Guidelines for applicants 2014

LIFE Nature and Biodiversity

The current guidelines apply to the preparation of project proposals to be submitted to the Contracting Authority under the LIFE sub-programme for Environment. They are intended to help the applicant prepare the content of the project proposal.

This document only applies to this first call for LIFE project proposals ("LIFE 2014"). Furthermore, these guidelines only concern applications for the following types of "traditional" projects in the priority area *Nature and Biodiversity*: "pilot projects", "demonstration projects", and "best practice projects". Separate guidance documents are available on the LIFE web page for other components of the LIFE 2014 call.

The document LIFE Orientation Document (also available on the LIFE web page) provides guidance to applicants on how to identify the most suitable LIFE sub-programme and priority area under which they could submit their proposal. This document also discusses the distinctions between LIFE and other EU direct funding programmes.

The current guidelines are part of the call for proposals application package 2014 which also includes the following documents that should be carefully read before submitting a LIFE proposal:
- Guide for the evaluation of LIFE project proposals
- Model LIFE Grant Agreement with Special and General Conditions

Table of contents

1. Introduction to LIFE

1.1 What is LIFE?

LIFE is the European Programme for the Environment and Climate Action, for the period from 1 January 2014 until 31 December 2020. The legal basis for LIFE is Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013[1] (hereinafter "the LIFE Regulation").

The LIFE Programme is structured in two sub-programmes: the sub-programme for environment and the sub-programme for climate action.

The **sub-programme for environment** covers three priority areas:

- *LIFE Environment and Resource Efficiency*
- *LIFE Nature and Biodiversity*
- *LIFE Environmental Governance and Information*

The thematic priorities for each priority area are further described in Annex III to the LIFE Regulation.

The **sub-programme for climate action** covers three priority areas:

- *LIFE Climate Change Mitigation*
- *LIFE Climate Change Adaptation*
- *LIFE Climate Governance and Information*

The overall financial envelope for the implementation of the LIFE Programme is EUR 3.457 Billion, 75% of which is allocated to the sub-programme for environment (EUR 2,592,491,250).

According to Article 17(4) of the LIFE Regulation, at least 81% of the total budget shall be allocated to projects supported by way of action grants or, where appropriate, financial instruments. The first LIFE Multiannual Work Programme covering the period 2014-2017 foresees a budget of EUR 1,347.1 Million for the sub-programme for environment[2].

During the period 2014-2020, the Contracting Authority will launch one call for LIFE project proposals per year.

LIFE is open to public or private bodies, actors or institutions registered in or, exceptionally, outside the European Union. Project proposals can either be submitted by a single applicant or by a partnership which includes a coordinating beneficiary (the applicant) and one or several associated beneficiaries.

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[1] Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013, published in the Official Journal L 347/185 of 20 December 2013
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:347:0185:0208:EN:PDF
[2] Commission Implementing Decision (2014/203/EU) of 19 March 2014 on the adoption of the LIFE multiannual work programme for 2014-17, OJ L116 of 17.04.2014, p.1;
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:JOL_2014_116_R_0001

1.2 "Traditional" Projects

Article 2 of the LIFE Regulation defines the various types of projects which may be supported by the LIFE 2014-2020 programme. While some of the project types (eg 'integrated projects' and 'capacity building projects') are new to LIFE, other project types are similar to those already supported by LIFE+ and previous LIFE programmes.

These "traditional" types of projects are:

- "pilot projects" means projects that apply a technique or method that has not been applied or tested before, or elsewhere, and that offer potential environmental or climate advantages compared to current best practice and that can subsequently be applied on a larger scle to similar situations;

- "demonstration projects" means projects that put into practice, test, evaluate and disseminate actions, methodologies or approaches that are new or unknown in the specific context of the project, such as the geographical, ecological, socio-economic context, and that could be applied elsewhere in similar circumstances;

- "best practice projects" means projects that apply appropriate, cost-effective, state-of-the-art techniques, methods and approaches taking into account the specific context of the project;

- "information, awareness and dissemination projects" means projects aimed at supporting communication, dissemination of information and awareness raising in the fields of the sub-programmes for Environment and Climate Action.

A **"demonstration" project** must be designed right from the start to demonstrate whether or not the target techniques and methods work in the project's context (geographical, ecological, socio-economical,…). Monitoring, evaluation and active dissemination of the main project results and/or lessons learnt are integral parts of the project and its aftermath. A successful demonstration project ultimately aims to encourage other stakeholders to use the techniques and methods demonstrated in the project. The ability to replicate and transfer results during and after the project implementation will be explicitly part of the evaluation process, so projects should be set up in way to allow for replication and transfer of the results elsewhere under similar circumstances, e.g. by ensuring knowledge sharing and transparency. Given the time frequently required for certain actions to have a measurable impact, it is recognised that the evaluation and dissemination of the results may need to continue well after the end of the project and the actual replication or transfer of project results can only be evaluated ex-post. Nevertheless, projects should be set up in way to allow for replication and transfer of the results, e.g. by ensuring knowledge sharing and transparency.

A **"pilot" project** aims to evaluate whether the targeted new techniques and methods work or not. The monitoring, evaluation and active dissemination of the main project results and/or lessons learnt is an integral part of the project; a pilot project aims to assess the effectiveness of the method, to inform other stakeholders of the results and to encourage them where appropriate to use the techniques and methods successfully tested in the project. The project must also show evidence of the ability to replicate and transfer results during and after the project implementation to larger scale contexts.

In order for a project to be considered pilot/demonstrative, <u>the overall character</u> of its core actions must be pilot/demonstrative. Although some best practice actions might be included in the project proposal, the overall approach must clearly have a pilot/demonstrative character and this should be justified in detail in the proposal.

The following table shows which type of project may be submitted to which priority area:

Sub-Programme	Priority Area	Types of Traditional Projects Eligible
Environment	Environment and Resource Efficiency	Demonstration and pilot projects
Environment	Nature and Biodiversity	Best practice, demonstration, and pilot projects
Environment	Environmental Governance and Information	Information, awareness and dissemination projects
Climate Action	Climate Change Mitigation	Best practice, demonstration, and pilot projects
Climate Action	Climate Change Adaptation	Best practice, demonstration, and pilot projects
Climate Action	Climate Governance and Information	Information, awareness and dissemination projects

The amount available for co-financing action grants for all types of "traditional" projects under the Environment sub-programme is indicatively set at EUR 165,383,803.

Projects financed by the LIFE Programme under one priority area shall avoid undermining environmental or climate objectives in another priority area and, where possible, promote synergies between different objectives as well as the use of green public procurement.

1.3 Role of project topics

The LIFE multiannual work programme for 2014-2017 defines project topics implementing the thematic priorities for the sub-programme for environment listed in Annex III to the LIFE Regulation for pilot, demonstration, best practice and information, awareness and dissemination projects ("traditional" projects). They reflect the priorities on which projects should focus during the relevant period. Eligible proposals that reach or pass the minimum pass scores (see section 5.1.1 of the LIFE multiannual work programme for 2014-2017) and target a project topic will be given priority over projects of comparable quality that do not fall under one of the project topics. See also the *Guide for the evaluation of LIFE project proposals 2014* for further details on scoring of proposals.

1.4 How, where and when to submit a proposal?

Applicants for LIFE funding for "traditional" projects must submit their proposals using the web tool eProposal available via the LIFE web page.

The application tool contains all administrative (A), technical (B and C) and financial (F) forms required, and functionalities to attach relevant documents (maps, photos, diagrams, graphs, mandatory administrative and financial annexes). For complete details regarding the application forms and use of the eProposal tool, please refer to sections 3 and 4 of this document.

Applicants must submit their proposals to the Contracting Authority via eProposal before **16:00 Brussels local time on 16 October 2014.**

For the proposals covered by these guidelines the Contracting Authority is the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME).

When preparing the proposal, the applicants may wish to consult the relevant LIFE National Contact Point; the complete list of the names and contact addresses of the national/regional authorities for LIFE in the Member States can be found on the LIFE website at

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/contact/nationalcontact/index.htm

1.5 How will LIFE projects be selected?

The technical methodology for the project selection procedure and the selection and award criteria are described in section 5 of the LIFE multiannual work programme for 2014-2017. For a detailed description of how this procedure will be implemented, please refer to the *'Guide for the evaluation of LIFE project proposals 2014'*.

Very important: Please note that the e-mail address specified by the applicant as the contact person's e-mail address in form A2 will be used by the Contracting Authority as the single contact point for all correspondence with the applicant during the evaluation procedure. It should therefore correspond to an e-mail account which is valid, active and checked on a daily basis throughout the duration of the evaluation procedure.

The individual grant agreements are expected to be signed by the Contracting Authority in **May-June 2015** (for a detailed timetable, see **Annex 1**).

The earliest possible starting date for projects is **16 July 2015**.

1.6 General Guidance to Applicants

The current chapter replies to some frequently asked questions on how to conceive a LIFE project proposal. For specific guidelines, see section 2; for recommendation on how to fill in the technical and financial forms, please refer to sections 3 and 4 of this document.

1.6.1 In which language may the proposal be submitted?

LIFE proposals may be submitted in any of the official EU languages, except Irish or Maltese. The Contracting Authority nevertheless strongly recommends that applicants fill in the technical part of the proposal in clear English.

The title of the proposal and form B1 ("Summary description of the project") must always be submitted in English. Form B1 may **in addition** also be submitted in the language of the proposal.

1.6.2 Who may submit a proposal?

A proposal may be submitted by any legal person registered in the European Union.

Applicants may fall into three types of beneficiaries: (1) *public bodies*, (2) *private commercial organisations* and (3) *private non-commercial organisations* (including NGOs).

The term "public bodies" is defined as referring to national public authorities, regardless of their form of organisation – central, regional or local structure – or the various bodies under their control, provided these operate on behalf of and under the responsibility of the national public authority concerned. In the case of entities registered as private law bodies wishing to be considered for the purpose of this call as equivalent to "public law bodies", they should provide evidence proving that they comply with all criteria applicable to bodies governed by public law and in the event the organisation stops its activities, its rights and obligations, liability and debts will be transferred to a public body. For a complete definition, please refer to the annex "Public body declaration", which must be completed by all beneficiaries which wish to be considered and treated as a 'public body'.

The applicant must show its legal status (by completing application form A2) confirming legal registration in the EU.

Please refer to the *'Guide for the evaluation of LIFE project proposals 2014'* for full details regarding the compulsory administrative documents which are required with the proposal depending on the legal status of the coordinating beneficiary.

1.6.3 Who may participate in a project?

Once a proposal has been accepted for co-funding, the applicant will become the **coordinating beneficiary** who is legally and financially responsible for the implementation of the project. The coordinating beneficiary will be the single point of contact for the Contracting Authority and will be the only beneficiary to report directly to the Contracting Authority on the project's technical and financial progress.

The coordinating beneficiary receives the EU financial contribution from the Contracting Authority and ensures its distribution as specified in the partnership agreements established

with the associated beneficiaries (if there are any – see below). The coordinating beneficiary must be directly involved in the technical implementation of the project and in the dissemination of the project results.

The coordinating beneficiary must bear part of the project costs and must thus contribute financially to the project budget. It cannot therefore be reimbursed for 100% of the costs that it incurs.

In addition to the coordinating beneficiary, a LIFE proposal may also involve one or more associated beneficiaries and/or one or more project co-financers.

An **associated beneficiary** may be legally registered outside the European Union, provided that the coordinating beneficiary is based in the EU. Any activities to be carried out outside the EU must be necessary to achieve EU environmental objectives and to ensure the effectiveness of interventions carried out in the Member State territories to which the Treaties apply. The associated beneficiary must always contribute technically to the proposal and hence be responsible for the implementation of one or several project actions. An associated beneficiary must also contribute financially to the project. Furthermore, it must provide the beneficiary with all the necessary documents required for the fulfilment of its reporting obligations to the Contracting Authority.

There is no obligation to involve associated beneficiaries in a LIFE proposal. A proposal that is submitted without any participant other than the coordinating beneficiary itself is perfectly eligible. On the other hand, a beneficiary should not hesitate to associate other beneficiaries, if this would bring an added value to the project, such as when the partnership strengthens the feasibility or the demonstration character of the proposal, its European added value, its impact and/or the transferability of its results and lessons learnt.

Public undertakings whose capital is publicly owned and which are considered an instrument or a technical service of a public administration, and which are subject to the public administration's control, but are in effect separate legal entities, must become beneficiaries if a public administration intends to entrust the implementation of certain project actions to these undertakings. This is the case for example in Spain for "empresas públicas" such as TRAGSA, or EGMASA and in Greece for regional development agencies.

All associated beneficiaries must show their legal status (by completing application form A5), and provide full information on the Member State or third country in which they are registered. In addition all beneficiaries whether registered or not in the EU must declare that they are not in any of the situations foreseen under Article 106(1) and 107 of the EU Financial Regulation[3] (by signing the application form A3 or A4 – see instructions in section 4 of this document).

A **project co-financer** only contributes to the project with financial resources, has no technical responsibilities, and cannot benefit from the EU financial contribution. Furthermore, it cannot act, in the context of the project, as a sub-contractor to any of the project's beneficiaries.

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[3] 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, OJ L 298 of 26/10/2012, p.1.

However, project proposals involving business-sector co-financing will be favourably considered during the evaluation process where this co-financing contributes to the probable sustainability of the project results.

For specific tasks of a fixed duration, a proposal may foresee the use of **sub-contractors**. Sub-contractors provide external services to the project beneficiaries who fully pay for the services provided. Beneficiaries may not act as sub-contractors. Sub-contractors should normally not be identified by name in the proposal; if they are, the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement must still be respected.

For a more detailed description of the respective rules related to the coordinating beneficiary, associated beneficiaries and sub-contractors, please refer to the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement.

1.6.4 What is the optimal budget for a LIFE project?

There is no fixed minimum size for project budgets. While large ambitious projects (i.e. over 5,000,000 Euro total costs) have been financed several times in the past, very small projects (i.e. below 500,000 Euro total costs) have seldom succeeded due to the limited output and consequently the low added value.

When preparing a project budget, applicants should also take into account the indicative national allocations per Member State for projects financed under the sub-programme for environment applicable for the period 2014-2017. A project proposal that requests an EU financial contribution higher than the total indicative national allocation for the applicant's Member State will have a reduced probability of being selected for LIFE co-funding. The national allocations can be found in section 5 of the LIFE multiannual work-programme for 2014-2017 and in the *'Guide for the evaluation of LIFE project proposals 2014'*.

1.6.5 What is the maximum rate of EU co-financing under LIFE?

For the duration of the first LIFE multiannual work programme for 2014-2017, the maximum EU co-financing rate for "traditional" LIFE projects is 60% of the total eligible project costs.

By way of exception, a co-financing rate of up to 75% of the total eligible costs may be granted to *LIFE Nature and Biodiversity* proposals that focus on concrete conservation actions for **priority** species or habitat types of the Birds and Habitats Directives, when actions in the project are necessary to achieve the conservation objective.

1.6.6 How much should project beneficiaries contribute to the project budget?

The coordinating beneficiary and any associated beneficiaries are expected to provide a reasonable financial contribution to the project budget. A beneficiary's financial contribution is considered as a proof of its commitment to the implementation of the project objectives – a very low financial contribution may therefore be considered as an absence or lack of commitment.

A proposal cannot be submitted if the financial contribution of any of the beneficiaries to the proposal budget is EUR 0.

Moreover, where public bodies are involved as coordinating and/or associated beneficiaries in a project, the sum of their financial contributions to the project budget must exceed (by at

least 2%) the sum of the salary costs charged to the project for personnel who are not considered 'additional'. For details, please refer to section 4.3 of this document.

1.6.7 What is the optimal starting date and duration for a project?

When preparing the project's time planning, beneficiaries should be aware that the expected date of the signature of the grant agreements for the LIFE 2014 projects will be May-June 2015. The earliest possible starting date for these projects is **16 July 2015**. Any costs incurred before the project's starting date will not be considered eligible and cannot be included in the project budget.

There is no pre-determined project duration for a LIFE project. Generally speaking, the project duration must correspond to what is necessary to complete all of the project's actions and to reach all its objectives. Most projects last for 2–5 years.

The experience of the previous LIFE Programmes has shown that many projects had difficulties completing all actions within the proposed project duration, mostly due to unforeseen delays and difficulties encountered during the project. Beneficiaries are therefore strongly advised to build an appropriate safety margin (e.g. 6 months) into the timetable of their proposal.

Beneficiaries should also be aware that a project that has completed all of its actions prior to the expected end date can submit its final report ahead of schedule and receive its final payment before the official project end date mentioned in the grant agreement.

1.6.8 Where can a LIFE project take place?

LIFE projects shall take place in the territory of the European Union Member States. The LIFE Programme may also finance activities outside the EU and in overseas countries and territories (OCTs), provided that the coordinating beneficiary is based in the EU and strong evidence is provided that the activities to be carried out outside the EU are necessary to achieve EU environmental objectives and to ensure the effectiveness of interventions carried out in the Member State territories to which the Treaties apply (e.g. actions supporting migratory birds or actions implemented on a transboundary river).

The eligibility criteria formulated in European Commission notice Nr.2013/C-205/05 (OJEU C-205 of 19/07/2013, pp. 9-11), concerning the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards, shall apply for all actions under this call for proposals, including with respect to third parties referred to in Article 137 of the EU's Financial Regulation.

1.6.9 Who should manage LIFE a project?

It is expected that the project management is carried out by the staff of the coordinating beneficiary. However, on the basis of an appropriate justification it may be carried out by a sub-contractor under the coordinating beneficiary's direct control. Any other arrangements for the project management would have to be adequately explained and justified. It is also **strongly advised** that each project has a full-time project manager.

While there is no obligation for the beneficiaries to include in the proposal budget any costs related to the project management, the proposal should nevertheless clearly describe who will be in charge of the project management, how much personnel and time will be devoted to this task and how and by whom decisions on the project will be made during the project period (i.e. how and by whom the project management will be controlled).

1.6.10 Outsourcing of project activities

The beneficiaries should have the technical and financial capacity and competency to carry out the proposed project activities. It is therefore expected that the share of the project budget allocated to external assistance should remain below 35%. Higher shares may only be accepted if an adequate justification for this is provided in the project proposal.

The General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement must be respected for any external assistance.

In line with Article 19 of the Regulation, beneficiaries (public and private) are strongly advised to use "green" procurement. The European Commission has established a toolkit for this purpose. More information can be found at http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/toolkit_en.htm

1.6.11 Under which conditions does LIFE favour transnational projects?

The LIFE Regulation indicates that, while selecting the projects to be co-funded, the Contracting Authority shall have special regard to transnational projects, when transnational cooperation is essential to guarantee environmental or nature protection. A transnational proposal should therefore be submitted only if the project proposal provides sufficient arguments for an added value of the transnational approach. If such evidence can be provided, the proposal will be considered for a higher scoring in the project selection process and will therefore have a higher chance of being selected for co-funding.

1.6.12 How voluminous should a LIFE proposal be?

A proposal should be as concise and clear as possible. Applicants should avoid voluminous proposals and should not provide excessively detailed descriptions of project areas, environmental technologies, lists of species, etc.

Clear and detailed descriptions should, however, be provided for all project actions. Maps should be annexed wherever this would be useful to clarify the location of the proposed actions (note that they are obligatory in some cases).

Brochures, CVs and similar documents should not be submitted and will be ignored if provided.

1.6.13 Ongoing activities

Actions already ongoing before the start of the project are not eligible.

Where actions to be undertaken in the project are significantly different from previous or ongoing activities in terms of frequency or intensity they are not considered ongoing. The applicant must provide adequate information in the proposal that allows to assess this aspect.

Exceptionally, in case of actions that were undertaken and completed in the past and that are proposed to be repeated at a similar frequency or intensity during the project, the applicant must provide evidence that such actions would not have been carried out in the absence of the LIFE project.

1.6.14 Long term sustainability of the project and its actions

LIFE projects represent a considerable investment, and the European Union attaches great importance to the long term sustainability of these investments. It is obligatory that throughout the duration of the project, the beneficiaries consider how these investments will be secured, maintained, developed and made use of or replicated after the end of the project. This should be built into the proposal. This aspect will be carefully checked during the evaluation process, particularly under Award criterion 6.

Each proposal needs to provide clear evidence on its EU added value in terms of coverage, replicability, transferability or its transnational scope.

