



Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)

Call for proposals

LIFE Preparatory Projects
Projects addressing ad hoc Legislative and Policy Priorities (PLP)

(LIFE-2022-PLP)

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EUROPEAN CLIMATE, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT EXECUTIVE AGENCY (CINEA)
 CINEA.D – Natural Resources, Climate, Sustainable Blue Economy and Clean Energy
 CINEA.D.2 – LIFE Environment (Nature & Circular Economy)

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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0. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU **action grants** under the **Programme for Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)**.

The regulatory framework for this EU Funding Programme is set out in:

- Regulation 2018/1046 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))
- the basic act (LIFE Regulation [2021/783](#)¹).

The call is launched in accordance with the 2021-2024 Multiannual Work Programme² and will be managed by the **European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA)** ('Agency').

The call covers the 3 following topics:

- **LIFE-2022-PLP-NATURA — Nature and Biodiversity**
- **LIFE-2022-PLP-Environment — Circular Economy and Quality of LIFE**
- **LIFE-2022-PLP-ENER — Supporting Clean Energy Transition**

Each project application under the call must address only one of these topics. Applicants wishing to apply for more than one topic, must submit a separate proposal under each topic.

¹ Regulation (EU) 2021/783 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2021 establishing a Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) (OJ L 172, 17.5.2021, p. 53).

² Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the LIFE programme and the adoption of the work programme for 2021-2024 (COM(2021) 4997 final).

We invite you to read the **call documentation** carefully, and in particular this Call Document, the Model Grant Agreement, the [EU Funding & Tenders Portal Online Manual](#) and the [EU Grants AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

These documents provide clarifications and answers to questions you may have when preparing your application:

- the [call document](#) outlines the:
 - background, objectives, scope, activities that can be funded and the expected results (sections 1 and 2)
 - timetable and available budget (sections 3 and 4)
 - admissibility and eligibility conditions (including mandatory documents; sections 5 and 6)
 - criteria for financial and operational capacity and exclusion (section 7)
 - evaluation and award procedure (section 8)
 - award criteria (section 9)
 - legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements (section 10)
 - how to submit an application (section 11)
- the [Online Manual](#) outlines the:
 - procedures to register and submit proposals online via the EU Funding & Tenders Portal ('Portal')
 - recommendations for the preparation of the application
- the [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement](#) contains:
 - detailed annotations on all the provisions in the Grant Agreement you will have to sign in order to obtain the grant (*including cost eligibility, payment schedule, accessory obligations, etc*).

1. Background

What is the LIFE Programme?

The LIFE Programme is the EU Programme for Environment and Climate Action.

As such, it is one of the key contributors to the European Green Deal³ which aims to:

transform the EU into a fair and prosperous society, with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy where there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050 and where economic growth is decoupled from resource use and

protect, conserve and enhance the EU's natural capital, and protect the health and well-being of citizens from environment and climate related risks and impacts.

The LIFE Programme will contribute to these priorities through its four sub-programmes in particular by:

³ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: The European Green Deal (COM [\(2019\)640](#) final).

- boosting and integrating the implementation of the EU's policy objectives for halting and reversing loss of wildlife habitats and species across all sectors
- supporting the transition to a circular economy and protecting and improving the quality of EU's natural resources, including air, soil and water among others
- supporting implementation of the 2030 energy and climate policy framework, the EU's climate neutrality objective by 2050, and the new EU strategy on adaptation to climate change and
- building capacity, stimulating investments and supporting implementation of policies focused on energy efficiency and small-scale renewables.

The LIFE Programme is structured in two fields and four sub-programmes:

Environment:

- sub-programme Nature and Biodiversity
- sub-programme Circular Economy and Quality of Life

Climate Action:

- sub-programme Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation
- sub-programme Clean Energy Transition.

Nature and Biodiversity

The specific objectives of the sub-programme 'Nature and Biodiversity' are the following:

- to develop, demonstrate, promote and stimulate scale up of innovative techniques, methods and approaches (including nature-based solutions and ecosystem approach) for reaching the objectives of the EU legislation and policy on nature and biodiversity, and to contribute to the knowledge base and to the application of best practices, including through the support of the Natura 2000
- to support the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of EU legislation and policy on nature and biodiversity, including by improving governance at all levels, in particular through enhancing capacities of public and private actors and the involvement of civil society, also taking into due consideration the possible contributions provided by citizen science
- to catalyse the large-scale deployment of successful solutions/approaches for implementing EU legislation and policy on nature and biodiversity, by replicating results, integrating related objectives into other policies and into public and private sector practices, mobilising investment and improving access to finance.

Circular Economy and Quality of Life

The specific objectives of the sub-programme 'Circular Economy and Quality of Life' are:

- to develop, demonstrate and promote innovative techniques, methods and approaches for reaching the objectives of the EU legislation and policy on environment, and to contribute to the knowledge base and, where relevant, to the application of best practices

- to support the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of the EU legislation and policy on environment, including by improving governance at all levels, in particular through enhancing capacities of public and private actors and the involvement of civil society
- to catalyse the large-scale deployment of successful technical and policy-related solutions for implementing the EU legislation and policy on environment, by replicating results, integrating related objectives into other policies and into public and private sector practices, mobilising investment and improving access to finance.

This sub-programme aims at facilitating the transition toward a sustainable, circular, toxic-free, energy-efficient and climate-resilient economy and at protecting, restoring and improving the quality of the environment.

It will contribute to the EU priorities by:

- reducing resource consumption and facilitating the transition toward a sustainable, circular, toxic-free, energy-efficient and climate-resilient economy
- developing circular systems, in line with the new Circular Economy Action Plan and reflecting its focus on sustainable products, material and energy intensive sectors and circular business models for value retention
- bringing down waste generation in line with the Waste Framework Directive [2019/1004](#)⁴ and the reduction of hazardous waste in view of the EU's commitment under the [Basel Convention](#)⁵.
- improving waste management with respect to collection and storage of waste, recovery options and end-of-life disposal, including in islands where waste management has to face specific challenges
- reducing emissions of pollutants to air and ensuring clean air for EU citizens in line with the EU legislation and the objectives of the Zero Pollution Action Plan
- achieving and maintaining a good status of the EU water bodies
- ensuring clean surface water and ground-water, in sufficient quantities for human and other species, including by increasing efficiency of water use
- reducing production, use and emissions of hazardous chemicals as well as reducing the exposure of humans and the environment to those chemicals
- promoting the development, commercialisation and uptake of safe and sustainable-by-design substances, materials and products
- diminishing exposure to harmful noise levels
- protecting the quality of EU soil, preventing soil degradation through sustainable practices of soil and land management, remediating from soil pollution and enhancing the capacity to improve water quality through reduced nitrate leakage and to reduce emissions through carbon storage.

