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Candidate:

Scuccato Giada

UniBo ID: 0000899166

Supervisor:

Dr. Stefano Picchi

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Alla mia Famiglia.

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ABSTRACT

Over the past 50 years, human activities have led to the inevitable loss of biodiversity on the planet. Many organizations seek to tackle the harmful effects of climate change through habitat conservation and restoration activities. Thus, the main purpose of the present thesis is to provide a guideline on how to best approach the world of European funds as well as other non-European funds available to organisations active in nature conservation. In this context, the main EU funds are there listed, a guideline is given as to how a good project proposal should be written, and three case studies on different topics are analysed. The conclusions account for why the Strategic Approach is the best choice to pursue European funds, as well as identify the most appropriate of these in the LIFE programme for its versatility.

1. INTRODUCTION

The number of nature conservation organisations that interface with the world of funds has greatly increased over the course of the past few years, as have the funds allocated to finance projects for the conservation of biodiversity, particularly in countries with rapidly growing economies, with Europe, the USA and China being responsible for the largest contributions. And such an increase proves all the more positive when one considers more than half of the global GDP—some €40 trillion—depends on ecosystem services, i.e. those which a healthy ecosystem provides humans and from which they benefit in terms of their well-being, such as clean air and water, natural pollination, crop productivity (European Commission, 2020a).

By consequence, considering the importance of preserving a healthy ecosystem, it is only natural that one of the central challenges of the next decade will be halting the rapid loss of biodiversity we are currently experiencing and, thus, restore our ecosystem: something which is in our interest not only on physical level, but also in terms of economy. According to the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem (IPBES), 75% of the Earth's surface has, in fact, been significantly altered, with an average of about 25% of plant and animal species assessed as endangered. Thus, it is of fundamental importance for nature conservation organization to learn how to best exploit the funds at their disposal (Díaz, S. et al. 2019).

In an effort to promote this, the United Nations have declared 2021-2030 the ‘United Nations Decade for Ecosystem Restoration’¹ (Bucharova, A., Farwig, N., Kollmann, J., 2020.) , with vast public and private funds at both a national and European level being made available every year through new tools, sources, funding programmes (Anyango-van Zwieten, N., Lamers, M. & van der Duim, R., 2019) (European Commission, 2020a) (Parker,C., et al. 2012). For example, as per last report of the European Commission, the New Green Deal² will crucially seek to tackle the economic recovery by investing extensively in the protection and restoration of nature, unlocking at least 20 billion euros a year for this purpose (European Commission, 2019).

¹ <https://www.decadeonrestoration.org/>.

² “The European Green Deal is a new growth strategy that aims at transforming the EU into a fair and prosperous society, with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy where there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050 and where economic growth is decoupled from resource use.” (European Commission, 2019)

2.AIM

The aim of this thesis is to provide a first approach to European funding and other funds for organizations active in nature conservation, as many companies which approach it for the first time are mostly unaware of how to do so successfully.

The first part will detail the best approaches to employ in researching, selecting, and applying for the funds that best meets their needs, as well as how to write a good proposal. The second part will, instead, analyse three case studies, namely: Triton Research, a marine biology company; GREENARCO, a spin-off company of the University of Bologna's projects to enhance natural benefits; and lastly the European Land Conservation Network (ELCN), which deals with the conservation of privately protected areas. All companies will be analysed in terms of how to apply the so-called 'Strategic Approach'.

The thesis does not only intend to provide guidelines that organizations will be able to follow, but rather to give indications on how many thematic areas concerning the environment can be adopted for their preservation

3. MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF EUROPEAN FUNDING

Before discussing financial approaches, it is necessary to define some of the characteristics of European funding and the fundamental requirements to participate in such type of funding. It is generally required that the activities financed are extraordinary and that present innovative and reproducible methodologies in European countries. Proposers who have their headquarters in one of the 28 EU countries or in countries with signed bilateral agreements can usually respond to the calls. It is important to keep in mind that these types of environmental financing typically fund only a portion of a project (co-financing). However, Horizon2020, the main fund for applied research and innovation, tends to cover percentages close to 100%. Those who access it are obliged to report to the European Commission or the supervisory authority. The beneficiaries³ are normally small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), public bodies—local, regional or national, such as research bodies, and universities (Camera di Commercio di Torino, 2018). Beneficiaries have the opportunity to make use of experts and they must respect the basic principles of European policies such as gender equality or no child exploitation.

³ https://ec.europa.eu/growth/access-to-finance_en.

4. APPROACHES TO FINANCING: Contingent Approach and Strategic Approach

When an institution, organization or company wants to approach EU financing, it is important to closely examine the best approach to access it. Companies tend to focus their interest on practical aspects such as how to participate in the calls for proposal, the percentage of the financing and the eligible costs, rather than focusing on the designing a valid project to propose (Camera di Commercio di Torino, 2018).

As described by Veronica Vecchi, the first step to approach financing is to choose between two different and distinct ways: Contingent Approach and Strategic Approach (Vecchi, V., 2013a).

The Contingent Approach is one adopted by parties who try to access community funding sporadically and exceptionally, with activities often lacking any careful planning as they are driven by the urgency of responding to a call for a proposal deemed to be of interest (Vecchi, V., 2013b) (Vecchi, V., Cusumano, N., Minardi, P., 2015). As result, despite being widely used, this approach has fairly steep costs when compared to its success rates. Specifically, the Contingent Approach often suffers from the following issues (Vecchi, V., 2013b):

- Limited experience and poor knowledge in the use of funds, which can negatively affect the search for partners and consequently the organisation's reputation. The resulting partnership is often weak and created close to the call proposal's deadline.
- Costly and time-consuming creation of standard schemes⁴ every time one gets a new call proposal.
- A weak link between the project and the company, which decreases the chances one has to rely on co-financing, consequently forcing the beneficiary to mobilize its company resource to cover the project activities.

⁴ Standard scheme is a document drawn up during the Analysis of Eligibility (Strategic Approach), which collects useful information relating to different financing programmes.

By contrast, the Strategic Approach accesses multiple funding programmes at the same time, based on a logic of complementarity with the ordinary sources of funding of the beneficiary (Vecchi, V., 2013). Companies which select the Strategic Approach normally put a Project Manager in charge of planning a more structured project proposal, thanks to the documents and information collected beforehand as well as his professional experience. In addition to this, the Project Manager can identify the economic resources necessary to cover the company's financial needs as well as coordinate the intermediate project outputs towards the achievement of the programme purpose.

The three pillars of the Strategic Approach are (Vecchi, V., 2013a):

- Coherency between the type of programme pursued and the project that the organization has elaborated, which usually increases the possibility of co-financing compared to the Contingent Approach, a feature crucial in the financing world
- Good management of financial costs (without losing money in collecting information on every new call for proposal) and competitiveness, thanks to the cyclicity and the previous planning phase by the project manager
- Structured partners through continuous research and interaction with national and international networks, building strong long-term connections

In conclusion, the major difference between the two approaches are the functionality of the funds and the way of accessing them. This brief analysis of the two approaches shows that a company that wants continuity over time should focus on adopting the Strategic Approach.