1.6.15 Research activities

Whereas EU funding for research activities is provided under Horizon 2020 – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014–2020)[4], limited research aimed to improve and enhance the knowledge data underpinning the project may be carried out within a LIFE project. Research must be strictly limited and intrinsically related to the project's objectives and the applicant shall explain in detail how the proper implementation of the project relies on these research activities, showing that the existing scientific basis is insufficient, and how the additional knowledge will be used to implement the project actions. In such a case, scientific publications are considered important deliverables of the project.

1.6.16 Complementarity with other EU funding programmes

According to Article 8 of the LIFE Regulation, activities supported from the LIFE Programme must ensure consistency and synergies, and avoid overlap with other funding programmes of the Union. In particular, the Contracting Authority and the Member States must ensure coordination with the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and Horizon 2020.

It is thus essential that, prior to submitting their proposal to the Contracting Authority, beneficiaries check thoroughly whether the actions proposed under their project **in practice could be, or are, funded** through other EU funds.

The beneficiaries must inform the Contracting Authority about any related funding they have received from the EU budget, as well as any related ongoing applications for funding from the EU budget. The beneficiaries must also check that they are not receiving on-going operating grants from LIFE (or other EU programmes) that would lead to double financing.

In addition, at the project revision stage, the national authority may also be required to indicate the steps taken to ensure the coordination and complementarity of LIFE funding with other EU funding programmes.

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[4] 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).

1.7 Additional elements to be considered when preparing the proposal

Efforts for reducing the project's "carbon footprint": You must explain how you intend to ensure that the "carbon footprint" of your project remains as low as it is reasonably possible. Details of efforts to be made to reduce CO_2 emissions during a project's life shall be included in the description of the project. However, you should be aware that expenses for offsetting greenhouse gas emissions will not be considered as eligible costs.

For all proposals aimed at **direct or indirect tourism related sectors** or activities, we invite applicants to carefully consider the Commission Communication COM(2010) 352 of 30/6/2010 "Europe, the world's No 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe"[5] and to describe if and how their project is likely to support any of the objectives set out in this Communication.

1.8 Personal Data Protection Clause

The personal data supplied with your proposal, notably the name, address and other contact information of the beneficiaries and co-financers, will be placed in a database named ESAP that will be made available to the EU Institutions and agencies, as well as to a team of external evaluators who are bound by a confidentiality agreement. ESAP is used exclusively to manage the evaluation of LIFE proposals.

The same personal data of successful projects will be transferred to another database called BUTLER, which will be made available to the EU Institutions and agencies and to an external monitoring team who are bound by a confidentiality agreement. BUTLER is used exclusively to manage LIFE projects.

A summary of each project, including the name and contact information of the coordinating beneficiary, will be placed on the LIFE website and made available to the general public. At a certain point the coordinating beneficiary will be invited to check the accuracy of this summary.

The list of successful beneficiaries and the relative amounts awarded to the projects selected will also be published in a public database called the Financial Transparency System[6].

The Contracting Authority, or its contractors, may also use the personal data of unsuccessful applicants for follow up actions in connection with future applications.

Throughout this process, Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data will be respected by the Contracting Authority and its sub-contractors. You will notably have the right to access data concerning you in our possession and to request corrections.

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[5] http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/files/communications/communication2010_en.pdf
[6] Financial Transparency System (FTS) - European Commission

Submission of a proposal implies that you accept that the personal data contained in your proposal is made available as described above. It will not be used in any other way or for any other purposes than those described above.

2. LIFE Nature and Biodiversity

2.1 What is LIFE Nature and Biodiversity?

LIFE Nature & Biodiversity aims specifically at contributing to the development and implementation of EU policy and legislation in the area of nature and biodiversity. Projects financed must have a European added value and be complementary to those actions that can be financed under other EU funds during the period 2014–2020.

The priority area *LIFE Nature & Biodiversity* focuses on:

- contributing to the development and implementation of EU policy and legislation in the area of nature and biodiversity, in the Union Biodiversity Strategy to 2020[7], and the Birds and Habitats Directives[8];

- supporting the further development, implementation and management of the *Natura 2000* network; and

- improving the knowledge base for the development, implementation, assessment, monitoring and evaluation of EU nature and biodiversity policy and legislation, and for assessing and monitoring factors, pressures and responses that impact on nature and biodiversity

There are two distinct sectors of projects which are intended to complement each other: *LIFE Nature* projects and *LIFE Biodiversity* projects. **A proposed project submitted under the priority area *LIFE Nature & Biodiversity* must either be a *LIFE Nature* or a *LIFE Biodiversity* project.**

Annex III of the LIFE Regulation describes the thematic priorities for each of these two sectors as follows:

Thematic priorities for LIFE Nature projects: activities for the **implementation of the Birds and/or Habitats Directives** in particular:

(i)   Activities aimed at improving the conservation status of habitats and species, including marine habitat and species, and bird species, of Union interest;

(ii)   Activities in support of the *Natura 2000* network bio-geographical seminars;

(iii)   Integrated approaches for the implementation of prioritised action frameworks.

Thematic priorities for LIFE Biodiversity projects: activities for the **implementation of the Union Biodiversity Strategy to 2020,** in particular:

(i)   Activities aimed at contributing to the achievement of Target 2[9];

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[7] COM (2011) 244 Final – Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/2020.htm
[8] Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the conservation of wild birds
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:020:0007:0025:EN:PDF
Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/habitatsdirective/index_en.htm,

(ii)   Activities aimed at contributing to the achievement of Targets 3[10], 4[11] and 5[12].

Thus *LIFE Nature* relates specifically to the objectives of the Birds and Habitats Directives, while *LIFE Biodiversity* is not restricted to the objectives of the Birds and Habitats Directives, but supports the broader implementation of the Union Biodiversity Strategy to 2020.   A nature conservation project that targets **exclusively** species/habitats of the Birds / Habitats Directives is more suited to be a *LIFE Nature* project.   Other projects are more likely to fit better within the requirements of *LIFE Biodiversity.*

Notwithstanding the above, it should be noted that the *Natura 2000* network of protected areas is still the EU's main contribution in our fight against the loss of biodiversity. Within the classic *LIFE Nature* projects most of the targets listed in the Union Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 may be effectively addressed in the context of the *Natura 2000* network: e.g. control of invasive alien species may be addressed through control and eradication in and around *Natura 2000* sites, developing green infrastructure through the connectivity dimension of the network and maintaining or enhancing ecosystem services (like flood protection, improving water quality etc.) through nature conservation activities resulting in the preservation or enhancement of these functions for a site or for the whole network in a region.

LIFE Biodiversity addresses targets 2 to 5 of the Union Biodiversity Strategy to 2020. The most appropriate *LIFE Biodiversity* projects use innovation, or explore sectors and processes that have not been the target of classic *LIFE Nature* projects. This does not exclude projects that are based on best practice approaches, but applicants should carefully read the project topics for *LIFE Biodiversity* to understand for which themes best practice might be considered a priority.

Only w**ild** flora and fauna may be targeted by *LIFE Nature & Biodiversity* projects. Projects, or actions within projects that target the conservation of domestic species or varieties of plants or animals are **not eligible**.

LIFE Nature and *LIFE Biodiversity* projects should be primarily focussed on nature conservation and/or on halting the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services. A project that may have a positive but *secondary* impact on nature and biodiversity and whose main objective is in relation to another environmental thematic priority (e.g. water) should not be submitted under *LIFE Nature and Biodiversity.* Please refer to the documents '*LIFE Environment and Resource Efficiency, Guidelines for applicants 2014'* and '*LIFE Orientation Document'*. A project on nature conservation and/or on halting the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services that essentially consists of targeting awareness raising campaigns should be submitted under *LIFE Environmental Governance and Information.*

While the largest part of *Natura 2000* is composed by areas where human activities have heavily shaped nature and landscape, there are still some significant examples of wilderness or close to wilderness areas. The Commission published the Guidelines for management of wilderness in *Natura 2000*[13] showing that a special attention should be dedicated to these

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[9] Target 2: Maintain and restore ecosystems and their services
[10] Target 3: Increase the contribution of agriculture and forestry to biodiversity
[11] Target 4: Ensure the sustainable use of fisheries resources
[12] Target 5: Combat Invasive Alien Species
[13] http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/wilderness/pdf/WildernessGuidelines.pdf

precious areas. In the European context, and the *Natura 2000* network in particular, it is important to notice that there is a spectrum of more or less wild areas according to the intensity of human intervention. In that sense, wilderness is a relative concept which can be measured along a 'continuum', with wilderness at one end and marginal used land at the other. Re-wilding is a process to move areas up towards a wilder state, where the final stage is wilderness. This process is based on using natural processes for establishing sustainable and cost-effective management systems of *Natura 2000* sites as a way to avoid recurring management activities. Applicants may consider this approach whenever the conditions would indicate this could be the most cost-effective approach to ensure the favourable conservation status of habitats and species. This would clearly not be a substitute to best practices currently used, but could be tested as a complementary way of biodiversity conservation for species and habitats identified in the Habitats and Birds Directives. Where relevant, applicants are invited to consider the guidelines mentioned above when preparing their proposals.

2.2 LIFE Nature

2.2.1 General scope and objectives

LIFE Nature projects aim to support the further development, implementation and management of the *Natura 2000* network in particular by applying, developing, testing and demonstrating approaches, best practices and solutions.

With an area that is currently covering almost 18% of the terrestrial surface of the EU Member States, plus over 217,000 square kilometres of marine area, *Natura 2000* is the central backbone for biodiversity in the European Union. However, even within the *Natura 2000* network, a substantial part of flora, fauna and natural habitat types of Union interest, as defined by the EU Birds and Habitats Directives, is still in an unfavourable conservation status. *Natura 2000* is also at the heart of Europe's Green Infrastructure, providing benefits through multiple ecosystem services.

For the years to come, projects for improving the management and/or for restoring sites of the *Natura 2000* network will therefore remain the first priority for *LIFE Nature* funding. The species and habitats targeted in *LIFE Nature* projects must be listed in the annexes of the EU Birds (2009/147/EC) and Habitats Directives (92/43/EEC).

LIFE Nature projects are usually focussed on concrete conservation measures and are result-oriented, i.e. their implementation leads to direct and sustainable improvements of the conservation status of species and habitats for which sites are proposed or designated.

The eligibility of project actions under the *LIFE Nature* strand depends on the species and/or habitats targeted and can be distinguished as follows:

Site-based actions:

- *Bird species* targeted by site-based actions must be listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive or be regularly occurring migratory bird species.

- Any *habitat types / species other than bird species* targeted must be listed in Annexes I or II of the Habitats Directive. Site-based actions for Annex IV species not listed in Annex II may be possible under certain conditions (see section 2.4.6).

Species-related (i.e. not site-based) actions:

- *Bird species* targeted must be listed in Annex I or II of the Birds Directive or be regularly occurring migratory bird species.

- Any *species other than bird species* targeted must be listed in Annexes II, IV and/or V of the Habitats Directive.

2.2.2 Geographic scope

LIFE Nature projects must take place on the terrestrial and/or marine territory of the EU Member States where the EU Birds and Habitats Directives apply[14]. However, specific actions outside the Union may be financed as long as the applicant provides full details on why such actions are necessary for the achievement of the EU environmental objectives and to ensure the effectiveness of interventions carried out in the Member State territories to which the Treaties apply.

2.2.3 Project topics

According to the LIFE multiannual work programme for 2014–2017, the following project topics contributing to Target 1 of the Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 to fully implement the Birds and Habitats Directives are given priority:

1. Projects aimed at improving the conservation status of habitat types or species (including bird species) of Community Interest[15], targeting the ***Natura 2000* sites** proposed or designated for these habitat types or species.

2. Projects aimed at improving the conservation status of habitat types in *Natura 2000* sites or species (including bird species) of Community Interest, provided, their **status is not "favourable/secure and not declining"** or **"unknown"** according to the most recent overall assessments that Member States have provided at the relevant geographic level according to Article 17 of the Habitats Directive or to the most recent assessments according to Article 12 Birds Directive and EU-level bird assessments.

3. Projects implementing one or several **actions** foreseen in the relevant **Prioritised Action Framework (PAF),** as updated by the Member States or concrete actions identified, recommended or agreed in the framework of the *Natura 2000* bio-geographical seminars.

4. Projects addressing the **marine component** of the implementation of the Habitats and Birds Directives and related provisions under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive[16] descriptor 1, in particular where such projects focus on one or several of the following actions:

   a. completing and finalising national inventories for setting up the offshore marine *Natura 2000* network of sites;

   b. restoration and management of marine *Natura 2000* sites, including the preparation and implementation of site management plans;

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[14] Note that these two Directives do not apply to the French Overseas Departments (DOMs), and therefore *LIFE Nature* projects in the DOMs are not eligible

[15] The reference to the term "Community interest" used in this context is to be understood as "Union interest".

[16] Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2008:164:0019:0040:EN:PDF

c. actions addressing species-, habitat- or site-based conflicts between marine conservation and fishermen or other "marine users",

d. demonstrative or innovative approaches to assess or monitor the impact of human activities on critical marine habitats and species as a tool to guide active conservation measures.

5. Projects for improving the conservation status of habitat types or species of Community Interest (including bird species), the actions of which correspond to the **actions** identified in the relevant national or EU-level species or habitat action plans

6. Projects targeting invasive alien species, where these are likely to deteriorate the conservation status of species (including birds) or habitat types of Community Interest in support of the *Natura 2000* network.

Applicants should clearly explain whether and why their proposal falls under one or more of these project topics.

This list does not exclude the possibility of submitting proposals for topics that are not listed above, but fall under the general remit and objectives of *LIFE Nature*. Note however that proposals that do not fall under the above project topics cannot receive points under the award criterion 4 'Contribution to the project topics' and are therefore less likely to be retained and financed than other eligible projects of comparable quality that are covered by one of the project topics. Note that the maximum score (10) under award criterion 4 'Contribution to the project topics' will be awarded **only** to proposals that **fully** comply with at least one of the project topics; the indication of more than one project topic does not translate into higher scores. For further details see the "*Guide for the evaluation of LIFE project proposals 2014*".

2.3 LIFE Biodiversity

2.3.1 General scope

LIFE Biodiversity projects must contribute to implementing the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 targets and actions, with a view to achieving the objectives of the 2020 headline target of "*halting the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020, and restoring them in so far as feasible, while stepping up the EU contribution to averting global biodiversity loss*", other than those already covered by *LIFE Nature*. The EU added value of a *LIFE Biodiversity* project is highly important; projects with low EU-wide value targeting biodiversity will generally receive low scores under award criterion 3 and are therefore very unlikely to receive a passing score (for further details see the *Guide for the evaluation of LIFE project proposals 2014*).

LIFE Biodiversity projects must be compatible with national and/or regional strategies for biodiversity (where these exist).

2.3.2 Geographic scope

LIFE Biodiversity projects generally take place on the terrestrial and/or marine territory of the EU Member States. This includes the French Overseas Departments (DOMs). However, actions outside the Union (including OCTs) may be financed as long as the applicant provides full details on why such actions are necessary for the achievement of the EU

environmental objectives (e.g. actions to support the EU Biodiversity Strategy) and to ensure the effectiveness of interventions carried out in the Member State territories to which the Treaties apply.

2.3.3 Project topics

According to the LIFE Multiannual Work Programme for 2014–2017, the following project topics focusing on the implementation of Targets 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 are given priority:

1. Projects aimed at implementing **Target 2** of the Biodiversity Strategy, **through the integration of actions to maintain and enhance ecosystems and their services into the activities of the public or private sectors**, by establishing Green as well as Blue Infrastructure and restoring degraded ecosystems. These projects should test and apply approaches aimed at:

    a. mapping and assessing (including valuation) of ecosystems and their services[17] to contribute to a priority setting for restoration, Green Infrastructure or No Net Loss[18];

    b. restoring ecosystems and their services by applying the Restoration Priority Framework[19];

    c. developing methodologies for valuation of and payment for ecosystem services[20] (including tangible and intangible services); or[21]

    d. innovative management schemes addressing, in particular, water related ecosystem services, which could provide potential funding mechanisms to achieve the Biodiversity Strategy targets and contribute to aims of the Water Framework Directive[22] and the Floods Directive[23].

2. Projects implementing actions targeting **Invasive Alien Species** (under Target 5 of the Biodiversity Strategy or in view of contributing to reaching the level of protection set out in descriptor 2 - Non-indigenous species of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive) through actions testing and applying approaches aimed at:

    a. preventing the introduction of invasive alien species, in particular by tackling pathways of unintentional introduction,

    b. establishing an early warning and rapid response system, and[24]

    c. eradicating or controlling established invasive alien species on an appropriate spatial scale.

    These projects shall address with their actions the three steps (prevention; early warning and rapid response; eradication/control) in a comprehensive framework, or, where one of the steps has already been addressed, their actions shall at least be clearly situated in a broader framework that links all three steps. They should be set up to improve existing –

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[17] http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/knowledge/ecosystem_assessment/index_en.htm

[18] http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/nnl/index_en.htm

[19] http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/2020.htm , section "Priorities for the restoration of ecosystems and their services in the EU" and
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/pdf/2020/RPF.pdf

[20] http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/economics/

[21] one of these options must apply

[22] Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2000:327:0001:0072:EN:PDF

[23] Directive 2007/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the assessment and management of flood risks
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2007:288:0027:0034:EN:PDF

[24] all these options must apply

or introduce new – technical, administrative or legal frameworks on the relevant level; they should aim at preventing the broader establishment of IAS within the EU.

> Alien species are species introduced outside their natural past or present distribution that might survive and subsequently reproduce. Species migrating through climate change are not considered as alien species. Alien species are considered invasive when their introduction or spread threatens biodiversity and ecosystem services or has other negative consequences. Invasive Alien Species (IAS) are recognised as one of the five major pressures directly causing biodiversity loss. Lost output due to IAS, health impacts and expenditure to repair IAS damage has already cost the EU at least 12 billion EUR / year over the past 20 years. Trade in species and other commodities, as well as travel, are the driving forces behind the introduction of alien species in the EU. As those driving forces are expected to continue their increase, the threat by IAS will similarly increase.
>
> The EU approach to addressing IAS is described in the European Commission Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species (COM(2013) 620 final,
> http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2013:0620:FIN:EN:PDF)

3. Projects targeting **threatened species** that are not included in the annexes of the Habitats Directive but that have a status of **"endangered" or worse** in the European Red Lists (http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/redlist/index_en.htm) or in the IUCN Red List for those species that are not covered by the European Red Lists (http://www.iucnredlist.org/).

> This item opens the possibility to work on additional endangered species not listed in the Habitats Directive. At the same time it limits this possibility to species that are recognised as endangered or worse at European or global level. In other words, a proposal on a species locally threatened, but not listed in the reference lists above is unlikely to receive any funding.

4. Pilot or demonstration projects using **innovative ways of direct or indirect financing** (including public and private partnerships, fiscal instruments, biodiversity offsets etc.) for Biodiversity-related activities in the public and private sector.

5. Pilot or demonstration projects testing and then implementing **Green Infrastructure actions** focusing on:

    a. innovative technologies and the development and application of technical standards regarding them;

    b. the preservation or restoration of ecosystems for the benefit of human health; or

    c. cost-efficient technologies and methods that minimise the impact of existing energy and transport infrastructures on biodiversity by strengthening the functionality of spatially linked ecosystems.

> **Green Infrastructure (GI)** is a strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services. It incorporates green spaces (or blue if aquatic ecosystems are concerned) and other physical features in terrestrial (including coastal) and marine areas. On land, GI is present in rural and urban settings. (See COM (2013) 249 Final – Green Infrastructure (GI) – Enhancing Europe's Natural Capital, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2013:0249:FIN:EN:PDF and also http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/ecosystems/index_en.htm)

Applicants should clearly explain whether and why their proposal falls under one or more of these project topics.

This list does not exclude the possibility of submitting proposals for topics that are not listed above, but falling under the general remit and objectives of *LIFE Biodiversity*. Note however that proposals that do not fall under these project topics will not receive points under the award criterion 4 'Contribution to the project topics' and are therefore unlikely to receive high overall scores. Be aware that in order to be considered as complying with one of the project topics, a proposal has to comply with the full list of requirements of the respective topic. Note that the maximum score (10) under award criterion 4 'Contribution to the project topics' will be awarded **only** to proposals that **fully** comply with at least one of the project topics; the indication of more than one project topic does not translate into higher scores. For details see the "*Guide for the evaluation of LIFE project proposals 2014*".