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

The specific objectives of the sub-programme 'Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation' are:

⁴ Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2019/1004 of 7 June 2019 laying down rules for the calculation, verification and reporting of data on waste in accordance with Directive 2008/98/EC (OJ L 163, 20.6.2019, p. 66).

⁵ Basel Convention on the control of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal

- to develop, demonstrate and promote innovative techniques, methods and approaches for reaching the objectives of the EU legislation and policy on climate action and to contribute to the knowledge base and to the application of best practice
- to support the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of the EU legislation and policy on climate action, including by improving governance at all levels, in particular through enhancing capacities of public and private actors and the involvement of civil society
- to catalyse the large-scale deployment of successful technical and policy-related solutions for implementing the EU legislation and policy on climate action by replicating results, integrating related objectives into other policies and into public and private sector practices, mobilising investment and improving access to finance.

This sub-programme will contribute to the transformation of the EU into a climate-neutral and -resilient society, by supporting the implementation of the EU's climate policy and preparing the EU for the climate action challenges in the coming years and decades.

Clean Energy Transition

The specific objectives of the sub-programme 'Clean Energy Transition' are the following:

- to develop, demonstrate and promote innovative techniques, methods and approaches for reaching the objectives of the EU legislation and policy on the transition to sustainable renewable energy and increased energy efficiency, and to contribute to the knowledge base and to the application of best practice
- to support the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of the EU legislation and policy on the transition to sustainable renewable energy or increased energy efficiency, including by improving governance at all levels, in particular through enhancing capacities of public and private actors and the involvement of civil society
- to catalyse the large-scale deployment of successful technical and policy-related solutions for implementing the EU legislation on the transition to renewable energy or increased energy efficiency by replicating results, integrating related objectives into other policies and into public and private sector practices, mobilising investment and improving access to finance.

This sub-programme aims at facilitating the transition toward an energy-efficient, renewable energy-based, climate-neutral and -resilient economy by funding coordination and support actions across Europe. These actions, of high EU added-value, aim at breaking market barriers that hamper the socio-economic transition to sustainable energy, typically engaging multiple small and medium-size stakeholders, multiple actors including local and regional public authorities and non-profit organisations, and involving consumers.

The sub-programme will contribute to the implementation of the energy-related actions of the Green Deal, including the 'Renovation wave' initiative for the building sector, and will give due consideration to territories not connected to the European grids such as the EU outermost regions. It will contribute to the Just Transition objectives by accompanying the territories and the groups of citizens negatively affected by the transition from fossil fuels to clean energy, by building capacity of actors and fostering clean energy investments, mainly in energy efficiency and locally available, sustainable, renewable energy sources. Activities related to biofuels will not be included.

2. Type of action – Objectives – Themes and priorities – Activities that can be funded – Expected impact

Type of action

The topics under this call for proposals concern LIFE Other Action Grants (OAGs).

Other Action Grants (OAGs) include:

- Coordination and Support Actions (CSA) for projects focusing on the transition to renewable energy and increased energy efficiency by breaking market barriers, through activities including capacity building, dissemination of information and knowledge, and awareness raising; they may include directly awarded grants to bodies designated by Member States.
- A Small Grant Facility on Biodiversity (BEST). Small grants (max 100 000 EUR) for projects in the EU Outermost Regions and the Overseas Countries and Territories on biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and sustainable use of ecosystem services, including ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and mitigation
- Pilot projects in the framework of the 'New European Bauhaus' to identify and address some key challenges helping Europe's transformation into the first climate-neutral continent in view of having better spaces in which form not only follows function, such as in the historical Bauhaus movement, but also contributes to preserve the resources of the planet.
- Action grants benefitting the organisations mentioned in Annex I of the LIFE Regulation
- Additional projects responding to the EU legislative and policy priorities determined following a consultation with Member States (PLP)
- Other specific projects to identified beneficiaries (Article 195 EU Financial Regulation).

The 3 topics under this call for proposals concerns the **LIFE Projects addressing ad hoc Legislative and Policy Priorities (PLP)**.

Based on article 11 of the LIFE Regulation [2021/783](#)⁶, the LIFE Multi Annual Work Programme 2021-2024⁷, includes the possibility to finance each year a limited number of projects designed to support specific needs for the development and implementation of Union environment policy and legislation.

Point 4.1.4 of the Multi Annual Work Programme indicated that under "Other Actions", additional projects responding to the Union legislative and policy priorities could be determined on annual basis, following a consultation with Member States.

Once a year the Commission makes an inventory of the specific needs regarding the development and implementation of Union environmental or climate policy and legislation that need to be addressed during the following years and identifies among them the needs that could be addressed by specific projects.

⁶ Regulation (EU) 2021/783 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2021 establishing a Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) (OJ L 172, 17.5.2021, p. 53).

⁷ Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the LIFE programme and the adoption of the work programme for 2021-2024 (COM(2021) 4997 final).

Before launching this annual call for proposals, the Member States received a draft list of the identified specific needs that could be addressed by those projects and were asked to comment. Based on these comments, the final list was established.

Under this call, the proposals may be submitted only to address the following specific needs, based on the final list of specific projects established by the Member States, as described in the section below.

LIFE 2022-PLP-NATURA — Nature and Biodiversity

Objectives

The proposed projects under the topic LIFE 2022-PLP-NATURA shall address the following specific needs and Policy Priorities identified by the Member States in the sub-programme Nature and Biodiversity.

Scope — Activities that can be funded

1. Improving the quantity and quality of bird-related data in Europe, to enhance their contribution to EU policy objectives under the EU Birds Directive and the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030

(Maximum available EU co-financing EUR 1 000 000, EU co-financing rate: 90%)

Specific need addressed

The EuroBirdPortal (EBP)⁸ has been developed in the frame of a LIFE project by the European Bird Census Council (EBCC), a partnership of ornithological organizations from 31 different countries. The EBP Portal currently combines data collected by different online bird recording portals operating in Europe in order to describe the large-scale spatiotemporal patterns of bird distributions (seasonal distributional changes, migratory patterns, phenology) and their changes over time.