4.1. The main steps of the Strategic Approach

This paragraph describes the 3 phases which make up the Strategic Approach:

- Planning phase (Vecchi, V., 2013a). This is the first step in implementing the Strategic Approach, in which one must take into account production factors, time, output, costs and suitable financial resources, putting all these parameters in a Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) matrix, and additionally inserting existing co-financing and listing all activities in need of implementation (see Tab.1). The advantage of using this matrix is that it gives a clear view of the different activities necessary to develop the project and that it is a simple way to communicate the annexed project activities to the stakeholders. Furthermore, the WBS matrix can also be used for more complex projects by introducing secondary actions (Vecchi, V., Cusumano, N., Minardi, P., 2015).

Projects	Activities ⁵	Productive factor ⁶	Time ⁷	Output ⁸	Cost ⁹	Suitable financial resource ¹⁰	Resource of the project ¹¹
Project 1	Activity 1.1						
	Activity 1.2						
Project 2	Activity 2.1						
	Activity 2.2						

Tab.1: Example of WBS Matrix (Work Breakdown Structure) (Vecchi, V., 2013a)

⁵ Reference is made to the activities of project

⁶ Reference is made to the human resources involved in the project

⁷ Reference is made to the time required for the implementation of each activity

⁸ Reference is made to the result of each activity (e.g. Report, Guidelines etc.)

⁹ Reference is made to the cost of implementation of each activity

¹⁰ Reference is made to the suitable financial resource of organisation

¹¹ Reference is made to the co-financing

- Analysis of Eligibility (Vecchi, V., 2013a). The second step in implementing the Strategic approach consists of identifying and selecting all possible types of funding resources and programmes, while also recognizing which are adaptable to different projects. In order to do so, it is necessary to refer to the official documents of different financing programmes and fill out a standard scheme¹² for each financing programmes, which may then be used multiple times.

Example of Standard Scheme to fill out with EU financing programmes:

1. name of the programme
2. eligible activities
3. eligible cost
4. international partnership obligation (YES / NO)
5. eligible countries
6. minimum number of partners
7. minimum number of countries represented in the partnership
8. eligible applicants
9. formal requirements (a type of subjects eligible for the request for funding)
10. % co-financing
11. type of co-financing requested (economic or financial)
12. official documentation available (programme, vademecum, form)
13. call for tenders (date of publication/deadline)
14. contacts

Fig 1: Example of Standard Scheme for each financing programme. (Vecchi, V., 2013a)

¹² In the appendix the scheme completed for LIFE programme and Horizon

- Matrix of eligibility (Vecchi, V., 2013a). The third step, is defined as “the tool that allows you to programme access to the various concessional sources, intersecting the company's financial needs and eligible costs for each line of financing” (Di Falco, G., In Dallocchio, M., Salvi, C., 2011), or in other words, the evaluation of the consistency between the project and the source of funding (Vecchi,V., Cusumano, N., Minardi, P. , 2015). The matrix of eligibility is set up by crossing the activities of the WBS matrix with the possible funding resources identified in the second step (see Tab.2) (Vecchi, V., Cusumano, N., Minardi, P., 2015) As reported in (Bonifazi , A. , Giannetti, A., 2014), the advantages of the creation of this matrix are multiple:
 - It maximizes the financial coverage of the project by taking advantage of synergies between subprojects and projects;
 - It reduces the self-finance rate;
 - It identifies alternative financing that may allow one to increase his financial coverage options.

Projects	Activities	Fund 1	Fund 2	Fund 3	Fund 4	Fund 5	Fund 6
Project 1	Activity						
	1.1						
Project 2	Activity						
	1.2						
Project 2	Activity						
	2.1						
	Activity						
	2.2						

Tab.2: Example of the matrix of eligibility (Vecchi, V., 2013a)

4.2 Types of European funding for the environment

As discussed, in the previous chapter, the appropriate funding resources and financing programme is a crucial step for the success of the project. This chapter will analyse the main types of funding related to nature and the environment, such as EU funding, funds by foundation, or bank funding.

It should be noted that “EU funding” refers to funds supplied by the European Commission through specific financing programmes, who contribute to implementing the financing of projects, and consequently the European policy and legislation (Zoffoli, D., 2016) (European Union, 2017).

Usually this funding has a pluriannual framework (currently 2014-2020) during which the different resources for each programme and the eligibility subjects have access to resources through calls for proposals. Two different EU funding management modes exist: Direct Management and Indirect Management (European Union, 2017). In the programme with Direct management, the European Commission provides the funds directly to the beneficiary with fast, small contributions within a certain time frame. While in the programme with Indirect Management the financing resources are provided by the EU commission to member states and then subdivided to the regions and final beneficiaries. This management is mainly related to local and regional policies (Picchi, S., 2019b).

Compared to Direct Management, in this case, there is a major investment but slow bureaucratic management. Structural or indirect funds finance projects more specifically linked to territory. The calls for proposal are decided and announced by the individual Regions. Some programmes related to environment and conservation of nature at direct management are LIFE programme and Horizon 2020 while EMFF and EAFRD are at indirect management.

Direct management:

LIFE programme

The LIFE programme¹³ is the key financial instrument that the EU has developed and established in 1992 to support nature-biodiversity conservation, environment projects and nowadays also the climate action. Thanks to the synergy, different actors promote and encourage good practices and the best solutions for environmental and climate change fields (Pisani, E., et al., 2020).

¹³ <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/life>

The funding period is 7 years and the current co-financing period is 2014-2020.

LIFE programme is divided into two sub programmes Environment and Climate Action.¹⁴

Subprogramme Environment: this sub programme provides funds for 3 priority areas

- 1) Environment and Resource Efficiency: this area concerns the project to support an innovative solution for better implementation of environmental policies. The thematic priorities are i.e. water and marine environment, air and emission, waste and natural resource, environment, healthy and green economy.
- 2) Nature and Biodiversity: this area concerns to fund nature conservation projects in the areas of biodiversity, habitats, and species (includes habitats or species listed in the “EU’s Birds and Habitats Directives” and “IUCN Red List”)
- 3) Environmental Governance and Information: this area concerns in projects that support the information, communication, and promote sensibilization and awareness about the environmental sector.

Subprogramme Climate Action: this sub programme also provides funds to 3 priority areas:

- 1) Climate Change Mitigation (CCM): this area supports projects that promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions focusing on land use, farming, agriculture and forestry, and conservation and enhancement of natural carbon sinks.
- 2) Climate Change Adaptation (CCA): this area funds projects that support strengthening resilience to climate change. Some priority areas are: urban adaptation and land use planning, flood coastal management, resilience to agriculture, forestry and tourism sector and extreme weather.
- 3) Climate Governance and Information (CGIC): this area provides action grants for information, awareness, and dissemination projects on the climate sector.

The co-financing scheduled during the seven years is approximately 3.4 million euros, in which almost 2.6 million euros is given to the Environment sub programme and almost 800 thousand euros to the Climate Action sub programme.¹⁵

¹⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/life>

¹⁵ Idem.

Another aspect to consider in the LIFE programme is the typology of the project to submit and the different rate of co-financing by the EU. Traditional projects are pilot projects, best practice, and demonstration projects, and the eligibility cost is between 55% and 75%. Integrated, preparatory, and technical projects receive co-funding of up 60%, this typology of projects have the necessity of more time to submit the proposal and a large partnership. (Picchi, S., 2019b).