In particular, note that projects addressing topics 1 and 2 should 'test and apply' approaches; while this does not imply an obligation to be of a demonstrative nature, the simple application of well-established approaches will not be considered sufficient to comply with this project topic. Concerning topic 2 it is important to note that projects should cover the three steps in a comprehensive framework; this means that a standard project dealing only with e.g. control of an IAS will normally not be considered as fitting the requirements for this topic. Best practice is acceptable for project topic 3 and is acceptable for project topics 1 and 2 if the approaches are tested and applied. Note also that LIFE *Biodiversity* projects addressing topics 4 and 5 must be clearly demonstration or pilot projects. All demonstration and pilot projects must have as an **integral part** of the project the evaluation and active dissemination of the results and lessons learnt (for further information see section 1.2).

	Best practice	Demonstration	Pilot
Project topic 1	Yes (if tested and applied)	Yes	Yes
Project topic 2	Yes (if tested and applied)	Yes	Yes
Project topic 3	Yes	Yes	Yes
Project topic 4	No	Yes	Yes
Project topic 5	No	Yes	Yes

2.4 How to conceive a LIFE Nature or LIFE Biodiversity project proposal?

When preparing your proposal, the following main types of eligible actions must be clearly distinguished:

> Preparatory actions (A Actions),
> Land purchase/lease of land and/or compensation payment for land use rights
> (B Actions),
> Concrete conservation actions (C Actions),
> Monitoring of the impact of the project actions (D Actions),
> Communication and dissemination actions (E Actions),
> Project management and monitoring of project progress (F Actions).

To be taken eligible for funding, all actions must meet each of the following conditions:

- the need of the action has to be well justified in view of the objectives of the project; and
- the long-term sustainability of the investments must be guaranteed.

2.4.1 Volume of concrete conservation actions (the "25%-rule")

At least **25%** of the total budget of a *LIFE Nature* or *LIFE Biodiversity* project must concern "concrete conservation" actions. In this context, *"concrete conservation"* actions are those that _directly_ improve (or slow/halt/reverse the decline of) *the conservation status / ecological condition* of the species, habitats, ecosystems or ecosystem services targeted.

Preparatory actions (e.g. planning and preparation of the concrete conservation actions) and land purchase / lease / compensation payments count towards this 25% *insofar as they are _directly_ necessary for the execution of concrete actions during the project's lifetime*. Any investments necessary to facilitate new management actions are also considered as an element of concrete conservation actions.

Monitoring of reintroduced species will only be considered as concrete conservation if the monitoring can re-direct the course of the reintroduction action.

Legal protection will only be considered as concrete conservation if it is fully achieved within the project duration.

Actions that aim to influence the behaviour of key stakeholders (e.g. farmers, hunters, fishermen, visitors) so as to indirectly benefit the site/species/habitats targeted, may only be considered as concrete conservation actions if all of the following conditions are met:

a) the inappropriate behaviour of the stakeholders in question is an important threat to the site/species/habitat targeted;

b) the action has as its main objective changing the behaviour of specified stakeholder groups in a specified way that will clearly benefit the habitat/species in a specified way;

c) the behaviour in question is foreseen to change during the project duration;

d) this action is sufficiently quantified (no of persons reached by the action, % whose behaviour will be favourably changed during the project, estimation if possible of favourable impact on the species/habitat targeted, …);

e) this change is explicitly monitored by the project to check the results.

Visitor management actions (e.g. fences, trails) will only be considered as concrete conservation actions if the proposal can show that the visitors already directly have a negative impact on the conservation status of the habitats/species targeted.

Under past LIFE programmes, Nature and Biodiversity proposals were frequently rejected for not complying with the requirement for a minimum of 25% concrete conservation actions. Project actions for concrete conservation must be clearly identifiable as such (i.e. they must be 100% concrete conservation and not a mix of concrete conservation with other activities). Note that the mere listing of actions in the C1c section of the application does not qualify them as concrete actions; the content of the action must correspond to the description provided in this section.

It is strongly advised that *LIFE Nature* and *LIFE Biodiversity* projects include *significantly more* than 25% concrete conservation actions. During the evaluation and revision of the proposal, certain actions may be considered ineligible and removed from the project. Furthermore the applicant may consider certain actions to be concrete, whereas the selection team may not. If the percentage of concrete actions falls under 25%, the whole project may be rejected for that reason.

Exceptions to the concrete conservation actions requirement

Proposals allocating less than 25% of their budget to concrete conservation actions will generally be considered ineligible. There are, however, two <u>exceptions</u> to this rule for *LIFE Nature* projects:

- **Marine site designation projects:** Projects for inventories and planning for the designation of new marine offshore *Natura 2000* sites (either offshore or in territorial waters) or their extension do not need to include concrete conservation actions (for a definition of the term "offshore" within the context of *Natura 2000* marine sites please refer to page 7 and to section 2.6 of the document "Guidelines for the establishment of the *Natura 2000* network in the marine environment" - http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/marine/docs/marine_guidelines.pdf). Any such proposal must, however, include a **commitment from the Competent Ministry/Authority** to designate the site(s) concerned as *Natura 2000* sites before the end of the project and **the Competent Authority must be a beneficiary of the project** (coordinating or associated beneficiary). The designation of the site must be the subject of a specific action in the project, with the Competent Authority responsible for its implementation.

- **Article 11 projects**: *LIFE Nature* projects for the **support and/or the further development of the surveillance of the conservation status** of natural habitats and species covered by the Birds and Habitats Directives (in the sense of Article 11 of the Habitats Directive) do not have to include concrete conservation actions. In any such cases, **the Competent Authority in charge of the Article 11 monitoring**

must be a beneficiary of the project (coordinating or associated beneficiary). Proposals for routine monitoring or for merely local improvement in monitoring will not be considered as qualifying for this exception.

2.4.2 Recurring activities for site or species management

A recurrent management action is an action that needs to be carried out periodically (at least annually) in order to maintain the conservation status of a species, habitat, or ecosystem.

In line with the general rule about ongoing actions (see section 1.6.13), ongoing recurrent actions are generally ineligible. For example, any site surveillance, periodic mowing or long-term monitoring actions, which were ongoing already before the start of the project, is generally ineligible.

New recurrent actions are, in principle, eligible for funding in *LIFE Nature* and *LIFE Biodiversity* projects. In particular recurring actions with a clear pilot demonstration value may be considered as eligible for funding.

However, projects foreseeing recurring actions must sufficiently demonstrate the long term sustainability and European added value of the proposed action. The applicant must therefore explicitly undertake that the project beneficiaries will continue after the project's end any recurrent actions started and carried out during the project, and explain how this continuation will be financed. The implementation of this commitment will be checked at the time of the final payment, when the Contracting Authority will verify that the recurring actions are still being undertaken at the required periodicity, or that all administrative and budgetary conditions are fulfilled to ensure their continuation at the appropriate time. If there is no such assurance that the recurrent action will be continued after the end of the project, all related costs will be ineligible.

2.4.3 Maximum co-financing rates

For the duration of the Multiannual Work Programme for 2014-2017, the maximum EU co-financing rate for *LIFE Nature* and *LIFE Biodiversity* is 60% of the total eligible project costs.

By way of exception, a maximum co-financing rate of 75% is applicable to projects that focus on concrete actions for priority habitats/species of the Birds and Habitats Directives. This higher financing rate will only be applied to projects allocating 50% or more of the total estimated cost for concrete conservation actions, to activities **directly** benefitting priority habitats or species. The proposal must identify clearly all actions benefitting priority habitats or species and the method used to calculate the corresponding costs (including overheads) must be explained. It is extremely important that the proposal include complete and correct information on the species and habitats targeted by each action. The 75% rate will only be granted to projects for which clear and convincing details have been given, allowing the Contracting Authority to verify the eligibility of the requested rate.

Priority habitat types and priority species of the Habitats Directive are those marked by an asterisk in Annexes I or II of this Directive. If you have any doubts as to whether a habitat is a priority habitat, you are advised to consult the Interpretation Manual of EU Habitats:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/habitatsdirective/docs/2007_07_im.pdf

Bird species considered as "priority for funding under LIFE" are those that appear in the following list:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/wildbirds/action_plans/docs/list_annex1 .pdf

2.4.4 *Preparatory actions*

As a general principle, all preparatory actions must produce practical recommendations and/or information that can be implemented and be used without requiring further preparatory work. Furthermore, where exceptionally preparatory actions do not lead to direct implementation during the project, the proposal must provide a sufficient set of explanations, commitments and guarantees to show that their full implementation after the project is effectively ensured. Most projects include preparatory actions.

Preparatory actions should:

- be clearly related to the objective(s) of the project;
- be significantly shorter than the project duration and end well before the end of the project;
- not be research actions, unless they fall under the exception described in point 1.6.15 of this Guide,
- not be inventories of new or existing *Natura 2000* sites (except for new offshore marine sites).

Preparatory actions may for example include:

- Actions preparatory to the concrete conservation actions of the project (technical planning, permit procedures, stakeholder consultations, etc.);
- Drafting *Natura 2000* site management plans;
- Drafting, monitoring and reviewing strategic initiatives related to targets or actions of the Biodiversity Strategy (at trans-national, national, regional or local level) not focused on the *Natura 2000* network;
- Developing conservation action plans for species/habitat types of the Birds and Habitats Directives;
- Developing action plans on Invasive Alien Species, in particular on pathways of introduction and spread, or development of surveillance and early warning plans;
- Preliminary studies required to improve the integrity and connectivity of the *Natura 2000* network.

Where management plans, action plans, strategies or other similar plans are drafted or modified in the framework of a *LIFE Nature or LIFE Biodiversity* project, they must become legally operational before the end of the project. Therefore, in those Member States where a procedure for their legal adoption and/or approval exists, this procedure must be completed before the end of the project, otherwise, the related expenses will be ineligible. Applicants are therefore advised not to include actions to develop such plans unless they are **certain** that they will be legally operational before the end of the project. The applicant should include a timetable showing how and when the plans developed will become legally operational.

2.4.5 _Land purchase/lease of land and/or compensation payment for use rights_

This includes:

- the purchase of land and associated costs (e.g. notary expenses, taxes, etc.);
- the long-term lease of land and associated costs;
- one-off land use compensation payments and associated costs.

(Note: Short term lease and/or compensation payments can only be eligible for funding if they serve for demonstration of pilot actions – see below)

Any land purchase payments, compensation payments or lease payments to public bodies are not eligible, with the exception of compensation or short-term lease payments to local authorities (i.e. municipalities or similar).

It is recommended that local authorities re-invest the income from such payments into conservation or public awareness-raising measures for _Natura 2000_ network or the Biodiversity Strategy. _Those proposals which include a commitment from the local authorities in question to do so will be considered for a higher scoring on EU added value in the project evaluation process and may therefore have a higher chance of being selected for co-funding._

a) _Land purchase_

The eligibility of any costs for land purchase is subject to the conditions listed below. The **applicant must address each of these conditions in his proposa**l, explaining how each condition is met or will be met during the project.

(i)   The land purchase must be clearly related to the objectives of the project.

(ii)   The land purchased must contribute to improving, maintaining or restoring the integrity of the _Natura 2000_ network.

(iii)   The purchase is the only or most cost-effective way of achieving the desired conservation outcome.

(iv)   The land purchased is reserved in the long-term for uses consistent with the objectives set out in Article 11 of the LIFE Regulation, through the most appropriate form of legal protection.

(v)   The beneficiaries must ensure that the sales contract / notary act and/or entry in the land register includes a guarantee that the land is assigned definitively (without time limitation) to nature conservation purposes. Where both possibilities exist (sales contract and land registry entry), the beneficiaries must use the option that offers the strongest long-term protection. Note that at the latest with the final report, the beneficiaries will have to submit a copy of the sales contract and/or entry in the land register including the above mentioned guarantee. Should they fail to provide such documents, the corresponding land purchase costs and associated costs will be considered ineligible. For countries where it would be illegal to include such a guarantee in both the land register and in the sale contract, the Contracting Authority may accept an equivalent guarantee, provided it offers the same legal level of protection in the long term.

(vi)   The land must be purchased by one of the project beneficiaries who is either a well-established private organisation (e.g. nature conservation NGO or other) or a public body with nature conservation responsibility, and must remain in its ownership after the end of the project.

(vii)   The proposal must demonstrate that each beneficiary that will carry out land purchase has the necessary competence and experience in land purchase for nature conservation, and that the planned target is realistic within the time framework of the project.

(viii)   If the purchasing body is a private organisation, its statutes must include a provision that, in case of dissolution, the land will be transferred to another legal body primarily active in the field of nature conservation (e.g. another conservation NGO or appropriate public body).

(ix)   Evidence must be provided in the proposal that the purchase price is consistent with the current market prices for the type of land and the region concerned.

(x)   Evidence must be provided that the land purchased was not owned by a public authority prior to the project starting date. Purchase of land that has recently been transferred from public to private ownership will not be eligible.

(xi)   Land purchased must be the subject, during the project, of specific restoration and/or active management or restrictions of use that go beyond legal obligations and existing restrictions that could not be imposed without purchasing the land. The purchase of land that is in excellent conservation status (i.e. that requires no restoration or specific management or restrictions of use) is only eligible if strategic to the objectives of the project.

b)   ***Long-term land lease, purchase of rights and one-off compensation payments***

The same conditions listed above apply, as and where appropriate, to these types of payments. The applicant must address each of these conditions in the proposal, explaining how each condition is met or will be met during the project. The duration of a lease must be sufficient to guarantee the durability of the conservation investment (e.g. 30 years). See also the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement.

c)   ***Short term land lease or temporary compensation payments***

Land lease or compensation payments with a limited duration, within the project period, will **only** be eligible **insofar as** they are **necessary for the demonstration of pilot actions favourable to the conservation status of the species, habitats or ecosystem targeted**. Note that appropriate justification for the cost-effectiveness of short term lease payments (consistency with current market prices for the type of land and the region concerned) will have to be provided with the project's final report.

2.4.6 *Concrete conservation actions*

Concrete conservation actions must aim to directly improve (or slow/halt/reverse the decline of) the conservation status / ecological condition of the species, habitats, ecosystems or ecosystem services targeted. Their impact must be measurable and must be monitored and evaluated during the project.

The maintenance of the investments made through these actions must be ensured in the long-term after the end of the project. Amongst others, where actions take place on land that does not belong to any of the beneficiaries, they must establish a convention with the owner in which he/she commits not to take any action that would compromise the investments/restoration made by the project. This convention must be for a suitably long

period (ideally 30 years or longer). The establishment of these conventions must appear explicitly in the description of the relevant action(s) and in the corresponding "expected results" section.

For the purpose of these guidelines site-based concrete conservation actions are distinguished from species (non-site) related actions. Site-based actions are land-based actions carried out on a specific site, while non-site related actions are independent of a specific site. Nevertheless, some species-oriented concrete conservation actions like reintroduction and translocation (see point d below) also have site-based elements.

a) Site-based conservation actions inside Natura 2000 sites:

For *LIFE Nature* projects, site-based conservation actions generally take place within existing designated *Natura 2000* sites. *LIFE Biodiversity* projects may also include actions inside *Natura 2000* sites.

For each *Natura 2000* site targeted, the applicant should provide a general description and (in annex) a map of the site, indicating where each action is planned to take place. The project area will be the whole of the *Natura 2000* site(s) targeted by the project (it is thus unnecessary to further delimit a project area within the *Natura 2000* site, unless there are specific reasons for doing so).

Please note that many applicants provide maps indicating *Natura 2000* perimeters that do not correspond to the official ones (i.e. as notified to the EU by the Member State in question). Many provide maps that indicate SCI perimeters whereas the project targets birds or indicate SPA perimeters where the project targets habitats or species of the Habitats Directive. Such proposals generally receive a lower score as it is not certain that all the actions proposed will take place within the site or contribute to the integrity of the *Natura 2000* network and therefore may be in all or in part ineligible and need to be deleted. Even if selected, such proposals often have serious problems during the short revision period. Applicants are advised to check that the perimeters on their maps correspond to those on the EU *Natura 2000* viewer available to the public (http://natura2000.eea.europa.eu).

In *LIFE Nature* projects, actions targeting species and habitats not listed in a site's official *Natura 2000* Standard Data Form (SDF) are ineligible. Applicants are advised to check this carefully. These SDFs can be viewed at http://natura2000.eea.europa.eu/ (note: this public site is updated generally within a couple of months of the Commission receiving data from the Member States, however in some cases it may take up to six months for the very latest information to be added). Where the species/habitats are in fact present but are not in the SDF, actions targeting them in that site **can only be accepted** if the proposal contains a letter of commitment from the competent authority to update the data sheet before the end of the project. For *LIFE Nature* projects, actions targeting bird species must take place within SPAs, actions targeting habitats or species of the Habitat Directives must take place within pSCIs/SCIs/SACs.

Eligible site-based conservation actions inside *Natura 2000* sites concern a wide range of **restoration** and **management** actions too numerous to list here.

b) Site related actions outside of Natura 2000 sites, for improving the ecological coherence / connectivity of the Natura 2000 network:

These may be included in projects if each of the following conditions is met:

(i) Evidence is provided that the investments foreseen **contribute to an "improvement of the ecological coherence of the *Natura 2000* network"**;

(ii) A guarantee is provided for the long-term sustainability of these investments, in the form of a commitment for giving these sites **the most appropriate legal or contractual protection status** before the end of the project, i.e. in the proposal the applicant must provide detailed information on the proposed protection status and explain why it is considered as being sufficient for securing the long-term sustainability of the investments;

(iii) The national *Natura 2000* network of sites is considered as sufficient for the species/habitats targeted by the project.

Exceptionally, **protected area status is not required** for sites where an **infrastructure** will be located that act as animal migration corridors (e.g. eco-ducts, fish passes) that would enhance the possibilities for the migration of animals, if each of the following conditions is fulfilled:

(i) In the proposal the applicant explains how the species population targeted already benefits from an appropriate *Natura 2000* site designation of their main breeding, feeding and/or resting areas;

(ii) In the proposal the applicant provides evidence that the future use and maintenance of the infrastructure is backed by an appropriate land use planning at the most relevant administrative level.

c) *Other site-based conservation actions outside Natura 2000*

LIFE Biodiversity projects may include site-based conservation actions not connected to the *Natura 2000* network.

Exceptionally, *LIFE Nature* projects may include actions for improving the conservation status of species listed **in Annex IV, but not in Annex II of the Habitats Directive.** Costs for site-based conservation actions for the conservation of Annex IV species not listed in Annex II is not conditional upon a *Natura 2000* site status of the lands targeted. However, a guarantee must be provided for the sustainability of any such investments, in the form of a commitment for giving these sites **the most appropriate legal protection status** before the end of the project. When submitting the proposal, the applicant must provide detailed information on the proposed protection status and explain why it is considered as being sufficient for securing the long-term sustainability of the investments. Land purchase is not possible in this context.

d) Species re-introduction and other conservation introductions/translocations

Concrete conservation actions to reintroduce or translocate species can only be considered eligible for funding, when the project proposals meet all conditions listed below.

The applicant must address each of these conditions in his proposal, explaining how each condition is met.

In the case of re-introduction and other conservation translocation projects and actions the proposal has to demonstrate that each of the following conditions is met:

(i) the actions are justified, expected to yield quantitative conservation benefit based on a cost/benefit analysis, and have a high chance of success based on a thorough risk and feasibility analysis;

(ii) the reintroduced/translocated organisms are likely to be able to cope with new pathogen and stresses encountered at the destination site and the risk of reintroducing new pathogens in the destination area are minimised;

(iii) alternatives to reintroduction/translocation have been assessed as less effective or infeasible as a means to reach the specific and clearly defined conservation objectives of the reintroduction/translocation;

(iv) the actions target areas where the causes of extinction of the species have been eliminated;

(v) the removal of individuals from their present habitat for re-introduction is only considered if it does not endanger the captive or wild source populations;

(vi) the actions target areas whose habitats and climate meet, the foreseeable future, the conditions necessary for the survival of a viable population of the species;

(vii) a prior agreement between all parties involved (e.g. between the competent authority for the donor population and the manager of the area of reintroduction) has been concluded and documented;

(viii) the actions target only areas where the attitude of the local population towards the planned reintroduction is favourable or where there is a reasonable expectation that local acceptance can be achieved during the project;

(ix) either

 o organisms are only reintroduced *in areas where they previously occurred*

or

 o organisms are deliberately introduced/translocated *outside their indigenous ranges* in order to

  ▪ prevent the extinction of populations of the focal species where protection from current or likely future threats in its current range is deemed less feasible than at alternative sites or

  ▪ re-establish an ecological function lost through extinction through introduction of organisms which are a close relative of the extinct species, within the same genus, and which belong to the closest and most similar population available (in terms of genetics, ecology, etc.).

