

SUMMARY OF THE LIFE MULTIANNUAL WORK-PROGRAMME 2018-2020

1. INTRODUCTION

According to Article 3 of 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 (hereinafter "LIFE Regulation"), the LIFE Programme pursues 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; and
- to support the implementation of the 7th Environment Action Programme.

The present, second LIFE multiannual work programme (MAWP) takes into account the experience gained in the period 2014 to 2017 and, in particular, the recommendations made in the mid-term evaluation¹, which are mainly related to

1. the simplification of the application and reporting processes;
2. the replication of project results;
3. the improvement of the communication strategy.

The simplification measures related to the application process are an integral part of the contents of the present LIFE MAWP (see Section 5.1.1.1 below). The need for continuation, replication and/or transfer of project results is given more emphasis in the Award phase (see Section 5.1.1.2 below) and receive more support through procurement. The simplification of reporting will be targeted through project management procedures and by giving beneficiaries access to an on-line data base facilitating the collection of the data related to the key project indicators. The improvement of the communication strategy through procurement. These measures are thus not addressed in detail in the present LIFE MAWP.

The present LIFE MAWP also takes up recent developments, in EU policy, such as the the circular economy action plan² and the Action plan on nature, people and the economy³, and

¹ See "Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions accompanying the mid-term evaluation of the LIFE Programme", COM(2017) 642 ([link to be added](#)).

² Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 'Closing the loop - An EU action plan for the Circular Economy', <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52015DC0614>.

³ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 'An Action Plan for nature, people and the economy', http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/fitness_check/action_plan/index_en.htm

shall serve as a bridge to future funding for ‘sustainability’ as outlined in the Reflection paper on the future of EU finances⁴. The following changes have been included:

As regards the sub-programme for Environment:

- reduction of the number of project topics (from 87 to 42) and more pronounced focus to increase the steer of applicants to EU policy priorities while increasing the chances for projects in certain sub-areas like biodiversity and circular economy, but also projects with a strong and direct impact on the health of the majority of European citizens;
- reorientation of the governance and information project topics to focus more on specific awareness raising and governance related issues;
- encouragement of further engagement of private entities by highlighting the advantages of close-to-market approaches as a tool for ensuring sustainability of the project results. This entails support to investment-ready economically and environmentally viable projects that mobilise additional private and public financial resources for scale-up and replication of results;

As regards both sub-programmes:

- further enhancement of the results-orientation by introducing the requirement to produce measurable effects on the environment or climate change under all priority areas;
- encouragement of further engagement of private entities by highlighting the advantages of close-to-market approaches as a tool for ensuring sustainability of the project results. Support actions that help to develop investment-ready economically and environmentally viable projects that mobilise additional private and public financial resources for scale-up and replication of results;
- simplification of the grant management procedures, in particular by testing a two-stage application procedure for pilot, demonstration, best practice and information, awareness and dissemination projects, as suggested in the mid-term evaluation of the LIFE Programme.

The mid-term evaluation of the LIFE Programme, and the European Parliament (with regard to EU spending)⁵ confirmed the need and importance of measurable effects of projects on the ground. The LIFE Programme contains performance indicators and the multiannual work programmes contain quantitative (i.e. output) and qualitative outcome indicators in line with these. To be able to report on these indicators on programme level, beneficiaries need to forecast and measure the environmental, climate, and governance and information, i.e. societal, effects at project level in relation to specific output and outcome indicators⁶. To ensure that these effects are lasting, i.e. sustainable in time, they also need to establish robust mechanisms to ensure that projects have effects beyond the original project area by extension and replication. The clear and coherent explanation of how the continuation, replication and/or transfer of projects’ activities and effects will be ensured, therefore becomes an even more decisive award criterion in the evaluation of project proposals. By their nature,

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/reflection-paper-eu-finances_en.pdf

⁵ European Parliament decision of 27 April 2017 on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2015, Section III – Commission (2016/2151(DEC)), paragraph 8, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P8-TA-2017-0143>.

⁶ These are the so called LIFE Key Project Indicators, see also Section 7 below.

successfully demonstrated close-to market solutions to environmental and climate change challenges have a particularly high chance to be continued, replicated and/or transferred. Proposals credibly and coherently presenting a strategy to reach marketability by the end of the project, will therefore score high under this criterion.