Even though the development of the portal has been a major step towards providing quality data on the spatio-temporal distribution of bird species over the European continent, there are still two limitations to the policy value of the data currently available on the portal:

- 1) the geographical coverage of the EBP project in East (E) and South-East (SE) Europe is still deficient. In some other areas of the continent, the overall quantity of data collected is high, but the number of complete lists is still too low, or the existing national online portals do not allow the collection of complete species lists. These deficiencies currently generate large gaps in availability of more structured data that limit the overall quality of the distributional models that can be produced by the EBP project.
- 2) the EBP only collects data on 137 species (16,8% of those covered by Article 1 of the Birds Directive⁹ and 30,3% of those listed in Annexes I or II). This prevents the portal from delivering key information on the year-round distribution of most species of conservation interest and limits the dissemination capabilities of the EBP viewer and its potential to encourage participation in citizen science.

By solving the above deficiencies, the proposed project would help improving the amount and quality of data on birds in Europe. This would provide evidence for the successful delivery of the new European Biodiversity Strategy in areas such as (1)

⁸ [EuroBirdPortal - Home](#)

⁹ [Directive 2009/147/EC](#)

restoration, (2) improvement of the protected areas network and (3) species conservation status improvements.

Three unique traits of the EBP portal make it particularly suitable for this purpose: 1) Data are collected in near-real time and, therefore, can be readily used to assess the effectiveness of conservation measures at the necessary time intervals; 2) Data is collected year-round and, therefore, can be applied to inform conservation measures also during the migration periods and winter; and 3) The data in the portal can be combined with those of the two other existing data sets (European Bird Breeding Atlas (EBBA2) & Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme (PECMBS)) to further boost the usability of the data collected.

The overall amount of information collected by the online bird recording portals operating in Europe is vast: in 2021 alone, more than 60 million bird records were collected. Moreover, both the quantity and quality of the data collected has been increasing continuously both in absolute terms and in terms of temporal and geographical coverage. Currently, the EBP mobilizes the data from 21 different online systems, storing effort and contextual information based on data collected covering 137 bird species. The EBP central database repository receives nearly all these data from the local online portals automatically and on a daily basis, following the same common data standard and with updates up to the previous day. Moreover, thanks to the LIVE EBP viewer, all data collected by the project is presented to the general public in a visually attractive way, in the form of weekly animated maps spanning from January 2010 up to the current week.

The capacity of the EBP project to provide the most up to date information on the location of birds in time and space across Europe has been successfully exploited to provide support for instance for the surveillance of Avian Influenza in Europe. However, to make a more widespread use of the EBP capabilities, there are two key areas where a big step-forward is still needed. Having the capacity to collect and manage the data from all bird species, not just the current 137 ones, is one of the most critical ones. The other important limitation is the geographic coverage, which it is still too poor, in absolute terms or regarding the quality of the data collected, in some areas of Europe, particularly, the South-East (SE).

Specific project

The main objective of the proposed project should be to reinforce the EBP capabilities in order to allow it to contribute the evidence required to inform the successful delivery of the EU Biodiversity Strategy. Moreover, to be able to generate the best possible information outputs for the breeding season, it is also important to render the EBP data compatible with those of the other EBCC¹⁰ projects (EBBA2 and PECBMS), as the combination of the datasets and know-how from all these projects would, certainly, increase the overall efficiency and value of the applied deliveries that could be developed in the near future.

It is expected that the project awarded should cover the 3 Actions explained here below:

- Action 1) Improving coverage and the overall quality of the data collected

Objective: increasing participation, data collection and use of more structured data collection protocols, particularly, in South-East and East Europe.

How: in order to have the highest impact, the tasks directed to increase coverage and data collection will be essentially focussed on the Balkans region

¹⁰ <https://www.ebcc.info>

since there is an important continuous gap in the coverage of the EBP project in that area. In fact, no single EBP partner operates in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, and data collection is still quite scarce in Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Romania and Slovenia.

In concrete terms, the following is required:

- Capacity building: supporting and training of local organizations in portal development, bird census techniques and organization, mobilization and involvement of participants, data management and handling, and data quality issues;
- Helping the local organizations of countries not yet covered by the EBP project to set up portals, prioritizing systems already operating in Europe that can collect complete lists and, if convenient, also monitoring data;
- Supporting local organizations to set up and run international census plots;
- Producing documents and informative materials on best practices and the benefits of collecting more structured data in the local languages;
- Setting-up communication campaigns directed to encourage participation and collection of good quality data.

Furthermore, in countries covered by the EBP project but with a deficit of more structured data, additional efforts should be made to adapt the local online portals to collect complete lists and to help the corresponding organizations to promote their use through capacity building and the implementation of communication campaigns and promotional tools.

- Action 2) Adding all species recorded in Europe to the EBP data flow and improving the data management capacities of the network

Objective: Adding all the species recorded in Europe to the EBP data flow making full use of the EBP data standard and updating the EBP viewer accordingly.

How: The strength and capacity of the existing automatic dataflow system and central databank should be increased to properly handle the expected large increase in the volume of data. This includes improving the capacities and tools that are set up to help identify and correct potential errors in the data or the data submission process at both ends of the data flow system (i.e. the local partners and central EBP databank). On the other hand, the EBP viewer should be adapted and re-designed to show a much higher number of species (e.g. at least all those stored in the central EBP databank that feature some kind of seasonal changes in distribution). Given the large increase in the number of species, such a re-design should aim at keeping unchanged the overall dimensions of the viewer infrastructure and, thus, ensuring its long-term sustainability. To figure out how to attain this objective, while at the same time maximizing the attractiveness and dissemination potential of the viewer, should be one of the main tasks to be developed prior to the implementation of the technical improvements.

To add all species to the EBP data flow, each local (i.e. regional or national) online portal should have to adjust its own taxonomy to the one followed by the EBP (i.e. the HBW-BirdLife Checklist ¹¹, the same one used by the EU). Moreover, all data collected by the portals through standard monitoring projects that is already included in the data submissions to the EBP would have to be properly identified and characterized using the corresponding table of the EBP standard. Nowadays, it is rather widespread for online portals to collect also such highly valuable structured data and, therefore, it will be vital to have it properly stored and identified when submitted to the EBP. This would not only significantly increase the analytical value of the entire EBP dataset, but is a prerequisite for performing combined analyses with the data of other projects such as the PECBMS.

Another key task to be developed under this action should be for the EBP partnership to agree and put in place a protocol that deals with the visualization and handling of the data of sensitive species taking into account, when necessary, regional or national particularities. Once approved, the EBP infrastructure should be adapted to handle the data accordingly, and to provide the necessary tools to facilitate the work of the partners.

