



Awareness and Capacity Building against Bird Crime in Priority Flyway Countries

LIFE Against Bird Crime

LIFE17 GIE/NL/ 000599

After-LIFE Communication Plan





Project details

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Awareness and Capacity Building against Bird Crime in Priority Flyway Countries
LIFE Against Bird Crime

Duration of the Project:

01-09-2018 – 31-10-2022

Total budget of the project:

€ 1 827 689

Of which € 1 088 026 was provided by the European Commission LIFE fund.
The rest was provided by the beneficiaries and external financiers.

Coordinating Beneficiary:

Stichting BirdLife Europe (NL)

Associated Beneficiaries:

BirdLife International (UK)

BirdLife Cyprus (CY)

Lega Italiana Protezione Uccelli - LIPU Onlus (IT)

Association BIOM (HR)

Hellenic Ornithological Society (GR)

Co-financier other than beneficiaries:

MAVA Foundation

Government of the Republic of Croatia - Office for Cooperation with NGOs

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1. Background on the project's objectives

Illegal activities such as killing, trapping, or unpermitted trading of birds still occur in many EU countries, with several locations identified as particular blackspots. In addition, illegal practices outside the European Union also impact directly on migratory species that breed on our continent. This forms a threat to the attainment of the objectives of the EU's Birds Directive and the first target of the EU Biodiversity Strategy, which aims to improve the conservation status of European species. The long-term goal of the current project is to significantly reduce the illegal killing, trapping and taking of birds both in the EU and the neighbouring Mediterranean region.

Specific objectives include:

- Expand and improve knowledge on the illegal killing of birds (IKB) in the target region, in order to identify and promote strategic actions within and beyond the scope of the project;
- Raise awareness and stimulate public demand to stop IKB;
- Support increased international and national advocacy efforts to ensure political commitment and technical capacity to enforce actions to diminish IKB;
- Design and implement pilot projects with key stakeholders in priority countries to demonstrate, share and promote effective approaches to reduce illegal killing and taking of birds;
- Contribute towards achieving the objectives of the Birds Directive, the EU roadmap for combating illegal killing, trapping and trade of birds, and the EU 2020 biodiversity strategy and the Rome Strategic Plan 2020-2030;
- Maintain and strengthen the networks of civil society organizations and stakeholder groups working together to address IKB.

2. Achieved results

Through systematic monitoring on project sites in Cyprus, Greece, Italy, and Croatia we achieved a better understanding of the scale, impact and causes of illegal killing of birds. The increased presence on these blackspots have also supported preventing, detecting and reporting the illegal activities. The best practice experiences have been widely shared through a dedicated international workshop in 2019 and via several online lectures. The BirdLife International publication titled „A best practice guide for monitoring illegal killing and taking of birds” has been updated with several new case studies and disseminated broadly.

The project partnership actively advocated for stronger political involvement to tackle IKB. We supported secretariats from international conventions and the European Commission to put pressure on national governments to take actions against wildlife crime. We also assisted national governments in the priority flyway countries to strengthen their legislation and enforcement in this



field and to report on IKB cases to the Convention on Migratory Species, Bern Convention, and the European Commission. We communicated with the relevant ministries about designing, adopting, implementing and evaluating the national IKB strategies.

Our joint international campaign called „Flight for Survival” and several nationally focussed campaigns have targeted the general public along the African-Eurasian flyway to express their support in stopping IKB. These campaigns reached approximately 15 000 000 people in total. We also organized more specific educational and training opportunities for potential end users of IKB in order to directly reduce illegal behaviour or demand for illegally sourced birds.

As an overall result, the estimated reduction in IKB at the project sites can be translated to around 450,000-750,000 individual birds saved in year 2022 (during the project’s final year) when compared to the project’s starting year (2018). With conservative calculations, this can be translated to over one million saved birds over the full project period between 2018-2022!

