

EXTRACT FROM ANNEX OF THE COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION C(2017)7815 OF 28.11.2017

INTRODUCTION

On the basis of the objectives provided for in Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council¹, this work programme contains the actions to be financed and the budget breakdown for the year 2018 as shown in table 1.

Table 1

Actions	Indicative amount in EUR
Grants (1), of which	326 810 000
- call for proposals for integrated projects (1.1)	94 000 000
- call for proposals for traditional projects grants (1.2)	217 000 000
- call for proposals for technical assistance projects (1.3)	930 000
- call for proposals for preparatory projects (1.4)	2 080 000
- call for proposals for capacity building projects (1.5)	2 800 000
- call for proposals for operating grants (1.6)	9 000 000
- others	1 000 000
Procurement (2)	60 340 250
Prize (3), of which	500 000
- European Green Capital Award (3.1)	350.000
- European Green Leaf Award (3.2)	150.000

1. GRANTS

1.1. ACTION GRANTS FOR INTEGRATED PROJECTS

1.1.1 Legal basis

Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013, and in particular Articles 17, 18, 19 and 20 thereof.

¹ Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the establishment of a Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) and repealing Regulation (EC) No 614/2007 (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 185).

1.1.2 Budget Lines and amounts

Budget article 07 02 01 - Contributing to a greener and more resource efficient economy and to the development and implementation of Union environmental policy and legislation - EUR 37 000 000.

Budget article 07 02 02 - Halting and reversing biodiversity loss - EUR 57 000 000.

1.1.3 Priorities of the year, objectives pursued and expected results

The integrated projects (IP) aim at implementing one of the following environmental plans or strategies required by specific environmental Union legislation, developed pursuant to other Union acts or developed by Member States' authorities:

Natura 2000 network management: Prioritised Action Framework Programmes

Waste: Waste Management Plans

Water: River basin management plans

Air: Air quality management plans

Since the primary aim of IPs is to implement plans and strategies pursuant to applicable Union legislation at the time of the submission of the proposals, they should take into account the latest developments, e.g., in the case of Nature IPs, the results of the mid-term review of the EU biodiversity strategy; in case of IPs dealing with the implementation of waste management plans, the objectives of the new Circular Economy Strategy should be taken into account.

Where relevant, synergies with the implementation of research and innovation projects will be established. For example Nature-Based solutions developed through Horizon 2020 projects could be relevant to support the efforts made by the LIFE programme on the management of the environmental issues, in particular for the IPs on Water.

The integrated projects financed under this AWP are expected to contribute to the achievement of the following outcomes:

Thematic priorities	Quantitative outcomes	Qualitative outcomes
In the framework of the subprogramme for environment		
NATURE	No. of Natura 2000 sites covered by Nature IPs.	Improving conservation status within the meaning of Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC No. of Natura 2000 sites restored or brought to adequate management
WATER	No. of river basin districts (RBD) covered by IPs	Implementation of compliant and efficient river basin management plans (RBMP) in the covered RBD, in conformity with Article 4 of Directive

		2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council ² Additional funding mobilised
WASTE	No. of regions Union wide covered by ongoing or finalised waste IPs	Putting in place and implementing compliant and efficient Waste Management Plans (WMP) and/or Waste Prevention Programmes (WPP) in the covered Region, in conformity with Articles 28 and 29 of Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council ³ . Additional funding mobilised
AIR	No. of persons from regions Union wide targeted by ongoing or finalised Air IPs	Compliant and efficient Air Quality Plans and Programmes (AQPP) in the covered Region, in conformity with Article 23 of Directive 2008/50/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁴ on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe. Additional funding mobilised

The priorities for 2018 are the following:

1. *Nature* - IPs dealing with the implementation of Prioritized Framework Programmes (PAF) for NATURA 2000: IPs designed to support the implementation of PAFs pursuant to Article 8 of Directive 92/43/EEC.

The IP should contribute towards achieving target 1 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy and the general objectives of the Directive 92/43/EEC and of the Directive 2009/147/EC, and in particular contribute to improving the conservation status of species and habitat types of Union Interest (Directive 92/43/EEC) and/or the status of bird species (Directive 2009/147/EC).

2. *Water* - IP projects implementing river basins management plans (RBMPs): IPs designed to support the implementation of measures in River Basin Management Plans pursuant to Article 4 of Directive 2000/60/EC (WFD).

The IP should contribute towards achieving WFD objectives and target significant pressures affecting the environment's capacity for water retention and the use of low impact measures (e.g. green

² Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for the Community action in the field of water policy (OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p.1).

³ Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste and repealing certain Directives (OJ L 312, 22.11.2008, p. 3).

⁴ Directive 2008/50/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 May 2008 on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe (OJ L 152, 11.6.2008, p. 1).

infrastructure) for depollution. The projects should focus on large scale (e.g. sub-catchment or river basin) planning and establishment of measures to increase water retention in urban and rural areas, enhance infiltration, increase water storage capacity and remove pollutants through natural or "natural-like" processes. They should seek synergies to implement actions that will redress existing hydro morphological pressures and improve biodiversity and amenity value.

3. *Waste* - IP dealing with implementation of waste management plans: The IPs are designed to support the implementation of the Waste Management Plans (WMP) and/or Waste Prevention Programmes (WPP). They should contribute to the implementation of the waste hierarchy (Art. 4 of Directive 2008/98/EC), the achievement of the recycling targets as foreseen in Article 11 of the Directive 2008/98/EC and additional targets included in the EU waste legislation, as well as the implementation of necessary measures to support those objectives.

4. *Air* - IP dealing with the implementation of air quality plans and programs: The IPs are designed to support the implementation and monitoring of local and regional air quality plans with the ultimate goal of contributing to National Air Pollution Control Programmes.

1.1.4. Description of the activities to be funded under the call for proposals

The call for proposals will fund all the activities related to the definition, revision, implementation or management of environmental plans, including the involvement of relevant stakeholders and activities aimed at ensuring sustainability and replicability. Beneficiaries will be encouraged to boost strategic investments drawing on the European Fund for Strategic Investments or other sources of finance.

The purchase of land could be financed in line with Article 20 of the Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013 and according to the specific conditions mentioned in this article.

1.1.5. Essential eligibility, selection and award criteria

A call for proposals based on a two-stage procedure will be launched.

Applicants will be invited to submit, as part of their candidature, a short concept outlining the project contents, the plan or strategy it is intended to implement and a financial plan related to the overall implementation of the plan or strategy.

