

| EVALUATION AND FITNESS CHECK (FC) ROADMAP | | | |
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| TITLE OF THE EVALUATION/FC | Mid-term evaluation of the LIFE Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) | | |
| LEAD DG – RESPONSIBLE UNIT | DG ENV E4 | DATE OF THIS ROADMAP | 10/2015 |
| TYPE OF EVALUATION | Interim Evaluation | PLANNED START DATE | 01/07/2015 |
| | | PLANNED COMPLETION DATE | 30/06/2017 |
| | | PLANNING CALENDAR | http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/evaluation/index_en.htm |
| This indicative roadmap is provided for information purposes only and is subject to change. | | | |

| A. Purpose |
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| (A.1) Purpose |
| The purpose is to evaluate the implementation of the LIFE Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (hereinafter referred to as 'the LIFE Programme'), by the relevant criteria, notably effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU added value, with a view to taking a decision on the renewal, modification or suspension of the measures, as well as taking into account evaluation results on the long term impact of LIFE +. In line with the Better Regulation Guidelines, a Staff Working Document will be prepared on the basis of an external and independent evaluation. The results will be relevant in particular for the preparation of the second Multi-Annual Working Programme (MAWP) for the implementation of the LIFE Programme in 2018-2020. |
| (A.2) Justification |
| An external and independent mid-term Evaluation of the Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) and its sub-programmes is required in Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013 of 11 December 2013 on the establishment of a Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) and repealing Regulation (EC) No 614/2007, Article 27, paragraph 2a. Article 27 indicates all issues to be examined, as explained here below under (C.2). |

| B. Content and subject of the evaluation |
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| (B.1) Subject area |
| The LIFE Programme, established by Regulation (EC) No 1293/2013 (hereinafter referred to as 'the LIFE Regulation') for the funding period 2014–2020, is the EU's funding instrument for the environment and climate action and is divided into two sub-programmes. The sub-programme for 'Environment' covers three priority areas: environment and resource efficiency; nature and biodiversity; and environmental governance and information. The sub-programme for 'Climate Action' covers climate change mitigation; climate change adaptation; and climate governance and information. Articles 17ff. of the LIFE Regulation provide for different funding types to finance projects (action grants and |

contributions to financial instruments), operational and administrative tasks of non-profit making entities (operating grants), and various support tasks and studies (public procurement and other interventions).

(B.2) Original objectives of the intervention

Environment and climate activities are supported through all major EU funding programmes, but these cannot address all specific needs related to the environment and climate action. For the environment and for climate action, specific approaches are required to deal with uneven integration of their objectives into Member States' practices, uneven and inadequate implementation of the legislation in the Member States, and insufficient dissemination of information about, and promotion of, policy goals.

Therefore, the LIFE Programme has been set up with the following general objectives:

- to contribute to the shift towards a resource-efficient, low- carbon and climate- resilient economy, to the protection and improvement of the quality of the environment and to halting and reversing biodiversity loss, including the support of the Natura 2000 network and tackling the degradation of ecosystems;
- to improve the development, implementation and enforcement of Union environmental and climate policy and legislation, and to act as a catalyst for, and promote, the integration and mainstreaming of environmental and climate objectives into other Union policies and public and private sector practice, including by increasing the public and private sector's capacity;
- to support better environmental and climate governance at all levels, including better involvement of civil society, NGOs and local actors;
- to support the implementation of the 7th Environment Action Programme.

In pursuing these objectives, the LIFE Programme shall contribute to sustainable development and to the achievement of the objectives and targets of the Europe 2020 Strategy and of relevant Union environment and climate strategies and plans.

The LIFE programme is conceived as a catalyst in a wide range of priority areas and thematic priorities. The outputs and outcomes on project level are expected to be on a small scale and diverse, but aim at continuation, replication and/or transfer of project actions.

(B.3) How the objectives were to be achieved

See the Intervention Logic Diagram

INTERVENTION LOGIC DIAGRAM – The LIFE Programme 2014-2020

To address all specific needs related to the environment and climate action, specific approaches are required to deal with uneven integration of their objectives into Member States' practices, uneven and inadequate implementation of the legislation in the Member States, and insufficient dissemination of information about, and promotion of, policy goals.