3. Communication activities

Communication strategies and strategy workshops

- Annual communication strategy workshops were organized, as follows:
 - 2018.10.28-31 Int. Comms. Workshop (Cyprus)
 - 2019.06.27-29 International IKB Monitoring and Communication Workshop (Madrid)
 - 2020.04.06. Flight for Survival Communication webinar (online)
 - 2021.02.18. Flight for Survival Communication webinar (online)
- Annual national communication plans (for Croatia, Cyprus, Italy, and Greece) and a joint international plan (BirdLife ECA) were produced for 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022
- Four broad strategies for end users' groups and detailed strategies for short listed groups were developed (one by each national project partners: BIOM, BL Cyprus, HOS, LIPU)

Internal Communication platforms

The BirdLife partnership operated an extranet, where the LABC Programme page was created in October 2018 and operated until March 2021. In 2021 the BirdLife extranet was replaced by the so-called Hatch platform. In the interim period, the project working documents have been hosted on Microsoft Teams.

Home pages

- **Project’s website links:**
 - <https://flightforsurvival.org/life-against-bird-crimes/>
 - Croatian <https://flightforsurvival.org/life-against-bird-crimes-ct/>
 - Greek <https://flightforsurvival.org/life-against-bird-crimes-gr/>
 - Italian <https://flightforsurvival.org/life-against-bird-crimes-it/>
- **Partners’ website links to the project site**



On BIOM's website: <https://www.biom.hr/projekti/life-against-bird-crime/>

In English: <https://www.biom.hr/en/life-against-bird-crime-3/>

On HOS's website <https://www.ornithologiki.gr/el/oi-draseis-mas/programmata/89-life-abc-enantia-sto-egklima-agria-poulia>

In English: <https://www.ornithologiki.gr/en/public-awareness-education/information/our-news/1429-hos-birdlife-greece-campaign-against-bird-trapping-trade>

On BL Cyprus's website: <https://birdlifecyprus.org/life-against-bird-crime/>

On LIPU's website: <http://www.lipu.it/stopbracconaggio>

- **Information hub on IKB**

<http://datazone.birdlife.org/sowb/spotkilling>

- illegal shooting <http://datazone.birdlife.org/sowb/casestudy/the-illegal-shooting-of-birds-in-the-european-union>
- illegal trapping <http://datazone.birdlife.org/sowb/casestudy/illegal-bird-trapping-in-the-european-union>
- illegal poisoning <http://datazone.birdlife.org/sowb/casestudy/the-illegal-use-of-poisoned-baits-is-a-serious-threat-to-birds>
- nest robbing <http://datazone.birdlife.org/sowb/casestudy/nest-robbery-remains-a-serious-threat-in-europe>

These websites will remain in operation during the after-LIFE period.

Campaign social media posts

The “Flight for Survival” is our joint campaign that raises awareness about the illegal killing of birds along the African-Eurasian flyway. The campaign has been coordinated by BirdLife Europe, but the stories are authored by the project partners and even other BirdLife partner organizations along the entire flyway. The most important feature is its inclusiveness: it hosts and amplifies the voice of any flyway partners fighting the illegal killing of birds. BirdLife shares the articles with an intensive social media presence during the peak migration periods. During the project period, the campaign reached over 15 million people and helped to strengthen the moral unacceptance of illegal bird killing in a broad, general audience.

The campaign used the social media channels of the partner organizations to maximize the reach of people. Therefore, we did not create a separate channel for the project itself. We used Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and LinkedIn to communicate our stories and to lead visitors to our website.

The consortium will keep posting IKB-related stories during the after-LIFE period via these channels – with the intensity dependent on funding and on the changes of the issue itself.





Mural

BirdLife Cyprus created a wall mural at the Ayios Andreas Primary School in May 2022 to call attention on IKB.



The mural will remain visible during the after-LIFE period, until at least 28th February 2025.

Petitions

Two big petitions (and joint campaigning) were undertaken in the frame of the LIFE ABC project:

- In Italy, LIPU's petition collected 180 000 signatures for increasing penalties of bird crime. The signatures were handed over to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Environment in September 2021.
- In Cyprus, BirdLife Cyprus launched an online petition to overturn the dramatic relaxation of the bird protection law voted through by the House of Representatives in December 2020. It was signed by almost 14 000 citizens by November 2021. The signatures were handed over to the President of Cyprus Parliament, together with a joint letter of BirdLife International and BirdLife Cyprus that was endorsed by 22 European partners.

The above-mentioned petitions were handed over. New petitions may be launched in the future if the necessity arises.