- Action 3) Demonstrative outputs with relevance for the EU nature legislation and policy

Objective: Producing two outputs that showcase how the improved capabilities of the EBP project, attained through Actions 1 & 2, could be applied to help implement key EU Biodiversity Strategy goals.

How: A first output should exemplify how the capabilities of the EBP project could be combined with those of other EBCC initiatives. In this case, data from the EBP will be combined with the PECBMS site-level data (Common Breeding Bird Surveys) with the aim of producing EBBA2-like maps of distribution (50x50km resolution) and probability of occurrence (10x10km) for a set of five species using the most recent available information (e.g. the latest 3-5 years of data). The Turtle Dove, given the interest in knowing the temporal evolution of its breeding range in the context of this species' International Conservation Action Plan, should be one of the five selected species. Four additional species should be chosen later on, during the project period and in agreement with the Commission's nature conservation unit taking into account the needs at the moment of producing the maps.

This output should also help boost synergies with the EUROPABON¹² project, given its current work in terms of combining data from all three EBCC projects to update European breeding bird distributions and produce improved population trends every few years. Specifically, the present task could serve as trial, or proof of concept, of how to develop and validate some of the components of a future "live" atlas.

A second output should showcase the applicability of the EBP data outside the breeding season. Building upon the experience gained by developing abundance models in the framework of the surveillance of Avian Influenza in Europe, the aim would be to focus on terrestrial migratory species and try to assess the overall adequacy of the Natura 2000 network for the protection of these species year-round or, at least, seasonally. As this field of application is

¹¹ Handbook of the Birds of the World (HBW) and BirdLife International digital Checklist

¹² EuropaBON - <https://europabon.org/>

more novel, some preliminary work will be needed to define the exact focus and scope of this demonstrative output.

**Third countries associated to the LIFE Programme: The assessment of each proposal will be done in line with the provisions of the relevant association agreement.*

Expected impact

It is expected that the specific project awarded in the framework of this call will have will have concrete results in terms of:

- Improving coverage and overall quality of the data collected, particularly, in South-East and East Europe,
- Adding all species recorded in Europe to the EBP data flow and improving the data management capacities of the network
- Producing demonstrative outputs with relevance for the EU nature legislation and policy.

Additional conditions

Not applicable

Funding rate

- Other Action Grants (OAGs): 90% funding rate of the eligible project costs.
- Projects under the topic LIFE 2022-PLP-NATURA - maximum budget envelopes are established for each specific need. See section above for details.

LIFE-2022-PLP-Environment — Circular Economy and Quality of LIFE

Objectives

The proposed projects under the topic LIFE 2022-PLP-Environment shall aim to address the following specific needs identified by the Member States in the sub-programme Circular Economy and Quality of LIFE.

Scope — Activities that can be funded

2. Testing and measuring the feasibility and effectiveness of financial incentives for the take-back of small used/waste EEE and portable batteries in view of setting up a stakeholder platform

(Maximum available EU co-financing EUR 800 000, EU co-financing rate: 90%)

Specific need addressed

Waste of electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) is one of the fastest growing waste streams in the EU, with current growth rates of 2%¹³. The way electronics and batteries are produced, consumed and discarded have an immense environmental and climate impact. While electronics contain hazardous or potentially hazardous substances, they also have high-embedded value of interest in a circular economy,

¹³ Forti V., Baldé C.P., Kuehr R., Bel G. The Global E-waste Monitor 2020, Quantities, flows and the circular economy potential. United Nations University (UNU), International Telecommunication Union (ITU) & International Solid Waste Association (ISWA), Bonn/Geneva/Vienna.

not the least as they contain precious metals as well as rare materials of strategic value such as indium and palladium¹⁴.

However, while EU legislation, namely Directive 2012/19/EU on waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE), sets ambitious WEEE collection and recovery (recycling) targets, collection rates in particular of small devices such as mobile phones, tablets and chargers remain low. Too often, small electronics are discarded in municipal waste streams, disposed in landfills, treated in a substandard way or stored in households due to limited return incentives. User concerns over personal data and limited information on how and where to discard small electronics further leads to devices accumulating in households. While current EU official statistics reflect an overall WEEE collection rate of 48.5%¹⁵, the collection rate of small electronics in Europe is estimated at around 15%¹⁶. This represents a substantial loss of resources and a missed opportunity for value to be fed back into the economy.

The European Green Deal and the new Circular Economy Action Plan call for specific action to address these challenges. The European Green Deal places particular attention on resource-intensive sectors such as the electronics sector and announced that the Commission would, inter alia, assess “the benefits of supporting ‘take-back’ schemes to incentivise people to return their unwanted devices such as mobile phones, tablets and chargers.” Similarly, a key action point under the 2020 Circular Economy Action Plan has been to improve the collection and treatment of WEEE, in particular exploring options at the EU level for take-back systems of small electronics such as mobile phones, tablets and chargers by providing the right incentives to consumers.

Specific project

The proposed project should test, as a primary objective, the feasibility and effectiveness of setting up financial incentives such as reward schemes, deposit refund schemes, the use of postal services and/or systems calculating the residual value of small electronics and portable batteries for subsequent reuse and/or recovery. Feasibility of the proposed solutions should also be checked at EU level. In particular, the project should prepare the ground to establish and bring together potentially in a single platform all relevant public and private actors.

As part of this primary objective, the project should include the following key features:

- collect evidence of successful take-back schemes using financial incentives for the return of waste and used EEE and portable batteries,
- the role of relevant actors in particular of distributors including online actors and Producer Responsibility Organisations should be assessed and described, including the potential challenges and opportunities faced in setting up such schemes.
- provide concrete measurements of success as regards the collection reached through the implementation of financial incentives for the take-back of small electronics and portable batteries.

¹⁴ LIFE: Critical Raw Material Closed Loop Recovery Project http://www.criticalrawmaterialrecovery.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/LIFE14_ENV_UK_000344-Final-Technical-Report-Webcopy.pdf

¹⁵ Waste Statistics https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Waste_statistics_-_electrical_and_electronic_equipment#Electronic_equipment_.28EEE.29_put_on_the_market_and_WEEE_collected_by_country

¹⁶ Ellen Macarthur Foundation <https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/news/in-depth-mobile-phones>

- identify areas which facilitate the development, practical implementation and transferability of such take-back schemes to improve the separate collection for small electronics and portable batteries.