Therefore, the LIFE Programme has been set up as a catalyst for changes in policy development and implementation with the following **general objectives**:

- Contribution towards a resource-efficient, low-carbon and climate-resilient economy; protecting and improving the environment; maintaining and improving biodiversity, ecosystems and, in particular, the Natura 2000 network
- Improving the development, implementation and enforcement of Union environmental and climate policy and legislation
- Integrating and mainstreaming of environmental and climate objectives into other Union policies
- Improving environmental and climate governance
- Implementing of the 7th Environment Action Programme

External factors:

- External economic conditions (incl. for co-financing)
- EU environmental and climate legislation
- MS legislation (particularly relevant in the case of Integrated Projects)
- Cooperation between national, regional and local authorities and the non-state actors concerned (especially for Integrated Projects)
- Other funding sources available (incl. EU)
- Technological and methodological development
- Results of environmental and climate related research (incl. Horizon 2020)

- Applicants (Who applies for what?)
- Who chooses to make use of lessons from LIFE Projects?
- Market uptake (role of SMEs)

Expected results/impacts:

- Improve the development, implementation and enforcement of EU Environmental and Climate policy and legislation across the EU through 'lessons learned' in projects
- Overcoming roadblocks to efficient implementation of key instruments and plans required by EU Legislation and policies and mobilisation of finance to support the full implementation of these instruments and plans (Integrated Projects)
- Improved policy development through use of lessons in projects
- Substantial Improvement to the State of the Environment and contribution to the shift towards a resource-efficient, low-carbon and climate resilient economy
- Better solidarity and responsibility sharing in preserving the common good of the Union's environment and climate.
- Improved environmental and climate governance
- Halted and reversed Biodiversity loss

Actions and Operations

LIFE foresees different types of funding:

- Action Grants
 - Traditional Projects
 - Integrated Projects
 - Technical Assistance Projects
 - Capacity Building Projects
 - Preparatory Projects
- NGO Operating Grants
- Financial Instruments (NCFE and PF4EE)

Areas of actions:

- Environment:
 - environment and resource efficiency;
 - nature and biodiversity;
 - environmental governance and information
- Climate Action: climate change mitigation; climate change adaptation; and climate governance and information

Consequences (Intermediate Phase)

System in place to be measured against the performance indicators, set out in Article 3(3) of the LIFE Regulation and further developed in the LIFE multiannual work programme for 2014-17

- Natura 2000 sites restored or brought to adequate management
- Improved conservation status of targeted habitats and species targeted;
- Interventions developed or undertaken that implement plans, programmes or strategies pursuant to Union environmental or climate policy and legislation,
- Interventions suitable for replication or transfer, bridging the gap between the project and the market level
- Interventions achieving synergies with or mainstreamed into other Union funding programmes, or integrated into public or private sector practice,
- Interventions to ensure better governance, dissemination of information and awareness of environmental and climate aspects.

C. Scope of the evaluation/FC

(C.1) Topics covered

The scope of the evaluation encompasses all actions and operations under the LIFE Programme, i.e.:

- Traditional action grants
- Integrated projects
- Technical assistance projects
- Capacity building projects
- Preparatory projects
- NGO operating grants
- Financial instruments NCFE and PF4EE
- Public procurement for support activities.

The Mid-term evaluation of the LIFE Programme will consider its implementation to date. However, since the first action grants were signed and the first projects to be funded through contributions to financial instruments were selected in 2015, the first outputs and outcomes of projects cannot be expected before 2017 and actual continuation, replication and/or transfer cannot be assessed before 2020, at the earliest. Before then, the programme has to be assessed on the basis of the experience under the predecessor programme LIFE+ and on the basis of the operations and projects selected for implementation under LIFE 2014-2020 by looking at their expected outputs and outcomes, including regarding continuation, replication and/or transfer, and at the structures set up on programme level to ensure that these will be reached.

(C.2) Issues to be examined

Article 3 of the LIFE Regulation sets out the performance indicators against which the LIFE programme shall be assessed. This will be done on the basis of qualitative and quantitative outcomes, indicators and targets for each priority area and type of projects which are defined in line with performance indicators and the specific objectives set out for each priority area in the two multiannual work-programmes to be adopted as implementing acts (Article 24 paragraph 2 (c) of the LIFE Regulation).

The LIFE multiannual work programme for 2014-2017 (Commission Implementing Decision 2014/203/EU) also defines the technical methodology for project selection, including for projects financed by contribution to two pilot financial instruments (the Natural Capital Financing Facility (NCFE) and the Private Finance for Energy Efficiency (PF4EE)), as well as selection and award criteria for grants. In addition, the LIFE multiannual work programme (MAWP) specifies the indicative allocation of funds between priority areas and between different types of funding within each sub-programme in line with the LIFE Regulation.

Since the bulk of the budget is dedicated to projects and operating grants, the qualitative and quantitative outcomes, indicators and targets will be measured on project or operating grant level and aggregated. The evaluation will also examine the activities taking place under further types of funding foreseen by the LIFE Regulation, such as operating grants, public procurement contracts, and any other interventions needed for the purpose of achieving the general objectives set out in Article 3 of the LIFE Regulation.