Radio campaign

From 2nd to 6th September 2021, Biom's radio campaign on quail poaching has aired on 44 Croatian local radio stations and on a national one (which is the most popular radio station in Croatia). The campaign was created as a 30-second fake "radio ad" for selling illegal tape lures. It was aired twice per day along with the morning or noon or afternoon news (i.e., prime time). It was aired through Media Servis Global, a company that specialized in joint radio broadcasting, and according to them, their news is the most listened to information system in the country with over 2 million listeners per week. To complement the campaign, Biom invited an investigative journalist from the prime-time TV show "Potraga". This was done in the Slatina region of Croatia after an ethical hunter called Biom after hearing the campaign on the radio and gave a tip where tape lures are used in his local area. The anti-poaching action was shown in the TV show "Potraga" during which the issues of hunting tourism and the use of tape lures were discussed. The TV report was also shared by a hunting social media page (Lovčki portal - forum), which has 22.000 followers and condemned hunting tourism with tape lures. Along with the radio campaign, press releases for Croatian media were also prepared regarding the campaign. In September 2021, the topic of quail poaching with tape lures was in 21 news articles in Croatia, including the top 5 news portals, with a total estimated reach of 67.000 people. On Biom's social media, this topic was estimated to reach approximately 47.000 people.



The campaign was successfully finished. Building on the LIFE ABC experience, Biom is planning to run a locally focused raising awareness campaign about Eurasian Coot (*Fulica atra*) meat consumption. The campaign is planned for 2024.

Video spot

HOS created a TV spot against illegal bird trapping and trade which was promoted in Jan-Feb 2022.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6SKEVEB_Cow

The message was broadcasted (on TV, radio, YouTube/FB/Twitter/LinkedIn platforms) more than 15,000 times. Impressively, all but one major TV outlets aired the spot for 30 days -many times during or just after prime-time slots. We estimate that this campaign, on average, has reached a 30% of the country's population, or around 3,000,000 people. (Due to the publicity created since the campaign's launch, traffic on our website's dedicated LABC page increased by 800% in the following 90 days, while new visitors marked an impressive 1500% increase during the same period.)

The TV spot will remain accessible on YouTube and on HOS' website. HOS plans to continue to broadcast the campaign on Trapping & Trade (as a social message) via both TV and Radio on a yearly basis, and to promote it through its Social Media (FB, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube) channels.

Communication materials produced

- **BIOM:**
 - Leaflet "Give a voice to quail" (2200 in Croatian and 1100-1100 copies each in English and Italian.)
 - Educational Brochure for police officers (2500 copies) distributed to all police stations in Croatia in October 2022.



- **HOS:**
 - "Race for Survival "Turtle Dove sticker (1000)
 - Educational Booklet "Ο φίλος μου στο κλουβί!" - My friend at the cage?! (5,000)
 - Promo Roll-up Banner "Awareness and Capacity Building against Bird Crime"
 - Poster "Defend bird migration" (ENG version 1,000, GR version 2,000)
 - Sticker "Safe Flyways for Migratory Birds" (version 1: Greek 2,000, English 500)
 - Sticker "Safe Flyways for Migratory Birds" (version 2: Greek 2,000 English 500)
 - Sticker "STOP bird trapping" (Greek version 2,000, English version 500)
 - Trapping Bird ID Guide (Digital version & printed version 3,000)
 - Banners mobile exhibition - Bird trapping and trade
 - Postcards "Defend bird migration" (English & Greek version 2,000)



Επίσημο όνομα	Κοινό όνομα	Κατάσταση	Ποσοστό απώλειας
Κυκλάριος	Κυκλάριος	Επιπλέον κίνδυνος	100%
Σκουρηνάκι	Σκουρηνάκι	Επιπλέον κίνδυνος	100%
Βουλιά	Βουλιά	Επιπλέον κίνδυνος	100%
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Επίσημο όνομα	Κοινό όνομα	Κατάσταση	Ποσοστό απώλειας
Κυκλάριος	Κυκλάριος	Επιπλέον κίνδυνος	100%
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Σταυροπόδι	Σταυροπόδι	Επιπλέον κίνδυνος	100%

- **BLECA – Flight for Survival campaign materials**
 - Postcards (100)
 - Posters (100)
 - Banners and flags (40x240 cm) at BirdFair 2019



- **LIPU:**
 - Bird Identification Booklet “Aguzza lo sguardo”
 - Cartoon “Sulle tracce dei bracconieri”