  In case of such a conservation introduction/translocation, it must be possible to reliably assess that they present low risks.

(x) the proposal must include a preparatory phase, a re-introduction phase and a follow-up phase, as well as of an exit strategy, in case the translocation/reintroduction does not proceed according to plan.

In *LIFE Nature* projects, re-introduction and other conservation introductions/translocation projects and actions **outside existing *Natura 2000* sites** are only eligible, if the proposal meets each of the following additional conditions:

(xi) it includes a commitment from the competent authority for *Natura 2000* site designation to designate the core reproductive and feeding areas of the (re)introduced/translocated population as *Natura 2000* sites before the end of the project (provided the (re)introduction/translocation has been successful);

(xii) it ensures that the competent authority for *Natura 2000* site designation is a beneficiary of the project (coordinating or associated beneficiary). A specific action, implemented by the competent authority for the designation must be included in the proposal.

Further guidelines on re-introduction and conservation translocation and can be found in the following document:

http://www.issg.org/pdf/publications/RSG_ISSG-Reintroduction-Guidelines-2013.pdf

e) Species-related actions (that are not necessarily site-based)

i. *Species-related conservation actions that target species of the Birds / Habitat Directives*

This concerns any actions other than site-based actions that are necessary to improve the conservation status of species covered by the Birds Directive (Annex I or II or regularly occurring migratory species) or Habitats Directive (Annex II, IV or V). Such actions should be clearly distinct from those that concern site protection and must address significant conservation issues. In the proposal, the **applicants must explain in detail the planned conservation actions and the necessity to take these actions regarding the targeted specie(s) and provide guarantees and commitments that the investments made will be sustained in the long-term.** Such projects may include, amongst others:

- Actions related to the direct protection of animal species against unintentional or incidental disturbance, collection, capture, poisoning or killing. These may in particular concern wide-ranging or mobile species for which the designation of *Natura 2000* sites and the associated conservation and management of sites are not sufficient to ensure a favourable conservation status. For example, this may concern actions to remove or modify technical devices or infrastructures such as electric power lines, fishing gear, etc.;
- Actions for combating invasive alien species or mitigating the negative impact of climate change, insofar as they directly benefit the species targeted by the project.

ii. *Ex situ conservation actions*
These concern actions such as captive breeding, seed banks, etc., and may include sustainable investments in infrastructure / equipment. **In order to be eligible as well as to be considered as a concrete conservation action, ex situ conservation must be linked to a reintroduction during the project.** Exceptionally these investments will be considered eligible in the absence of a planned reintroduction if clear justification is given to prove that ex situ conservation is the only possible/useful type of conservation action at present for that/those species

iii. *Other species-related conservation actions that target species not covered by the Birds / Habitat Directives*

Such actions are allowed for *LIFE Biodiversity* projects (see section 2.3.3 above on project topics).

2.4.7 *Monitoring of the impact of project actions (obligatory)*

Each project will have to report on the outcomes and impact of the project taking into account the relevant outcome indicators listed in section 7.1 of the LIFE multiannual work programme for 2014-2017. The project proposal will therefore have to foresee monitoring actions that will facilitate this reporting, establishing baselines and monitoring the progress and results of all actions contributing to halting and reversing biodiversity loss, including the support of the *Natura 2000* network and tackling the degradation of ecosystems.

These monitoring activities are distinct from the monitoring of the project progress (F actions).

In particular, the concrete conservation actions (C actions) must lead to a measurable improvement of the conservation status of the species/habitats or the biodiversity problem targeted by the project. Monitoring these effects should take place throughout the project and its results should be evaluated on a regular basis. In this view, every project proposal including concrete conservation actions must contain an appropriate amount of monitoring activities in order to measure their **impact on the species/habitats/biodiversity problem targeted**.

Furthermore *pilot/demonstration* projects must have a clear set of actions for evaluating the main project findings and outcomes, including the cost-efficient replicability or transferability of the actions and results and the measures taken to ensure the actual replication or transfer of successful pilot/demonstration actions. Proposals that are insufficient in these respects will not be considered pilot/demonstration.

The proposal should identify <u>specific indicators</u> to be used to measure the impact of the project (or foresee an action to do so). These indicators should be coherent with the conservation or biodiversity problem addressed and the type of activities planned during the project. The initial situation from which the project starts should be assessed and progress should be regularly evaluated against it. Note that during the project implementation, beneficiaries will be required to produce a report on a set of programme indicators based on section 7.1 of the LIFE multiannual work programme for 2014-2017. Further guidance on indicators will be issued by the date of grant signature.

The monitoring of the project impact should allow the project management team either to confirm the adequacy of the developed means to address the specific problems and threats, or to question these means and develop new ones for implementation during the project duration if possible. At the end of the project, the beneficiaries should be able to quantify the progress achieved, in terms of impact on the targeted species/habitats or on the targeted biodiversity issue. However, depending on the species/habitats targeted and on the actions foreseen, it is recognised that their impact may not always be practicably measurable within the project's lifetime.

Each proposal containing concrete conservation actions must also include two separate actions aimed to assess the **socio-economic impact** of the project actions on the local economy and population, and to assess the project's impact on the **ecosystem functions**. This may, for example, take the form of a study consolidating the data and results over the project lifetime, to be delivered with the Final Report. Examples of positive effects of the

project are: direct or indirect employment growth, enhancement of other activities (e.g. ecotourism) aimed to develop supplementary income sources, offsetting social and economic isolation, raising the profile of the area/region, resulting in increasing the viability of the local community (especially in rural areas). The direct linkages between the project measures and key ecosystem services provided, such as carbon sequestration, water purification, pollination, etc. should be clearly assessed. The impact of project actions aimed at restoring multi-functional ecosystems such as rivers, floodplains, forests, peatlands or mires should be assessed as far as possible in economic terms (monetary terms or if this is not possible there should be a qualitative estimation). All these should be consistent in so far as possible with the methodology on Mapping and Assessing Ecosystems and their Services (MAES) agreed at European level within action 5 of the Biodiversity Strategy

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/knowledge/ecosystem_assessment/index_en.htm

2.4.8 *Communication and dissemination actions (obligatory)*

Note that certain communication actions are obligatory for best-practice as well as for demonstration and for pilot projects (project web site, notice boards, use of LIFE / *Natura 2000* logos …) and should therefore be explicitly foreseen in the proposal as separate actions.

A **best practice** project must contain an appropriate amount of communication and dissemination actions. These typically include:

- information activities to the general public and stakeholders aimed at facilitating the implementation of the project;
- public awareness and dissemination actions aimed at publicising the project and its results both to the general public and to other stakeholders that could usefully benefit from the project's experience;
- activities to raise the awareness of *Natura 2000* network (obligatory for projects taking place in *Natura 2000* sites).

Should the proposal include the development of general guidelines for setting up management plans for *Natura 2000* sites / habitat types / species or guidelines for their practical management, it must demonstrate the need for such guidelines and that equivalent guidelines do not already exist elsewhere, and must identify the target "public" and how the guidelines will be distributed to them.

Should the proposal include the creation of **small-scale** visitor infrastructures, these may not exceed 10% of the budget allocated to concrete actions in the proposal budget, and must be well-justified and cost effective or else they will be deleted from the proposal during the revision phase.

P**ilot or demonstrative** proposals **must also include a significant set of actions to evaluate and disseminate the results of the project** so that the knowledge gained is actively communicated to those stakeholders that may apply the lessons from the project. Proposals that are insufficient in this respect will not be considered pilot/demonstrative. A crucial element is active networking with, and active dissemination to, other stakeholders that could apply the results.

Pilot and demonstrative projects should therefore typically include 2 distinct types of communication actions:

- information and awareness raising activities regarding the project to the general public and stakeholders. These actions should in general begin early on in the project.
- more technical dissemination actions aimed at transferring the results and lessons learnt **to those stakeholders that could usefully benefit from the project's experience** and implement themselves the actions demonstrated in the project. These actions should in general begin only once the method/technique being tested has been evaluated. They should continue for a sufficiently long period so that the results and lessons learnt are extensively disseminated before the end of the project.

The range of possible actions for both types of communication actions is large (media work, organisation of events for the local community, didactic work with local schools, seminars, workshops, brochures, leaflets, newsletters, DVDs, technical publications, …), and those proposed should form a coherent package. Each communication and dissemination action must clearly define and justify its target audience, and should be expected to have a significant impact. To be effective, these actions should in general begin early on in the project. The organisation of large and costly scientific meetings or the financing of large-scale visitor infrastructures is not eligible.

Each proposal must include an action entitled "Networking with other LIFE and/or non-LIFE projects". This must include visits, meetings, exchange of information, and/or other such networking activities with an appropriate number of other relevant LIFE projects (ongoing or completed). It may also include similar exchanges with other non-LIFE projects and/or participation in information platforms related to the project objectives (including at international level where justified).

See General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement for full details of communication and dissemination requirements. The LIFE website http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/toolkit/comtools/index.htm also contains detailed advice on communication and dissemination actions, in particular *LIFE Nature*: Communicating with stakeholders and the general public – Best practices examples for *Natura 2000* and the guidelines on how to design a LIFE web-site.

2.4.9 *Project management and monitoring of project progress (obligatory)*

Every project proposal must contain an appropriate amount of both project management and project monitoring actions. This typically involves at least all of the following actions and associated costs:

- Project management activities undertaken by the beneficiaries for the management of the project (administrative, technical and financial aspects) and for meeting the LIFE reporting obligations. The technical project management may be partially outsourced, provided the coordinating beneficiary retains full and day to day control of the project. The proposal should clearly describe how this control will be guaranteed. The project management structure must be clearly presented (including an organigram and details of the responsibilities of each person and organisation involved). It is strongly recommended that the project management staff has previous experience in project management. It is **strongly recommended** that the project manager be full-time. If a coordinator or project manager also directly contributes to the implementation of

certain actions, an appropriate part of his/her salary costs should be attributed to the estimated costs of those actions.

- Training, workshops and meetings for the project beneficiaries' staff, where these are required for the achievement of the project objectives.

- **Obligatory action**: each proposal must include an action to compile the information needed to complete the indicator tables (quantitative and qualitative) that must be submitted with the first Progress and Final Reports. These indicators will contribute to evaluating the impact of the LIFE project in view of the overall objectives of the LIFE Programme, in line with the Regulation and the Multiannual Work Programme for 2014-2017. Templates of the tables will be made available in due course.

2.4.10 Some lessons from past Calls for Proposals

- Some proposals whose core actions were clearly demonstration/innovation were nevertheless not considered as such because they did not contain a coherent and sufficient set of actions for the evaluation and dissemination of the results to those stakeholders that could use the lessons learnt.

- Some proposals that were to take place on essentially agricultural/forest land were rejected because the measures proposed could have been financed by agri-environment / Rural Development Programmes.

- A number of proposals were rejected because they were not directly related to nature or biodiversity or because the measures were poorly described.

- A number of proposals were rejected because they addressed domestic species.

- Projects were rejected for not demonstrating sufficient EU added value.

3. eProposal Tool

The eProposal tool allows applicants for LIFE "traditional" projects to create proposal(s) online. Only proposals submitted through eProposal are eligible to be evaluated.

Please post your IT questions about eProposal to

> **eProposal Help Desk:** env-life-eproposal-admin@ec.europa.eu

Please note that this Help Desk is only for IT questions related to the use of eProposal. All other questions about LIFE should be addressed by reading the documents included in the application package and, in case of need, by contacting the LIFE National Contact Point.

Please note that if you registered on eProposal for the 2012 or 2013 LIFE+ Calls for proposals, you may continue to use the same user credentials to register, and may skip steps 1 and 2. You may however be requested to change the password.

3.1 Step 1: Create your ECAS user ID and password (for all users)

Access to eProposal Welcome Page is provided via the LIFE web page.

The eProposal web tool is best viewed using Internet Explorer 8 or 9 or Mozilla Firefox 10.

Please note that the eProposal tool can only be accessed through ECAS (the European Commission Authentication Service). Therefore you have to register in ECAS first and obtain a user ID and a password.

Once you have authenticated your identification, you do not have to re-enter your credentials (username and password) within the same browser session.

In the 'New user?' menu click 'Register':
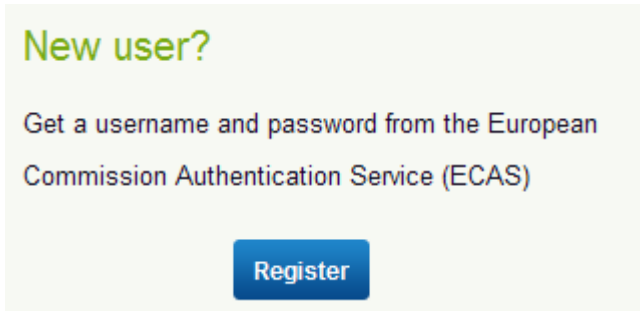
3.1.1 ECAS sign-up

Please provide the information required (compulsory fields are marked by a red asterisk *):

Note: If you cannot read the 'security check', do not hesitate to try another one by clicking on the icon ↻ beside the security check image.

Once you have submitted this information, click on the 'Sign up' button. You should then get the following message:

Sign Up

Thank you for registering, you will receive an e-mail allowing you to complete the registration process.

3.1.2 Create your ECAS password

You will receive a confirmation message at the provided e-mail account from ECAS (<ecas-admin@ec.europa.eu>).

Note: it can take up to half an hour for the confirmation e-mail to arrive. If you do not receive this e-mail at all, please first check your SPAM folder before contacting the eProposal Help Desk.

From the moment the e-mail was sent to you, you have 90 minutes
to generate your ECAS password!

In the confirmation e-mail received, click on 'this link'.

Define your password (minimum 10 characters, containing at least 1 capital letter and 1 digit or special character) and submit.

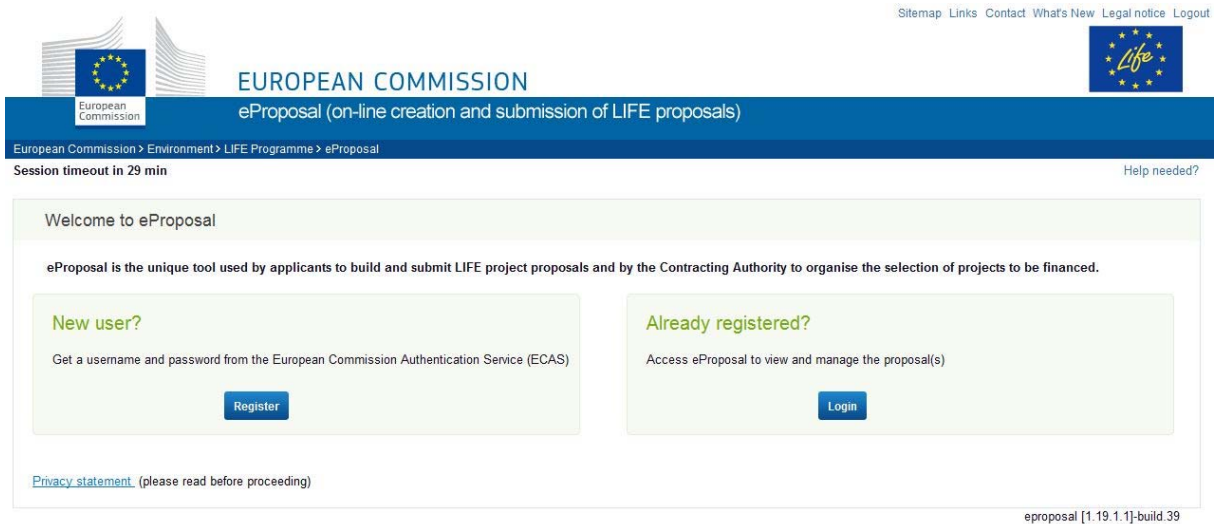Once submitted, the following message should appear:

New password

Your ECAS password was successfully changed.

You may change your password or ask for it to be reset in case you forget it. We recommend you keep safely the user ID / e-mail address and password you used to register for registration and login to eProposal (Step 2).
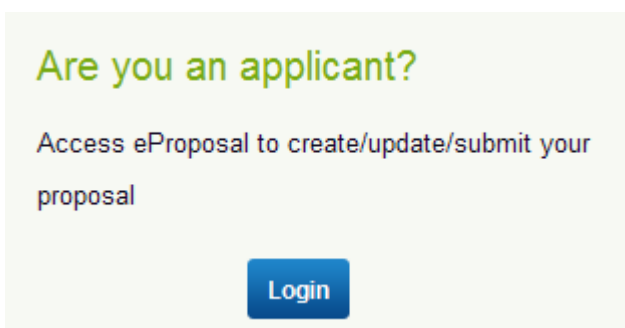
3.2 Step 2: Register as a user on eProposal (for all users)

Go to the LIFE eProposal Welcome Page

Click on the option 'Are you an applicant?'

In the "Are you an applicant?' menu click 'Login'.

You will be redirected to this page:

(1)   Check that the domain selected is 'External' (if not, please change it to 'External' by using the 'Change it' link and when asked 'Where are you from?', please specify 'Neither an institution nor a European body' + click on 'Select').

(2)   Enter your e-mail address and password (the one you created in Step 1).

(3)   Click on 'Login' button.

You are now in the LIFE eProposal tool.

Please select the **Applicant User** account type:

Register user

Select account type you request for | Applicant User

Message for an administrator

Continue

Then fill in the required information (compulsory fields are marked by a red asterisk *), and click on the 'Save' button available at the bottom of the screen.

You will get the following confirmation message: 'Your user account has been created'.

Once you are registered as a user, you will also see in the list of proposals any proposal you created (or were invited to see) during this LIFE Call or the 2012 and 2013 LIFE+ calls.

3.3 Step 3: Create a proposal (to be done by coordinating applicant)

Proposals may only be created in eProposal by registered users acting as "coordinating applicant", i.e. "the owner" of the proposal.

The 'coordinating applicant' will become the 'coordinating beneficiary' should the proposal be selected for LIFE co-financing.

You may now create a LIFE project proposal by clicking the 'Create new proposal' button available at the bottom of the screen:

You will be requested to input basic information concerning your proposal, based on the selected LIFE priority area. This information remains editable once the proposal has been created.

For this purpose, you will be automatically redirected to technical form A1 (see below). Please note that you have to fill in both form A1 AND form A2 in order to create a new project proposal in the eProposal tool. The proposal will be then identifiable with the project acronym entered in technical form A1. The information already entered while registering as an applicant will be available under forms A1 and A2 for the proposal you have created.

Please note that for technical reasons it will not be possible to digitally 'recycle' proposals from the LIFE+ programme. You cannot generate a new 2014 proposal based on a LIFE+ proposal; you would need to download the old proposal and cut and paste the contents into the 2014 application forms.

3.3.1 Manage access rights (optional)

A LIFE proposal created in eProposal is linked by default to its owner: the user who created it.

The owner of the proposal may:

-view / edit the proposal;

-invite other users and grant them edit rights;

-submit the proposal.

Management of access rights

In order for the owner to manage access rights and for other users linked to the proposal to view access rights, you have to perform the following operations:

(a)   Select the proposal for which you want to give access rights to another user or invite an associated beneficiary;

(b)   Go to Proposal menu / Access rights part.

        If only the owner is linked to the proposal, the screen will look like this

Inviting another user (optional)

(c)   In order to **invite** another user, the owner of the proposal (the coordinating applicant) must specify the e-mail address of the person to be invited in the bottom field of the screen 'List of proposal users'.

(d)   If the invited user is already registered on eProposal:

- The first and last names of this user will appear as '(Pending)' in the Access rights list of users.

- An invitation message is received at the e-mail address entered by the invited user when they registered to eProposal).

- The user logs on to eProposal: on the top of the first screen, the invitation is visible. The user may accept or reject it.

- If the invited user accepts the invitation, the proposal will appear in this user's list of proposals, and the user will be able to view it straight away. The owner of the proposal may then grant this user editing rights

(e)   If the invited user is NOT yet registered on eProposal:

- The first and last names of this user will appear as '(Pending)' in the Access rights list of users.

– An invitation message is received at the e-mail address of the invited user specified by the owner of the proposal. This message contains a link to register on ECAS (if needed, see Step 1) and another one to register on eProposal (see Step 2).