Besides the criteria indicated in Article 131.2 of the Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012, the applications will be assessed on the basis of the following main criteria:

<p>Main eligibility criteria on the applicant</p>	<p>The applicant shall be a legal person registered in the European Union.</p> <p>Pursuant to Article 6(2) of the LIFE Regulation, legal persons established outside the Union may participate in projects referred to in Article 18 of the LIFE Regulation, provided the beneficiary coordinating the project is based in the Union and any activity to be carried out outside the Union meets the requirements set out in Article 6(1) of the LIFE Regulation. Thus these activities have to be necessary to achieve Union environmental objectives and to ensure the effectiveness of the project actions ('interventions') carried out in Member State territories to which the Treaties apply.</p> <p>The competent authority or entity responsible for the implementation of the plan or strategy targeted by the proposed integrated project shall</p>
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	participate in the project as beneficiary (coordinating or associated).
Eligibility based on the scope of the proposals ⁵	<p>A proposal shall comply with the following criteria:</p> <p>The proposed action shall cover a large territorial area, in particular, regional, multi-regional, national or trans-national. A multi-city approach may also be acceptable for IP dealing with air quality management.</p> <p>At least one other relevant Union, national or private funding source shall be mobilised for the implementation of the IP.</p> <p>The key stakeholders shall be involved in the implementation of the IP.</p> <p>The proposed action shall aim at implementing one of the following environmental plans or strategies required by specific environmental Union legislation, developed pursuant to other Union acts or developed by Member States' authorities in one of the following areas:</p> <p>Natura 2000 network management: Prioritised Action Frameworks pursuant to Article 8 of the Directive 92/43/EEC which may include Green Infrastructure actions that contribute to the coherence of the Natura 2000 network in a cross-border context;</p> <p>Waste: Waste Management Plans pursuant to Article 28 of the Directive 2008/98/EC.</p> <p>Water: River basin management plans pursuant to Annex VII to the Directive 2000/60/EC</p> <p>Air: Air quality plans pursuant to the Directive 2008/50/EC or National Air Pollution Control Programmes pursuant to the Directive 2016/2284/EU</p>

The applicants who comply with the above mentioned criteria and who submitted a proposal within the scope of the call will be invited :

- to participate in a written "question and answer" phase, which will be organised to give them the possibility to submit questions related to the preparation of the full proposal, and
- to submit a full proposal.

When submitting a full proposal, applicants will be checked against the following criteria:

Exclusion situations	Applicants shall declare on their honour that they are not in one of the situations listed in Articles 106(1) and 107 of the Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012
Selection criteria	Applicants will have to demonstrate a sufficient:

⁵ See Articles 2 and 19 of the Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. operational capacity: professional competencies, qualifications and requirements needed to undertake the proposal within stated technical parameters and 2. financial capacity: stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain the activity throughout the period during which the proposal is being carried out and to participate in its funding.
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Moreover, applications will be ranked on the basis of a score system based on the following main award criteria:

Criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score
1. Technical coherence and quality	10	20
2. Financial coherence and quality (including value for money)	10	20
3. EU added value: extent and quality of the contribution to the objectives	10	20
4. EU added value: sustainability (continuation, replication and/or transfer)	8	15
5. Extent and quality of mobilisation of other funds, in particular Union funds	0	10
6. EU added value:		
- synergies (including multipurpose, complementarity, integration, green public procurement, ecolabel, uptake)	0	11
- EU added value: transnational cooperation :	0	4
Total	50 (*)	100

*A project proposal has to reach at least the minimum pass score for each award criterion and also get an overall score equivalent to or exceeding 50 points.

Once having ranked the proposals on merit basis, the Commission will define the final list of awarded projects by ensuring the adaptations necessary to comply with:

- the 60.5% quota of budgetary resources devoted to action grants supporting the conservation of nature and biodiversity;
- the geographical balance indicated in Article 19(4) of the Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013.

1.1.6. Implementation

The action will be implemented in direct management by the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME).

Grants awarded shall be covered by a written agreement.

1.1.7. Indicative timetable and indicative amount of the call for proposals

Publication date	April 2018
Closing date for sending concept notes	June 2018
Information to applicants about the results of the evaluation	September 2018
Closing date for sending full proposals proposals to the Commission	December 2018
Award decision and information to the applicants about the results of the evaluation	May 2019
Indicative amount of the call related to the sub programme for Environment ⁶	94 000 000 EUR

Grant agreements will be signed upon successful completion of the award process.

1.1.8. Maximum possible rate of co-financing of the eligible costs

A 60% maximum rate of total eligible costs will be co-financed.

1.2. ACTION GRANTS FOR TRADITIONAL PROJECTS⁷

1.2.1. Legal basis

Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013, and, in particular, Articles 17, 18, 19 and 20 thereof.

1.2.2. Budget lines and amounts

Budget article 07 02 01 - Contributing to a greener and more resource efficient economy and to the development and implementation of Union environmental policy and legislation EUR 80 000 000.

Budget article 07 02 02 - Halting and reversing biodiversity loss - EUR 128 000 000.

Budget article 07 02 03 - Supporting better environmental governance and information at all levels - EUR 9 000 000.

⁶ Only one call is expected to be launched covering the environment and the climate action sub-programmes.

⁷ Traditional projects include the financing of pilot, demonstration, best practice, and information, awareness, and dissemination projects within the meaning of Article 18 (a), (b), (c) and (h) of the Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013.

1.2.3. Priorities of the year, objectives pursued and expected results

The traditional action grants aims at:

- contributing to a greener and more resource efficient economy
- halting and reversing biodiversity loss;
- supporting better environmental governance and information at all levels

They are expected to contribute to the implementation, management and development of Union environmental policy and legislation, including monitoring and evaluation, integration of the environmental objectives into other policies, communication, awareness raising and better governance.

In accordance with Article 8 of the Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013 on complementarity with other EU funding, proposals dealing with research have to be addressed to the instruments of implementation of Horizon 2020⁸. Demonstration and pilot actions submitted to and funded by LIFE must avoid duplication of work and/or double funding with ones submitted to and funded under relevant parts of Horizon 2020, particularly under the Societal Challenge 5 on “Climate action, environment, resource efficiency and raw materials” and/or the Cross-cutting focus area on “Smart and Sustainable Cities”.

Complementarity and synergies with Horizon 2020 actions will be assessed in the award criterion "EU added value".

The project topics included in the Multiannual Work Programme 2018-2020 and implementing the thematic priorities set out in Annex III to the Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013 represent the priorities applicable in the framework of the Environment Sub-Programme for the three years. A specific focus on some key priorities could be included in the 2018 call for proposals.