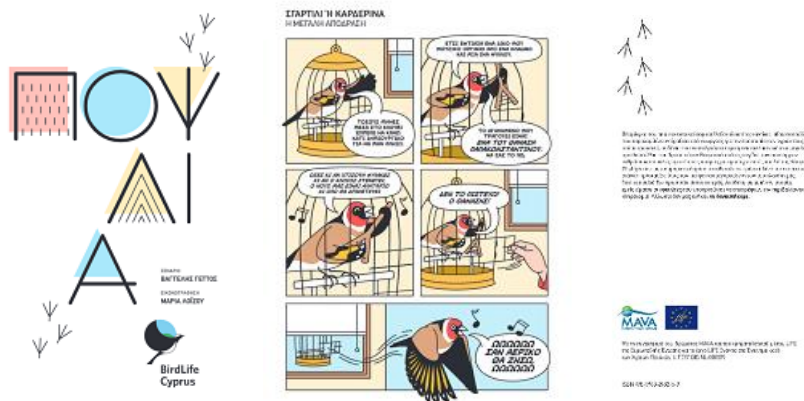
- Drinking flasks for students in the educational program



- BirdLife Cyprus:
 - “Why birds matter and how to protect them” leaflet (6000 -English and 9000 -Greek)



- Comic book (1500 copies)



- “Birdwatching in Cyprus: Where to go and what to look out for” book (500 copies English)





School education activities

Our educational activities focussed on sensitizing the younger generation against accepting this illegal phenomenon. The environmental educators employed a wide variety of methods from simulation games to storytelling and role plays to capture the attention of school children of different ages. Several **educational toolkits** have been developed to aid these programs.

- BIOM conducted education for 6 classes (5 in 2021 for 76 children, 1 in 2022 for 22 children), total of 98 schoolchildren,
- BirdLife Cyprus' educational program has reached 4839 students,
- Lipu conducted educational activities in southern Sardinia, 51 school classes and 912 students were involved
- HOS carried out educational programs to a broad age range (6-16 years old) focusing on our edition "My friend in a cage" and using the communication materials created. More than 1,670 school pupils from 14 schools took part in the project's programs. However, through additional workshops and open public events, HOS reached more than 4,000 school children. HOS will continue to educate and raise awareness among school children (9+ years old) on the devastating impact of IKB, mainly through workshops and open events.



Trainings for other stakeholders

Trainings were organized for special stakeholder groups on different related topics, namely:

- Bird identification courses for volunteers, hunters, national park rangers and civil nature guards
- Trainings about monitoring and covert surveillance for police
- Importance of wildlife crime and training on legal framework & penalties for prosecutors and judges
- Awareness raising trainings for educators
- Advocacy training for conservationists

Knowledge sharing online events

In 2021, BirdLife International launched a [Conservation Webinar Series](#) with several topics focusing on IKB, project personnel invited as speakers. The recordings are published on YouTube:

- 23/03/2021 – *Protecting Wetlands: Challenging the illegal killing of birds*
BIOM (Ivana)/BL Cyprus (Martin)/BLI (Ivan Ramirez)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4uUGIHD928I&t=750s>



- 18/05/2021 *Illegal hunting methods in the Mediterranean* - Jessica (BLI)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOmpiUc8lfg&t=1s>
- 11/08/2021 *Champions of the Flyway - Year of the Dove – Roula (HOS), Tassos (BL Cyprus)*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FVFLSJ7ydOq&list=PLZdqdnP9k_IGOYvAftZ8QFhKb_I0m3G1QX&index=13



In 2022, in the frame of the project BirdLife Europe and Central Asia and BirdLife International launched a knowledge-sharing webinar series, called “Lunchtime IKB Talks”.

Date	Speaker	Title
January:	19 Dr. Christos Astaras, wildlife researcher at the Forest Research Institute	Passive acoustic monitoring as a law enforcement monitoring tool
February:	2 Alice Tribe and Nicholas Barbara, BirdLife Malta	Anti-poaching work in Malta with the help of the CLUE database software
	16 Dr. Peter Palatitz, MME/BirdLife Hungary	Using Individual Animal Movements to Aid Global Conservation - a Case Study of Red-footed Falcon
March:	2 Dr. Teresa Lappe-Osthege, University of Sheffield	Policy challenges and crime dynamics in the illegal songbird trade in South-eastern Europe
	16 Antony Bagott, TRAFFIC	Using web scraping and online investigation tools to fight wildlife crime
September	28 Juan Serratos Lopez, BirdLife International	Understanding causes of bird mortality from tracking technologies in the African-Eurasian flyway.
October	12 Juan Manuel Pérez-García, University of Miguel Hernández	Blind shots: Illegal shooting counteracts conservation efforts for the marbled teal
November	9 LIFE Swipe / Nada Tosheva	European wildlife crime review (<i>event held outside of the project period, but the organization took part during the project's implementation period</i>)

We plan to continue organizing these talks after the project ends – depending on the interest and the availability of speakers.