The evaluation will address the following criteria:

Effectiveness: the extent to which the effects achieved so far, and likely to be achieved by the end of the LIFE Programme, have been caused by the LIFE Programme and correspond to its objectives. Additionally:

- What is the distributional effectiveness?
- What is the role of LIFE in bridging uneven integration of environmental and climate action objectives among Member States?

Efficiency: the extent to which the costs of the LIFE Programme involved are justified, given the effects which

have been achieved, and are likely to be achieved by the end of the LIFE Programme, including an assessment of the scope for simplification and burden reduction.

Coherence: the coherence of the LIFE programme, internally among its two sub-programmes and between the various types of funding, as well as externally, assessing its complementarity with other relevant Union programmes.

Relevance: the extent to which the Programme objectives are pertinent to needs, problems and issues addressed.

EU Added Value: Based on the results of the LIFE Programme and the structure established for LIFE 2014-2020:

- What is the additional value resulting from the EU intervention(s), compared to what could be achieved by Member States at national and/or regional levels?
- To what extent do the issues addressed by the intervention continue to require action at EU level?
- What would be the most likely consequences of stopping or withdrawing the existing EU intervention?

Sustainability: the extent to which positive effects are likely to last after the end of the interventions, especially of the demonstration effect and scope for replication of the projects. Additionally, the extent to which key stakeholders support the LIFE interventions.

(C.3) Other tasks

NA

D. Evidence base

(D.1) Evidence from monitoring

Data from new LIFE projects, as well as running and recently closed LIFE+ projects, collected in a simple database in aggregated format considering various elements: LIFE brand, policy area, member state, etc.

Monitoring Team Reports and Syntheses of Ex-Post Missions (2009 – 2015).

Information about VAT reimbursements requested by beneficiaries under the LIFE Programme at the final payment stage. The data will be summarized per Member State in an overview to be provided in the evaluation, according to the LIFE Regulation.

(D.2) Previous evaluations and other reports

The following documents will be available for the external evaluator, who will assess in particular the extent to which past recommendations have been taken into account in the design of the new programme as well as the efforts taken to overcome the obstacles indicated by the applicants:

Application and Evaluation Guidelines

Final Evaluation of LIFE+ [Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations](#) (December 2012)

Impact Assessment SEC(2011) 1541 final [EXECUTIVE SUMMARY](#)

Executive summary of the study "[Identification and analysis of the main obstacles for applicants in EU-12 countries for submitting proposals for a LIFE+ funding](#)" (February 2010)

Communication to the Council and the Parliament – [Mid-term review of the LIFE+ Regulation](#)

Communication on Mid-term review of LIFE+ (Working Document) [Mid-term review of the LIFE+ Regulation COM\(2010\) 516 final](#)

Special Report No 15/2013: Has the Environment component of the LIFE programme been effective? [Report of the European Court of Auditors](#)

Special Report No 11/2009: The sustainability and the Commission's management of the LIFE-Nature projects, [Report of the European Court of Auditors](#)

Financial instruments relevance:

Delegation Agreements for PF4EE and NCFE, expressions of interest and other project documents

Information documents accompanying the Commission Implementing Decision on the adoption of the LIFE Multiannual Work Programme for 2014: [Ex-ante evaluations of PF4EE and NCFE](#)

Draft General Budget of the European Union for the Financial Years 2016 and 2017 Working Document Part X Financial Instruments ([2016](#) available at present, 2017 to be published in June 2016)

Annual reports for 2014 and 2015 from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on financial instruments supported by the general budget according to Art. 140.8 of the Financial regulation (when published, including Commission Staff Working Documents)

(D.3) Evidence from assessing the implementation and application of legislation (complaints, infringement procedures)

NA

(D.4) Consultation

The consultation strategy aims to gather relevant information about the implementation of the LIFE Programme. Planned consultation activities include:

- A 12 weeks online public open consultation about LIFE through the relevant Commission website ("Your Voice in Europe") using a structured public questionnaire in accordance with the Better Regulation Commission's guidelines.
- One stakeholder consultation planned in the course of 2016 to target especially LIFE Beneficiaries, NCPs and NGOs.
- Two dedicated workshops planned in 2016 and 2017 to gather further information from public and private stakeholders and representatives of MS as well as sharing first draft results of the evaluation.
- Interviews with key stakeholders, if needed, including LIFE programme administrators, key Commission staff in technical and financial units in DG Environment and DG Climate Action, and EASME, relevant persons in other DGs (e.g., DG AGRI, DG CLIMA, ECFIN, ECHO, ENER, GROW, MARE, REGIO and RTD) and the European Investment Bank (EIB), current contractors evaluating project proposals and current monitoring teams.

Further tasks linked to Public and Stakeholder consultations will be possibly defined at later stage.

(D.5) Further evidence to be gathered

Besides the evaluation report, no specific additional information is foreseen to be gathered at this stage.

E. Other relevant information/ remarks

NA