The mid-term evaluation analysed in line with Article 25 of the LIFE Regulation and confirmed the ability of the LIFE Programme to promote synergies within the programme. The reflection papers on the future of EU Finances⁷ emphasise the importance of the social dimension in European policies. For the LIFE programme this should provide an impetus to seek even more synergies among the environmental, economic and social dimensions of sustainable development. . Therefore, well-conceived multi-purpose approaches, pursuing, besides their primary environmental or climate action objectives, e.g. social integration or economic growth, will receive a bonus⁸. For instance, nature and biodiversity protection activities and activities aimed at enhancing the circular economy, hold a potential to contribute to community building and social integration. The circular economy can face challenges to demonstrate economic viability, and in many cases it is important that the social dimension (for example for job market integration of disadvantaged individuals) is taken into account.

The LIFE programme allows for ‘other projects’ and ‘other activities’. This flexibility can be used to experiment with new approaches, new project types and support services for existing projects, and/or stakeholders not attracted by the traditional project formats.. For example, the gap between the successful application of environment or climate action solutions in LIFE projects and their actual access to the market could often be bridged, if the most promising LIFE projects were to receive specific support to access markets and potential investors. This could consist in a complementary project concentrating on market access support, project-specific business management and fund acquisition coaching, support for building up and/or collaborating within circular economy clusters or annual prizes for projects with a particularly high EU added value. Should the new Financial Regulation allow for more flexibility regarding the attribution of lump sums for specific outcomes, this might also be used for capacity building towards ‘bankability’ of investment projects and market access.

The LIFE programme is managed by the Commission services themselves and by the Executive Agency (EA) to which this task has been delegated in direct management. The EA acts within the limits of the delegation according to the Commission Decision C(2013)9414 or any Commission Decision replacing it and under the supervision of the Commission services. The overall responsibility for the programme remains with the Commission. External experts may be contracted to support the Commission services and/or the EA in their work.

In application of the principle of complementarity with other European funding programmes set out in Recitals 5, 11 and 13 and Article 8 of the LIFE Regulation, the implementation of the MAWP will ensure consistency and synergies, and avoid overlap with other Union policies and financial instruments as far as possible, seeking complementarity to Horizon

⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/publications/reflection-paper-future-eu-finances_en

⁸ Recent studies confirm that sustainable investments require smart policies and incentives to create more engagement within broader society and across all sectors, in particular on the level of local communities and in collaboration with the citizens and SMEs as these become more and more involved through community initiatives enabled by the spread of digital technologies, or as ‘prosumers’ (whereby they can e.g. produce, store and even sell their electricity rather than simply buying it), cf. European Policia Strategy Centre, EPSC Strategic Notes, Issue 25 8 June 2017, p. 14.

2020⁹, the Union's research and innovation programme for 2014-2020, and with its work programmes¹⁰. This will mainly be achieved through the eligibility criteria for the different project types and orientations in the application guidelines accompanying the calls,¹¹ seeking complementarity to Horizon 2020. Double funding will be avoided through cross-checking during the selection phase and through ex-post verifications. projects focused on research or the construction of large infrastructure, which are covered by other EU programmes, are excluded from funding through the LIFE Programme.

The structure of the MAWP follows the structure set out in Article 24(2) of the LIFE Regulation and only addresses the sub-programmes Environment and Climate Action separately, where necessary.

It covers the period from 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2020.

1.1. THE SUB-PROGRAMME FOR ENVIRONMENT

The sub-programme for Environment covers the **priority areas** Environment and Resource Efficiency, Nature and Biodiversity, and Environmental Governance and Information (Articles 9 to 12 of the LIFE Regulation). Each of the priority areas covers several **thematic priorities**, listed in Annex III to the LIFE Regulation.

The present MAWP 2018-2020 defines **project topics** implementing the thematic priorities.

1.2. THE SUB-PROGRAMME FOR CLIMATE ACTION

The sub-programme for Climate Action covers climate change mitigation, adaptation and governance and communication **priority areas** (Articles 13-16 of the LIFE Regulation). Each priority area contains a number of **policy areas** set out in Section 4 below, which are considered of particular interest throughout the period covered by the present multiannual work programme..

2. ALLOCATION OF FUNDS BETWEEN PRIORITY AREAS AND BETWEEN DIFFERENT TYPES OF FUNDING - ARTICLE 24(2)(a)

According to Article 4 of the LIFE Regulation, the **overall budgetary envelope for the LIFE programme for the period 2014-2020** is EUR 3 456 655 000, 75 % of which is attributed to the sub-programme Environment (EUR 2 592 491 250), and 25 % of which is attributed to the sub-programme Climate Action (EUR 864 163 750).

⁹ Regulation (EU) No 1290/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 laying down the rules for participation and dissemination in "Horizon 2020 - the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020)" and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1906/2006 (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 81).