Fairs, exhibitions, public events

The partnership took part in several public events, festivals. Family days and organized educational programs at birdwatching excursions and at bird-ringing camps. We created photo and art exhibitions. HOS operated two information kiosks at IKB hotspots during August of 2022.



The partnership will continue to disseminate the developed information materials and use the project's portable display banners as required at suitable events.

Biom in the next 3-4 years plans to do the following:

- Organize the ornithological camp in Učka Nature Park with educational accent on the IKB topics
- Conduct BirdID training with interested stakeholders, where IKB would also be a topic

The continuation of operating the summer kiosks by HOS in the following years is funding dependent, but rather unlikely, because it is quite expensive.

Workshops, seminars, and conferences

The project organized and hosted several events and workshops organized for a professional audience working on tackling IKB. The most important project-funded events during the implementation period were the following:

- 2022.10.18-20. Closing Event LABC Med. Workshop (Tirana, Albania)
- 2021.10.29 – International live webinar against Poaching - Lipu
- 2021.03.08-09. National Action Plan Webinar – BL Cyprus
- 2020.02.18-19 B7 Project design workshop (Brussels, Belgium)
- 2019.11.29 International workshop on IKB (Athens, Greece) - HOS
- 2019.11.20-21 Database Expert Group Meeting (Mechelen, Belgium)
- 2019.06.27-29 International IKB Monitoring and Communication Workshop (Madrid, Spain)



These events reached a specifically targeted audience and helped us to strengthen cooperation along the Flyway. BirdLife Europe and BirdLife International wants to organize at least one technical IKB workshop within the next 4 years.



Newsletters

- In 2021, BirdLife Europe & Central Asia and BirdLife International launched its bi-monthly “Wildlife Crime Newsletter” keeping our IKB conservationist network up-to-date with what’s happening in the fight against the illegal killing of wild birds and other forms of bird persecutions in the African-Eurasian Flyway. Previous issues are available on the project’s website: <https://flightforsurvival.org/newsletter/>



We will continue compiling this newsletter during the after-LIFE period.

Signboards

HOS installed signboards in strategic spots on 3 Ionian islands: two in Zakynthos, one in Corfu and another in Othonoi.



The signboards will not be removed by HOS during the after-LIFE period.

Media activities

Press release	108
Newspapers, magazines articles	669
Internet articles	703, on the Flight for Survival website: 91
TV interviews	47
Radio interviews	55



Reports and publications

The most important project output reports are published on the project’s website and are available for download at <https://flightforsurvival.org/download-documents>:

- [The Enforcement Chain: can it effectively address the Illegal Killing of Birds in four Mediterranean countries?](#)
- [Illegal bird hunting in Croatia attitudes and needs of police officers](#)
- [Format for National Action Plans for Addressing the Illegal Killing, Trapping, Taking, Trade and Poisoning of wild birds](#)
- [A best practice guide for monitoring illegal killing and taking of birds](#)
- [Towards the development of a European IKB Database – Recommendations report](#)
- [Layman’s report](#) (available in English, Croatian, Greek, and Italian)

4. Dissemination analysis

Annual reports were produced for each project years.

Summary of indicators

	Total reach	Total engagement
F4S Website		447,994
Facebook	15,007,973	942,599
Instagram	3,070,608	45,349
Twitter	1,587,730	62,807
Newsletters	636,203	between 50-60%



5. After LIFE communication

After-LIFE communication strategy

After the end of the LIFE project, we will continue to put the spotlight on Illegal Killing & Poisoning happening across the African-Eurasian Flyway. As ever, the goal is to showcase our partners’ work and to get international attention on the issues they face. We will mainly continue this work under the Flight for Survival campaign.



The already existing website will still be online and be updated with new IKB stories from the partnership. We also hope with time to become the “go-to” source of information on IKB in the African Eurasian Flyway.