1.2.4. Description of the activities to be funded under the call for proposals

The call for proposals will fund all the activities related to the development, implementation and enforcement of Union environmental legislation and/or able to contribute to the shift towards a resource-efficient economy, to the protection and improvement of the quality of the environment, to halting and reversing biodiversity loss and to the integration and mainstreaming of environmental objectives into other policies.

The purchase of land could be financed in line with Article 20 of the Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013 and according to the specific conditions mentioned in that Article.

1.2.5. Essential eligibility, selection and award criteria

A call for proposals based on a two-stage procedure will be launched.

Applicants will be invited to submit, as part of their candidature a concept note of a maximum of 10 pages including the following:

- administrative forms regarding the beneficiaries participating in the project;

⁸ <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/index.html>

- an outline of the project contents, including a description of the main environmental project focus, the partnership foreseen, the constraints that might arise and the contingency plan to address these, as well as the strategy chosen to ensure sustainability of the project results beyond the project duration; and
- the project budget indicating an estimate of the expenditures at the level of cost categories.

Besides the eligibility, exclusion and selection criteria indicated in Articles 131 and 132 of the Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012, the concept notes will be assessed on the basis of the following main criteria:

Main eligibility criteria on the applicant and the co-beneficiaries	<p>The coordinating beneficiary shall be a legal person registered in the European Union.</p> <p>The associated beneficiaries shall be a registered legal person. Associated beneficiaries registered in a non-EU country may participate in project actions outside the EU, provided those activities are necessary to achieve Union environmental objectives and to ensure the effectiveness of project actions carried out in Member State territories to which the Treaties apply.</p>		
Eligibility based on the scope of the proposals ⁹	<p>A proposal shall comply with the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - it contributes to one or several of the general objectives set out in Article 3 of the Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013 and of the specific objectives defined in Articles 10, 11 and 12 of the Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013, - it falls within the scope of the priority area of the LIFE sub-programme under which the project proposal was submitted, as set out in Article 9 of the Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013 and - it corresponds to one of the project types defined in Article 2(a), (b), (c) and (h) of the Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013. 		
Main selection criteria	<p>The coordinating applicants and associated applicants will have to demonstrate sufficient:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - operational capacity in terms of professional competencies, qualifications and requirements needed to undertake the proposal within stated technical parameters and - financial capacity in terms of stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain the activity throughout the period during which the proposal is being carried out and to participate in its funding. 		
Main award criteria		Min. score	Max score
	1. Overall quality of the proposal: clarity of the proposal (including the description of the pre-operational context), feasibility, sustainability and indicative value for money.	5	20

⁹ See Articles 2 and 19 of the Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013.

	2. Overall EU added value: project contribution to the LIFE priorities and expected impact	10	30
	Total	15	50

After having excluded the proposals that did not reach the minimum threshold indicated for each criterion in the above table, the concept notes will be ranked on merit basis.

The long list of concept notes invited to submit a full proposal will include the best ranked proposals, for which the sum of the EU contributions requested represents 2 to 2.5 times the available budget.

The long list will include sub-lists for each priority area. In case the demand under one priority area is insufficient to cover the budget foreseen for this priority area, the lists corresponding to the other priority areas may be extended.

When submitting a full proposal, applicants will be checked against the following criteria:

Exclusion situations	Applicants shall declare on their honour that they are not in one of the situations listed in Articles 106(1) and 107 of the Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012
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Moreover, applications will be ranked on the basis of a score system based on the following main award criteria:

Criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score
1. Technical coherence and quality	10	20
2. Financial coherence and quality	10	20
3. EU added value: extent and quality of the contribution to the specific objectives	10	20
4. EU added value: sustainability (continuation, replication and/or transfer)	8	15
Overall pass score	50	
5. Contribution to project topics	-	0 or 5 or 10
6. EU added value: - synergies (including multipurpose and integration/complementarity, green public procurement, ecolabel, uptake) - transnational cooperation	0	15, out of which: max 4
Total		100

*A project proposal has to reach at least the minimum pass score for each award criterion and also get an overall score equivalent to or exceeding 50 points.

1.2.6. Implementation

This call for proposals is part of the activities delegated to the EASME and will be implemented in direct management by the Agency.

Grants awarded shall be covered by a written agreement.

1.2.7. Indicative timetable and indicative amount of the call for proposals

Publication date	April 2018
Closing date for sending concept notes	June 2018
Information to applicants about the results of the evaluation	September 2018
Closing date for sending full proposals proposals to the Commission	December 2019
Award decision and information to the applicants about the results of the evaluation	May 2019
Indicative amount of the call related to the sub programme for Environment ¹⁰	217 000 000 EUR

1.2.8. Maximum possible rate of co-financing of the eligible costs

The maximum cofinancing rate is 55 % of the total eligible costs for the projects under the priority areas "environment and resource efficiency" and "environmental governance and information".

The maximum cofinancing rate is 60 % of the total eligible costs for the projects under the priority area "Nature and Biodiversity", except if the project concerns priority habitat or species for the implementation of Directive 92/43/EEC or the species of birds considered as a priority for funding by the Committee for Adaptation to Technical and Scientific Progress when necessary to achieve the conservation objective. In these cases, according to Article 20.1 (c) point iii of the Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013, the maximum cofinancing rate is up to 75% of eligible costs.

1.3. ACTION GRANTS FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS

1.3.1. Legal basis

Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013, and, in particular, Articles 17, 18, 19 and 20 thereof.

¹⁰ Only one call is expected to be launched covering the environment and the climate action sub-programmes.

1.3.2. Budget lines and amounts

Budget article 07 02 01 - Contributing to a greener and more resource efficient economy and to the development and implementation of Union environmental policy and legislation EUR 360 000.

Budget article 07 02 02 - Halting and reversing biodiversity loss - EUR 570 000.

1.3.3. Priorities of the year, objectives pursued and expected results

Technical assistance projects should help applicants preparing integrated projects, and in particular should ensure that those projects comply with the timing, technical and financial requirements of the LIFE Programme in coordination with funds referred to in Article 8(3) of the Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013.

It is expected to ensure the uptake of 5-6 technical assistance projects under the priority area Nature and Biodiversity and 3-4 technical assistance projects in the priority area Environment and Resource Efficiency.

1.3.4. Description of the activities to be funded under the call for proposals

All the activities necessary to support the capacity of the applicant to submit an integrated project.