For the next seven-years, 2021-2027, the LIFE Programme¹⁶ will have two fields of action, Environment and Climate Action, and it will be organized in four sub-programmes:

- Nature and Biodiversity;
- Circular Economy and quality of life;
- Mitigation and Adaptation to Climate Change;
- Transition to clean energy.

The allocation will be around 5.45 billion euros, almost 60% more than in previous years (Fabbri, M., 2020).

Call for proposal LIFE:

The Climate action sub-programme provides only one step for the presentation of the project proposal, which consists of the elaboration and sending of a complete proposal. In contrast, the Environment sub-programme provides two steps (European Commission, 2020c). The first step consists of the compilation and sending of the concept note (a project summary) that includes the description of the problem, the objectives of the project, the partnership, the list of proposed actions, and the budget. If the valuation of the first step passes, the organisation can proceed with sending the complete proposal (step 2).

The compilation of the formulary for the LIFE programme consists of the semi-structured form, in which the number of characters is indicated for each section. Both the first and the second steps are assigned a score during the evaluation phase.

¹⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/life>

The evaluation criterion is subdivided into (Giappichelli, L. 2019):

1. Evaluation criteria-Step 1: Concept note
 - Overall quality of proposal: considering feasibility, clarity in drafting, and usefulness. The other criterion used is the EU added value, which includes the sustainability and the transnationality of the project. (passing score min: 5)
 - Overall EU added value: considering the technical and financial coherence and quality, EU added value and bonus point. (passing score min: 10)
2. Evaluation criteria- Step 2: Full Proposal
 - Consist of 6 criteria subdivided for Environment sub-programme and Climate Action subprogramme. (Fig.2 and Fig.3)

	Award criteria	Minimum pass score (*)	Maximum score
Technical and Financial coherence and quality			
1	Technical coherence and quality	10	20
2	Financial coherence and quality (including value for money)	10	20
EU added value			
3	Extent and quality of the contribution to the specific objectives of the priority areas of the LIFE sub-programme for Environment	10	20
4	Sustainability (continuation, replication, transfer)	8	15
	Overall (pass) score	50 (*)	
Bonus			
5	Contribution to the project topics	—	0 or 5 or 10
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synergies (including multipurpose and integration/complementarity (max. 8 points), Green Public Procurement (max. 1 point), Ecolabel (max. 1 point), and uptake EU-research results (max. 1 point)) • Transnational (max. 4 points) 	—	15
	Maximum score		100

Fig.2 The award criteria for the environment sub-programme
(Giappichelli, L. 2019)

	Award criteria	Minimum pass score (*)	Maximum score
Technical and Financial coherence and quality			
1	Technical coherence and quality	10	20
2	Financial coherence and quality (including value for money)	10	20
EU added value			
3	Extent and degree of quality of the contribution to the LIFE sub-programme for Climate Action priority areas and related specific objectives contained in Articles 14, 15 and 16 of the LIFE Regulation	10	20
4	Sustainability (continuation, replication, transfer)	8	15
	Overall (pass) score	50 (*)	
Bonus			
EU added value: contribution to the implementation of the Paris Agreement			
5	Contribution to the Climate Action policy areas set out in Section 4	—	0 or 5
	Contribution to the detailed work areas contained in the LIFE Climate Action annual call for proposals	—	0 or 5
6	• Synergies (including multipurpose and integration/complementarity (max. 8 points), Green Public Procurement (max. 1 point), Ecolabel (max. 1 point), and uptake EU-research results (max. 1 point)) • Transnational (max. 4 points)	—	15
	Maximum score		100

Fig.3 The award criteria for the climate action subprogramme (Giappichelli, L. 2019)

Horizon

Horizon 2020¹⁷ is the financial instrument that funded the research and innovation sector in the period 2014-2020. The challenge is creating an economic opportunity through a stable economic and financial system and contribute to sustainability (European Union, 2014).

Horizon 2020 is based on three pillars¹⁸:

- 1) Excellent science: the main goal is to raise the European level of scientific and technological excellence to facilitate the transfer of research results into innovation processes and the market, ensuring European competitiveness in the long term.
- 2) Industrial leadership: the pillar aims to promote structured research and innovation activities in European companies, focusing on ecological innovation and help the growth of SMEs and their transformation into companies.
- 3) Societal challenges: this pillar aim concerns the policy priorities of the Europa 2020 strategy. The social challenges of environmental and nature concerns to achieve water-efficient and climate change resilient economy, the protection and sustainable

¹⁷ <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/>.

¹⁸ Idem.

management of natural resources and ecosystems, and sustainable supply and use of raw materials, to meet the needs of a growing global population within the sustainable limits of the planet's natural resources and ecosystems..

Other horizontal activities are also part of Horizon 2020¹⁹:

- Dissemination of excellence and promotion of participation;
- Science with and for the Society;
- European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT);
- Euratom;
- Joint Research Center, JRC;
- Enhanced European Innovation Council (EIC) pilot;

The beneficiaries of this programme are private and public bodies from a member state of the EU. The budget is 80 million euros in the framework 2014-2020 of which 3.081 million euros concerns the areas Climate Action, Environment, Resource Efficiency, and Raw Materials. (European Union, 2014).

For the next pluriannual framework 2021-2027 the programme will be Horizon EUROPE²⁰ with five new missions:

- Adaptation to climate change including societal transformation;
- Cancer;
- Climate-neutral and smart cities;
- Healthy oceans, seas, coastal and inland waters;
- Soil health and food;

¹⁹ Idem.

²⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/info/horizon-europe-next-research-and-innovation-framework-programme_en

Call for proposal Horizon 2020:

To write the project idea it is mandatory to fill out an online form. This form consists of two parts, one with personal information and the other with a project idea.

The evaluation process consists in different phases: individual evaluation made by at minimum 3 experts (each expert evaluates the proposal individually and prepares an individual evaluation report), then the experts join in a "consensus group" to reach a shared opinion through the consensus report and finally a panel reviews all the proposals summarizing the report which includes a summary report of the evaluation. (Palla, L., 2014)

The evaluation criteria are based on three criteria: Excellence, Impact, and Quality and efficiency of Implementation of which can score between 1 and 5. (Palla, L., 2014). (below the Fig.4 and Fig.5)

1. Excellence

- Clarity of the objectives;
- Soundness of the concept, including transdisciplinary considerations;
- Credibility of the proposed approach;
- Progress beyond the state of the art.

2. Impact: [...] contribution to:

- The expected impacts listed in the work programme;
- Enhancing innovation capacity and integration of new knowledge;
- Strengthening the competitiveness and growth of companies by developing innovations meeting the needs of European and global markets;
- ...measures to, disseminate and exploit the project results,... communication.

3. Quality and efficiency of implementation

- Coherence and effectiveness of work plan, ... allocation of tasks, resources;
- Competences, experience and complementarity of the individual participants, as well as of the consortium as a whole;
- Appropriateness of the management structures and procedures....risk management.

Fig.4 Evaluation criteria (Palla, L., 2014)

0 — The proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.

1 — **Poor.** The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.

2 — **Fair.** The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.