In doing so, the project should take into account the circumstances of individual Member States, including the tendency to buy used electronics, as well as the impact of the introduction of possible financial schemes on already existing channels for the transfer of used electronics for reuse, such as transfer to other family members, sale through marketplaces on social media or companies dealing in used electronics (e.g. online stores).

**Third countries associated to the LIFE Programme: The assessment of each proposal will be done in line with the provisions of the relevant association agreement.*

Expected impact

It is expected that the specific project awarded in the framework of the call will have a substantial support to the policy development and legislative implementation in particular in terms of:

- supporting the implementation of the take-back obligation under Article 5 (2) (b) and (c) of the WEEE Directive;
- supporting a future revision of the WEEE Directive and the Commission proposal on a Batteries Regulation;
- increase recovery of secondary materials including Critical Raw Materials;
- understanding consumer needs and habits in different Member States with regards to the return of small electronics and portable batteries;
- the project will provide an opportunity for exchanging and building on best practices between relevant actors.

Additional conditions

Not Applicable

Funding rate

- Other Action Grants (OAGs): 90% funding rate of the eligible project costs.
- Projects under the topic LIFE 2022-PLP-Environment - maximum budget envelopes are established for each specific need. See section above for details.

3. Bringing lifecycle into building policy – Level(s) case studies

(foreseen EU contribution EUR 500 000, EU co-financing rate: 90%)

Specific need addressed

During 2015-2020, DG ENV, DG JRC and DG GROW developed the framework Level(s) to assess and report on the sustainability performance of buildings, over the full lifecycle, paying particular attention to circularity. Level(s) consists of a number of indicators covering energy, carbon, resource efficient and circular material flows, water consumption, health and comfort, resilience to climate change and life cycle costing.

Several of these indicators have during 2021 made their way into policy. In particular the indicator on whole life carbon, but also those linked to circularity, now feature in e.g. the Sustainable Finance Taxonomy and Commission proposals for the revised Energy Efficiency Directive and the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive. Moreover, the New European Bauhaus (NEB) sets out to develop a self-assessment tool, for projects to assess how NEB they are, and the part on circularity and environmental performance will largely be based on Level(s). While several web-

based tools have been developed to support the Level(s) user, including E-learning, many building professionals wanting to apply the indicators, in particular to prepare for policy requirements, now ask to see case studies based on real building projects, where projects using Level(s) share their results and experience. This is not something that exists at this stage. Such case studies would thus support the uptake of the Level(s) indicators, increase the understanding further for organisations before they test it themselves, and thereby pave the way for a smooth implementation of existing and future building policy and legislation which for the first time include circularity and lifecycle thinking.

Specific project

The objective of this project is to provide relevant information to the European Commission, based on real building project applications of the Level(s) indicators, so that the Commission in turn can produce case studies to the sector. Beyond the actual quantified indicators, when relevant for different options considered, the case studies should present in depth how building projects have applied the Level(s) indicators, such as in terms of when in the building projects they were used, which kinds of building professionals were involved, how the use of the indicators at different life cycle stages impacted the building process in terms of e.g. choice of design, material, process and collaboration. All this shall thus be shared with the Commission, together with information regarding how the understanding of sustainability has developed in the organisation, together with other benefits, such as preparing the organisation for future policy.

The project shall include ten building projects which apply the Level(s) indicators at their different levels, as set out by the framework methodology. It shall cover at least five Member States and a mix of residential building typologies, offices and schools.

New Built and Renovation projects shall apply all indicators related to Level(s) macro objectives 1, 2, 3 and 6, as well as indicators 4.1.1 and 4.2, at all levels (level 1 - 3). A small number of existing buildings shall also be used for case studies, these will cover fewer indicators, 1.1, 3.1, 4.1.1, 4.2 and 6.2, at level 3.

**Third countries associated to the LIFE Programme: The assessment of each proposal will be done in line with the provisions of the relevant association agreement, the proposal must explain how those provisions are met.*

Expected impacts

It is expected that the project awarded in the framework of the call will have a concrete results in terms of:

- substantial support to policy and legislative implementation, across several kinds of initiatives, from the most important building legislation (Energy Performance of Buildings Directive) to the concretisation of the new holistic New European Bauhaus. Taking climate change as an example, assessing whole life carbon, a key Level(s) indicator which is now included in a number of policy initiatives, is expected to reduce embodied carbon emissions (making up about 10% of total EU carbon emissions) with 60-80% up to 2050 (according to EEA and UNEP ¹⁷). To achieve this, a range of different support

¹⁷ European Environment Agency (EEA) and UN Environment Programme (UNEP)

and guidance will be needed, and case studies will play an important role in such a package.

Additional conditions

- The applicants shall have a good understanding of sustainability performance of buildings and lifecycle assessment and experience of working with building certification schemes.
- The applicants shall be able to provide building projects “in the pipeline”, to be sure to finalise projects within three years and be able to report on post occupancy performance within four years.
- The applicants shall be ready to share all the necessary information with the Commission, for the development of useful and pedagogic case studies. The Commission shall be able to use the data and information to provide public communication material, in any format it deems useful. The applicants shall be available for questions and verification of draft case studies as prepared by the Commission. The preparation of the ten case studies will be finalised at the latest one year after the finalisation of the LIFE project.
- Different building organisations can join forces to deliver this project. Ideally, applicants will work together with a wide group of stakeholders, such as architects, real estate developers, local municipalities and construction companies. If they so wish, the names of the organisations will be published in the case studies.

Funding rate

- Other Action Grants (OAGs): 90% funding rate of the eligible project costs.
- Projects under the topic LIFE 2022-PLP- Environment - maximum budget envelopes are established for each specific need. See section above for details.

LIFE-2022-PLP-ENER — Supporting Clean Energy Transition

Objectives

The proposed project under the topic LIFE 2022-PLP-ENER shall address the following specific needs and Policy Priorities identified by the Member States in the sub-programme Clean Energy transition.

Scope — Activities that can be funded

4. Supporting EU’s standardisation activities related to eco-design, energy labelling, energy audits and energy management systems (foreseen EU contribution EUR 900 000, EU co-financing rate: 90%)

Specific need addressed

Standards are the backbone of eco-design and energy labelling regulations, and very relevant as well in the context of energy audits and energy management systems. For eco-design and energy labelling regulations to deliver, the standardised test-procedures must be available or elaborated in response to new regulatory requirements and be sufficiently simple, repeatable and reproducible to avoid an excessive testing burden on manufacturers, service providers and authorities. At the same time they must, to the extent possible, take into account the real-life usage of a given product or system, reflect average consumer and end-user behaviour, and be robust in order to deter intentional and unintentional circumvention.

