



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME)
Department B - LIFE and H2020 Energy, Environment, Resources
Unit B3 - LIFE and CIP Eco-Innovation
Head of Unit

CONCEPT NOTE EVALUATION SYNTHESIS (SUMMARY REPORT)

Concept Note Award Criteria according to Call for Proposals 2018

Proposal number: **LIFE18 NAT/RO/001077**

Proposal acronym: **LIFE for ROLLER**

Proposed EU requested funding in €: **2,931,402**

Award Criteria	AW1	AW2	Pass Score*
Max. score and Min. passing score	20 (pass 5)	30 (pass 10)	50 (pass 15)
Final scores	7	12	19

(* Total score must be at least 15 according to criteria 1 + 2)

1. Award criterion 1

The preoperational context is partly described and provides some information on the main threats and problems targeted, mainly the degradation of Roller (*Coracias garrulus*) habitat in the Lower Danube Basin, due to loss of nesting sites, collision with power lines and pesticides. However, the proposal fails to provide a clear overview of the preparatory work already undertaken. Data is provided on the size of the species population at the European level and in Romania, but no data is provided about the population in Bulgaria, and the size of the population in the project area is unclear. The partnership is clearly described and is assessed as generally justified, because it is comprised of beneficiaries with expertise in the protection, research and monitoring of the target species, and expertise in the restoration of its habitat. However, the partnership lacks expertise in extensive agricultural land-use practice, and representation of local communities and farmers (farmers would have an important role in the protection of the target bird species, which is closely connected to extensively used agricultural areas). The budget does not include co-financers. The concept note does not foresee external co-financing. Financial contribution will be provided only by the beneficiaries.. The main actions are not sufficiently described. In particular, the following are not specified: measures to be applied in forest management; new agri-environmental measures; and activities to reduce mortality. Expected results are insufficiently quantified (e.g. area of habitat to be restored, decline in mortality due to reduced collision with power lines). The project is generally clearly and logically designed because the identified problem of a regional decrease of the Roller population is likely to be at least partly addressed by the proposed action plan, which includes the installation of artificial nest-boxes, warning markers on electricity lines, isolation of dangerous pylons, and agri-environmental schemes. However, the lack of quantitative information on the baseline and actions, and the lack of prioritisation of threats, reduce the merits of the project design. The proposal seems partly feasible. Key stakeholders have been correctly identified (e.g. farmers, land owners), but the concept note does not explain how they will be involved in the implementation of the project. In particular, constraints related to potential resistance of farmers to change their practices, and the potential lack of cooperation from state and private forest owners to place nest-boxes on their property, have not been properly identified. Contingency measures to minimize potential risks for project implementation and achievement of the expected results are insufficiently described. It is not fully clear if the project budget would be sufficient to carry out the wide range of proposed actions over the large regions targeted by the proposal. The proposed budget does not appear fully reasonable and would only represent moderate value for money against the expected results and conservation benefits, which are not fully clear. The requested EU contribution (75%) seems appropriate because the project targets a priority species.

2. Award criterion 2

The proposal contributes convincingly to the priority areas of the LIFE sub-programme for Environment, as it focusses on the improvement of the conservation status of the Roller (*Coracias garrulus*), a species listed on Annex I of the Birds Directive. The concept note does not sufficiently justify the chosen project topics. The proposal contributes convincingly to the implementation

of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, the implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directives and the implementation of CAP, by restoring and maintaining ecosystems and their services, and engaging farmers to participate in agri-environmental schemes to reintroduce extensive farming and forestry practices to benefit a priority bird species. The expected environmental benefit of increasing the nesting Roller population by 900-1000 pairs in the target regions seems concrete. However, considering the uncertainty of feasibility, this expected result is hardly realistic, even though some benefit is expected. Although to be implemented at a trans-national level, the project is expected to achieve a limited conservation benefit at a regional Lower Danube Basin level. The concept note only partly explains how actions and results would be continued after the project. This would be undertaken mainly by the beneficiaries as a part of their regular activity. It is foreseen that the results would be integrated into strategic documents. However, there is no clear indication that the authorities would adopt and implement these documents. In addition, there is insufficient information to assess what resources the applicants would commit to ensure the continuity. The concept note does not include actions (in addition to those designed for dissemination) targeting transfer and replication of the project activities and results.