– The user logs on to eProposal: on the top of the first screen, both confirmation or registration and the invitation are visible. The user may accept or reject the invitation.

List of proposals

✓ Your user account has been created

ⓘ **Anne, Seekings-Le Quément** has invited you to join proposal **MERCAN CHOUETTE**.

Accept   **Reject**

–

– If the invited user accepts it, the proposal will appear in this user's list of proposals, and the user will be able to view it straight away. The owner of the proposal may then grant to this user editing rights.

(f)   The owner of the proposal may invite as many users as wished, following the same steps.

(g)   If several users are linked to a proposal, the Access rights screen will look like this (for the owner of the proposal, for the other users linked to it, all squares will be greyed out):

List of proposal users
Please find below the list of users linked to this proposal. Only the coordinating applicant can modify it, by clicking on the green squares to change a 'No' to 'Yes', or 'Yes' to 'No'.

First name	Last name	Email	Owner	Can view	Can edit	Actions
Seekings-Le Quément	Anne	eproposal6@gmail.com	Yes	Yes	Yes	
fdgh	ghdfgh	eproposal7@gmail.com	No	Yes	No	✖
(Pending)	(Pending)	eproposal.aom@gmail.com	No	No	No	✖

(h)   The owner of the proposal is always greyed out (at least one user must be owner of a proposal at all times).

User(s) who have accepted the invitation are listed and the squares in the columns 'Owner', 'Can view' and 'Can edit' are activated.

If the first and last names are still '(Pending)', it means that this (these) user(s) have not yet accepted the invitation.

The owner of the proposal may decide to **grant editing rights to other user(s) linked to that proposal**. The only condition is for the user to have accepted the invitation sent by the owner. This enables several users to work in parallel on the same project proposal.

To grant editing rights to a user, the owner must click on the 'No' square in the 'Can edit' column: it will then turn to yes. When that user next logs on to eProposal, s/he will be able to edit that proposal.

Important: If a user has been granted editing rights, s/he will be able to perform exactly the same actions as the coordinating beneficiary, i.e. modify, delete, add technical and financial data, etc. but will not be able to submit the proposal and invite other users. The switch between edit and view modes for an associated applicant can be performed as many times as needed / wished by the coordinating beneficiary.

Changing owner

The user that has to become the owner must have already been invited to the proposal. To change owner, the (original) owner must click on the 'No' square in the 'Owner' column corresponding to the user that is to become the new owner: after a confirmation message, it will then turn to Yes. From that moment on the 'former' owner does not have the possibility to manage user rights anymore. When the 'new' owner next logs on to eProposal, s/he will be able to manage user rights for that proposal.

Any data that was already entered in the technical and/or financial forms for the coordinating applicant (e.g. in relation to actions for which the coordinating applicant is responsible, or for costs incurred by this applicant), will have to be manually edited so as to align them to the new set-up of the proposal.

3.3.2 Validating and Submitting a proposal
Please note that both steps are compulsory to ensure that the proposal is taken into consideration during the evaluation process!

Validation

After completing the proposal, click on the 'Validate' button available on form A1. A number of pre-defined verifications will be launched throughout the entire proposal, such as checks that mandatory fields are filled in and in the correct format, coherency between dates, consistency of various elements of the budget, etc.

Validation error messages indicate missing or incorrect information.   They block the submission of the proposal (e.g. 'Total costs must equal total contributions').

When the validation is performed without any blocking errors, you will receive the following confirmation message:

Please note that at this stage the proposal has NOT been submitted yet.

Upon successful validation of the proposal, eProposal will request the owner whether s/he wants to submit the proposal at that moment.

Submission

Once the proposal is validated and before the submission deadline, the coordinating applicant (owner of the proposal) should submit the proposal by clicking on the 'Submit to Contracting Authority' button (this button becomes available on form A1 only after the proposal has been validated and no more blocking validation errors are identified).

After clicking on this button, you will receive the following message confirming that the proposal is successfully submitted:

The proposal can be modified, validated and (re)submitted as many times as needed until 16 October 2014 (16:00 Brussels time). Each subsequent submission overwrites the previously submitted version (earlier versions are not archived and are therefore not available anymore).

This submission deadline will only be extended in case of 'force majeure' or breakdown of the system and the new deadline (established in a way to compensate the down period) will be communicated on the LIFE website and eProposal welcome page immediately.

Each submitted proposal is automatically attributed a unique project reference code that includes the year of the call, the LIFE priority area and a sequential 6 digits number. All technical, financial and reporting forms will bear this code (e.g. 'Proposals / **LIFE14 NAT/FI/000001 LIFE Peatlands** / Financial Forms / **F1 – Direct personnel costs'**). This code will be referred to in all correspondence with the Contracting Authority during the selection procedure and during the project implementation, if the proposal is retained for LIFE co-financing. A proposal that has not been submitted yet does not carry a reference.

Important: proposals submitted can be modified and re-submitted until the submission deadline is reached. Only the final submitted version of the proposals will be evaluated by the Contracting Authority.

If you want your proposal to be taken into account under the evaluation process, please make sure that you click on the 'Submit to Contracting Authority' button prior to the submission deadline.

<u>The button 'Submit to Contracting Authority' will be deactivated at the submission deadline (16 October 2014 at 16:00 Brussels time). The Contracting Authority may not be held responsible for any problem caused by slow performance of the system or similar issues. Applicants should take the necessary steps to avoid "last minute" submissions.</u>

Please note that National Authorities can see that a proposal (identified by its reference, title, coordinating applicant, total costs and contribution requested) has been submitted, but cannot view the full proposal on-line until the submission deadline is reached, unless the coordinating applicant has given them the authorisation to do so.

This authorisation can be granted by executing the following steps which have to be carried out by the coordinating applicant:

(a)   Select the proposal for which you want to grant view rights to your National Authority;

(b)   Go to Proposal menu / Access rights part;

(c)   In the National authorities access section, click on the green square which by default reads 'No': it will then turn to 'Yes'.

(d)   When a National Authority user (for the Member State where the Coordinating applicant or one of the Associated applicants is/are registered) next logs on to eProposal, s/he will be able to view that proposal, even though the submission deadline has not been reached yet.

You may remove access authorisation at any point in time.

Please note that after the submission deadline has been passed, this option is no longer accessible (as the National authorities have read access by default to the proposal).

Post-submission Communication

Once the submission deadline has passed, communication with applicants who have submitted a proposal will be solely through the proposal Mailbox.

Only the owners of proposals with status 'Received by Contracting Authority' (and later statuses) have access to this Mailbox.

WHO CAN USE IT?
- the applicant: to read messages sent by the Contracting Authority or its Consultant and to reply to these messages and to initiate new messages addressed to the Contracting Authority or its Consultant;
- the Contracting Authority or its Consultant: to send messages to any Applicant and to read Applicants' replies.
- National Authorities: to view correspondence for the proposals to which they have access (Applicant or Associated Beneficiaries established in their Member State).

HOW DO I READ AND SEND MESSAGES?
There are 2 options to access the messages:

- go to the List of proposals: if you have a new message for a particular proposal, the icon

becomes visible in the 'Unread' column; click on it to access the mailbox directly
- if you have already opened a particular proposal, the "Mailbox" is available in the drop-down menu under 'Proposal'

These 2 options lead to the Thread list:

A thread groups all messages linked to the same 'Topic' (which is defined by the one who creates the thread), 'Phase' (the phase of the selection process to which this message is linked) and 'Type' (e.g.: rejection letter, question letter, instruction letter or 'Other').

Threads can be created and closed. Official threads (such as Rejection letter, Instructions letter, etc…) can only be created by the Contracting Authority. Applicants can create (and afterwards Close)

'Other' types of threads, using the button . The Contracting Authority and its Consultant can close any type of thread.

When clicking on icon for a given thread, the Thread details appear:

This screen enables you to view all past correspondence (green colour is used for messages posted by applicants, blue colour for messages posted by the Contracting Authority and its consultant). The same colours appearing in a stronger shade indicate a new message, whereas a message in a lighter shade indicates that it has been marked as read.

When clicking on the **Reply** button, the Applicant has the possibility to define a new message (choosing the recipient: Contracting Authority or consultant and clicking on **Save**; if necessary attachment(s) of 2MB maximum size each may be uploaded; please use only generic formats to ensure readability by other users).

By clicking on **Ready to send** the Applicant may see the message about to be sent and check its content and list of attachments. To send the new message click on **Send**. To continue editing the message click on **Not ready to send**.

HOW WILL I BE ALERTED IF A NEW MESSAGE IS AVAILABLE?
Applicants will receive an e-mail notification message in the mailbox corresponding to the e-mail address indicated on form A2, informing that a new message is available in their Proposal Mailbox.
We advise applicants to regularly check the Proposal Mailbox in eProposal as notification messages may sometimes not reach the recipient (e.g. filtered as SPAM, mailbox changed, mailbox full, etc.).
Only coordinating applicants will receive notification messages.

Deleting a proposal

A proposal which has not been submitted can be deleted at any point in time by the applicant (owner).

To delete a proposal:

- Find it in your list of proposals;

- For that proposal, click on the icon ✖ in the corresponding Actions column;

- When prompted 'Are you sure you want to delete proposal?', press 'OK' to delete it, or 'cancel' to cancel the deletion.

Please be aware that all the information entered in eProposal will be permanently deleted and therefore not retrievable anymore once you have deleted the proposal.

Withdrawal of a Proposal

The applicant (owner) retains the right to withdraw a proposal at any moment after submission. A withdrawn proposal will not be considered during the evaluation.

To withdraw a proposal:

- Find it in your list of proposals;

- For that proposal, click on the Edit icon ✎ in the corresponding Actions column;

- In the proposal menu, choose the Withdrawal form. There you will be able to detail the reason(s) why you need to withdraw your proposal (for instance: expected financing did not materialise), and to confirm the fact that you withdraw your proposal.

- If you click on 'OK' you will receive the following confirmation message:

⊘ Proposal has been successfully withdrawn.

4. Application forms

4.1 General rules

- In order to enter data into the proposal, use the 'Edit' mode; a 'View' mode is also available and you can switch from one mode to the other at any time during preparation of your proposal;

- You may introduce the information either directly into the textboxes or you may copy and paste information in simple text format; note that for security reasons, a text copied and pasted from a Word document or an html page may not be accepted entirely, therefore simple, basic text editors such as Notepad suit better for this purpose;

- **Always click on the 'Save' button before switching to another form**;

- All fields allow introducing a limited number of characters – these limits are clearly displayed. Please note that in order to ensure that the text input in large text fields can be printed in the pdf extract, only the following formatting may be used: bold, italics, underlined. Only simple lists (simple enumerations 1,2,3, A, B,C etc; or bullet points) will appear correctly. If you need to insert tables, do not do so in text fields: please use the Add picture(s) functionality available at the end of most forms;

- Fields marked with a red asterisk * are related to obligatory information and must be filled in; when validating the proposal, error messages will be displayed if mandatory fields have been left empty;

- The data between various technical and financial forms are intrinsically connected, this is why as a matter of principle the information will be introduced manually only once and then automatically transferred to other relevant forms across the application;

- Disabled fields cannot be filled in manually since the respective information will be extracted and/or calculated automatically from other forms;

- You will be allowed to insert objects (such as maps, graphs, tables, photos) in certain forms where the "Maps", "Pictures" or "Declaration" headings appear; you may only use png, jpg, tif, gif, bmp formats; pdf files may also be used if the file contains one single picture (nevertheless, if for technical reasons, the picture is not extracted from the file, try using any of the other 5 formats listed above); the maximum size accepted is 2MB;

- Enter all dates in DD/MM/YYYY format or use the calendar functionality where available;

- At any stage, you may view your proposal as a pdf document, by clicking the 'Request pdf' button available in the Proposal exports and Attachments sections of eProposal. Once the pdf version of your proposal has been created, you will receive an e-mail which will allow you to download it straight away, or to do so from the Proposal exports and Attachments sections of eProposal (remember to 'refresh' the page, press key F5) ;

- You may extract the content of your proposal in order to work off-line:
    - o B and C forms to an editable Word document, by clicking on the 'Download working copy' button available in the Proposal exports section;
    - o Financial forms and reports to an editable Excel document, by clicking on the 'Financial data export' button available in the Proposal exports and Attachments sections;
    - o Please note that these are only working documents to be used to prepare input in eProposal forms and fields. It is not possible to automatically transfer the Word text or the Excel data back into eProposal.

- All the content of a proposal can be edited / viewed using the Proposal menu available at the top of the screen:
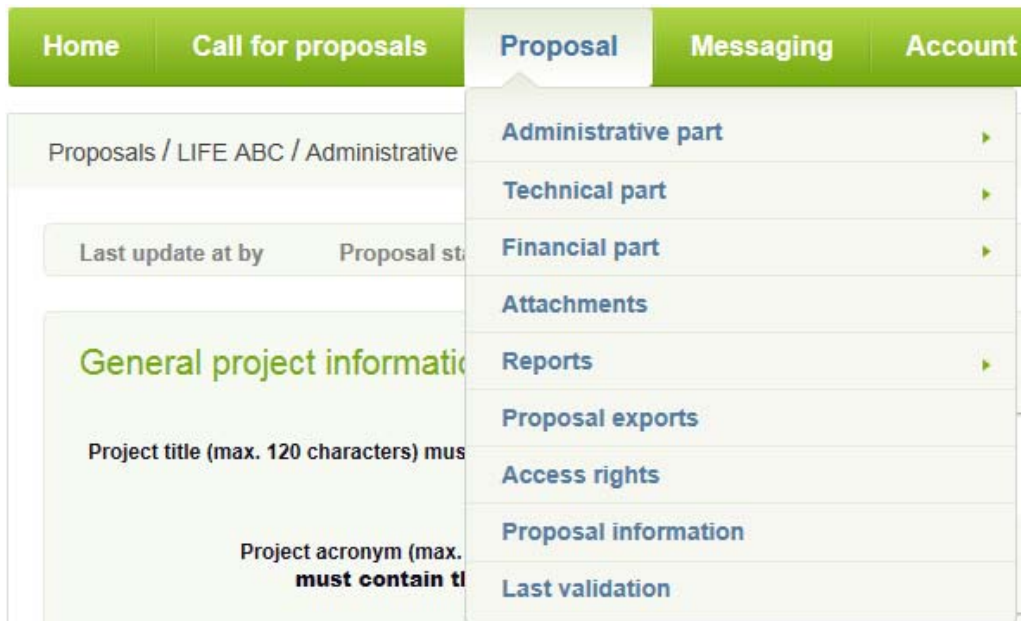
4.2 Technical application forms

The technical part of the *LIFE Nature* and *LIFE Biodiversity* application file consists of 3 parts (A, B and C).

Where you have no specific information to put on certain parts of obligatory forms (e.g. for "previous conservation efforts"), indicate "not applicable" or "none" or "no relevant information" or an equivalent indication. Do not leave empty parts in obligatory forms.

4.2.1 Administrative information (A forms)

<u>**Form A1 – General project information**</u>

Project title (max 120 characters): It should include the key elements and objective of the project, such as the name of the site and / or the name of the main species / habitat type or biodiversity issue targeted. Note that the Contracting Authority may ask you to change the title in order to make it clearer. The title of the project must be in English, even if the proposal itself is submitted in a different language.

Project acronym (max 25 characters): The acronym must contain the word 'LIFE', e.g. 'LIFE Urban Bees'. Once the proposal is created in the eProposal system, all technical, financial and reporting forms will bear this acronym (e.g. 'Proposals / **LIFE Urban Bees** / Technical Forms / **A1 – General project information**')

LIFE Programme priority area: Select the priority area from the drop-down menu
Applicants must indicate whether the project is being submitted to the sector Nature or to the sector Biodiversity.

Expected start date: Type in the date in the format DD/MM/YYYY or use the calendar functionality. The earliest possible start date is 16 July 2015. The start date should be realistic. Please note that if you choose a late date the costs of participation in the kick-off meeting for all new projects may not be eligible.

Expected end date: Type in the date in the format DD/MM/YYYY or use the calendar functionality.

Language of the proposal: Select the language from the drop-down menu. The Contracting Authority nevertheless strongly recommends that applicants fill in the technical part of the proposal in English.

Click on the 'Next' button and fill in form A2 (see below).

Please note that after the creation of the proposal (see below, form A2), you will be required to enter the following information in form A1:

The project will be implemented in the following Member State(s) / Region(s) or other countries:
- by default the eProposal tool selects the Member State where the applicant is legally registered (as per form A2). You may change it by using the 'Delete' and 'Add' buttons;
- to add a region, select the Member State, then the Region, and click on the Add button; at least one region must be selected.

If project actions will be implemented outside the EU, select the country from the drop-down list.

Member State	Selected regions	Actions
IT - Italy	All regions	✖
AT - Austria ▾	All regions ▾	Add

Form A2 – Coordinating beneficiary

Short Name (max 10 characters)**:** The beneficiary will be identified throughout the technical forms, the financial forms and the reports by its short name.

E-mail: This e-mail address will be used by the Contracting Authority as the single contact point for all notifications of correspondence availability with the applicant during the evaluation procedure (see above Step 3 point c. "3. Post-submission Communication").

Legal name (max 200 characters): Provide the full name under which the beneficiary is officially registered.

Legal Status: Select one of the following 3 choices: *Public body*, *Private commercial* or *Private non-commercial* (including NGOs). Tick the appropriate box. Further guidance on how to distinguish private entities from public bodies can be found in section 1.6.2 of this document.

Value Added Tax (VAT) number: If applicable, provide the entity's VAT registration number.

Legal Registration Number: If applicable, provide the entity's legal national registration number or code from the appropriate trade register (e.g. the Chamber of Commerce register), business register or other.

Registration date: Type in the date in the format DD/MM/YYYY or use the calendar functionality.

PIC Number (not compulsory): The PIC (Participant Identification Code) is a unique 9-digit code used for the identification of validated legal entities of projects funded under a number of EU programmes. **It is not mandatory to provide this number at the time of the proposal submission**, however applicants are invited to create it, by following the instructions provided at the link: http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/organisations/register.html[25]

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[25] During the registration for the PIC number, applicants will be required to provide some information which is used only for Horizon 2020 Programme and is irrelevant for the LIFE Programme. Therefore, when completing Step 1 - Status of the Organisation and if you wish to participate as a beneficiary only in LIFE projects, choose the minimal status by ticking only the 'Legal person' box. Similarly, for the cost method section, select the indirect cost method 'standard flat rate'. Should you decide at a later moment to participate in a project financed under the Horizon 2020 Programme, you may change the related information anytime.

The PIC will have to be validated at a later stage for all proposals selected for LIFE co-financing. Note that beneficiaries whose PIC is already validated will not have to submit anymore their legal and supporting documents.

Legal address: Enter Street name and no., PO Box, Town / City, Post code.

Member State: Select the relevant member state from the drop-down menu

Contact person information: Enter Name, Surname, Street name and no., PO Box, Town / City, Post code (if they are identical to the legal address, you may copy them directly).

Telephone/Fax: Provide information for the contact person.

Title: Title commonly used in correspondence with the person in charge of proposal co-ordination.

Function: Provide the function of the person in charge of coordinating the proposal. Example: Managing Director, Project Manager, etc.

Department / Service Name: Name of the department and / or service in the entity co-ordinating the proposal and for which the contact person is working. The address details given in the fields which follow must be for the department/service and not the legal address of the entity.

Website (max 250 characters): Provide the beneficiary's official website.

Brief description of the activities of the beneficiary (max 2000 characters): Please describe the entity, its legal status, its activities and its competence in nature / biodiversity conservation, particularly in relation to the proposed actions. The description given should enable the Contracting Authority to evaluate the technical reliability of the coordinating beneficiary, i.e. whether it has the necessary experience and expertise for a successful implementation of the proposed project.

For private non-commercial entities please provide the key elements that prove that the entity is recognised as such.

Click on the 'Save' button available at the bottom of the form.

Your project proposal has been now created in the eProposal system and the project acronym is automatically displayed on all screens and forms throughout the entire proposal.

Form A3 – Coordinating beneficiary declaration

This form is available at the end of form A2 under the heading 'A3 – Coordinating Beneficiary declaration'.

Some of the information contained in this form (name of the beneficiary, contribution, actions in which the beneficiary is involved and total cost) will be automatically retrieved from the data entered in other forms of the proposal.

Click on the 'Generate declaration' button and fill in manually the following fields:

- 'At….on….': Indicate the place and the date of the signature.
- 'Signature': This form must be signed.
- 'Name(s) and status of signatory': The **name** and **status** of the person signing the form must be clearly indicated.