The objectives of the action are to support the EU's efforts in the area of standardisation activities for eco-design and energy labelling legislation, as well as energy audits and energy management systems, and thus support the application of the Energy Efficiency First principle. In particular, this will be achieved by participating and contributing to the standardisation processes, ensuring transparency, consideration of the interests of civil society, understanding and challenging the industrial interests. Specifically for energy-related products and to the extent feasible, by improving the standards' representativeness of average real-world usage of products. Such representativeness is not only fundamental in ensuring the effectiveness of the eco-design and energy labelling regulations, but also in responding to the interests of users of energy-related products, audits and energy management systems.

Specific project

The proposed project should provide support to environmental and consumer NGOs for their representation in standardisation processes for eco-design and energy labelling legislation, as well as for energy audits and energy management systems, and overall support the application of the Energy Efficiency First principle as part of its activities in the European and International Standardisation Organisations. The tasks to be undertaken under this grant agreement are focused on two areas: 1) Monitoring of horizontal and product specific standardisation activities related to eco-design, energy labelling, energy audits and energy management systems, 2) Participation in and contributions to the Technical Committees and related Working Groups in the European and International Standardisation Organisations at different levels of the standardisation process. The deliverables will include regular progress reports, research reports, position papers, compatibility analyses, input into standardisation requests, guidelines, etc. Ideally, a joint participation of environmental and consumer NGOs is desired to ensure due consideration of both environmental and wider consumer and end-user perspectives.

**Third countries associated to the LIFE Programme: The assessment of each proposal will be done in line with the provisions of the relevant association agreement.*

Expected impact

It is expected that the specific project awarded in the framework of this call will have a substantial support to policy development and legislative implementation in particular in terms of:

- supporting the effective implementation of eco-design and energy labelling legislation, as well as energy audits and energy management systems, through related standardisation work;
- improving the standards' representativeness of average real-world usage of energy-related products as well as for energy audits and energy management systems;
- increasing transparency and promoting the consideration of civil society interests in standardisation processes;
- exchanging and building on best practices between relevant actors.

Additional conditions

Minimum requirement for applicants:

- The applicants shall be a single NGO or a consortia of NGOs, covering through their membership at least 2/3 of the EU Member States, able to ensure representation in the framework of the relevant Technical Committees and related Working Groups in the European and International Standardisation Organisations, at different level of the standardisation process.
- Applicants shall have an expert understanding of the eco-design and energy labelling regulations, and of other standardisation activities in the field of energy efficiency, including energy audits and energy management systems. Applicants should also have a good understanding of the wider sustainability of products framework, related upcoming initiatives at EU level and possible novelties introduced by the FF55¹⁸ legislative revisions on energy.
- Envisaged duration of the project: 3 years.

Funding rate

- Other Action Grants (OAGs): 90% funding rate of the eligible project costs.
- Projects under the topic LIFE-2022-PLP-ENER- maximum budget envelopes are established for each specific need. See section above for details.

3. Available budget

The total available call budget is EUR 3 200 000.

Specific budget information per topic can be found in the table below.

Topic	Topic budget	Estimated number of projects to be funded	Expected project duration
LIFE 2022-PLP-NATURA	EUR 1 000 000	1 Project	Maximum 36/48 months
LIFE-2022-PLP-Environment	EUR 1 300 000	2 Projects	Maximum 36/48 months
LIFE-2022-PLP-ENER	EUR 900 000	1 Project	36 months

The availability of the call budget still depends on the adoption of the budget 2022 by the EU budgetary authority.

¹⁸ On 14 July 2021 the European Commission adopted the 'fit for 55' package with a view to adapting existing EU climate and energy legislation to the new EU objective of a minimum 55% reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2030, in accordance with the new European Climate Law. The fit for 55 package is part of the European Green Deal.

We reserve the right not to award all available funds or to redistribute them between the call priorities, depending on the proposals received and the results of the evaluation.

4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
Call opening:	17 May 2022
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	7 September 2022 17:00 CET (Brussels)
Information on evaluation results:	January/February 2023
Grant Agreement signature:	April/May 2023

5. Admissibility and documents

Proposals must be submitted before the **call deadline** (see *timetable section 4*).

Proposals must be submitted **electronically** via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (accessible via the Topic page in the [Search Funding & Tenders](#) section. Paper submissions are NOT possible.

Proposals (including annexes and supporting documents) must be submitted using the forms provided *inside* the Submission System (⚠ NOT the documents available on the Topic page — they are only for information).

Project acronym — Your project acronym must include the word LIFE.

Proposals must be **complete** and contain all the requested information and all required annexes and supporting documents:

- Application **Form Part A** — contains administrative information about the participants (future coordinator, beneficiaries and affiliated entities) and the summarised budget for the project (*to be filled in directly online*)

- Application **Form Part B** — contains the technical description of the project (*to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed and then assembled and re-uploaded*)
- **Part C** (*to be filled in directly online*) containing additional project data
- **mandatory annexes and supporting documents** (*to be uploaded*):
 - for single stage:
 - detailed budget table (*mandatory excel template available in the Submission System*)
 - CVs of core project team: *not applicable*
 - activity reports of last year: *not applicable*
 - list of previous projects: *not applicable*
 - participant information
 - letters of support from competent authorities, if available
 - other annexes, if available.


Please note that the amounts entered into the summarised budget table (filled in directly online) must correspond to the amounts calculated in the detailed budget table. In case of discrepancies, the amounts in the online summarised budget table will prevail.

At proposal submission, you will have to confirm that you have the **mandate to act** for all applicants. Moreover you will have to confirm that the information in the application is correct and complete and that the participants comply with the conditions for receiving EU funding (especially eligibility, financial and operational capacity, exclusion, etc). Before signing the grant, each beneficiary and affiliated entity will have to confirm this again by signing a declaration of honour (DoH). Proposals without full support will be rejected.

Your application must be **readable, accessible and printable**.

Proposals are limited to maximum **50 pages** (Part B). Evaluators will not consider any additional pages.

You may be asked at a later stage for further documents (*for legal entity validation, financial capacity check, bank account validation, etc*).

 For more information about the submission process (including IT aspects), consult the [Online Manual](#).