3 — **Good.** The proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.

4 — **Very Good.** The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.

5 — **Excellent.** The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion.

Fig.5 Score to be associated with the evaluation criteria
(Palla, L., 2014)

Indirect management:

European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)

The EMFF²¹ is a fund for the EU's maritime and fisheries policies for 2014-2020.

The EMFF programme is articulated in these points²²:

- helps fishermen in the transition to more sustainable fishing practices, with a focus on small-scale fisheries and sustainable aquaculture
- supports coastal communities in diversifying their economies and assists in the development of a sustainable blue economy while creating new jobs and improving quality of life along European coasts.
- gives a contribution to protect the marine ecosystem and to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Moreover, the fund invests in new markets, maritime technologies and services such as ocean energy and marine biotechnology

As reported by the European Commission the fund allocated is 6400 million euros in total during 2014-2020, with the distribution to each country based on the size of its fishing sector (European Commission, 2015).

For example, 537 million euros are allocated in Italy (Zoffoli, D., 2016). Each country must then have an operational programme specifying how the assigned resources are used.

European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)

EAFRD²³ is a financial instrument that supports European rural development policy and funds rural development programmes in all Member States and regions of the European Union.

This fund is targeted to deliver benefits for the sustainable development of rural areas and provide support to the following priority themes (Kettunen, M. et al., 2011):

- agriculture innovation technologies and sustainable forest management
- the possibility to transfer funds into another rural area, promoting the social inclusion and organisation of the food supply chain to reduce poverty in the rural area
- preserving, restoring and enhancing ecosystems and transition to low carbon

²¹ https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/emff_en.

²² Idem.

²³ https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/rural-development_en.

According to EU Commission²⁴ “The EAFRD budget for 2014-2020 amounts to around EUR 100 billion. During this period, the budget will be spent through the implementation of rural development programmes that will continue until the end of 2023”.

4.3 Other types of funding

In addition to EU funds, private funds also play a fundamental role in environmental financing.

In the last 25 years, private funds have increased significantly as an incentive for nature conservation (Credit Suisse World Wildlife Fund, McKinsey & Company, 2014). In the document of (Klimpel, T., Peiffer, A., Mannigel ,E., 2017), there was some evidence that “between 2004 to 2015, 8.2 million dollars has been invested for finance conservation by private institutions, showing an increase of 62% in the last two years”. Mostly, the private funds come from the foundations, philanthropic organisation, or bank funding, and are largely being used by the non-profit organisation and environmental association.

A foundation²⁵ is a legal entity that has available assets to be allocated to specific social utility purposes. The foundations have developed fundraising techniques to identify which type of projects and thematic areas are eligible, and they provide all the instruments to participate at call for the proposal. There are different types of foundations; familiar foundation, corporate foundation, community foundation, and banking foundation.²⁶

In Italy there are almost 2.300 philanthropic foundations, of which 300 are banking foundations²⁷. Some of these private funds finance projects for nature conservation and reduce environmental impact.

One of the examples of banking foundation in Italy, established in the region of Lombardy, is the “Cariplo Foundation”. It has been active for 25 years and their funds help Non-Governmental-Organisation (NGO) or Non-Profit-Organisation (NPO) to carry out various projects and initiatives, while their main focus are environmental issues²⁸. In the past, it provided 92 million euros for projects related to energy, biodiversity and ecology, environmental education, community resilience, care of the territory, and urban spaces.

²⁴ Idem.

²⁵ <https://italianonprofit.it/risorse/definizioni/fondazioni/>

²⁶ Idem.

²⁷ <https://www.biblioraising.it/fundraising-per-le-biblioteche/finanziamenti-fondazioni/>.

²⁸ <https://www.fondazionecariplo.it/it/la-fondazione/la-fondazione.html>.

Moreover, in 2019, it started the project “F2C – Fondazione Cariplo per il Clima” to raise awareness and give information on climate change to citizens and institutions, while also trying to mitigate and adapt to climate change to decrease CO₂ emission²⁹.

5. DRAFTING A GOOD PROPOSAL PROJECT

Once an organisation has identified the fund programme for preparing a good proposal project, it is appropriate to apply a Logical Framework Approach (LFA) (Picchi, S., 2019b)

This approach is subdivided into two phases:

- Analysis phase:



The analysis phase consists first of the identification of stakeholders and through a meeting with them and discuss any problem it might encounter. The main problems are identified, and a tree of problems is constructed by linking causes and effects together to define the focal problem.

Afterward, one proceeds with the analysis of the objectives meaning one tries to convert the previously identified problems into positive factors. Also, in this case, the tree of objectives is constructed, identifying the means to achieve the objective.

Finally, there is the phase of the strategy in which it is decided which problems may be included or not thanks to a consultation with the stakeholders, and the call for proposal.

²⁹ <http://ambiente.fondazionecariplo.it/it/index.html>.

Defined these three steps the organisation can fill out the matrix of the logical framework³⁰; it consists of four columns and four rows that summarize the key elements of the project (see an example matrix below). (Table.3).

	Description	Indicator ³¹	Sources ³²	Assumption ³³
Overall objective ³⁴				
Project purpose ³⁵				
Expected results ³⁶				
Activities ³⁷				

Tab.3 Example of matrix of LFA

- Project phase:



Source: (Picchi, S.,2019b)

Through the matrix, the actions of the project and the sub-actions are extrapolated. For each action it defines the timeline, the budget, the responsibilities of the various actors involved, and the milestones. (Picchi, S., 2019b)

³⁰ <https://sswm.info/planning-and-programming/decision-making/planning-community/logical-framework-approach>

³¹ Measure the progress in terms of quantity, quality and time

³² Sources of information and in the box of activities it is include the costs

³³ External factors that have the potential to influence (or even determine) the success of a project

³⁴ Overall objective of the project

³⁵ The outcome that the project will achieve

³⁶ Describe the project intervention strategy

³⁷ The tasks that are needed to achieve the outputs

5.1 Partner search and fundraising

The search for a partner is one of the crucial aspects to consider for a good project proposal because sometimes represents an assessment criteria. For this reason, is important, to make an adequate study and find a more suitable partner and coherent with the project, type of programme and considering that previous experience with funds is an advantage. It is recommended to prepare a project fiche including all information about project idea and funding application (Vecchi, V.,2013a).

In the selection of partners, is better to avoid selecting too many similar organisation. Furthermore, it should be better to create an international partnership to give added value to the project and to encourage the replicability and the transferability of the initiative in other European states (Picchi, S., 2019b). In order to search for a partner, one can use an online database from the European Commission where everyone can research or propose themselves or consult in the database the previously funded projects. Very useful in these last years are the social networking groups (e.g. in LinkedIn or Facebook group). Usually, in the Strategic Approach, an experienced project manager gives the advantage of having contacts established in previous projects that can be more easily activated to collaborate in new projects.