¹⁰ The last Work Programme of Horizon 2020 covers the years 2018-2020. Horizon 2020 focuses on three priorities, namely generating excellent science in order to strengthen the Union's world-class excellence in science, fostering industrial leadership to support business, including micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and innovation, and tackling societal challenges, in order to respond directly to the challenges identified in the Europe 2020 strategy by supporting activities covering the entire spectrum from research to market. In Horizon 2020, Environmental and Climate Action research and innovation is tackled by a series of actions and opportunities for collaboration, in particular in the Societal Challenge "Climate action, environment, resource efficiency and raw materials" and the Societal Challenge "Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry, Marine, Maritime and Inland Water Research and the Bioeconomy. In this context, environmental research and innovation aims to achieve a resource, water efficient and climate change resilient economy and society.

¹¹ The application guidelines for each call for proposals can be found on the LIFE website: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/funding/life.htm>

In the years 2014-2017, 1 349 million EUR were allocated to the Environment Sub-programme and 446 million EUR to the Climate Action sub-programme. 1 657 million EUR remains available for the years 2018-2020.

The LIFE Regulation also fixes the minimum percentage of the total budget to be reserved for **projects** (81 %, Article 17(4) of the LIFE Regulation) and the maximum percentage of the budgetary resources allocated to projects supported by way of action grants that may be allocated to **integrated projects** (30 %, Article 17(5) of the LIFE Regulation).

Article 4 of the LIFE Regulation is under revision to include a contribution of EUR 4 500 000 to the European Solidarity Corps for projects engaging young volunteers across the EU in environmental protection and climate action¹².

LIFE projects shall be funded by **action grants** or, where appropriate, by **financial instruments** (Article 17(4) of the LIFE Regulation).

According to Article 24(2)a) of the LIFE Regulation, this **MAWP specifies** the amounts to be allocated **per priority area and funding type**.

Overall allocation by type of funding for both sub-programmes

Budget 2018-2020	in million EUR
Projects and operating grants	
<i>Action grants</i>	1 263.44
<i>Operating grants</i>	36.00
<i>Financial instruments</i>	75.00
Public procurement	252.70
Support expenditure	29.92
Overall total	<u>1 657.06</u>

The allocations per priority area and funding type are of indicative nature. For action grants, the final allocation will depend on the actual number of fundable project proposals under each priority area. Budgetary allocations for and between financial instruments may be adapted during the course of the LIFE programme in response to actual uptake. In line with the Financial Regulation,¹³ within the thresholds established by the LIFE Regulation, reallocations between priority areas may not exceed 5% of the total allocation for the priority areas concerned.

¹² For more information about the text of the European Solidarity Corps Regulation Proposal and the state-of-play of the related legislative procedure see: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/HIS/?uri=COM%3A2017%3A262%3AFIN>.

¹³ Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1465306920729&uri=CELEX:02012R0966-20160101>.

2.1. THE SUB-PROGRAMME FOR ENVIRONMENT

For the duration of the present MAWP, a budget of 1 243.81 million¹⁴ is allocated to the sub-programme for Environment.

A specific percentage of the budgetary resources allocated to projects supported by way of action grants under the sub-programme for Environment are allocated to projects supporting the conservation of nature and biodiversity, including related information and governance, technical assistance and preparatory projects (Article 9(3) of the LIFE Regulation)¹⁵. The rest of the budget allocated to projects will be allocated to projects under the priority areas environment and resource efficiency and environmental governance and information.

Indicative allocation by type of funding under the sub-programme for Environment

Budget 2018-2020		in million EUR
Action grants*		
- Capacity building projects		7.75
- Technical assistance projects		2.95
- Other action grants		992.37
Financial instrument**		
Natural Capital Financing Facility (NCFF)		p.m.
Operating grants		27.00
Public procurement		193.67
Support expenditure ***		20.07
Overall total		1 243.81

* According to Art.17(5) of the LIFE regulation, 30% of the budgetary resources allocated to projects supported by way of action grants are allocated to integrated projects. Depending on the actual number of proposals for integrated projects, unused resources will be used for other projects funded by action grants.

**The maximum level of management cost related to the implementation of the financial instruments (FIs) shall not exceed 7% of the total envelope for FIs.

***Including the total contribution from the LIFE Programme to the Executive Agency budget of EUR 14.58 million, with the amount of EUR 2.33 million of the contribution from the sub-programme for Climate Action.

¹⁴ For budgetary reasons, this amount includes EUR 2.33 million as contribution to the Executive Agency budget from the sub-programme for Climate Action.

¹⁵ As amended by Delegated Act ...

The allocations per priority area and funding type are of indicative nature.