1.3.5. Essential eligibility, selection and award criteria

Main eligibility criteria on the applicant	The applicant shall be a legal person registered in the European Union ¹¹ .		
Eligibility based on the scope of the proposals ¹²	A proposal for a technical assistance project is only retained for evaluation against the award criteria, if it aims at the preparation of a future IP proposal.		
Main selection criteria	The coordinating applicants and associated applicants will have to demonstrate sufficient: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - operational capacity in terms of professional competencies, qualifications and requirements needed to undertake the project within stated technical parameters and - financial capacity in terms of stable and sufficient sources of funding and to participate in its funding. 		
Main award criteria		Min. score	Max score
	1. Technical coherence and quality	30	60

¹¹ In case of parallel Capacity Building and Technical Assistance projects, applicants shall ensure that funding is not sought for the same costs

¹² See Articles 2 and 19 of the Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013.

	2. Financial coherence and quality	20	40
	Total	55	100

*A project proposal has to reach at least the minimum pass score for each award criterion and also get an overall score equivalent to or exceeding 55 points.

1.3.6. Implementation

The action grants financed in the framework of the sub-programme for environment will be implemented in direct management by EASME.

1.3.7. Indicative timetable and indicative amount of the call for proposals

Publication date	May 2018
Award decision and information to the applicants about the results of the evaluation	September 2018
Indicative amount of the call related to the sub programme for Environment ¹³	930 000 EUR

Grants agreements will be signed upon successful conclusion of the evaluation process.

1.3.8. Maximum possible rate of co-financing of the eligible costs

According to Article 20(1) of the Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013, the maximum rate at which the technical assistance projects can be co-financed by LIFE is 60 % up to a maximum amount of 100.000 EUR per project.

1.4. ACTION GRANTS FOR PREPARATORY PROJECTS

1.4.1. Legal basis

Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013, and, in particular, Articles 17, 18(g), 19 and 20 thereof.

1.4.2. Budget lines and amounts

Budget article 07 02 01 - Contributing to a greener and more resource efficient economy and to the development and implementation of Union environmental policy and legislation EUR 800 000.

Budget article 07 02 02 - Halting and reversing biodiversity loss - EUR 1 280 000.

¹³ Only one call is expected to be launched covering the environment and the climate action sub-programmes.

1.4.3. Priorities of the year, objectives pursued and expected results

Preparatory projects support specific needs for the development and implementation of Union environmental policies and related legislation.

The priorities for 2018 are defined in consultation with Member States and included in an inventory of specific needs regarding the development and implementation of Union environmental policies and legislation.

1.4.4. Description of the activities to be funded under the call for proposals

The activities to be funded will vary in relation to the work necessary to address the specific needs identified by the Commission including the project duration and the indicative budget to be allocated to each project.

1.4.5. Essential eligibility, selection and award criteria

Main eligibility criteria on the applicant	Be a public or private organisation registered in an EU Member State.		
Main selection criteria	<p>Operational capacity – the applicant must have the professional competencies and qualifications required to complete the project.</p> <p>Financial capacity - the applicant must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain his activity throughout the duration of the project and to participate in its funding.</p> <p>In line with Article 131 of the Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012, the verification of the financial capacity does not apply to public authorities.</p>		
Main award criteria		Min. score	Max score
	Technical coherence and quality of the proposal in relation to the specific need addressed	22	45
	Comprehensiveness of the approach in relation to the specific need addressed	15	30
	Financial coherence and quality	12	25
	Total	55 (*)	100

*A project proposal has to reach at least the minimum pass score for each award criterion and also get an overall score equivalent to or exceeding 55 points.

1.4.6. Implementation

The action will be implemented in direct management by DG Environment.

1.4.7. Indicative timetable and indicative amount of the calls for proposals

Publication date	May 2018
Closing date for the receipt of proposals	3 rd quarter 2018
Award decision and information to the applicants about the results of the evaluation	4 th quarter 2018
Signature of grant agreements	1 st quarter of 2019

Grants agreements will be signed upon successful conclusion of the evaluation process.

The overall indicative amount for the calls for proposals for preparatory actions is 2 080 000

1.4.8. Maximum possible rate of co-financing of the eligible costs

According to Article 20(1) of the Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013, the maximum rate at which the preparatory projects can be co-financed by LIFE is 60 %.

1.5. ACTION GRANTS FOR CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECTS

1.5.1. Legal basis

LIFE Regulation, and, in particular, Articles 17, 18(f), 19 and 20.

1.5.2. Budget line and amount

Budget article 07 02 03 - Supporting better environmental governance and information at all levels - EUR 2 800 000.

1.5.3. Priorities of the year, objectives pursued and expected results

Capacity building projects are intended to enable Member States who have had a low uptake of LIFE projects in the past, to participate more effectively in the LIFE Programme.

The Member States who are beneficiaries of such projects are expected to increase their capacity to attract quality LIFE project applications.

Given their specificity, yearly priorities applicable to capacity building projects are not defined.

1.5.4. Description of the activities to be funded under the call for proposals

All the activities necessary to build the capacity of Member States, including LIFE national or regional contact points, to attract quality LIFE project applications, will be funded under the call for proposals.

Therefore activities may include, but shall not be limited to:

- recruitment of new personnel and training for LIFE national or regional contact points;
- facilitating exchanges of experience and best practices and promoting the dissemination and use of results of projects under the LIFE Programme;
- 'train the trainer' approaches;
- exchange and secondment programmes between public authorities in Member States, in particular 'best in class' exchange activities.

The interventions covered by the capacity-building plan may include the procurement of experts to address ad-hoc gaps in technical and process capability, but may not include the procurement of experts whose primary function is the drafting of proposals for submission under the annual calls for proposals.

1.5.5. Essential eligibility, selection and award criteria

Main eligibility criteria	<p>1. The applicant is a Member State,</p> <p>a. which GDP per capita in 2012 was not above 105 % of the Union average;</p> <p>b. with an average absorption level of its indicative national allocation for the years 2014, 2015 and 2016, below 70 %;</p> <p>c. with an average absorption level of its indicative national allocation for the years 2014, 2015 and 2016, which has increased compared to the average absorption level for the years 2010, 2011 and 2012;</p> <p>d. is not beneficiary of a capacity building project awarded under the second MAWP.</p> <p>2. In case the applicant Member State was awarded with a capacity building project under the previous MAWP,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - it shall commit to maintain for the duration of the present MAWP resources dedicated to the LIFE Programme, including staff, at levels no lower than those allocated for its first capacity building project. - the starting data of the second capacity building project should be after the completion of the first one. <p>3. Its application contains a capacity-building plan, in which the Member State commits to maintain resources dedicated to the LIFE Programme, including staff, at levels no lower than those in place in 2012 for the duration of the present MAWP.</p>		
Main selection criteria	<p>In line with Article 131 of the Financial Regulation, the verification of the financial capacity does not apply to public authorities.</p> <p>Taking into account the nature of the proposal, the authorising officer could, depending on the results of a risk assessment, waive the obligation to verify the operational capacity of the applicants.</p>		
Main award criteria		Min. score	Max score
	Technical coherence and quality of the proposed interventions	15	30
	Financial coherence and quality	10	20
	Comprehensiveness of the approach in relation to the identified weaknesses leading to the Member State's low participation in LIFE+ 2014-2016 calls	15	30
	Presentation of the expected improvement of the	10	20

	ability to promote integration, complementarity, synergies and replicability of the LIFE Programme into policies, economic activities and other programmes		
	Total	55 (*)	100

*A project proposal has to reach at least the minimum pass score for each award criterion and also get an overall score equivalent to or exceeding 55 points.