6. Eligibility

Eligible participants (eligible countries)

In order to be eligible, the applicants (beneficiaries and affiliated entities) must:

- be legal entities (public or private bodies)
- be established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
 - EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs))
 - non-EU countries:
 - listed EEA countries and countries associated to the LIFE Programme (associated countries) or countries which are in ongoing negotiations

for an association agreement and where the agreement enters into force before grant signature ([list of participating countries](#))¹⁹

- the coordinator must be established in an eligible country.

Beneficiaries and affiliated entities must register in the [Participant Register](#) — before submitting the proposal — and will have to be validated by the Central Validation Service (REA Validation). For the validation, they will be requested to upload documents showing legal status and origin.

Other entities may participate in other consortium roles, such as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions, etc (*see section 13*).

Specific cases

Exceptional funding — Entities from other countries (not listed above) are exceptionally eligible, if the granting authority considers their participation essential for the implementation of the action (*see work programme*).

Natural persons — Natural persons are NOT eligible (with the exception of self-employed persons, i.e. sole traders, where the company does not have legal personality separate from that of the natural person).

International organisations — International organisations are eligible. The rules on eligible countries do not apply to them.

Entities without legal personality — Entities which do not have legal personality under their national law may exceptionally participate, provided that their representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf, and offer guarantees for the protection of the EU financial interests equivalent to that offered by legal persons²⁰.

EU bodies — EU bodies (with the exception of the European Commission Joint Research Centre) can NOT be part of the consortium.

Associations and interest groupings — Entities composed of members may participate as 'sole beneficiaries' or 'beneficiaries without legal personality'²¹. ⚠ Please note that if the action will be implemented by the members, they should also participate (either as beneficiaries or as affiliated entities, otherwise their costs will NOT be eligible).

Countries currently negotiating association agreements — Beneficiaries from countries with ongoing negotiations (*see above*) may participate in the call and can sign grants if the negotiations are concluded before grant signature (with retroactive effect, if provided in the agreement).

EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for certain entities (*e.g. entities subject to [EU restrictive measures](#) under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)*)²² and entities

¹⁹ Applicants from countries which requested to be associated to the LIFE Programme may participate in this call for proposals. However, no grant agreement will be signed if the related association agreement is not entered into force by the finalisation of the evaluation process.

²⁰ See Article 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

²¹ For the definitions, see Articles 187(2) and 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

²² Please note that the EU Official Journal contains the official list and, in case of conflict, its content prevails over that of the [EU Sanctions Map](#).

covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)²³). Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).

 For more information, see [Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment](#).

The identity of the applicant (and compliance with general eligibility conditions) will be verified through the documents provided in the [Participant Register](#) during legal entity validation (copy of the resolution, decision or other official document establishing the entity, etc).

Consortium composition - please see section 2 above for additional conditions.

Eligible activities

Eligible activities are the ones set out in section 2 above (Type of action — Objectives — Themes and priorities — Activities that can be funded).

The following activities are not considered as eligible for funding under this call:

- land purchase
- volunteer work.

Projects must comply with EU policy interests and priorities (*such as environment, social, security, industrial and trade policy, etc.*).

Financial support to third parties is not allowed.

Geographic location (target countries)

Proposals must relate to activities taking place in the eligible countries (*see above*). Projects with activities outside the EU must be necessary to achieve EU environmental and climate objectives and ensure the effectiveness of interventions carried within the EU (e.g. actions aimed at the conservation of migratory birds in wintering areas, actions implemented on a trans boundary river, or projects aimed to address environmental problems that cannot be solved successfully or efficiently unless actions are carried out also in non-EU countries).

7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion

Financial capacity

Applicants must have **stable and sufficient resources** to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share. Organisations participating in several projects must have sufficient capacity to implement all these projects.

The financial capacity check will be carried out on the basis of the documents you will be requested to upload in the [Participant Register](#) during grant preparation (*e.g. profit and loss account and balance sheet, business plan, audit report produced by an approved external auditor, certifying the accounts for the last closed financial year, etc.*). The analysis will be based on neutral financial indicators, but will also take into account other aspects, such as dependency on EU funding and deficit and revenue in previous years.

²³ Commission guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#) on 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 (OJEU C 205 of 19.07.2013, pp. 9-11).

The check will normally be done for all consortiums except:

- public bodies (entities established as public body under national law, including local, regional or national authorities) or international organisations
- if the project requested grant amount is not more than EUR 60 000.

If needed, it may also be done for affiliated entities.

If we consider that your financial capacity is not satisfactory, we may require:

- further information
- an enhanced financial responsibility regime, i.e. joint and several responsibility for all beneficiaries or joint and several liability of affiliated entities (*see below, section 10*)
- prefinancing paid in instalments
- (one or more) prefinancing guarantees (*see below, section 10*)

or

- propose no prefinancing
- request that you are replaced or, if needed, reject the entire proposal.

④ For more information, see [Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment](#).

Operational capacity

Applicants must have the **know-how, qualifications** and **resources** to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share (including sufficient experience in projects of comparable size and nature).

This capacity will be assessed together with the 'Resources' award criterion, on the basis of the competence and experience of the applicants and their project teams, including operational resources (human, technical and other) or, exceptionally, the measures proposed to obtain it by the time the task implementation starts.

If the evaluation of the award criterion is positive, the applicants are considered to have sufficient operational capacity.

Applicants will have to show their capacity via the following:

- general profiles (qualifications and experiences) of the staff responsible for managing and implementing the project
- description of the consortium participants (and previous projects, if any)

Additional supporting documents may be requested, if needed to confirm the operational capacity of any applicant.

Exclusion

Applicants which are subject to an **EU exclusion decision** or in one of the following **exclusion situations** that bar them from receiving EU funding can NOT participate²⁴:

- bankruptcy, winding up, affairs administered by the courts, arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or other similar procedures (including procedures for persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- in breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- guilty of grave professional misconduct²⁵ (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).

Applicants will also be refused if it turns out that²⁶:

- during the award procedure they misrepresented information required as a condition for participating or failed to supply that information
- they were previously involved in the preparation of the call and this entails a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise (conflict of interest).

8. Evaluation and award procedure

The proposals will have to follow the **standard submission and evaluation procedure** (one-stage submission + one-step evaluation).

²⁴ See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

²⁵ Professional misconduct includes: violation of ethical standards of the profession, wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility, false declarations/misrepresentation of information, participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition, violation of IPR, attempting to influence decision-making processes or obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain advantage.