Important:

Before completing this form, please check that the beneficiary does not fall into any of the situations listed in art. 106(1) and 107 of the Financial Regulation n° 966/2012 of 25 October 2012 (JO L 298 of 26/10/2012), reference:

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2012:298:0001:0096:EN:PDF

For accuracy purposes, make sure that this form is **generated**, signed and dated **after** having entered all the technical and financial data into your application.

When the form is completed, scan it as an image file (not as a .pdf file, see accepted formats under point 4.1 General rules), then upload it by using the 'Upload declaration' button.

Form A4 – Associated beneficiary declaration and Mandate

This form is available at the end of form A5 (see below) under the heading 'A4 – Associated Beneficiary declaration and Mandate'; click on 'Generate declaration'.

For completing this form, please also **see instructions for form A3.**

You need to manually fill in the following fields:

- The forename and surname of the legal representative of the future associated beneficiary signing the form.
- The forename and surname of the legal representative of the future coordinating beneficiary of the project.
- 'At….on….': Indicate the place and the date of the signature.
- 'Signature': This form must be signed.
- 'Name(s) and status of signatory': The **name** and **status** of the person signing the form must be clearly indicated.

Form A5 – Associated beneficiary

Click on the 'Create Associated Beneficiary' button: fill-in all necessary information and click on 'Save' button. The Associated Beneficiary then appears in the list of Associated Beneficiaries.

For completing this form, please **see instructions for form A2.**

If the associated beneficiary is not legally registered in the EU, select the country from the drop-down list.

Form A6 – Co-financers

If a co-financer will contribute to the project, click on the 'Add Co-financer' button: fill-in all necessary information and click on 'Save' button. The Co-financer then appears in the list of Co-financers.

For completing this form, please **see also the instructions for form A3 above.**

Note that the co-financer contribution will have to be entered in form FC (see below).

Status of the financial commitment: please indicate either "*Confirmed*" or "*To be confirmed*". If the status is "to be confirmed", this must be explained. Note that at a later stage in the selection process you will be required to provide the A6 form with status "confirmed".

When the form is completed, scan it as an image file (not as a .pdf file, see accepted formats under 4.1 Application forms – General rules), then upload it by using the 'Upload declaration' button.

Important note: A coordinating / associated beneficiary should only appear in the proposal with that single role of coordinating / associated beneficiary and not also as a co-financer. In case a coordinating / associated beneficiary wishes to be a net financial contributor to the project, they should still only submit forms A2/A3 or A4/A5 in which their financial contribution may be higher that their foreseen costs.

Form A7 – Other proposals submitted for European Union funding

Applicants should not underestimate the importance of this form: Clear and complete answers must be provided to each question (max 5000 characters for each question). LIFE projects should not finance actions that are better financed by other EU funding programmes (see, section 1.6.16). **Applicants must therefore verify this aspect carefully** and provide the fullest possible information in their answers. Supporting documents (e.g. extracts from the texts of the relevant programmes) should be provided (as far as possible and appropriate). Please also note point 1 of the declaration in form A3 that you have to sign; national authorities may be asked to review this declaration.

Form A8 – Declarations of support

Project proposals frequently include actions for which the coordinating and associated beneficiaries are not empowered to take the necessary decisions to ensure their successful completion. Typical examples are actions like management plan approval, *Natura 2000* site designation or modification or simply working on land falling partly or completely under the authority of a third party. For these proposals it is essential that the competent authority formally expresses its support and commitment to the proposal. The choice of the authority that should complete and sign the A8 form depends on the national / local administrative

context. Applicants are advised to carefully evaluate the necessity of such a support. Proposals including actions requiring this type of support for which the corresponding A8 form has not been completed and signed are likely to receive a low score during the award phase of the selection procedure.

For projects carried out in more than one country, this form (if considered necessary, see paragraph above), must be completed by the relevant competent nature conservation / biodiversity authority of **all participating countries**. In this case, one form needs to be completed by each authority.

The **name and legal status**, **full address**, **telephone** number, **fax** number, **e-mail** and **contact person** (name and function) of each authority should be indicated on the form.

The authority in question should indicate **whether, why and how** it will support this project. The authority's support or non-support for the project should be without ambiguity. The authority should indicate, in particular, if the proposed actions constitute part of a programme drawn up / approved by the competent authority. The reasons why the authority grants support should be described. If the competent authority is to play an active role in some aspects of project implementation (such as through the provision of a permit, the approval of a prepared management plan etc.), this should also be detailed.

Competent authorities that are directly involved as project beneficiaries do not need to complete an A8 form.

- Should the proposal include actions that require a commitment from the Member State to **designate new *Natura 2000* sites before the end of the project**, this commitment should be given in full detail here.

- It is also preferable, where possible, to include in this form a commitment from the Competent Authority to support or ensure the implementation of preparatory actions (e.g. draft management plans) after the end of the project (where this is not ensured during the project) and / or to disseminate and make use of the innovative techniques demonstrated by the project.

Signature: The form **must be signed** and the signature **must** be **dated**. The **name** and **status** of the person signing the form must be clearly indicated.

Click on the 'New declaration' button: fill-in all necessary information and click on 'Add' button. The Declaration then appears in the list of A8 forms. Click on the 'Print' icon to generate the declaration, print, sign and scan it as an image file (not as a .pdf file, see accepted format under point 4.1 General rules). Then, in the list of A8 forms, click on the 'Edit' button corresponding to the declaration, go to 'Declaration scanned image' at the bottom of the screen and upload it; click on the 'Save' button. You may delete it by clicking on the 'Remove' button.

Alternatively, you may ask the competent authorities to use the editable Word template document included in the Application package and upload it afterwards as a separate document in the 'Attachments' section of eProposal.

This form may also be used to indicate any other support to the project by **important stakeholder bodies, administrative bodies or individuals** that may be concerned by the project. The submission of such form(s) is encouraged in all cases where the feasibility or

the success of the project implementation is dependent on agreements from any third parties.

4.2.2 Technical summary and overall context of the project (B forms)

Form B1 – Summary description of the project (to be completed in English)

Please provide a Summary Description of your project. The description should be structured, concise and clear. It should include:

- **Objectives of the project (max 2,500 characters):** Please provide a detailed description of all project objectives, listing them by decreasing order of importance. These objectives must be realistic (be achievable within the timeframe of the project with the proposed budget and means) and clear (without ambiguity). They should concern mainly the species / habitats issue(s) targeted by the project, and should directly address the problems and threats identified in form B2d.

- **Actions and means involved (max 2,500 characters)**: Please explain clearly what means will be utilised during the project to reach the objectives indicated above (financial means should not be indicated). Please ensure that there is a clear link between the proposed actions and means and the project's objectives.

- **Expected results (quantified as far as possible) (max 2,500 characters)**: Please list the main results expected at the end of the project. These must directly relate to the species / habitats / biodiversity issue(s) targeted by the project and to the project's objectives. The expected results must be concrete, realistic and **quantified** as far as possible. Since the project's final achievements will be judged against its expected results, please make sure that the expected results are well defined and well quantified.

- **Climate-related project (max 2,500 characters):** applicants are required to indicate whether their project is significantly climate-related by ticking the appropriate box. If this is the case, a comments box is displayed that has to be filled in. A significantly climate-related project is defined as a project where the main actions concern initiatives and measures that can be used to reduce the vulnerability of natural and human systems against actual or expected climate change effects.

- **Project topics**: applicants are required to indicate whether the proposal addresses one or more of the project topics listed in section 2 of this document, by ticking the appropriate checkbox(es). If the proposal does not address any project topic, no checkbox should be, ticked.

- **Reasons why the proposal falls under the selected project topic(s) (max 2,500 characters)**: The applicant has to explain in detail why he considers that the proposal falls under the selected project topic(s).

If the project proposal is not presented in English, applicants may provide a summary description of the project in the language of the proposal as well. This is however optional. A separate form 'B1 – Summary description of the project (in the language of the proposal)' is available.

Form B2a – General description of the area(s) / site(s) targeted by the project

➢ *For projects with actions targeting a well-defined area / site:*

Please provide a general description of the area(s) / site(s) targeted by the project. If your project involves several distinct **sub-areas / sub-sites**, please fill in **one form for each**; use the 'Create new project site' button for this.

Note that for projects with site-based actions inside *Natura 2000* sites or intended to improve the integrity of the *Natura 2000* network, the project area is considered to include the entire area of all the *Natura 2000* sites covered by the project, i.e. the applicant should not define a project perimeter within a *Natura 2000* site. The form should include:

- **Name of the project area (max 200 characters)**: Please indicate the name of the area. The name indicated should be short and must be used consistently on all maps and technical forms of the proposal.
- **Surface area (ha):** Please indicate the total surface of the project area in hectares, rounded to two decimals.
- **EU protection status:** Please tick SPA and / or SAC / SCI / pSCI / none as relevant and indicate the corresponding *Natura 2000* site code, if relevant. In case the site is protected both under the Birds and Habitats Directive, both *Natura 2000* codes should be provided.
- **Other protection statuses according to national or regional legislation (max 500 characters)**: Please indicate, if relevant, any other international, national and / or local protection status.
- **Main land uses and ownership of the project area (max 1,000 characters):** Please indicate what are, at the project application date, the main uses made of the project site. Examples of uses are farming, tourism, urban, nature conservation etc. Please indicate the approximate percentages (in %) of the various uses, ensuring that the total reaches 100%. Please also indicate the ownership status / types of the area at the project application date (e.g. private, state, etc.) Please indicate the approximate percentages (in %) of the different ownership status / types, ensuring that the total reaches 100%.
- **Scientific description of the project area (max 10,000 characters):** Please provide a global description of the scientific value of the project area (botanical, zoological, geological, hydrological etc.). Whenever possible, please indicate the main sources of your information for this description.
- **Importance of the project area for the conservation of the species / habitat types or biodiversity issue targeted at regional, national and EU level (max 10,000 characters):** You must justify why you have selected this particular area for your project. You must explain why your choice is the most appropriate to reach the project's objectives. Indicate what actions are planned in this area and at what locations (where feasible provide a map in A4 or A3 format of the area / site summarising where each action will take place). As far as possible, provide quantitative information and indicate your main sources of information.

Maps are **mandatory for projects with site-based actions**. At least one map per project site (sub-area) should be presented. Each map should include where appropriate:

- A title **(max 250 characters)**,

- If relevant, indication if the area is a SPA and or SCI / pSCI /SAC, the name and code of the *Natura 2000* area,

- The location of the main habitats / species targeted by the project,

- The location of the different site-based actions, as planned in the proposal (these actions must be specified in the legend),

- The scale and legend of the map. The legend should include all project actions that have been located on the map, indicating its number and title (e.g. B1-Land purchase). The legend should also include the explanation of the habitats located on the map. Please indicate the official names and codes of these habitats,

- The boundary(ies) of the *Natura 2000* sites, if relevant. If the proposal includes actions targeting species / habitats of the Habitats Directive, pSCI / SCI / SAC boundaries must be indicated. If the proposal includes actions targeting bird species of the Birds Directive, SPA boundaries must be indicated.

- The boundary(ies) of the project area(s), only if they are different from the *Natura 2000* site boundaries.

- For information, and only if useful, the boundaries referring to other protection status either at regional or national level.

Applicants shall make sure that maps are of **very good quality** and contain all the requisite information. Maps should be presented in **A4 or A3 formats only**.

Note: A site-based *LIFE Nature* proposal may be rejected if the maps are of insufficient detail or quality. In particular, where relevant, the map must allow the evaluators to determine if the key actions will be implemented inside *Natura 2000* sites or in sites that will affect the integrity of the *Natura 2000* network.

➢ ***For projects without actions targeting a well-defined area:***

In case the project does not include actions targeting a well-defined area, you should describe as precisely as possible where the project will be implemented (city, area, region, etc.). Please use only one form, which should include:

- **Name of the project area(s) (max 200 characters)**: Please indicate the name of the city, area, region, etc. The name indicated should be short and must be used consistently on all maps and technical forms of the proposal.

- **Surface area (ha), EU protection status**, **Other protected statuses according to national or regional legislation, Main land uses and ownership of the project area, Scientific description of the project area:** Please indicate relevant information (see the notes for projects targeting a well-defined area or site above) or else 'NOT APPLICABLE'

- **Importance of the project area for the conservation of the species / habitat types targeted at regional, national and EU level (max 10,000 characters):** You must explain where the project will be implemented. Justify why you have selected this particular area for your project. You must explain why your choice is the most appropriate to reach the project's objectives.

Form B2b – Map of the general location of the project area

This map should locate **the project area(s) described in form(s) B2a**. It should locate the project area(s) within the country and, if necessary, within the region(s) concerned. In case the project does not include actions targeting a defined area, you should locate as clearly as possible where the project is implemented (city, area, region etc.).

The **title and scale of the map** must be indicated. The map should be of **high quality** and **high resolution**, preferably in colour. The map should be easy to read. It should include, as a minimum, a clear legend and the background (main cities, main administrative delimitations, main rivers, lakes and sea(s) with the corresponding names, and the main roads). In addition, topography and vegetal coverage may be indicated on the map, if appropriate.

Form B2c – Description of species / habitats / biodiversity issue targeted by the project

> ➤ *For LIFE Nature projects and for LIFE Biodiversity projects targeting defined species/habitats:*

List and provide a brief description of the **main species** and / or **main habitats** directly targeted by the project (**max 10,000 characters**). Please note that only the species and / or habitats directly targeted should be described.

For each of the main species targeted, please indicate:

- **Scientific name** (in Latin), as indicated in the EU Birds or Habitats Directive. Please note that the regularly occurring migratory bird species not listed in the EU Birds Directive which are targeted by the project should be listed here. If the species is a priority species (according to Annex II of the Habitats Directive or is on the list of priority bird species referred to in "75% co-financing" in the general principles section), please mark with an asterisk.
- The **Annex(es) of the EU Birds or Habitats Directive** where the species is listed.
- **Population size** within the project area. In case the project does not include actions targeting a well-defined area, please indicate the population size at regional, national or multinational level, as relevant.
- The **conservation status** within the project area. Please provide full and quantitative details. In case the project does not include actions targeting a well-defined area, please indicate the conservation status at regional, national or multinational level, as relevant.
- For bird species, please indicate whether the project area (if relevant) is used for **breeding, wintering and / or staging.**

For each of the main habitats targeted, please indicate:

- **Name and *Natura 2000* code**, as indicated in the EU Habitats Directive. If the habitat is a priority habitat (according to the Annex I of the Habitats Directive), please mark with an asterisk.
- The **% of the cover of the habitat type** over the whole project area and for each sub-area

- The **conservation status** within the project area (if relevant). Please provide full and quantitative details.

➢ *For all other LIFE Biodiversity projects:* Please describe the biodiversity issue(s) targeted by your project and the biodiversity / conservation status / ecological condition within the project area. In case the project does not include actions targeting a defined area, you should describe the biodiversity / conservation status / ecological condition at the scale of the city, area, region etc.

Form B2d – Conservation / biodiversity problems and threats & previous conservation efforts

Conservation / biodiversity problems and threats (max 10,000 characters): Identifying the threats in the project area(s) to the species / habitats or biodiversity issue(s) targeted is essential for determining which actions need to be undertaken. This section should describe these threats (in decreasing order of importance) and their importance for the conservation of the habitats/species targeted (both within the project area(s) and in general) or for biodiversity in general. Whenever possible, problems/threats should be located and quantified. The description should include: **the name of the threat**, its **description**, its **location** (if relevant), its **impact on biodiversity or on the habitats/species targeted** (quantify if possible) and an indication as to **how these problems and threats will be dealt with during the project**.

Previous conservation efforts in the project area or for the habitats/species targeted by the project (max 10,000 characters): Please describe whether any actions have been undertaken previously on the area or for the species/habitat type or biodiversity issue(s) targeted (e.g. any management plan drawn up, surveys conducted, land purchased etc.). Please indicate the year and results of these efforts. Please also indicate who was/is responsible for these efforts. If the project fits into a regional/national/EU conservation / biodiversity strategy, this should be clearly mentioned and explained here.

Form B3

Best Practice character of the project (max 10,000 characters): Please explain the best practice character of your project, if relevant. For details, see section 1.2.

Demonstration character of the project (max 10,000 characters): Please explain the demonstration character of your project, if relevant. For details, see section 1.2.

Pilot aspects of the project (max 10,000 characters): Please explain the pilot aspects of your project, if relevant. For details, see section 1.2.

EU added value of the project and its actions (max 10,000 characters):
Please indicate whether and how your project contributes to the updating and the development of the European Union environmental legislation. Describe if it contributes to the integration of the environment into other policies and/or if it contributes to sustainable development. Also indicate if it created synergies with the objectives of other EU policies.

Please indicate the added value of your project for the benefit for the species / habitats / biodiversity issue targeted by the project. Indicate what would be the situation should your project **not** be implemented. Indicate if the project will make a significant contribution to the conservation of the species / habitats / biodiversity issue targeted at the EU level. Indicate to what extent the conservation / biodiversity issue targeted is of European importance and to what extent the project results (if successful and widely applied) could make a significant difference at the EU level.

For demonstration or pilot projects, indicate to what extent the actions, methods, approaches or techniques put into place and tested are potentially replicable in the EU.

A project with a well-justified **transnational approach,,**a mechanism to ensure extensive application of green procurement or which foresees uptake of results from EU financed research projects may be also considered as having added value.

Note that the information provided in this field will be used for the evaluation of the proposal under award criteria 5 'EU added value: multipurpose, synergies and integration', 6 'EU added value: replicability and transferability' and 7 'EU added value: transnational, green procurement, uptake'. For details, see the *Guide for the evaluation of LIFE project proposals 2014.*

Socio-economic and ecosystem services effects of the project (max 10,000 characters): Please indicate the probable impact of the project actions on the local economy and population, as well as on the ecosystem functions protection and restoration.

Efforts for reducing the project's "carbon footprint" (max 10,000 characters): Please explain how you intend to ensure that the "carbon footprint" of your project remains as low as is reasonably possible.

Form B4 – Stakeholders involved and main target audience of the project (max 12,000 characters)

Indicate the stakeholders the proposal intends to involve and how. Please indicate what kind of input you expect from them and how their involvement will be used in the project and useful and/or needed for the project.

Describe target groups and methods for dissemination of knowledge. Comment on activities for general publicity and / or marketing of the concept during and after implementation.

Form B5 – Expected constraints and risks related to the project implementation and mitigation strategy (max 12,000 characters)

It is important that applicants identify all possible **internal or external events** ("constraints and risks") that could have **major negative impacts** on the successful implementation of the project. Please list such constraints and risks, in the decreasing order of importance. Please also indicate any possible constraints and risks due to the **socio-economic environment**. For each constraint and risk identified, please indicate how you envisage overcoming it.

You are also strongly advised to include in this section any details on licences, permits, EIA, etc., and to indicate what support you have from the competent bodies responsible for issuing such authorisations. The experience of the LIFE programme has shown that some projects have difficulties completing all actions within the proposed project duration, due to

unforeseen delays and difficulties encountered during the project. It is important that applicants identify all possible external events ("constraints and risks") that could cause such delays. One possible reason for such difficulties is the obligation to perform assessments that were not foreseen during the preparation of the LIFE project, in particular:

- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), according to the Directive 85/337/EEC (the EIA Directive), codified by Directive 2011/92/EU of 13 December 2011[26];
- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), according to the Directive 2001/42/WE (the SEA Directive)[27];
- Assessment required under Article 6 of Directive 92/43/EEC (the Habitats Directive; Article 6 assessment)[28].

LIFE Nature and Biodiversity co-finances projects in the field of nature conservation. Nevertheless, sometimes LIFE projects could include "*projects"* (within the meaning of the EIA Directive) for which due to the EIA Directive itself or to the national transposition, an EIA must be preceded. Although unlikely, it is also possible that LIFE project actions may require changes of existing plans or programs (e.g. spatial planning documents), which may in turn require an SEA.

These assessments may involve long administrative procedures and data collection analysis. This is normally not a problem if the time and funds necessary are foreseen in the project.

Therefore, before submitting a LIFE proposal, applicants should find out whether one or more of the assessments mentioned above will be required under EU or national law.

Applicants should describe in Form B5 how these issues are taken into account and how they envisage overcoming potential problems. To pre-empt unforeseen problems good communication and consultation with the competent authorities in charge of these procedures is essential. This should already be done at the beginning of the LIFE proposal preparation. Form B5 is the correct place to indicate whether the competent authorities in charge of assessments procedures have been consulted and the results of these consultations.