Budgetary allocations for and between financial instruments may be adapted during the course of the LIFE programme in response to actual uptake. Within the thresholds established by the LIFE Regulation, reallocations between priority areas may not exceed 5% of the total allocation for the priority areas concerned.

2.2. THE SUB-PROGRAMME FOR CLIMATE ACTION

For this multiannual work programme the budget for the sub-programme for Climate Action is EUR 413.25 million. The allocation to priority areas is indicative and subject to the actual number of proposals for action grants under each priority area, as well as the related market up-take under the Private Financing for Energy Efficiency (unique to this sub-programme) and Natural Capital Financing Facility financial instruments.

Indicative allocation by type of funding under the sub-programme for Climate Action

Budget 2018-2020		in million EUR
Action grants*		
Capacity building projects		3.00
Technical assistance projects		0.78
Other action grants		256.59
Financial instruments**		
Private Financing for Energy Efficiency (PF4EE)		75.0
Natural Capital Financing Facility (NCFF)		p.m.
Operating grants		9.00
Public procurement		59.03
Support expenditure***		9.85
Overall total		413.25

* According to Art.17(5) of the LIFE regulation, 30% of the budgetary resources allocated to projects supported by way of action grants are allocated to integrated projects. Depending on the actual number of proposals for integrated projects, unused resources will be used for other projects funded by action grants.

**The maximum level of management cost related to the implementation of the FIs shall not exceed 7% of the total envelope for FIs.

***The amount of EUR 2.33 million of the contribution to the Executive Agency budget from the sub-programme for Climate Action is included in the total contribution from the LIFE Programme.

3. PROJECT TOPICS IMPLEMENTING THE THEMATIC PRIORITIES SET OUT IN ANNEX III FOR THE SUB-PROGRAMME FOR ENVIRONMENT (ARTICLE 24(2)(b) OF THE LIFE REGULATION)

In line with Recital 36 and Article 24 of the LIFE Regulation, the MAWP contains a non-exhaustive list of project topics implementing the thematic priorities, focussing efforts on concrete environmental and related governance and information policy priorities and areas for action under the sub-programme Environment. In line with Recital 22 of the LIFE Regulation, when evaluating Union added value of projects under the sub-programme Environment, the Commission should pay particular attention to their contribution to the thematic priorities implemented through the project topics. Thus the project topics are a tool for giving a bonus to projects addressing strategically important policy areas, while remaining open to sound proposals in other areas and the incorporation of new ideas to react to new challenges.

A specific percentage of the resources allocated to projects supported by action grants will be earmarked for projects supporting the conservation of nature and biodiversity biodiversity¹⁶. The increased earmarking compared to the LIFE+ Regulation limits the budget available for projects in other thematic priorities under the sub-programme Environment and it is thus a further reason to better focus the use of the funds in these areas.

It should be noted that funding of projects on topics not included in this list is not excluded. High quality projects that fulfil the applicable eligibility and selection criteria may still be awarded funding. Thus, laying down this list for the duration of the MAWP ensures both the necessary flexibility to achieve the LIFE Programme objectives and the necessary stability for potential applicants to plan, prepare and submit proposals.

4. LINKING THE GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF LIFE WITH ACTION GRANTS IN THE SUB-PROGRAMME FOR CLIMATE ACTION

Thematic priorities and project topics are not foreseen for the action grants to be implemented under the sub-programme for Climate Action. However, to be in line with the general objective of the LIFE Regulation, i.e. to improve the development, implementation and enforcement of Union climate policy and legislation, current and emerging EU climate policy and legislation need to be linked with the three priority areas climate change mitigation, climate change adaptation and climate governance and information.

Particular priorities corresponding to the three priority areas and the most pressing related issues were therefore defined in this section of the MAWP.

5. TECHNICAL METHODOLOGY FOR THE PROJECT SELECTION PROCEDURE AND SELECTION AND AWARD CRITERIA FOR GRANTS (ARTICLE 24 (2) (E) LIFE REGULATION)

The MAWP describes the technical methodology for the project selection procedure and, for grants, the main specific eligibility¹⁷ and award criteria pursuant to Articles 2 and 19 of the LIFE Regulation. Since the methodology and the criteria are essentially the same for the same

¹⁶ Reference to be provided after adoption and non objection of the EP and Council to the Delegated Act increasing the percentage from 55% to 60.5%.

¹⁷ The meaning of the term “selection” in Article 24 (2) (e) LIFE Regulation and in Article 132 Financial Regulation is identical with the meaning of the term eligibility“ in Article 19 LIFE Regulation and Article 131 of the Financial Regulation.

project types under both sub-programmes, explicit reference to one of the sub-programmes is only made where there are differences.

