NGOs about the practical aspects of volunteering on private land. This discussion will continue this year at a second event on this topic in Portugal.

LIFE ENPLC also had big first impacts on a policy level. The CLC contributed to guidance developed by the European Commission on the EU’s protected area targets, with particular attention to the role of other area-based effective conservation measures (OECMs). In January 2022, the CLC and the European Commission organized a meeting of EU Expert Group on the Nature Directives (NADEG) on private land conservation. NADEG is the working-level platform of the European commission, EU member states, and interest groups on the implementation of EU nature conservation policy and legislation. As a follow up

to this meeting, LIFE ENPLC will work with government representatives from various EU member states on how to improve incentives and the regulatory framework for private land conservation in Europe.

This work continues in 2022. Here are some event highlights of what LIFE ENPLC has planned for this year:

- On 21st May, the project team will meet in person for the first time in Mon Sant Benet, Spain to celebrate [30 years of LIFE](#).
- LIFE ENPLC will continue to build national networks for private land conservation, such as the second meeting of Italian PPA managers in Orbetello this May, as well as the first Portuguese meeting of PPA managers in September.
- During the summer and fall, project partners will host various BioBlitzes and work camps.
- In August, LIFE ENPLC is launching a conservation training programme for landowners. The programme will trial the concept in four courses: wetland conservation (Belgium), pollinator conservation (Belgium), fire management (Portugal) and economic opportunities for nature conservation on private land (Romania).
- In September, there will be a workshop in Brussels on the potential value of citizen science for private land conservation.
- A webinar in November will introduce private landowners and conservationists to various types of conservation agreements.
- Finally, a workshop on privately protected area designation and recognition in December will conclude this busy year.

More information about these events will be shared in the coming months via the ILCN and Eurosite newsletters.

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