1.5.6. Implementation

This call for proposals is part of the activities delegated to the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME).

1.5.7. Indicative timetable and indicative amount of the call for proposals

Applications for capacity-building projects will follow a fast-track award procedure.

Considering the fact that pursuant to Article 19(8) of the LIFE Regulation capacity building projects can only be allocated to a predefined number of Member States and only one project per Member State can be subsidised per MAWP, there is no competition among received applications. Therefore applications may be submitted on a rolling basis from the date of publication of the 2018 call for proposals for LIFE action grants, which will include the application package for capacity building projects. Applications must be submitted before 30 September 2020 in order to be considered for the financing period 2018-2020.

Publication date	May 2018
Closing date	September 2020
Award decision	On on-going basis between May 2018 and September 2020
Indicative amount of the call related to the sub programme for Environment ¹⁴ for the first year	2 800 000 EUR

Grants agreements will be signed upon successful conclusion of the evaluation process.

1.5.8. Maximum possible rate of co-financing of the eligible costs

According to Article 20(1) of the LIFE Regulation, the capacity building projects can finance 100% of the total eligible costs up to a maximum amount of 1 million EUR per project, provided that the grant does not cover 100% of the total cost of the project.

1.6. OPERATING GRANTS FOR CO-FINANCING THE WORK PROGRAMME OF NON-PROFIT ENTITIES

1.6.1. Legal basis

LIFE Regulation and, in particular, Articles 17 and 21.

¹⁴ Only one call is expected to be launched covering the environment and the climate action sub-programmes.

1.6.2. Budget lines and amounts

Budget article 07 02 03 - Supporting better environmental governance and/or information at all levels - EUR 9 000 000.

1.6.3. Priorities of the year, objectives pursued and expected results

The objective of this action is to promote better environmental governance by broadening stakeholder involvement, including NGOs, in policy consultation and implementation (Article 12(d) of the LIFE Regulation - specific objective for the priority area Environmental Governance and Information).

The expected result is to identify and support no-profit organisations able to strengthen civil society participation in the dialogue process of environmental policy development and implementation.

The priorities for the 2019 work programmes of the applicants are the following:

- To protect, conserve and enhance the Union's natural capital;
- To turn the Union into a resource-efficient economy;
- To safeguard the Union's citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and wellbeing;

1.6.4. Description of the activities to be funded under the call for proposals

Grants will be awarded to framework partner organisations selected after the call for proposals run in 2017 (LIFE-NGO-FPA-EASME-2017) to select their 2019 work programme for co-financing.

1.6.5. Essential eligibility, selection and award criteria

Main eligibility criteria	The applicant organisations have signed a framework partnership agreements following the call for proposals LIFE-NGO-FPA-EASME-2017.
Main award criteria for the specific grants under framework partnership agreements	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Compliance of the work programme with the objectives and nature of activities indicated in the multiannual strategic plan2. Technical coherence and quality of the work programme3. Coherence between the work programme and the proposed budget, including efficient use of resources

1.6.6. Implementation

The selected framework partners will be invited to submit their 2019 work programme in view of the possible award of a specific operating grant for the financial year 2019.

Grants will be covered by a written agreement.

The operating grants to non-profit organisations are included in the activities delegated to EASME and will be implemented under direct management by the agency.

1.6.7. Indicative timetable and indicative amount of the call for proposals

Timing of call for proposals :	
Request of the work programme for 2019	August 2018
Receipt of the 2019 work programmes	September 2018
Assessment of the 2019 work programmes	October 2018
Signature of the specific operating grants	November-December 2018
Indicative amount of the call related to the sub programme for Environment ¹⁵	9 000 000 EUR

1.6.8. Maximum possible rate of co-financing of the eligible costs

The specific grant will take the form of a partial reimbursement of eligible costs. The rate of overall EU assistance shall not exceed 60 % out of the applicant's eligible expenses for 2019.

The maximum amount that can be requested and awarded for 2019 shall not exceed the amount awarded under the LIFE programme to the same beneficiary for an operating grant covering the financial year 2018.

[..]

2. PROCUREMENT

The budgetary allocation reserved for procurement contracts in 2018 by this work programme amounts to EUR 60 340 250.

2.1. *PROCUREMENT SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND COMMUNICATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT ACTION POLICIES AND LEGISLATION*

2.1.1. Legal basis

Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013, and, in particular, Articles 17(1) and 22 thereof.

¹⁵ Only one call is expected to be launched covering the environment and the climate action sub-programmes.

2.1.2. Budget lines and amounts

Budget item 07 01 04 01 – Support Expenditure for the Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) – Sub-programme for Environment -EUR 1 600 000;

Budget article 07 02 01 - Contributing to a greener and more resource efficient economy and to the development and implementation of Union environmental policy and legislation EUR 22 118 000.

Budget article 07 02 02 - Halting and reversing biodiversity loss - EUR 13 242 250.

Budget article 07 02 03 - Supporting better environmental governance and information at all levels - EUR 23 380 000.

2.1.3. Subject matter of the contracts envisaged, type of contracts, indicative number and timeframe for the launching of the procurement procedures

Indicative subject of the contracts	Type of contract ¹⁶	Estimated n° contracts	Indicative date of publication (quarter / Year)
<p>External communication, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level stakeholder events, workshop, conferences and support to participatory schemes/activities, such as Green Week, European initiatives for pollinators, European Green Capital Award, European Business Award, Natura 2000 Award, European environment information and observation network (Eionet), Integrating ecosystems in decision making, Business and Biodiversity Platform, access to justice and compliance assurance, European Week of Waste Reduction, Green Spiders network, etc. • Communication and publications in support to the main political priorities and the environmental legislation (such as circular economy and resource efficiency, noise, air quality, etc.). • Media relations, support of the European Presidency, outreach in the Member States. • Publications and information materials on LIFE + projects and implementation and development environment policy and newsletters, Eurobarometer surveys, Nature and biodiversity, Environment for European, Video news releases and other audiovisual productions, web and social media activities, web applications 	SER	20-21	1 st , 3 rd -4 th Q 2018

¹⁶ SER = service contract; ETU = study contract; FRA = framework contract.