Another risk applicants should consider is the possible negative impact of ongoing or planned development projects (infrastructure or industrial projects) on the LIFE proposal's actions or sites. Direct or indirect impacts of development projects may lead to difficulties in the implementation of the LIFE project. Therefore, before submitting a proposal, applicants should check the spatial planning documents for the areas selected for the LIFE proposal and check ongoing EIA procedures for development projects planned on or near the LIFE proposal sites. Applicants need to be aware that compensatory measures resulting from implementing a development project (within the meaning of the EIA or Article 6.4 of the Habitats Directive) cannot overlap with the LIFE proposal actions. There are four elements that determine whether an overlap exists:

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[26] Codified version of the EIA Directive:
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2012:026:0001:0021:EN:PDF
[27] SEA Directive:
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2001:197:0030:0037:EN:PDF
[28] Consolidated version of the Habitats Directive:
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:1992L0043:20070101:EN:PDF

- geographic – whether compensatory measures are applied in exactly the same *Natura 2000* site as LIFE measures;
- substantive – whether the LIFE measures are technically different from the compensatory measures;
- temporal – whether the LIFE actions and compensatory measures are applied at different moments;
- financial – whether it is possible to clearly distinguish the funds used for the implementation of the compensatory measures and the LIFE funds (for example, through two different accounts).

According to the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement any costs related to any action that can be considered as a compensatory measure, that are the responsibility of the Member State and that are decided in relation to the Birds and Habitats Directives are ineligible.

Finally, please detail how you have taken into account the risks identified into the planning of the project (time planning, budget, etc.) and the definition of the actions.

Form B6 – Continuation/valorisation and long term sustainability of the project's results after the end of the project

Describe how the project will be continued after the end of the LIFE funding, and what actions are required to consolidate the results in order to ensure the favourable conservation status of the targeted species and / or habitats and / or biodiversity aspects. Please indicate what mechanisms will be put in place to ensure that this will be done. Please note that information provided in this section is indicative and will have to be updated during the project life.

In particular, please reply to the following questions:

- **Which actions will have to be carried out or continued after the end of the project? (max 5,000 characters)** Please list such project actions indicating their reference (e.g. A1, A2,…) and title.

- **How will this be achieved? What resources will be necessary to carry out these actions? (max 5,000 characters)** Please indicate how the above actions will be continued after the project, by whom, within what timeframe and with what financing.

- **Protection status under national / local law of sites / species / habitats targeted (if relevant) (max 5,000 characters):** Please indicate what protection status is expected to be acquired by or after the end of the project, and when.

- **How, when and by whom will the equipment acquired be used after the project end (max 5,000 characters)**: Please list the main pieces of equipment to be purchased under the project and provide details on their utilisation after the end of the project. Please bear in mind that, according to the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement the purchase costs incurred for durable goods by public authorities or non-profit organisations in LIFE Nature and Biodiversity projects, the eligibility of durable goods purchased under the project shall be subject to the beneficiaries undertaking to continue to assign these goods **definitively to nature conservation activities** beyond the end of the project.

- **To what extent will the results and lessons of the project be actively disseminated after the end of the project to those persons and / or**

organisations that could best make use of them? (Please identify these persons / organisations) (max 5,000 characters): Please indicate how dissemination activities will continue after the end of the project. Please list the persons / organisations that have been so far identified as targets for these dissemination activities.

- **How will the long-term sustainability of the project's concrete actions be assured? (max 5,000 characters):** Please provide details.

4.2.3 Detailed technical description of the proposed actions (C forms)

The applicant must list **all the actions that will be implemented under the project**. There are 6 types of actions:

- A. Preparatory actions, elaboration of management plans and / or of action plans
- B. Purchase / lease of land and / or compensation payments for use rights
- C. Concrete conservation actions
- D. Monitoring the impact of the project actions (obligatory)
- E. Public awareness and dissemination of results (obligatory)
- F. Project management and monitoring of project progress (obligatory).

Under each type of action (A, B, C…), the applicant must list the different actions: A1, A2 … B1, B2 … C1, C2 … etc. Sequential numbers under the same category of actions are generated automatically and their order may be changed using the 'Up↑' and 'Down↓' arrows.

It is recommended that each action that is expected to have an important output for the project (e.g. preparation of a management plan, purchase of X ha of land, etc.) is presented as a **separate action**.

The actions must be described as precisely as possible. The descriptions may be accompanied by maps locating the actions, explanatory graphs, tables or pictures, which may be included in the forms by using the "Pictures" functionality.

The description of each action should clearly indicate the links with other actions (e.g. action C2 follows the purchase of land in action B1 which follows the preparation in action A2) and should clearly (and in quantitative terms) indicate how it contributes to the project's overall objectives. There should be a **clear coherence between the technical description of the action and the financial resources allocated.**

For each action, the applicant should provide the following information:

- **Name of the action (max 200 characters)**: Please ensure that the name is short (maximum 200 characters) and that it clearly reflects the objective of the action.

- **Beneficiary responsible for implementation:** Please indicate by selecting from the drop-down menu which of the project's beneficiaries will be in charge of the coordination of the implementation of this action. Should more than one beneficiary be implicated, please give full details of which beneficiary is responsible for what in the text field (max 500 characters) available under the drop down list.

- **Description (what, how, where and when) (max 10,000 characters)**: Please describe the content of the action indicating what will be done, using what means, on which location / site, with what duration and within what deadline. If applicable, indicate whether this action counts towards the 25% concrete conservation actions requirement, and why. Specify the links with other actions.

- **Reasons why this action is necessary (max 2,000 characters):** Please indicate why the action is necessary and how it will contribute to reaching the project's objectives. For actions implemented outside the EU, full details should be provided on why such actions are necessary to achieve EU environmental objectives and to ensure the effectiveness of interventions carried out during the LIFE project in the Member State territories to which the Treaties apply.

- **Constraints and assumptions (max 2,000 characters):** Indicate what may prevent you from implementing the action as planned and what will be done to address this risk. Please ensure that these constraints and assumptions are in line with those indicated on Form B5.

- **Expected results (<u>quantitative</u> information as far as possible) (max 2,000 characters):** Please indicate concisely what results will be achieved at the end of the action (e.g. xx ha of habitat type restored or yy ha land purchased) and what deliverable products (e.g. management guide) will be produced.

- **Indicators of progress (max 2,000 characters):** Please indicate how progress of this action will be measured.

- **Cost estimation (max 2,000 characters)**: Please summarise the methodology used for estimating the costs of the main expenditures in this action (e.g. no. of ha * cost / ha, no. days * average cost / day,…). Please note that the total cost of the action as inserted in financial forms is displayed automatically (sum of the cost lines created in the F forms for that Action); when creating a new action, this value is by default 0 €. You must give details of the different calculations and estimations on which this total cost is based.

- **Deliverable products:** Please list all deliverable products associated with each action and the corresponding completion deadline (day/month/year) by using the 'Add' button. *Deliverable products* are all those **tangible** products that can be shipped (e.g. management plans, studies and other documents, software, videos, etc). Please note that any deliverable product will have to be **submitted separately** (bearing the LIFE and *Natura 2000* logos) to the Contracting Authority together with an activity report.

- **Milestones:** Please list all project milestones associated with each action and the corresponding delivery / achievement deadline (day/month/year). *Project milestones* are defined as **key moments** during the implementation of the project e.g. ”Nomination of the Project Manager”, “Completion of land purchase”, etc. The corresponding documents do not need to be submitted to the Contracting Authority. You will need to inform the Contracting Authority whether the milestone has been completed or not in the technical reports you will send to the Contracting Authority.

- **Timetable:** For each project action, please tick the corresponding implementation period. When planning the implementation period of your project, please bear in mind that a LIFE 2014 project cannot start before 16 July 2015. Also, please add an appropriate safety margin at the end of the project to allow for the inevitable unforeseen delays.

Please find below indication on the additional information to be provided for specific actions.

Form C0 – List of all actions

This form allows the applicant to create all the actions foreseen in the project, per type of action (A, B, C, …), by using the 'Add project action' button. Once an action has been created, you may use the 'Save and next' button to directly create another action.

Very important: **project actions have to be created before you are able to introduce any costs in the financial F forms**.

Form C1

A. Preparatory actions, elaboration of management plans and / or of action plans

The preparatory actions should cover all that has to be completed to allow the start or proper implementation of other project actions indicated in categories B, C, D, E or F. This includes the preparation of technical documents (blueprints, preparation of inventories, …) and any administrative or legal procedure needed to be carried out (consultation, call for tender, deliberations, training etc.).

If the elaboration of a management plan and / or action plans is foreseen, the description of the corresponding preparatory action should specify what will be done to ensure that these plans will be implemented (e.g. competent authorities adopt the plan before the end of the project).

Where preparatory actions do not lead to direct implementation during the project, their description should include a sufficient set of explanations, commitments and guarantees to show that their full implementation after the project is effectively ensured. Otherwise, such actions may be deleted from the project during the revision phase.

B. Purchase / lease of land and / or compensation payment for use rights

It is particularly important that the description of each action clearly indicates how **each** of the eligibility conditions described in section 2.4.2 on land purchase is met.

For each action, please indicate the state of discussions with the landowners. Have they been consulted and do they agree in principle? Specify clearly what kind of habitats will be bought / leased and where they are located. Specify how much land will be bought / leased of each habitat types and justify the proposed cost/ha in relation to current land prices. If the land is to be bought through **land swaps**, specify this clearly (to be eligible the swap must be completed before the end of the project). If land is to be bought or leased in order to undertake other actions within the project, **indicate which actions** are dependent on the land purchase being achieved. If appropriate, please indicate **'alternative' land** that can be bought should difficulties arise with the prime target.

C. Concrete conservation actions

In case any of the concrete actions depend on preparatory actions or land purchase / leasing, please indicate this clearly.

For *LIFE Nature* and *LIFE Biodiversity* projects targeting specific habitats/species, for each concrete conservation action proposed, please specify **which habitat types and / or species** are affected (and if possible provide their surfaces and numbers), and how they relate to the project's objectives. For all other *LIFE Biodiversity* projects please specify **which biodiversity aspects** are tackled, and how they relate to the project's objectives. Provide clear information on the location and expected impact of each of these actions. Specify who will take care of the maintenance, if needed, after the end of the project.

If the beneficiaries need to build **infrastructure or purchase equipment or animals** (e.g. grazing cattle) for conservation management, these items should be listed, described and justified in detail.

If appropriate, explain how, by whom and through which financing source the action will **be continued** after the project period. Note also that any anticipated payments for management actions that take place after the end of the project are not eligible for LIFE funding.

The output of all C actions should be **concrete, measurable and with a clear benefit** for the habitats / species / biodiversity issue targeted by the project. This benefit should be **measurable** and should be measured and evaluated under **D-category monitoring action(s)**. The output of each action should be indicated in the 'expected results' section. It should be quantified when possible.

Note: only concrete conservation actions should be listed as C actions. Many applicants incorrectly list as C actions, actions that are not concrete conservation actions (e.g. actions related to inventories, management plans, monitoring, management guides, stakeholder communication, etc.).

D. Monitoring of the impact of the project actions (obligatory)

All projects shall include separate impact monitoring action(s) to measure and document the effectiveness of the project actions as compared to the initial situation, objectives and expected results. Specific indicators must be identified. Regular reporting on monitoring should be foreseen. A distinct "monitoring" action with an individual budget should therefore be proposed. In the description of this action, the "monitoring protocol", the "monitoring indicators" and "sources of verification" should be identified and described.

For projects that have a demonstration or innovation character, this action should also clearly include the evaluation of the technique or method demonstrated.

An assessment of the **socio-economic impact** of the project actions on the local economy and population, as well as an assessment on the **ecosystem functions restoration** are also obligatory and shall be included as separate actions. These can take the form of studies

consolidating the data and results over the project lifetime, to be delivered with the Final Report.

E. Public awareness and dissemination of results (obligatory)

For each action, please specify and justify the target audience. If an action involves meetings (e.g. with local stakeholders), you should specify how many meetings, where, when, who will attend, what will be discussed, how many persons are expected to participate and how this will help the project. If an action concerns brochures, leaflets, publications, ..., specify how many copies, how many pages (size, colour, ...), to whom they will be distributed and when. Should an action concern a film, specify the format, duration, number of copies, where it will be shown, etc. Should an action concern visitor access, specify what will be done, where, how many visitors are expected, how this will help the project, etc. Should beneficiaries plan to present the project results in national / international events (conferences, congresses), the relevance and added value for the project should be clearly explained.

All actions should specify the expected results in qualitative and quantitative terms (e.g. improved support from the local community, 2500 persons informed, 3000 newsletters circulated, …), indicating how this serves the project's objectives.

The following dissemination activities are considered obligatory and shall be included as E-category actions:

- **Notice boards** describing the project shall be displayed at strategic places accessible to the public. The LIFE logo should always appear on them. For actions taking place in *Natura 2000* sites or with the objective of improving the integrity of the Natura 2000 network, the *Natura 2000* logo should also appear.

- A description of the project shall be included in a newly-created or existing **website** (with the LIFE logo, and the *Natura 2000* logo if relevant), and full details of its objectives, actions, progress and results should be provided. The web site shall be put on line within 6 months after the project start and regularly updated during the project period and shall be maintained on-line during at least 5 years after the project's end.

- **Networking with other projects** (including LIFE III, LIFE+ and/or LIFE projects), information exchange activities etc. should be presented as one distinct E-category obligatory action with a separate budget.

- A **layman's report** shall be produced in paper and electronic format at the end of the project. It shall be presented in English and in the project's language. This report shall be 5 to 10 pages long and present the project, its objectives, its actions and its results to a general public.

The following dissemination activities are not considered obligatory, but are foreseen in many projects:

- **Media work** (press conferences, meetings with or visits by journalists, preparing articles for the press,…).

- **Organisation of events:** e.g., public information meetings, meetings with interest groups, guided visits,… Describe exactly what is planned and how it contributes to the objectives of the project. Describe the final output.

- **Workshops, seminars, conferences:** If (one or more) beneficiaries are attending, specify which (if known already). If (one or more) beneficiaries are organising, describe exactly what the topic will be, how it contributes to the project objectives, who will be invited (whenever possible, LIFE beneficiaries implementing or having implemented similar projects ought to be invited in order to foster networking), how many participants are expected. Finally, describe the output of each event and how it will be disseminated.

- **Production of brochures, films, visitor maps, etc.** Specify exactly what is planned (subject matter, number of copies, distribution to whom). Note that all such material charged to LIFE must bear a clear reference to LIFE financial support (including the LIFE logo, and the *Natura 2000* logo if relevant) to be considered eligible for co-financing and that one copy of each product must be annexed to the progress / intermediate report or final report.

- **Guidelines:** for example on how to manage species or habitats, implement a technique/method or tackle a specific biodiversity issue. Such guidelines must always be produced if the project is a demonstration or pilot project.

- **Technical publications on project:** If already known, indicate in which journal the publication will take place. Such publications must acknowledge the EU financial support.

F. Project management and monitoring of project progress (obligatory)

The applicant should list the different actions aiming at managing / operating the project and monitoring the progress of the project as well as quality control and risk management, including contingency planning.

Overall project management:

Each project must include one or several distinct actions named "Project management by (name of the beneficiary in charge)". This / these action(s) should include a description of the project **management staff** and describe management and reporting duties of the project beneficiaries. The management should be described, even if no costs will be charged for this to the project. Reporting should include the preparation of the progress reports, the mid-term and final reports with payment requests.

Please include a **management chart** of the technical and administrative staff involved. This chart must provide evidence that the coordinating beneficiary (Project Manager) has a clear authority and an efficient control of the project management staff, even if part of the project management would be outsourced. Explain if the management staff has **previous project management experience**.

Audit:

Where required (see General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement), an independent auditor nominated by the coordinating beneficiary must verify the financial statements provided to the Contracting Authority in the final project report. This audit should not only verify the respect of national legislation and accounting rules but should also certify that all costs incurred respect the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement. In the financial forms, the costs for the audit should be under the budget item "Other costs".

After-LIFE Plan:

The coordinating beneficiary must produce an "**After-LIFE Plan**" as a separate chapter of the final report. It shall be presented in the beneficiary's language and optionally in English, in paper and electronic format. For best practice projects, the After-LIFE Plan shall set out how the actions initiated in the LIFE project will be continued and developed in the years that follow the end of the project, and how the longer term management of the site(s) / habitats / species will be assured. For pilot and demonstration projects, the After-LIFE Plan shall in addition set out how the dissemination and communication of the results will continue after the end of the project. It should give details regarding what actions will be carried out, when, by whom, and using what sources of finance. A separate F-action for this plan should be added to the proposal and the plan must be added to the list of deliverables.

Indicators:

A distinct F-action must be included concerning the compilation of information needed to complete the indicator tables (quantitative and qualitative) to be submitted with the first Progress and Final Reports.

Form C2 Reporting schedule

Activity reports foreseen:

The coordinating beneficiary shall report to the Contracting Authority about the technical and financial progress of the project. The project's achieved results and possible problems should be highlighted in these reports.

Note that the grant agreement, project management, formal reporting (excluding annexes or deliverables) and all communication with the Contracting Authority must be in English, even if the language of the project proposal is different. The costs for translation of reports (excluding annexes or deliverables) are therefore eligible.

For projects with a duration exceeding 24 months and requesting an EU contribution of more than € 300,000, if the coordinating beneficiary intends to ask for a second pre-financing, a more detailed "Mid-term report with payment request" has to be provided. For projects with a duration exceeding 48 months and an EU contribution of more than € 4,000,000, if the coordinating beneficiary wishes to request a third pre-financing payment, a second Mid-term Report has to be provided. The Mid-term report(s) are to be delivered, together with the requests for mid-term pre-financing, in line with the thresholds defined in the Special Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement. One "Final Report with payment request" shall be submitted, not later than 3 months after the project end date. "Progress reports"

should also be foreseen in order to ensure that at least one report is received every 18 months (the reporting schedule may be modified during the revision phase). Please consult General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement for full details on reporting obligations of LIFE projects.

4.3 Financial application forms

Important**: **The project's budget may only include costs which are in accordance with Article II.19 of the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement. The EU contribution will be calculated on the basis of eligible costs.

General remarks:

All costs must be rounded to the nearest Euro. Decimals cannot be entered in the forms.

The coordinating beneficiary and associated beneficiaries, as well as other companies that are part of the same groups or holdings, cannot act as sub-contractors.

Internal invoicing (i.e. costs that result from transactions between departments of a beneficiary) is only allowed if it excludes all elements of profit, VAT and overheads.

All contracts attributed under any of the cost categories should respect the principle of absence of conflict of interest, regardless of the amount involved.

Value added tax paid by the beneficiaries is eligible except for:
   a) **taxed activities or exempt activities with right of deduction;**
   b) **activities engaged in as a public authority by the beneficiary where it is a State, regional or local government authority or another body governed by public law.**

For each cost line, select from the drop-down menus the short name of the beneficiary that will incur the respective cost and the number of the action to which the respective cost is related.

To add a cost line use the 'Add' button, to delete a cost line use the 'Delete' button.

All financial forms are tab activated: in order to create cost lines quickly, you may use the Tab key on your keyboard to move from one field to the next one, and then to the 'Add' button (then press the 'Enter' key: the cost line is added).

Form F1 – Direct personnel costs

General: The salary costs of public body personnel may be funded only to the extent that they relate to the cost of project implementation activities that the relevant public body would not have carried out had the project concerned not been undertaken. The personnel in question, irrespective of whether they are working full or part time for the project, must be specifically seconded/assigned to a project; the individual assignment shall either take the format of a contractual document or that of a letter of assignment signed by the responsible service or authority of the relevant beneficiary.

Moreover, the sum of the public bodies' contributions (as coordinating beneficiary and / or associated beneficiary) to the project budget must exceed (by at least 2%) the sum of the salary costs charged to the project for personnel who are not considered 'additional'. This will be automatically checked under Report R4 – Compliance with 2% rule when your

proposal is validated by eProposal prior to submission, and also both during the selection phase and when calculating the final EU contribution at the end of the project.

The definition of 'additional' personnel costs include the costs of all personnel – permanent or temporary – of public bodies whose contracts or contract renewals:

- start on or after the start date of the project or on or after the date of signature of the grant agreement by the Contracting Authority in case this signature takes place before the project start date, and

- specifically mention the LIFE project.