5.2 Compilation of formulary

The formulary can differ from each other, but in substance, they have a common basic structure, which can be used as a reference in the preparatory activities. The compilation of the formulary is often facilitated by the guidelines from the funding programme and in general is advised to consult also the regulation of programme, national priority, the FAQ, technical and finance report modules. According to the type of programme for which one decides to apply there may be 3 types of formulary (Vecchi, V., 2013a):

- 1) Structured forms: has predefined spaces and rather rigid compilation rules
- 2) Destructed forms: usually the total or the maximum number of pages for the section are indicated in which one can build a clear and short summary.
- 3) Semi-structured forms: the structure is quite flexible, one can add graphs, table, and sheet for a clear proposal

It is important to fill in the project proposal in the best way because scores will be assigned. It needs to consider “three-level of goodness” (Europe Direct La Spezia, 2014):

- 1) Formal goodness: consists in the respect of the guidelines of the programme (e.g.: number of pages, budget limit, document to be submitted and eligibility of partner)
- 2) Substantial goodness: corresponds to the coherency of the goals of the project with that of the programme as well as the coherency with the budget, the sustainability, feasibility and innovation of the project
- 3) Aesthetic goodness: refers to those elements that facilitate the readability of the project itself (e.g.: good design, coherency with the tables and graphs).

Nowadays almost all the projects are presented through special online portals and written in English.

5.3 Budget of the project

The last step to write a good proposal is to consider the budget of the project. To build a budget consistent with the action plan it is suggested to be build it in parallel with the compilation of the formulary. It is suggested to create a table for a clear and complete view of expenditure items and prices. The eligible costs must be considered for each programme (Picchi, S., 2019b).

Listed below are definite the main eligible costs:

- Personnel costs: include contract staff, full-time personnel, and part-time personnel, scholarship and researchers
- Travel and mission costs: travel and accommodation cost aimed at the realization of the project as for the participation in seminar or presentation of the project. May be included a business car or the oil, ticket for the flight etc.
- External costs: includes all services delegated to external entities not belonging to the partnership.
- Durable materials costs: consider the equipment, the prototypes, and supplies. For example, computers and tools
- Consumable material costs: don't appear in the durable materials balance and are include stationery and materials of communication like flyers, posters, and gadgets.
- Overhead: cover the cost of light, water, and gas bills.
- Other costs: any expenditure that does not fall into the previous categories e.g. an audit, the organisation of a seminar, translation of reports.

It is good to remember that some costs cannot be included in the budget and are defined as “Ineligible cost”, here are some examples: expenditure the cost of which has already been covered by another EU funding, unnecessary expenses or not recognized by the project, capital investment cost, contribution in kind.

Once identified the various costs, the budget of the project is divided among the various partners. Often the beneficiary coordinator will have a greater share (respect other associated beneficiary) and other substantial part will be covered by co-financing. (Europe Direct La Spezia, 2014)

6.CASE STUDIES

This second part of the thesis will analyse three different nature conservation organizations selected as case studies by virtue of their common use of the Strategic Approach, thanks to which they were able to successfully identify the European fund best suited to their needs.

6.1 Case study: Triton Research

6.1.1 *Background*

Human activities are increasingly compromising the marine ecosystem and its biodiversity, despite the indispensable contribution to human health and well-being. Thus, funding programmes that invest in marine conservation should be of primary importance amongst the objectives of the European Union (Brotons, V., et al., 2018). Yet, such programmes are relatively few and often inadequate in terms of what one can hope to achieve with them for the scale of the problems related to marine conservation efforts (Bosab, M., Presseya, R., L., Stoecklbc, N., 2015).

6.1.2 *About Triton Research*

Triton Research³⁸ is an Italian company established in 2019 with the aim of promoting marine ecosystem conservation projects by developing solutions to reduce maritime pollution and preserve the natural habitat of marine species. It is also specialised in communication, to raise awareness among the general public on these issues. Their Team consists of highly specialised collaborators in the field of marine biology, bioacoustics, documentary, project and finance management.³⁹ Through its project and finance manager, Triton wishes to collaborate and participate in European projects on nature and marine conservation, as well as on the environment and climate, such as LIFE programme, Horizon and EMFF.⁴⁰

³⁸ <https://tritonresearch.it/>

³⁹ Idem.

⁴⁰ Idem.

6.1.3 Application of Strategic Approach

Being a new company, the most effective way for them to approach funds is to follow the Strategic Approach. Through accurate online research, they looked at similar companies in terms of goals and activities in marine and oceanographic conservation to use as a reference. Having done this, they may now proceed with the compilation of the WBS matrix by inserting some of the possible projects and related actions with timing, costs and all the other parameters (see Tab.4).

Projects	Activities	Productive factor	Time	Output	Indicative Cost	Available financial resource	Resource to be found
Develop of marine documentary services	Idealisation and realization	Expert and internal personnel, researcher	6-12 months	Documentary 30 min e 5 clips video for internet 2.5 min.	1500€/min. * 30 min=45.000€	20.000	25.000
	Diffusion	Expert and internal personnel	6-12 months	Diffusion in tv channel	30.000	15.000	15.000
Protection of endangered marine species	Online and paper communication	Expert and internal personnel, specialized companies	1-5 years	Siti web, leaflet, brochure, social network pages	10-80.000	5-40.000	5-40.000
	Coordination of projects	Expert and internal personnel	1-5 years	Report and statements	25-100.000	12.5-50.000	12.5-50.000
Monitoring marine species	Support of Fisher	Expert and internal personnel	1-4 years	Seminar and training	45.000	22.500	22.500
	Dissemination of result	Expert and personnel, researcher	1-2 years	5 Scientific article and public conference	20.000	8.000	12.000

Tab.4 WBS Matrix with Triton's activities

As discussed in chapter 4.1, filling in the programme's standard scheme is a fundamental step in identifying the best fund for Tritons' aims. Thanks to Triton's highly diversified and specialised team, it is active on two different fronts: the scientific research on the field (monitoring, census, recovery of seabed including species and habitat) and scientific divulgation. Specifically, in reference to the latter, it introduces and raise citizen and fishermen's awareness on the significant resources of the Mediterranean Sea—which that includes sustainable fishery, species, and habitat endangered, plastic and acoustic pollution; which they do through television programmes, social networks, and social media⁴¹. Taking into consideration Triton's Mission and the guidelines of different programme related to marine biology, the most adequate fund programmes to consider would be:

- LIFE Programme:

Taking into account LIFE's programme and Triton's objectives, Triton could apply to both LIFE sub-programmes, i.e. Environment and Climate Action (European Commission, 2020b) (European Commission, 2020c).

With regard to the Environment sub-programme, a project could be proposed for the following sub-categories:

- LIFE Nature and Biodiversity: i.e. “activities to improve the conservation status of habitats and species, including marine species, of the Union interest; restoration and management of marine Natura 2000 sites and demonstrative or innovative approaches to assess or monitor the impact of human activities on critical marine habitats and species”, as mentioned in official guidelines (European Commission, 2020c).
- LIFE Environment and Resource Efficiency: which include projects connected to water issues and Marine Strategy Framework Directive
- LIFE Environmental Governance and Information: which deals with marine pollution, raising awareness on such matters amongst citizens, fishermen, and marine users.