<p>AIR QUALITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of knowledge base, including improvement of air quality sampling, and support to the Clean Air Programme and the Air Pollution Control Programme, including expert support and air policy dialogue with MS. • Scientific and technical inputs for the implementation of the Directive 2008/50/EC and Directive 2016/2284/EU, including emission inventory, review of national projections and 2019 adjustment applications 	SER	6-7	1 st – 3 rd Q 2018
<p>INDUSTRIAL EMISSIONS AND ACCIDENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to the implementation of the Directive 2010/75/EU, including MS support, electronic reporting, enforcement of the Commission Implementing Decision 2012/795/EU • Revision of the the guidance for the European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register • Support the exchange of information on best available techniques (BAT) pursuant to Article 13 of Directive 2010/75/EU on industrial emissions (IED) in the framework of the so-called "Seville process" and support the further development of nine BREF reviews in extremely different areas of industry (i.e. chemicals, textiles, metals processing, surface treatments, slaughterhouses, etc.). • Support to the implementation of the Regulation (EU) 2017/852 on Mercury, particularly as regards as dental amalgam 	SER	6-8	1 st – 3 rd Q 2018
<p>CIRCULAR ECONOMY</p> <p>Support to the on going implementation, including helpdesk, communication (i.e. Testing of the Building Framework and GLAD conferences), stakeholders consultation/involvement (i.e. Retail Forum, Forum of Accreditation and Licensing Bodies – FALB, Circular Procurement Congress, Stakeholder Platform), external aspects and international missions, eco-design and further evolution of existing legislation and policies related to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sustainable consumption and production, including implementation of the Circular Economy Action Plan • Environmental footprint, including acquisition, adaptation and extension of existing compliant datasets, support to the development of Product development of Environmental Footprint Category Rule (PDEF CR)/ Organisation Environmental Footprint Sectorial Rule (OEFSR) • Green Public procurement, including implementability of Life Cycle Assessment criteria, analysis of future orientations • Ecolabel, including Membership of the Global Ecolabelling Network, implementation of the EU Ecolabel scheme • Eco Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS), including FALB peer evaluation, copyright agreement, benchmarking, support for the implementation of the REFIT conclusions • Eco-innovation, including impact assessment of the EU scheme on Environmental Technology Verification (ETV), preparation of the Scorebord and the website management 	SER ETU	31-32 2-3	1 st – 3 rd Q 2018

<p>CHEMICALS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation and further development of the Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH), including carcinogenic, mutagenic, or toxic for reproduction (CMR) substances and contaminants in fertilisers and technical support for up-dating and further developing the Prior Informed Consent Regulation database (PIC, Regulation (EU) 649/2012). • Evaluation on the effectiveness and efficiency of Directive 2010/63/EU on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes • Scientific and technical support for the possible evolution of the EU Plastics Strategy 	<p>ETU SER</p>	<p>4-5 10-11</p>	<p>2nd and 3rd Q 2018</p>
<p>WASTE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to MS for the enforcement of the legislation on waste (including technical workshops and reporting under the Extractive Waste Directive (2006/21/EC) and the assessment of Waste Management Plans) • Site inspections of ship recycling facilities located outside the EU and assesement of applications • Development of guidance documents, best practices, platforms, including on the management of household hazardous waste, on backfilling, on inspections on emission limit values (ELVs) from waste incineration, on Extended producer responsibility (EPR) • Scientific and technical support for the impact assessment of the amendments of the Batteries Directive, support for the up-date of the Directive 2000/53/EC on end-of-life vehicles (Annex II), for the evaluation of Directive 2002/95/EC (RoHS) on the use of hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment (including specific exemptions/substances restrictions and a general review), on triennial reporting on ELVs, on essential requirements (enforceability) under Directive 94/62/EC on Packaging and Packaging Waste. • Scientific and technical support for the review the waste disposal operations, for establishing a methodology to report on reuse of products, for assessing the possibility to set additional target(s) for construction and demolition waste, for analyzing the situation of treatment of Waste from Electrical and Electronic Equipment and establishing minimum quality standards for their treatment • Support to the review of Commission Recommendation 2014/70/EU of 22 January 2014 on minimum principles for the exploration and production of hydrocarbons (such as shale gas) 	<p>ETU SER</p>	<p>16-17 6-7</p>	<p>2nd and 3rd Q 2018</p>
<p>WATER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scientific and technical support for the implementation and development the EU legislation on water, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in the framework of the Directive 2000/60/EC (Water Framework Directive), the elaboration of guidance on the Good Ecological Potential and on the environmental quality standards for River Basin Specific Pollutants, the implementation issues, and the analysis of quality 	<p>SER</p>	<p>8-9</p>	<p>1st, 2nd and 3rd Q 2018</p>

<p>elements, and,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in the framework of the Directive 91/271/EEC on Urban Waste Water Treatment, the reporting and the compliance promotion. • Support for the International Water Policy, the Urban Water Agenda 2030, the Follow-up of the Strategic Approach to Pharmaceuticals in the Environment 			
<p>SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS Strategic support and information for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • modelling and economic analysis of environmental policies, the analysis of investment needs for achieving environmental objectives and alignment with Sustainable Development Goals, the budgetary support and tax expenditures for fossil fuels, cost-benefit analysis of active dissemination of environmental information, • the mainstreaming of the environment in other policies and projects, including chapter on trade and sustainable development (TSD) in EU trade agreements, the Secretariat EU foresight system for emerging environmental issues (FORENV), an IT tool on statistical data from cohesion policy 	<p>ETU, SER FRA</p>	<p>6 2 1</p>	<p>1st, 2nd and 3rd Q 2018</p>
<p>BIODIVERSITY Technical and scientific support for the implementation and further development of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the EU biodiversity Strategy to 2020 including the assessment of ecosystems and ecosystem services, its final evaluation, the Impact Assessment that will be needed for any review/revision, the Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC, the Biodiversity Information System for Europe (BISE) and natural capital accounting, including KIP INCA, monitoring of farmland biodiversity, the status assessment of European birds, the follow-up to the Fitness Check of the Zoos Directive, the GIS analysis under the Nature Action Plan, the EU platform on large carnivores • EU soil initiative, Nitrates Action Programmes, integrating environment in agriculture • Combating Invasive Alien Species (IAS), including the risk assessment, the prevention and management, a possible IT solution for the authorisation procedure • EU Timber Regulation (EUTR), including the assessment of the impact of trade liberalisation, the study on illegal logging prevalence and timber trade analysis between EU and major timber suppliers and the EU Deforestation Action Plan 	<p>SER ETU</p>	<p>14-15 7-8</p>	<p>2nd-4th Q 2018</p>