Type of contract: Select from the drop-down menu.

Note that service contracts with individuals may be charged to this category on condition that the individual concerned works in the beneficiary's premises and under its supervision and provided that such practice complies with the relevant national tax and social legislation.

Important: The time which each employee spends working on the project shall be <u>recorded</u> on a timely basis (i.e. every day, every week) using time sheets or an equivalent <u>time registration system</u> established and certified regularly by each of the project beneficiaries, unless the employee is specifically assigned to the project full time as per Article II.19. of the General Conditions of the and Annex X (Financial and administrative guidelines) to the Model LIFE Grant Agreement or works less than 2 days per month on average for the LIFE project.

Category / Role in the project: You should identify each professional category in a clear and unambiguous manner to enable the Contracting Authority to monitor the labour resources allocated to the project. When the professional category is not explanatory of the role that the person will play in the project, you should also include this information. *Examples of staff categories / roles in the project are: senior engineer / project manager; technician / data analysis, administrative / financial management etc.*

Daily rate: The daily rate charged for each member of personnel is calculated on the basis of gross salary or wages plus obligatory social charges, any other statutory cost but excluding any other costs. For the purpose of establishing the budget proposal, the salary may be calculated based on indicative average rates which are reasonable for the concerned category of personnel, sector, country, type of organisation, etc. Please take predictable salary increases into account when estimating the average daily rates for the project duration.

The total number of productive time per year should be calculated on the basis of the total working hours/days according to national legislation, collective agreements, employment contracts, etc. An example for determining the total productive time per year could be as follows (provided what is established in the appropriate legislation):

Days/year	365 days
Less 52 weekends	104 days
Less annual holidays	21 days
Less statutory holidays	15 days
Less illness / other (when relevant)	10 days
= Total productive time	<u>215 days</u>

Please note that the rates indicated in the budget proposal must not be used when reporting the costs of the project; only the costs of the actual hours worked on the project may be charged . Any significant increases will have to be justified. Personnel costs shall be charged on the basis of hourly rates obtained by dividing the actual annual gross salary or wages plus obligatory social charges and any other statutory costs included in the remuneration of an employee by the actual total productive hours for that employee. In case the actual total productive hours for the employee are not recorded in a reliable time registration system a default value of 1720 productive hours shall be used.

Number of person-days: The number of person-days needed to carry out the project.

Direct personnel costs: Calculated automatically by multiplying the total number of person-days for a given category by the daily rate for that category.

Form F2 – Travel and subsistence costs

Note: Under this budget category applicants should foresee the travel costs for 2 persons from the project to attend a regional kick-off meeting with the Contracting Authority representatives.

General: Only costs for travel and subsistence must be included here. Costs related to the attendance of conferences, such as conference fees, should be reported under "Other costs" (form F7). The cost of participation in a conference is only considered eligible if the project is presented at the conference. The number of participants in conferences is limited to those for whose attendance there is a valid technical justification.

Destination (From / To): Identify the origin and destination of the trips. Specify the country and city name, if already known. If applicable, for repetitive visits to the project area, write 'project area'.

Outside Europe: Indicate 'Yes' for travel outside the European Union.

Purpose of travel: The purpose of travel must be clearly described, in order to allow an assessment of the costs in relation to the objectives of the project (examples: 'dissemination event', 'technical co-ordination meeting', 'project area visit'). Identify the number of trips foreseen and the number of people who will be travelling as well as the duration of the travel in days.

You may use more than one line for the purpose of travel or destination if necessary, but costs may be presented grouped, e.g. for all technical co-ordination meetings. (However, the individual costs must be identified when reporting.)

Travel costs: Travel costs shall be charged in accordance with the internal rules of the beneficiary. Beneficiaries shall endeavour to travel in the most economical and environmentally friendly way – video conferencing must be considered as an alternative.

In absence of internal rules governing the reimbursement of the use of an organisation's own cars (in opposition to private cars) costs related to the use of these are to be estimated at 0.25 €/km. If only costs for fuel are foreseen, they should also be listed here.

Subsistence costs: Subsistence costs shall be charged in accordance with the internal rules of the beneficiary (daily allowances or direct payment of meals, hotel costs, local transportation etc.). Make sure that meals related to travel / meetings of the beneficiaries are not included if subsistence costs are already budgeted as per diem allowances.

Form F3 – External assistance costs

General: External assistance costs refer to sub-contracting costs: i.e. services / works carried out by external companies or persons, as well as to renting of equipment or infrastructure. They are limited to 35% of the total budget unless a higher level is justified in the proposal.

For example, the creation of a logo, establishment of a dissemination plan, design of dissemination products, translation services, publication of a book or renting of material should be included in external assistance.

Please note that any services supplied under subcontract, but which are **related to prototype** development should be budgeted under prototype and not under external assistance. Costs related to the **purchase or leasing** (as opposed to renting) **of equipment and infrastructure** supplied under subcontract should be budgeted under those cost categories and not under external assistance.

Costs for the **lease of land use rights** must be charged under "external assistance" only if it concerns a **short-term** lease that expires prior to the project end date. Longer-term leases must be declared under long-term lease of land.

Procedure: Specify the procedure foreseen to sub-contract the work, e.g. 'public tender', 'direct treaty', 'framework contract', etc. Subcontracts must be awarded in accordance with Articles II.9 and II.10 of the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement.

Description: Provide a clear description of the subject of the service that will be subcontracted, e.g. 'carrying out impact assessment', 'maintenance of …', 'renting of …', 'consultancy on …', 'web page development', 'intra-muros assistance', 'organisation of dissemination event', etc. You may use maximum 200 characters for the description of the subcontract if necessary.

General comments on Forms F4.a, F4.b and F4.c – Durable goods

Please put in this category only those goods that the accounting rules of the beneficiary in question classify as durable goods. Conversely, do not put anything in this category that the accounting rules of the beneficiary in question do not classify as durable goods.

In the sub-categories equipment and infrastructure, you need to indicate the actual cost as well as the value of depreciation, in accordance with Article II.19.2 (c) of the General

Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement. <u>Only the depreciation is an eligible cost for the project and the EU co-financing will be calculated on the basis of this amount.</u>

Important: Depreciation of durable goods already owned by beneficiaries at the start of the project is not eligible for LIFE funding.

Actual cost: Full cost of the infrastructure or equipment without applying any depreciation.

Depreciation: Total value of the depreciation in the accounts of the beneficiaries at the end of the project. For the purpose of establishing the budget proposal, the beneficiaries should estimate as precisely as possible the amount of depreciation for each item, from the date of entry into the accounts (if relevant) until the end of the project. This estimation is based on their internal accounting rules and / or in accordance with national accounting rules. This amount represents the eligible cost.

Depreciation is limited to a maximum of 25% of the actual cost for infrastructure and a maximum of 50% of the actual cost for equipment. Blocking error messages will be displayed when validating the proposal if these rules are not being observed.

Exception 1: For prototypes, the eligible costs are equal to real costs under the conditions set up in Article II.19.2 (c) of the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement.

Exception 2: for *LIFE Nature and Biodiversity* projects, the cost of durable goods purchased by beneficiaries that are public bodies or private non-commercial organisations shall be considered eligible at 100%, if the organisation complies with all conditions set under Article II.19.2 (c) of the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement. In this case, the depreciation amount indicated should be the same as the actual cost.

Form F4.a – Infrastructure costs

Procedure: Specify the procedure foreseen to sub-contract the work, e.g. 'public tender', 'direct treaty', 'framework contract', etc. Subcontracts must be awarded in accordance with Articles II.9 and II.10 of the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement.

Description: Give a clear description and breakdown of the infrastructure per cost item, e.g. 'supporting steel construction', 'foundation of installation', 'fencing' etc.

Important: All the costs related to infrastructure, even if the work is carried out under sub-contract with an external entity, should be reported under this heading.

NB: Projects dedicated to the construction of large infrastructure do not fall within the scope of the LIFE Programme and are therefore not eligible. A project is considered to be dedicated to the construction of large infrastructure if the cost of a "single item of infrastructure" exceeds € 500,000. A "single item of infrastructures" means all elements as described in form F4a that are physically bound to ensure the functionality of the infrastructural investment (e.g. for an eco-duct the bridge, barriers, signposting, etc.) Such amount may be exceptionally exceeded if full technical justification is provided in the proposal demonstrating the necessity of the infrastructure for ensuring an effective contribution to the objectives of Articles 10, 11 or 12 of the LIFE Regulation.

Form F4.b – Equipment costs

Procedure: Specify the procedure foreseen to sub-contract the work, e.g. 'public tender', 'direct treaty', 'framework contract', etc. Subcontracts must be awarded in accordance with Articles II.9 and II.10 of the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement.

Description: Provide a clear description of each item, e.g. 'laptop computer', 'database software (off-the-shelf or developed under sub-contract)', 'measurement equipment', 'mowing machine', etc.

Form F4.c – Prototype costs

A prototype is an infrastructure and/or equipment specifically created for the implementation of the project and that has never been commercialised and is not available as a serial product. It may not be used for commercial purposes during the life of the project. (See Article II.19.2 (c) of the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement for definition of prototype.) Durable goods acquired under the project can only be accepted in this cost category when they are essential to the pilot or demonstration aspects of the project.

Procedure: Specify the procedure foreseen to sub-contract the work, e.g. 'public tender', 'direct treaty', 'framework contract', etc. Subcontracts must be awarded in accordance with Articles II.9 and II.10 of the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement.

Description: Give a clear description of the prototype.

Important: *All the costs related to the prototype, even if the work is carried out under sub-contract with an external entity, should be reported under this heading.*

Form F5.a – Costs for land purchase, Form F5.b – Costs for long-term lease of land / use rights and Form F5.c – One-off compensation payments costs

General: Please consult the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement, for the rules concerning land purchase. If short-term lease would be appropriate for achieving the project objectives, those costs should be presented under external assistance.

Description of land purchase / long term lease / one-off compensation: Give a clear description of each item, e.g. "purchase of acidic grasslands on sub-site X", "one-off compensation for peat exploitation rights on sub-site Y", etc. Use different rows for different land uses / habitat types / sub-sites, if their prices diverge significantly.

Estimated cost per hectare: Estimated cost, excluding taxes and other charges, rounded to the nearest €.

Your proposal has to include a letter from the competent authority or from a registered notary confirming that the price per hectare is not above the average for the types of land and locations concerned.

Form F6 – Costs for consumables

General: Consumables declared on this form must relate to the purchase, manufacture, repair or use of items which are not placed in the inventory of durable goods of the beneficiaries (such as materials for experiments, animal feeding stocks, materials for dissemination, repair of durable goods given that this is not capitalised and that they are purchased for the project or used 100% for the project, etc.). Should the project include a significant dissemination activity in which substantial mailing, photocopying, or other communication forms are used, the corresponding costs may also be declared here.

Costs for consumables must be specifically related to the implementation of project actions.

General consumables / supplies (as opposed to direct costs), such as telephone, communication costs, photocopies, <u>office material, water, gas</u>, etc. are covered by the overheads category.

Procedure: Specify the procedure foreseen, e.g. 'public tender', 'direct treaty', 'framework contract', etc. Subcontracts must be awarded in accordance with Articles II.9 and II.10 of the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement.

Description: Provide a clear description of the type of consumable materials, linking it to the technical implementation of the project, e.g. 'raw materials for experiments action 2', 'stationery for dissemination products (deliverable 5) ', etc.

Form F7 – Other costs

General: Direct costs which do not fall in any other cost category should be placed here. Costs for bank charges, conference fees, insurance costs when these costs originate solely from the project implementation, etc. should be placed here.

Auditor costs related to the auditing of the project's financial reports should always be placed under this budget category. For projects with more than one beneficiary, the total audit cost will be mentioned as one consolidated amount in the proposal, to be incurred by the coordinating beneficiary.

Costs for translation of reports, if needed, must always be reported in this category.

The **bank guarantee, if required, must always be reported in this category.** Please refer to Article I.4.1 of the Special Conditions and Articles II.19.2 (e) and II.24.1 of the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement and to the *Guide for the evaluation of LIFE project proposals 2014* for more information.

Procedure: Specify the procedure foreseen e.g. 'public tender', 'direct treaty', 'framework contract', etc. Subcontracts must be awarded in accordance with Articles II.9 and II.10 of the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement.

Description: Give a clear description of each item, linking it to the technical implementation of the project.

Form F8 – Overheads

Overhead amount: Indicate the general indirect costs (overheads) for each beneficiary. Beneficiaries benefiting from an operating grant from an EU funding programme (such as for example LIFE NGO calls) are not entitled to claim overheads.

Overheads (also referred to as "indirect costs") are eligible at a flat rate, which will be fixed in the grant agreement as a percentage of the total eligible direct costs of the entire project, excluding long-term lease of land/one-off compensations for land use rights (and excluding the overheads themselves, since they are <u>indirect</u> costs). In accordance with Article II 19.3 of the General Conditions for the Model LIFE Grant Agreement this percentage may not exceed 7%.. A blocking error message will be displayed in Report R1 and when validating the proposal if this rule is not observed.

Note that the column 'Total eligible direct costs excluding land related costs' is automatically filled in by the tool based on the costs entered in forms F1 to F7.

Form FC – Financial contributions

This form describes the funding of the project by the beneficiary(ies) and / or co-financer(s), as well as the EU contribution requested per beneficiary.

Goods or services which are to be provided **"in kind"**, i.e. for which there is no cash-flow foreseen, are ineligible for EU co-financing and should not be included in the project's budget.

Important: The column 'Total costs of the actions in €' is automatically filled in by the application, based on the costs entered in forms F1-F8.

Coordinating beneficiary contribution: Specify the amount of financial contribution provided by the coordinating beneficiary. This amount cannot include any funding obtained from other public or private sources specifically earmarked for the project or for a part of it (which should be declared as other co-financing).

Associated beneficiary contribution: Indicate the financial contribution from each associated beneficiary**.** These amounts cannot include any funding obtained from other public or private sources specifically earmarked for the project or for a part of it (which should be declared as other co-financing).

Amount of EU contribution requested: Specify the amount of financial EU contribution requested by the coordinating beneficiary and each of the associated beneficiaries. This amount must be in accordance with Articles II.19 and II.25 of the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement.

Amount of co-financing in € Indicate the financial contribution of each co-financer.

The amounts corresponding to the own contributions and the total costs are transferred automatically to forms A3 and A4. The amounts corresponding to co-financers contributions are transferred automatically to form A6.

4.4 Reports

eProposal reports contain detailed financial calculations and they are generated automatically, based on the data entered in the technical and financial forms.

Only reports R1 – Budget and R2 – Costs per Action will be included in the .pdf version of the proposal generated by the eProposal tool. The other reports provide, however, practical financial information.

Report R1 – Budget
The form summarises the financial structure of the project, by providing a budget breakdown for the project and an overview of the financing plan.

Reports R2 – Costs per Action, R2a – Costs per Beneficiary, R2b – Costs per Action per Beneficiary, R2c – Costs per Beneficiary per Action
These forms are very useful in order to link technical outputs and costs.

Report R3 – Profit rule per beneficiary
This report verifies that none of the beneficiaries receives a share of the EU contribution exceeding the costs it will incur. (see the no-profit rule in Article II.25.3 of the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement)

Report R4 – Compliance with 2% rule
This report shows whether the sum of the public bodies' contributions (as coordinating beneficiary and / or associated beneficiary) to the project budget exceeds (by at least 2%) the sum of the salary costs of their permanent staff charged to the project. If this is not the case, an error message will be displayed when validating the proposal.

Report R5 – National allocation
This report shows the distribution of the EU contribution for the period 2014-2017 per Member States in which the beneficiaries are registered.

4.5 Attachments

Attachment type: Select from the drop-down menu.

Attachment name: Please ensure that the name is short (maximum 200 characters).

Important: the maximum size of each document attached is 2Mb

Attach in this section the appropriate mandatory financial annexes, as explained in the document *'Guide for the evaluation of LIFE project proposals 2014'*. The templates of the 'Public body declaration' and 'Simplified Financial Statement' are provided in the application package available on the LIFE web page.

Maps are mandatory for *LIFE Nature* and *LIFE Biodiversity* projects including site-based actions. See requirements for form B2a.

5. Checklist

The questions below aim to help you check that your application is as well prepared as possible. Your answers should in all cases be "yes". However, the list of questions is not exhaustive and the questions do not provide all the detailed information necessary; please refer to the detailed information included in other sections of this document.

1. Have you checked whether your project is a *LIFE Nature* project or a *LIFE Biodiversity* project?

2. Are forms A3, A4 and A6 signed and dated?

3. Where relevant, are forms A8 signed and dated?

4. Is form B1 at least in English?

5. Have you included a safety margin at the end of the project to allow for unforeseen delays?

6. Is the applicant legally registered in the EU?

7. Have you included the mandatory annexes (annual balance sheet and profit and loss account, audit report or auditor-certified balance sheet and profit and loss account, simplified financial statement for coordinating beneficiaries that are not public bodies; public body declaration for coordinating beneficiaries that are public bodies)?

8. Is more than 25% of the budget devoted to concrete conservation actions (or does your proposal fall under the possible exceptions)? Have you allowed a safety margin?

9. For each action, have you detailed the expected results as far as possible in quantitative terms?

10. Have you excluded ongoing activities (only allowed in certain specific cases) and ensured that the relevant conditions are met for any recurrent actions ?

11. Have you excluded preparatory actions that do not produce practical recommendations?

12. Have you included a coherent package of communication and dissemination actions?

13. Have you included indicators and actions to monitor the impact of the project, and the impact of its actions on the species / habitats targeted?

14. Is the project management team sufficient? Is an organigramme provided? Is there a full time project coordinator (not obligatory but strongly recommended)? Is there a financial coordinator?

15. Have you excluded all actions that can be better financed by other EU funding programmes? In case of doubt, have you foreseen complementary actions or objectives?

16. Have you detailed your efforts towards carbon neutrality?

17. Have you and your associated beneficiaries read the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement in full?

18. For land purchase / compensation payments have you clearly explained how you meet all of the eligibility conditions?

19. For re-introduction / translocation of species have you clearly explained how the proposal meets all required conditions?

Nature projects only:

1. Do all concrete conservation actions take place within officially designated *Natura 2000* sites or for the purposes of improving the integrity of the *Natura 2000* network? Are the actions clearly located with respect to the *Natura 2000* sites on the maps provided?

2. Do these actions target exclusively *Natura 2000* species and habitats (for site based actions: Annex I of the Birds Directive and / or Annexes I or II of the Habitats Directive; for species-related actions: Annex I or II of the Birds Directive and / or Annexes II, IV or V of the Habitats Directive)?

3. Do the actions all take place in the European territory of the EU where the Birds and Habitats Directives apply (or are covered by the exceptions foreseen)?

4. Have you included detailed maps (size A3 or A4)? Do they include a readable scale, title and background details (e.g. village names, rivers, etc.)?

Biodiversity projects only:

1. For projects addressing topics 4 and 5, is your project demonstrative and/or pilot?

2. For "demonstrative" or "pilot" projects, does your project integrate monitoring, evaluation and active dissemination of the project's results and lessons learnt (see definitions of "demonstration" and "pilot")?

3. Do all actions take place in the European territory of the EU (or are covered by the exceptions foreseen)?

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: Calendar of the LIFE 2014 evaluation and selection procedure

Date or period	Activity
16 October 2014	Deadline for applicants to submit proposals to the Contracting Authority
October 2014 to May 2015	Evaluation and revision of the proposals
May-June 2015	Signature of individual grant agreements
16 July 2015	Earliest possible starting date for the 2014 projects

ANNEX 2: Important links

a) *General documents for all applicants:*

- **Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013**
- **LIFE Multiannual Work Programme 2014-2017**
- Link to the **LIFE Communication toolbox**
- **Financial Regulation**

b) *LIFE Nature and Biodiversity:*

- **Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna**
- **Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds**
- **List of priority bird species of Directive 2009/147/EC considered as priority for funding under LIFE**
- **Website providing a geographical view of the *Natura 2000* ecological network http://natura2000.eea.europa.eu**
- **Commission Communication COM (2011) 244 final Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/2020.htm**
- **Biodiversity Information System for Europe http://biodiversity.europa.eu/**
- **Biodiversity baseline http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/eu-2010-biodiversity-baseline/**
- **IUCN Guidelines for reintroduction and other conservation translocations**