⁴¹ <https://tritonresearch.it/>

By contrast, relatively to the Climate Action sub-programme, Triton could submit the project on conservation and enhancement of natural carbon sinks (e.g. oceans) related to Mitigation sub programme; while the Adaptation sub-programme the guidelines cover topics related coastal management to adapt to extreme weather events (e.g. mangrove, salt and coral reef conservation and restoration, sand dune and beach management, wetland management) (European Commission, 2020b)

By consulting the LIFE database one can find which projects related to similar topics were approved in previous years

- Horizon

In addition to the 3 main pillars of the programme, Horizon Europe has introduced 5 new missions divided into thematic areas, allocating 100 billion euros for the multi-year period 2021-2027 (see chapter 4.2)

One of these 5 new missions' concerns "Healthy Oceans, Seas, Coastal and Inland Waters", with the goal of ensuring the recovery and regeneration of the European marine and freshwater ecosystems by 2030 (European Commission, 2020d). This new mission requires more money to be invested in marine ecosystem conservation projects, and is further divided into 5 priority objectives (European Commission, 2020d):

- Zero pollution (freshwater and marine pollution, marine litter, microplastic, contaminants and limiting the noise in line with EU rules)
- Regeneration of degraded habitats
- Decarbonising waters, ocean, and seas
- Knowledge and ocean-literate society governance

Horizon Europe would, thus, be a good financing programme for Triton to achieve their missions.

- European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)

The EMFF is an Operational Plan (OP) at a national level, further subdivided by regions, that concerns individual fishermen, boat owners, etc. The eligible projects for Triton to apply for, in this case, would have to regard management, restoration and monitoring the NATURA 2000 sites, with particular attention to those involving Marine Protected Areas. Furthermore, it involves projects on environmental awareness to engage fishermen in the protection and restoration of the marine biodiversity, participation in other actions aimed at maintaining and promoting biodiversity and ecosystem services⁴².

- Creative Europe

Creative Europe⁴³ is the European programme to support cultural and creative sectors for the period 2014-2020 with a total budget of 1,462 billion euros.

Creative Europe consists into main sub-programmes⁴⁴:

- MEDIA, which support initiatives in the audio-visual sector, such as promoting the development, distribution and access to audio-visual works;
- Culture Sub-programme, to support cultural initiatives, as well as promoting transnational cooperation, networks, platforms and literary translations;
- Trans-sectoral Section: data collection and experimental projects to promote transactional political cooperation

Creative Europe could prove of interest in producing and developing audio-visual materials (e.g. the creation of documentaries and video clips) to be used to raise awareness amongst citizens on issues related to the sea.

⁴² <https://www.politicheagricole.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/8752>

⁴³ <http://www.europacreativa-media.it/europa-creativa>.

⁴⁴ Idem

Given the various funding programmes analysed above, it is possible to proceed with the compilation of the Matrix of Eligibility. (Tab.5)

Projects	Activities	LIFE	Horizon	EMFF	EAFRD	Creative Europe
Develop of marine documentary services	Idealisation and realization	X	X	X		X
	Diffusion	X		X		X
Protection of endangered marine species	Online and paper communication	X		X		
	Coordination of projects	X	X	X	X	
Monitoring marine species	Support of Fisher	X		X		
	Dissemination of result	X	X			

X = Eligible activities

Tab.5 Triton's Matrix of eligibility

The Matrix of Eligibility includes some of the actions that Triton will be able to provide in a hypothetical project, with LIFE and Horizon covering the most significant activities, the EMFF programme proving an excellent opportunity for regional projects, and the “Creative Europe” programme being useful to use to create marine documentary services.

6.2 Case study: GREENARCO

6.2.1 Background

Nowadays, new planning approaches based on the imitation naturally occurring phenomena have been developed in order to pursue goals such as increased sustainability of urban systems, recovery of degraded ecosystems, mitigation or adapting to climate change. (Malcevschi, E., et al., 2018). These new nature inspired approaches are commonly referred to as ‘nature-based solutions’ (NBSs), which the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) defines as “actions to protect, manage or restructure ecosystems in a sustainable way, which provide benefits for human well-being and biodiversity”. Amongst NBSs greening design actions also feature which contribute to the development of Green Infrastructures (GI).

The European Commission has identified four main areas in which NBSs may prove especially productive planning approaches and why. Specifically,⁴⁵:

- Enhancing sustainable urbanisation through nature-based solutions can stimulate economic growth as well as improving the environment, making cities more attractive, and enhancing human well-being.
- Restoring degraded ecosystems using nature-based solutions can improve the resilience of ecosystems, enabling them to deliver vital ecosystem services and also to meet other societal challenges.
- Developing climate change adaptation and mitigation using nature-based solutions can provide more resilient responses and enhance the storage of carbon.
- Improving risk management and resilience using nature-based solutions can lead to greater benefits than conventional methods and offer synergies in reducing multiple risks.

⁴⁵ <https://www.reteclima.it/nature-based-solutions-nbs/>.

6.2.2 About GREENARCO

GREENARCO⁴⁶ is a spin-off of the University of Bologna founded in 2019 that provides consulting, environmental monitoring, and projects related to urban landscape restoration combining design of green infrastructures (GI).

It uses Nature-Based Solution (NBS) to restore and develop urban areas, with the resulting environmental benefits (e.g. mitigation of pollution, noise and heat) as well as cultural and economic benefits (e.g. environmental education, increase of the tourism sector and aesthetic valorisation of the urban area) (Malcevschi, E., et al., 2018). In the last few years, the urban environment has become an ecosystem of its own, which is of the utmost importance to integrate with the native species of the ecosystem it modified.

The team comprises seven physical persons, experts in different fields: some ecologists, a forester, an architect, an agronomist and an expert in remote sensing. Furthermore, it collaborates with two societies: Alma Cube of the University of Bologna, a start-up incubator, and APS s.r.l, a spin-off of the University of Reggio Calabria which focuses on landscape architecture.

Last year, GREENARCO tried to participate in LIFE “Call for proposal”, but without success. The project was inside of the sub-programme Environment-Governance and Information, and they participated as partners in the project. Their main action would have been to monitor, communicate and manage of data. Despite the unsuccessful LIFE programme, they participated at the realization of International Horticultural Expo 2021 Yangzhou creating a garden with native species of the Italian area, especially the Emilia Romagna region. Moreover, they are working on monitoring the Maremma National Park with regards to both ecological and botanical aspects and the formation of an Integrated Proposal Plan of the park⁴⁷.

⁴⁶ <https://www.greenarco.com/>.

⁴⁷ <https://www.greenarco.com/>.

6.2.3 Application of Strategic Approach

After a first analysis, using a strategic approach compared to a contingent one can contribute to having a better chance of winning. To achieve this, one should tackle the problem of lack of the project manager in GREENARCO. Therefore, it is necessary to have a figure that works before and during the call proposal, trying to focus all his energies in the planning process, searching for a partner and the designing a project. Furthermore, having a Project manager allows to save time and money.

Another common problem for small and medium-sized enterprises as GREENARCO is the project's budget too high to cover their part of the expenditure. To cope with this problem, an emerging technology such as crowdfunding could be used. Crowdfunding consists in using online platforms in order to finance projects through donations or cash contributions from users interested in specific causes. This technique is used as an initial investment that allows the collection of the right amount of money (Picchi, S., 2018).

Alternatively, it might be appropriate to choose funds that cover almost all the expenses (Horizon very often covers almost 100% of the costs).