- **Thematic focus:** The FLIGHT FOR SURVIVAL platform will communicate on all aspects IKB & Poisoning. For clarity, IKB includes illegal shooting & poaching, trapping, using illegal hunting tools such as mist nets and calling devices, using poisoned bait, and illegal bird trade. Any work or news that is connected to IKB that happens in a partner country is relevant and will be published on the website on the partner’s country page and promoted on our social media platforms.
- **Goal:** Raise awareness on the IKB issues and put showcase they amazing work our partners are doing to tackle this issue.
- **The target audience:** The target audience remains will continue to be bird & nature lovers with varying levels of awareness of IKB as a phenomenon. Our strategy will still be to reach international audiences through our social media pushes and to drive them to the website to learn more about IKB and to take action.
- **Language:** The main campaign page exists in Arabic and English. We do not have the resources at present to translate into additional languages, however, we will include a new google translator widget which will automatically translate the website to the visitor’s preferred language. The LIFE ABC project pages will continue to be translated in Croatian, Greek and Italian.
- **Fundraising and non-financial support:** The website will continue to offer the opportunity to donate but this is not the primary goal of the platform (and has never been). Instead, we will focus on asking individuals to show non-financial support (e.g. sign up to their newsletters, become members of their organisations, become volunteers, sign a petition, buy merchandise, tweet their support, email a politician etc.).
- **Geographic scope:** The website will showcase the IKB work of countries across the continents of Africa, Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia. Every partner in these regions can continue to submit articles and use the #FlightForSurvival hashtags to showcase and amplify their work.

Beside the digital communication through the website and social media, other activities such as thematic events, media appearances, teaching activities on the topic and courses will also be provided by our partner and amplifies by the BirdLife Europe & Central Asia secretariat.



After-LIFE communication / dissemination activities and associated costs

LIFE ABC After-LIFE Communication TIMELINE

Project Ends: Mon, 10/31/2022

TASK	RESPONSIBLE	START	END	2022				2023				2024				2025			
				P	P	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q
Public communication																			
Flight for Survival Website	BLECA	10/31/22	12/31/25																
Media appearances	All	10/31/22	12/31/25																
DataZone InfoHub	BLI	03/20/19	12/31/25																
Public events	All	10/31/22	12/31/25																
		10/31/22	12/31/25																
Internal communication																			
Microsoft Teams		06/15/19	12/31/25																
"Hatch" intranet		1/15/23	12/31/25																
Extranet		no longer maintained																	
"Safe Flyways" IKB Facebook group		8/12/20	12/31/25																
Shared Google Drive		09/26/22	10/31/23																
Targeted communication - Conservation community																			
Newsletter		11/15/22	11/20/22																
Lunchtime IKB talks		09/28/22	1/12/23																
IKB workshop		1/1/24	4/15/24																
Targeted communication- Other stakeholders																			
Trainings for police/investigation	BL Cyprus, LIPU	10/31/22	12/31/25																
Trainings for legal (prosecutors/ju	LIPU	10/31/22	12/31/25																
Trainings for volunteers	BIOM, HOS, LIPU	10/31/22	12/31/25																
Trainings for hunters/ rangers	BIOM	10/31/22	12/31/25																
Trainings for educators	HOS	10/31/22	12/31/25																
Educational events for children/st	All	10/31/22	12/31/25																



Estimated cost for continued activities:

Activities to be continued	Annual cost	After-LIFE period (2023-2025)
Web pages: Flight For Survival website <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Publish IKB stories sent by our partner (the number of stories will depend on our partners feedback)- Promote the stories on all our social media channels- Promote any new petition from partners on their country pages	€ 700	€ 2,100
Media appearances	€1,000	€3,000
Events	€ 1,500	€ 4,500
Teaching activities	n/a	n/a
Professional workshop on IKB	€ 30,000	€ 30,000
Webinars, lunchtime talks	€500	€1500
Newsletters	€600	€1800

After-LIFE funding

BirdLife International has managed to secure funding from a private donor to support our work against the illegal killing of birds in the Mediterranean region for the next 4 years (until the end of 2026). Therefore, we can look forward to the future with some confidence that we can keep building on the current results, even with an extended partnership – including NGOs from outside of the EU: in the Balkans, North-Africa and the Middle East, too.



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