<p>ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE and LEGAL COMPLIANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal enforcement and conformity checks, assessment of the MS compliance with environmental legislation, support to the second phase of the Compliance Assurance Action Plan • Support to the implementation of the Directive 2004/35/EC on environmental liability for improving financial security • Cooperation with judicial authorities. • Cost and, in particular, benefits implementation of active dissemination of environmental information • Administrative, technical and legal assistance for the implementation of the legislative instruments on environmental governance (Directive 2004/35/CE of the European Parliament and of the Council[8], Directive 2007/2/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 March 2007 establishing an Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community (INSPIRE), etc.) 	<p>ETU SER</p>	<p>3 4-5</p>	<p>1st, 2nd and 3rd Q 2018</p>
<p>TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE in relation to the LIFE Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the implementation of the LIFE + and LIFE grants, including support activities for impact assessment, monitoring, evaluation, communication, organisation of platform meetings, follow up of projects including the promotion of a pipeline for sustainable projects, IT management and ex post audit of projects. 	<p>SER, FRA</p>	<p>8-9 2</p>	<p>1st, 2nd and 4th Q 2018</p>

[..]

2.1.4 Implementation

These actions will be implemented in direct management by DG Environment and, for the procurement related to the monitoring and evaluation of externalised projects financed under the LIFE Programme, by EASME.

3. PRIZES

3.1. EUROPEAN GREEN CAPITAL AWARD

3.1.1. Legal basis

LIFE Regulation, and in particular Art.17

3.1.2. Budget line

Budget article 07 02 03 - Supporting better environmental governance and information at all levels, EUR 350 000 for the winning city

3.1.3. Description, objectives pursued and expected results

Europe's cities are the engines of the European economy, providing jobs and services, catalysing creativity and innovation. Almost 70% of the EU population now live in urban areas, where some of our greatest challenges are concentrated – economic, social, environmental and demographic – often inter-related.

In 2014 the Commission's 7th Environment Action Programme (EAP) entered into force, setting out a strategic agenda for environment policymaking with nine priority objectives to be achieved by 2020. It establishes a common understanding of the main environmental challenges Europe faces and what needs to be done to

tackle them effectively. The European Green Capital Award contributes to reaching the objectives of the 7EAP "enhancing the sustainability of the of the Union's cities" (Priority Objective 8).

The European Green Capital Award is also DG Environment's contribution to the wider EU Urban Agenda (Pact of Amsterdam) which was adopted in May 2016. The Urban Agenda for the EU aims to address the challenges faced by cities and also seeks to fully exploit the potential of cities by integrating the urban dimension into EU policies. It furthermore aims to promote cooperation and partnerships between Member States, the European Commission, European institutions, cities and other stakeholders in order to stimulate growth, liveability and innovation in the cities of Europe.

It is important to recognise cities that are making efforts to improve their urban environment and move towards healthier and sustainable living. Progress is its own reward, but the satisfaction involved in winning a prestigious European title spurs cities to invest in further efforts and boosts awareness within the city as well as in other cities. Therefore, since 2010, the European Commission recognises cities demonstrating outstanding environmental performance each year, by awarding the title of European Green Capital. Assessment is based on a set of twelve indicator areas¹⁷ which cover most of the areas that determine the success or otherwise of an urban environment.

The objectives of the award are to:

- a) Reward cities that have a consistent record of achieving high environmental standards;
- b) Encourage cities to commit to on-going and ambitious goals for further environmental improvement and sustainable development;
- c) Provide a role model to inspire other cities and promote best practice and experiences in all other European cities.

The overarching message that the award scheme aims to communicate to the local level is that Europeans have a right to live in healthy urban areas. Cities should therefore strive to improve the quality of life for their citizens and reduce their impact on the global environment. This message is brought together in the Award's slogan 'Green cities-fit for life'.

The expected result is that the European Commission will select the winner of the European Green Capital 2020 title following a Europe-wide contest.

3.1.4. Essential conditions for participation and award criteria

The specific rules of the contest to find the European Green Capital winner (one) each year are published on the Commission's European Green Capital and European Green Leaf website¹⁸. The European Commission launches and manages the contest and will allocate the financial contribution following the award of the Green Capital title. The decision on the winner of the Green Capital competition is based on the judgement of independent experts which provide a short-list of finalists, which is then subject to a Jury process which identifies the winner.

Eligibility criteria: The contest is open to all city administrations¹⁹ from EU Member States, EU candidate countries as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland in conformity with Art. 5 of the LIFE Regulation. All cities from these countries which have more than 100,000 inhabitants can apply for the award (in countries where there is no city with more than 100,000 inhabitants, the largest city is eligible to apply).

¹⁷ Climate Change: mitigation; Climate change: adaptation; Sustainable Urban Mobility; Sustainable Land Use; Nature & Biodiversity; Air Quality; Noise; Waste; Water; Green Growth and Eco-innovation; Energy Performance; Governance.

¹⁸ On the European Green Capital website (http://ec.europa.eu/environment/europeangreencapital/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/EGCA_EGL_Rules_of_Contest.pdf) with promotion on other relevant platforms (such as city networks) to maximise participation.

¹⁹ In this context, a "city" is understood to be an urban area, excluding metropolitan areas, larger urban zones and conurbations, and is understood as an administrative unit governed by a city council or another form of democratically elected body.

Contestants that have already received the European Green Capital Award or European Green Leaf Award cannot participate for the following 10 years and furthermore cannot receive a second award for the same activities even after the expiry of a 10 year period.

Exclusion criteria foreseen in the provisions of articles 106(1), 107, 108 and 109 of the Financial Regulation (Regulation 966/2012) will apply.