Furthermore, the presence of a good project manager is useful in the various phases of designing project ideas, which, through the multiple steps, will take care of compiling the WBS matrix. Below is an example of the WBS matrix (Tab.6). For each activity costs, timing, outputs, and all the other various parameters to be considered are indicated.

Projects	Activities	Productive factor	Time	Output	Cost	Suitable financial resource	Resource of the project
Implementation Green area	Coordination stakeholder and project	Expert, personnel	1-6 months	Reports	45.000	22.000	23.000
	Elaboration and diffusion of toolbox	Expert, personnel	1-12 months	Reports and documents, guidelines	30.000	10.000	20.000
Containment of the heat island in the city	Implementation of road trees	Technical operators, experts	1-4 years	Trees, documents	500.000	250.000	250.000
	Isolation of buildings	Experts, external operators, personnel, external personnel	1-4 years	Green roofs, green walls	850.000	400.000	450.000
	Communication and diffusion	Internal and external personnel	1-8 months	Website, social network, seminars and workshops	50.000-60.000	35-40.000	15-25.000

Tab.6 WBS Matrix with GREENARCO'S activities

Taking into consideration GREENARCO's Mission, the guidelines of different programmes and some of the activities present on Tab.6 it is possible to identify the adequate funding programme.

The most adequate fund programmes to consider would be:

- LIFE Programme

Although small businesses struggle more than large businesses to obtain funding, Eu Financial Programmes are essential to support them grow and innovate. The LIFE programme is one of these, through a detailed reading of the guidelines, one can identify the various priority areas into which to collocate the ideas for their project. (European Commission, 2020b) (European Commission, 2020c).

With regard to the Environment sub-programme, instead, the projects deal with Nature and Biodiversity and Governance and Information (European Commission, 2020c):

- developing and implementing green infrastructure plans and actions (GI) to improve the condition of ecosystems and the services they provide the improvement of the Natura 2000 areas and increase the awareness of citizens on this type of infrastructure.

The Climate sub-programme also offers a good chance for project ideas that concern (European Commission, 2020b):

- projects in urban areas that can promote benefits both on mitigation and adaptation to climate change
- projects that use the green infrastructure as an adaption to climate change and as resilience to extreme weather

- Horizon

As analysed in chapter 4.2, Horizon offers good financing opportunities on the thematic area relating to ‘Climate-neutral and smart cities.’ The project can well suit missions defined by European Commission which “identify the objectives, commitments and strategy to be adopted to transition towards green urban systems, including climate change mitigation and adaptation, air quality and logistic efficiency system.” (European Commission,2020e)

- European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)

Amongst the various priority areas, the EAFRD⁴⁸ allows to have dedicated projects for the adaptation to climate change, which can include developing green infrastructures, as well as to ensure local and regional adaptation to climate change.

⁴⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/what/glossary/e/european-regional-development-fund

- Cohesion Fund (FC)

The Cohesion Fund⁴⁹ deals with the economic convergence of less developed regions and promotes sustainable development. It also provides support for critical issues such as the environment, with projects concerning energy efficiency, adaptation and mitigation to climate change, and the use of green infrastructures as green roof and green wall in the buildings.

Given the various funding programmes analysed above, it is possible to proceed with the compilation of the matrix of eligibility (Tab.7), highlighting which is the most appropriate funding for each action.

Projects	Activities	LIFE	Horizon	EMFF	EAFRD	FC
Implementation Green area	Coordination stakeholder and project	X	X		X	X
	Elaboration and diffusion of toolbox	X	X		X	X
Containment of the heat island in the city	Implementation of road trees	X	X		X	X
	Isolation of buildings	X	X		X	X
	Communication and diffusion	X	X			

X= Eligible activities

Tab.7 GREENARCO's Matrix of Eligibility

Referred to the matrix of eligibility, the founding programmes which are best suitable for GREENARCO are LIFE Programme, Horizon, EAFRD and FC, whereas the EMFF Programme is more relevant for blue infrastructure rather than green infrastructures.

⁴⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/funding/cohesion-fund/

6.3 Case study: ELCN

6.3.1 Background

Referring to the framework law of protected areas in Italy⁵⁰, the protected natural areas registered in the official list are 871. The Natura 2000 network's areas cover altogether about 19% of the land area of the EU member states and almost 4% of the marine one. Concerning private natural areas, 60% of the Natura 2000 network is owned by private landowners, but very rarely attention is given to the management of natural areas of a “private” nature in Europe and mainly in Italy. (Bucceri, F., 2019)

There is a lack of information and public support that prevents the landowners from addressing needs and problems appropriately. Therefore, it is evident that it is necessary to find a management model that can reach the right form of compromise between the economic interests of a protected area and the necessary conservation of the natural landscape. (Bucceri, F., 2019)

For this reason, it is appropriate to identify the tools capable of satisfying the need to establish credible and satisfactory mediation between all stakeholders. Some different instruments available for stopping further biodiversity loss exist by restoring already damaged ecosystems and conserving native species and habitat.

The incentives for private land conservation can be subdivided into three sub-groups (Disselhoff, T., 2015):

- financial incentives: included subsidies, compensation payments, EU funding, and private funding, etc.
- social-ethical incentives: information campaign, involvements of volunteer, certification, and labels, etc.
- other incentives: including legal tools and conservation easements

An interesting study by James R Farmer et al. has shown that the emotional connection to a property was the greatest motivation for the conservation of landowners rather than financial reasons (Farmer, J., R., 2011) (Disselhoff, T., 2015).

⁵⁰ <https://www.naturaitalia.it/apriSezioneMenu.do?id=54>

6.3.2 About ELCN

The project “Development of a European private land Conservation - ELCN”⁵¹, funded by the European Commission and launched in June 2017 of the duration 3 years, involves numerous partners from all over Europe, including Germany as the lead partner, Netherlands, Romania, Spain, Belgium, Portugal, Finland, Ireland, and Italy.

The ambitious goal was of establishing, in a long-term perspective, one stable European network of managers of private natural areas, providing debates, policies, and guidelines on the administration of private protected areas to encourage and support their replication at the widest possible level. Several meetings were organised and workshops to explore the potential, motivations, and knowledge among those who already have experience in the private management of natural areas e those who intend to commit themselves in this direction⁵².

Each of the partner countries is responsible for a pilot action. The individual pilot actions are implemented on a local, regional, or national scale. In Italy, WWF Oasi⁵³ is the partner of the project responsible for the implementation of action A.12 “Pilot action on historical heritage and private land conservation,” explicitly concerning the study of the link between the conservation of nature, protection of the historical-cultural heritage, and tourist-handicraft production.

The action analyses aspects of the Italian situation regarding the conservation of the territory and trying to replicate it in other countries. Furthermore, a report is created containing the guidelines relating to the management of private natural areas for the conservation of nature and cultural heritage (Bucceri, F., 2019).

⁵¹ <https://elcn.eu/>.

⁵² Idem.

⁵³ <https://www.wwfoasi.it/grande-successo-del-primo-incontro-aree-naturali-private-italiane/>.

6.3.3 Application of Strategic Approach

Unfortunately, the little attention paid to the owners and managers of private protected areas proves necessary to create a network of people who provide services and assistance to managers of private protected areas, organising periodic network meetings, increasing the number of private protected areas and people involved (Picchi, S., 2019c).