The MAWP introduces, for the first time under the LIFE programme, a two-phase selection procedure under the sub-programme for environment.

The MAWP also describes in some detail the two pilot financial instruments to which LIFE will continue to contribute with the purpose of achieving the general objectives set out in Article 3 of the LIFE Regulation. These financial instruments are the following:

- Natural Capital Financial Facility (NCFF) – a new financial instrument to be piloted under both sub-programmes in order to test and demonstrate innovative financing approaches for projects promoting the preservation of natural capital in the priority areas Nature and Biodiversity and Climate Change Adaptation (no additional contribution to the one provided under the MAWP for 2014-2017).
- Private Financing for Energy Efficiency instrument (PF4EE) – a pilot financial instrument under the sub-programme for Climate Action, testing a new approach to address the limited access to adequate and affordable commercial financing for energy efficiency investments targeted by national priorities.

The provisions on financial instruments under Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 (hereinafter ‘Financial Regulation’), in particular Articles 139 and 140 thereof, are fulfilled.

6. INDICATIVE TIMETABLES FOR THE CALLS FOR PROPOSALS (ARTICLE 24 (2) (F) LIFE REGULATION

The indicative timetables for grants and the financial instruments are included in section 6 of the MAWP.

7. QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE OUTCOMES, INDICATORS AND TARGETS FOR EACH PRIORITY AREA AND TYPE OF PROJECTS (ARTICLE 24 (2) (D) LIFE REGULATION

In line with the **performance indicators** (Article 3(3) of the LIFE Regulation) and the **specific objectives** of the priority area concerned, for each **priority area and type of project**, qualitative and quantitative **outcomes, indicators and targets** are established (Article 24 (2)(c) of the LIFE Regulation).

By limiting the scope of application of integrated projects to the implementation of specific strategies, plans and roadmaps under EU legislation in the areas nature, water, waste, and air, climate change mitigation and climate change adaptation, the expected outcomes and the targets to be reached by these projects can be focussed.

Under the sub-programme for Environment, the thematic priorities pursuant to Annex III to the LIFE Regulation and the project topics under point 3 of the present MAWP also increase the focus of the projects financed leading to a more tangible impact on the state of the environment. Based on the evaluation of the estimated impact of the LIFE programme some overall expected outcomes and targets have been defined, taking into account the catalytic function of the programme and hence, where linked to development and implementation, the importance of the replicability of successful projects (Article 3(3)(b) of the LIFE Regulation).

However, the number and scope of successful projects within a priority area mainly depends on the number of eligible applications submitted that comply with the selection and award criteria, and on technical and socio-economic factors outside the influence of the Commission.

In view of the above, and in order to increase the measurability of the contribution of the LIFE programme to the objectives of the 7th EU Environment Action Programme (Article 3(d) of the LIFE Regulation), where possible, expected outcomes have also been defined as outcomes foreseen at project level. Project beneficiaries will have to define the baseline at the outset of their project and the final result in relation to the objectives aimed for. To this end, the LIFE key project indicator (KPI) database has been established and will be made accessible to the beneficiaries by the end of 2017 (the indicators were successfully tried out in the prototype database in 2015 in the context of the LIFE midterm evaluation¹⁸). The environmental / climate objectives to be reached by each project should implement or go beyond the targets, emission limits or objectives set by the relevant Union policies and legislation.

LIFE is a catalyst and continuation, replication, and/or transfer of the project actions and results is therefore key to ensuring the programme's effectiveness in bringing about positive results for the environment and climate. While all project proposals aim for continuation, replication, and/or transfer in the respective environmental or climate change area, on the basis of the experience gained under predecessor programmes, only 80% of pilot and demonstration projects can be expected to be replicable, since there is a risk that the techniques and methodologies to be tested and demonstrated will not bring about the expected results. In addition, in view of possible economic and administrative difficulties, independent of such technical impossibilities, not all projects can be expected to be finalised successfully.

It should be noted that few projects under the LIFE programme 2014-2020 will have finished by 2020, as the average duration of LIFE projects is 3 to 6 years, depending on the priority area. Therefore, where the targets refer to ongoing projects, they are actually rather milestones. These milestones consist in having set up the projects in such a way that they can reach the targets by the end of the project period, which mostly will be beyond 2020.

In order to avoid duplication, under each priority area the project types within the meaning of Articles 2 and 18 of the LIFE Regulation foreseen to pursue the related objectives are grouped together, where possible. Project types independent of priority areas, like capacity-building projects, are listed separately.

The indicators are included in the description of the outcomes and targets and are therefore not mentioned separately in the tables below.

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¹⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/toolkit/pmtools/life2014_2020/monitoring.htm.