Essential award criteria: The financial contribution will be awarded, after the closure of each Green Capital contest, to the winning city, as follows:

A panel of independent experts shall evaluate received applications and after a full assessment (benchmarking exercise) shall draw-up a list of shortlisted candidates to pass to the next stage. The Jury members will assess the shortlisted cities based on the following evaluation criteria:

1. The city's overall commitment, vision and enthusiasm as conveyed through their presentation.
2. The city's capacity to act as a role model, inspiring other cities, promoting best practices and raising the awareness of the EGC model further – bearing in mind city size and location.
3. The city's communication strategy and actions, which should address:
 - Citizen communication and involvement to date in relation to the 12 environmental indicators, effectiveness via changes in citizen behaviour, lessons learned and proposed modifications for the future.
 - The extent of the city's (local, regional and national) partnering to gain maximum social and economic leverage.
 - How they intend to fulfil their role of EU Ambassador, inspiring other cities

3.1.5. Implementation

The action will be implemented under a direct management mode by DG ENV

3.1.6. Indicative timetable of the contest(s) and indicative amount

Reference	Date	Amount
Launch of the contest	May 2017 ²⁰	
Deadline for submission of application	October 2017	
Evaluation by independent, technical expert panel	April 2018	
Decision by jury on winning applicant and award	May 2018	EUR 350.000 (max. 1 city)

3.2. EUROPEAN GREEN LEAF AWARD

3.2.1. Legal basis

LIFE Regulation, and in particular Art.17.

3.2.2. Budget line

Budget article 07 02 03 - Supporting better environmental governance and information at all levels, EUR 75 000 each for maximum two winning cities²¹.

²⁰ The competition was launched including the following caveat clause "*Subject to the approval of the EU 2018 Budget and approval by the College of the 2018 Financing Decision for the EU LIFE Programme*".

3.2.3. Description, objectives pursued and expected results

Europe's cities are the engines of the European economy, providing jobs and services, and serve as hubs that catalyse creativity and innovation. Almost 70% of the EU population now live in urban areas, also home to some of our greatest challenges: economic, social, environmental and demographic, which are often interrelated.

In 2014 the Commission's 7th Environment Action Programme (EAP) entered into force, setting out a strategic agenda for environmental policymaking with nine priority objectives to be achieved by 2020. It establishes a common understanding of the main environmental challenges Europe faces and what needs to be done to tackle them effectively, and stresses the importance of sustainable urban development. The European Green Leaf Award contributes to reaching the objectives of the 7EAP "enhancing the sustainability of the of the Union's cities" (Priority Objective 8).

The European Green Leaf Award is also DG Environment's contribution to the wider EU Urban Agenda (Pact of Amsterdam) which was adopted in May 2016. The Urban Agenda for the EU aims to address the challenges faced by cities and also seeks to fully exploit the potential of cities by integrating the urban dimension into EU policies. It furthermore aims to promote cooperation and partnerships between Member States, the European Commission, European institutions, cities and other stakeholders in order to stimulate growth, liveability and innovation in the cities of Europe.

It is important to recognise cities that are making efforts to improve the urban environment and move towards healthier and sustainable living areas. Progress is its own reward, but the satisfaction involved in winning a prestigious European award spurs cities to invest in further efforts and boosts awareness within the city as well as in other cities. The environmental performance in Europe's smaller cities is also important and in 2014, four years after the establishment of the European Green Capital (EGC) Award and following its success the European Commission launched a similar competition for those smaller cities – 'European Green Leaf' (EGL). Evaluation of the EGL applicants is based on six topic areas: climate change and energy performance, mobility, biodiversity and land use, quality of air and the acoustic environment, waste and circular economy, water management.

The objectives of the award are:

- To recognise cities that demonstrate a good environmental record and commitment to generating green growth;
- To encourage cities to actively develop citizens' environmental awareness and involvement;
- To identify cities able to act as a 'green ambassador' and to encourage other cities to progress towards a better sustainability outcomes.

The expected result is that the European Commission will select the winner of the European Green Leaf 2019 title following a Europe-wide contest.

3.2.4. Essential conditions for participation and award criteria

The specific rules of the contest to find the European Green Leaf winner(s) each year are published on the Commission's European Green Capital and European Green Leaf website²². The European Commission launches and manages the contest and will allocate the financial contribution following the award of the European Green Leaf title. The decision on the winner(s) – a maximum of two – of the European Green Leaf competition is based on the judgement of independent experts which provide a short-list of finalists, which is then subject to a Jury process which identifies the winner.

²¹ The title of European Green Leaf 2019 can be given to a maximum of two cities (i.e. maximum two winners per title year). In the event that only one city receives the European Green Leaf 2019 title, an amount of EUR 75.000 is allocated to the winning city. In the event that two cities win the European Green Leaf 2019 title, an amount of EUR 75.000 is allocated to each winner.

²² On the European Green Capital website but also actively publicised elsewhere to maximise participation.

Eligibility criteria: The contest is open to all city administrations²³ from EU Member States, EU candidate countries as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland in conformity with Art. 5 of the LIFE Regulation. All cities from these countries which have between 20 000 and 100 000 inhabitants can apply. Applicant cities that have already received the EGL Award cannot participate for the following 10 years and cannot receive a second award for the same activities even after the expiry of the 10 year period.

Exclusion criteria foreseen in the provisions of articles 106(1), 107, 108 and 109 of the Financial Regulation (regulation 966/2012) will apply.

Essential award criteria The financial contribution will be awarded, after the closure of each Green Leaf contest, to the winning city / cities as follows:

A panel of independent experts shall evaluate received applications and after a full assessment (benchmarking exercise) shall draw-up a list of shortlisted candidates to pass to the next stage. The Jury members will assess the shortlisted cities based on the following evaluation criteria:

- The city's overall commitment, strategy and enthusiasm as conveyed by the presentation.
- The city's efforts to communicate to citizens and citizens' engagement in environmental activities.
- The city's potential to act as a 'green ambassador', promoting good practice and spreading the EGL concept further.

3.2.5. Implementation

The action will be implemented under a direct management mode by DG ENV.

3.2.6. Indicative timetable of the contest(s) and indicative amount

Reference	Date	Amount
Launch of the contest	May 2017 ²⁴	
Deadline for submission of application	October 2017	
Evaluation by independent, technical expert panel	April 2018	
Decision by jury on winning applicant(-s) and award	May 2018	EUR 75.000 (per city, max. 2 cities)

²³ In this context, a "city" is defined as an urban area and an administrative unit governed by a city council or another form of democratically elected body.

²⁴ The competition was launched including the following caveat clause "*Subject to the approval of the EU 2018 Budget and approval by the College of the 2018 Financing Decision for the EU LIFE Programme*".