The ELCN network, intends to create a new autonomous organisation with the aim of connecting all the organisations and owners that manage private natural areas for their protection and to exchange good management and self-financing practices (Picchi, 2019c).

Therefore, a broad knowledge of how European funds work and how they can be used is extremely useful for conservation and good practices in these areas. As in the two previous cases, also in this case it is appropriate implementing a Strategic Approach, using the first part of thesis as a guideline.

For the type of projects and related actions to be included when compiling the WBS matrix (Tab.8), one can refer to some of the actions proposed by the ELCN project, such as the census of private protected areas and the creation of a management plan. For each activity are defined: times, output, productive factor, cost, and financial resources.

Projects	Activities	Productive factor	Time	Output	Cost	Suitable financial resource	Resource of the project
Integrate Natura 2000 management planning for nature reserves	Drafting of management planning	Experts, coordinators and representatives of associations	1-2 years	Document of 200-250 pages	30.000	10.000	20.000
	Diffusion of guidelines	Personnel and experts	6-8 months	Workshop, Seminar	20.000	8.000	12.000
Monitoring of private natural areas	Census of private natural areas	Experts and operating personnel	1-2 years	Maps, Technical reports	25.000	10.000	15.000
	Database creation of private natural areas	Experts, personnel	1 – 2 years	Website	35.000	15.000	20.000
	Biodiversity management and elimination of alien species	Operating personnel, external operators, experts	1-4 years	Elimination alien species	50.000	15.000	35.000

Tab.8 WBS Matrix with ELCN's activities

Through a study of the primary missions of Italian conservation networks for protected private areas, it was possible to identify the most suitable sources of funding most suitable for nature conservation with reference to private natural areas. The most adequate fund programmes to consider would be:

- LIFE Programme

The LIFE programme⁵⁴ encourages the landowners of private land to apply to halt biodiversity loss in Europe. Among the priority themes for the project proposal, one can identify improving the conservation status of habitat types or species of Community Interest and trying to eradicating, controlling, or containing established invasive alien species. [44].

A clear example of project LIFE about private land conservation is ELCN itself analysed in the previous paragraph.

- Horizon

The programme Horizon⁵⁵, through the pillar related to “Social Challenges,” can include a project on environmental topics, such as protection of nature, improvement of the general conditions of development of the territories, and cultural tourism.

- European Regional Development Funds (ERDF)

European Regional Development Funds (ERDF)⁵⁶ has as its goals the economic and social cohesion of the European Union. Amongst the various key priority areas, one is aimed at financing environmental projects such as protect the environment and promote resource efficiency. This type of fund allows projects to be presented by both public and private entities.

- European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)

One of its objectives for the project proposal, includes the sustainable management of natural resources such as the enhancement and conservation of protected private areas and promotes climate action by trying to encourage a reduction in emissions by aiming for neutrality for 2050⁵⁷.

⁵⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/life>

⁵⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/>.

⁵⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/what/glossary/e/european-regional-development-fund

⁵⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/what/glossary/e/european-agricultural-fund-for-rural-development.

Projects	Activities	LIFE	Horizon	ERDF	EAFRD
Integrate Natura 2000 management planning for nature reserves	Drafting of management planning	X	X	X	
	Diffusion of guidelines	X	X		X
Monitoring of private natural areas	Census of private natural areas	X	X	X	X
	Database creation of private natural areas	X	X	X	
	Biodiversity management and elimination of alien species	X	X		X

X= Eligible activities

Tab.9 ELCN's Matrix of Eligibility

As can be seen from the matrix of eligibility, the LIFE programme, therefore, represents the most appropriate tool at the European level for the protection and conservation of nature, including in the private sphere. Equally useful and worth considering EARD and Horizon.

7.CONCLUSION

In Italy, as well as in the rest of Europe, there are many organisations active in the field of nature conservation that wish to approach the world of European funds. Often they are not aware on the correct methodology to approach funds and they not involve experts in funds research and project management that could aid them in selecting the most appropriate European funds amidst the many available at both direct and indirect management, drafting a successful project and, overall, developing strategies to purse such funds successfully. For this reason, it is necessary to rely on a figure such as the project manager who uses a Strategic Approach to obtain winning and long-term results.

Furthermore, the matrices introduced in each of the case studies have the purpose of building a valid request for funding. The WBS matrix translates the idea into a fundable project, while the funding matrix is used as a real financial planning tool. These tools represent a guideline to be followed and adapted to the needs of each organisation.

To conclude, through the case studies analysed, it can be stated that the LIFE programme is certainly the broadest and most suitable one funding programme available, due to the different priority topics it features such as reduction of greenhouse emission, conservation of species and habitat (included marine), implementation of green infrastructure to create a smart and green city.

8. APPENDIX

1. name of programme: LIFE
2. eligible activities: Environment and efficient use of resources, Nature and Biodiversity, Governance and information in environmental/climate matter, Climate change mitigation and adaptation
3. eligible cost: personnel costs, travel, and subsistence expenses, durable goods (for LIFE nature also purchase or lease of land/land rights), infrastructure, the prototypes, good consumables, other costs directly attributable to the project and overheads (7% of total costs).
4. international partnership obligation (YES / NO): No
5. eligible countries: state members of European union
6. minimum number of partners: no definite
7. minimum number of countries represented in the partnership: no definite
8. eligible applicants: State administrations, organisation, universities, research institutes, enterprises, SMEs, associations, NGOs.
9. formal requirements (the type of subjects eligible for the request for funding): public body, private commercial organisation, NGOs
10. co-financing: 55% - 75%
11. type of co-financing requested (economic or financial): Financial
12. official documentation available (programme, vademecum, form): Call for proposal, guidelines for applicants, Evaluation Guide, official documents etc.
13. call for tenders (date of publication/deadline): Open every Spring (April) and Close in autumn (September / October)
14. contacts: easme-life@ec.europa.eu

1. name of programme: HORIZON 2020
2. eligible activities: the actions of research and innovation
3. eligible cost: personnel costs, travel, and subsistence expenses, durable goods (for LIFE nature also purchase or lease of land/land rights), infrastructure, the prototypes, good consumables, other costs directly attributable to the project and overheads.
4. international partnership obligation (YES / NO): yes
5. eligible countries: state members of the European union
6. minimum number of partners: at least 3 partners
7. minimum number of countries represented in the partnership: no definite
8. eligible applicants: State administrations, organisation, universities, research institutes, enterprises, SMEs, associations, NGOs.
9. formal requirements (the type of subjects eligible for the funding request): at least 3 legal entities, each of which must be established in a different Member State or associated country; all 3 legal entities must be independent of each other.
10. co-financing: EU funding covers up 100% of all eligible costs for all research and innovation actions. For innovation actions, funding generally covers 70% of eligible costs but could go up to 100% for organizations without profit. Indirect costs are reimbursed in the flat rate of 25% of the eligible direct costs incurred.
11. type of co-financing requested (economic or financial): Financial
12. official documentation available (programme, vademecum, form): Call for proposal, guidelines for applicants, Evaluation Guide, official documents etc.
13. call for tenders (date of publication/deadline): //
14. contacts: <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/contact>

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