²⁶ See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

An **evaluation committee** will assess all applications. Proposals will first be checked for formal requirements (admissibility, and eligibility, *see sections 5 and 6*). Proposals found admissible and eligible will be evaluated (for each topic) against the operational capacity and award criteria (*see sections 7 and 9*) and then ranked according to their scores.

For proposals with the same score (within a topic or budget envelope) a **priority order** will be determined according to the following approach:

Successively for every group of *ex aequo* proposals, starting with the highest scored group, and continuing in descending order, the *ex aequo* proposals will be prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for the award criterion 'Impact'. If these scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion 'Relevance', then 'Quality', then 'Resources'.

All proposals will be informed about the evaluation result (**evaluation result letter**). Successful proposals will be invited for grant preparation; the other ones will be put on the reserve list or rejected.

 No commitment for funding — Invitation to grant preparation does NOT constitute a formal commitment for funding. We will still need to make various legal checks before grant award: *legal entity validation, financial capacity, exclusion check, etc.*

Grant preparation will involve a dialogue in order to fine-tune technical or financial aspects of the project and may require extra information from your side. It may also include adjustments to the proposal to address recommendations of the evaluation committee or other concerns. Compliance will be a pre-condition for signing the grant.

If you believe that the evaluation procedure was flawed, you can submit a **complaint** (following the deadlines and procedures set out in the evaluation result letter). Please note that notifications which have not been opened within 10 days after sending are considered to have been accessed and that deadlines will be counted from opening/access (*see also [Funding & Tenders Portal Terms and Conditions](#)*). Please also be aware that for complaints submitted electronically, there may be character limitations.

9. Award criteria

The **award criteria** for this call are as follows:

single stage:

1. Relevance (0-20 points)

- Relevance of the contribution to one or several of the specific objectives of the LIFE Programme and the targeted sub-programme
- Extent to which the proposal is in line with the description included in the call for proposals, including its specific priorities
- Concept and methodology: soundness of the overall intervention logic

2. Impact (0-20 points)

- Ambition and credibility of impacts expected during and/or after the project due to the activities, including ensuring that no substantial harm is done to the other specific objectives of the LIFE Programme

- Sustainability of the project results after the end of the project
- Quality of the measures for the exploitation of project results

3. Quality (0-20 points)

- Clarity, relevance and feasibility of the work plan
- Identification and mobilisation of the relevant stakeholders
- Appropriate geographic focus of the activities
- Quality of the plan to monitor and report impacts
- Appropriateness and quality of the measures to communicate and disseminate the project and its results to different target groups

4. Resources (0-20 points)

- Composition of the project team - in terms of expertise, skills and responsibilities and appropriateness of the management structure
- Appropriateness of the budget and resources and their consistency with the work plan
- Transparency of the budget, i.e. the cost items should be sufficiently described
- Value for money of the proposal

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score	Weighting
Relevance	10	20	1
Impact	10	20	1.5
Quality	10	20	1
Resources	10	20	1
Overall weighted (pass) score (without bonus)	55	90	N/A

Maximum points 90 points.

Individual thresholds per criterion: 10 points.

Overall threshold: 55 points.

10. Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements

If you pass evaluation, your project will be invited for grant preparation, where you will be asked to prepare the Grant Agreement together with the EU Project Officer.

This Grant Agreement will set the framework for your grant and its terms and conditions, in particular concerning deliverables, reporting and payments.

The Model Grant Agreement that will be used (and all other relevant templates and guidance documents) can be found on [Portal Reference Documents](#).

Starting date and project duration

The project starting date and duration will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 1*). Normally the starting date will be after grant signature. Retroactive application can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons — but never earlier than the proposal submission date.

Project duration: the duration of the project between 24 and 48 months (extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment). Since the exact submission date is not known in advance, it is suggested to add two or three months as a safety margin to the expected project duration.

Milestones and deliverables

The milestones and deliverables for each project will be managed through the Portal Grant Management System and will be reflected in Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement.

Form of grant, funding rate and maximum grant amount

The grant parameters (*maximum grant amount, funding rate, total eligible costs, etc.*) will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 3 and art 5*).

Project budget (maximum grant amount): *see section 3 above*. The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

The grant will be a budget-based mixed actual cost grant (actual costs, with unit cost and flat-rate elements). This means that it will reimburse ONLY certain types of costs (eligible costs) and costs that were *actually* incurred for your project (NOT the *budgeted* costs). For unit costs and flat-rates, you can charge the amounts calculated as explained in the Grant Agreement (*see art 6 and Annex 2 and 2a*).

The costs will be reimbursed at the funding rate fixed in the Grant Agreement as indicated below:

90% for the topic LIFE-2022-PLP-NATURA — Nature and Biodiversity;

90% for the topic LIFE-2022-PLP-Environment — Circular Economy and Quality of LIFE;

90% for and LIFE-2022-PLP-ENER- Supporting Clean Energy Transition.

(*See section 2 above for further details*).

Grants may NOT produce a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). For-profit organisations must declare their revenues and, if there is a profit, we will deduct it from the final grant amount (*see art 22.3*).

Moreover, please be aware that the final grant amount may be reduced in case of non-compliance with the Grant Agreement (*e.g. improper implementation, breach of obligations, etc*).

Budget categories and cost eligibility rules

The budget categories and cost eligibility rules are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 3, art 6 and Annex 2*).

Budget categories for this call:

- A. Personnel costs
 - A.1 Employees, A.2 Natural persons under direct contract, A.3 Seconded persons
 - A.4 SME owners and natural person beneficiaries
 - A.5 Volunteers
- B. Subcontracting costs
- C. Purchase costs
 - C.1 Travel and subsistence
 - C.2 Equipment
 - C.3 Other goods, works and services
- E. Indirect costs

Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:


- personnel costs:
 - SME owner/natural person unit cost²⁷: Yes
 - volunteers unit cost²⁸: No
- travel and subsistence unit cost²⁹: No (only actual costs)
- equipment costs: depreciation
- other cost categories:
 - costs for financial support to third parties: not allowed ;
 - land purchase costs: n/a
- indirect cost flat-rate: 7% of the eligible direct costs (categories A-D, and exempted specific cost categories (land purchase), if any)
- VAT: non-deductible VAT is eligible (but please note that since 2013 VAT paid by beneficiaries that are public bodies acting as public authority is NOT eligible)
- other:
 - in-kind contributions for free are allowed, but cost-neutral, i.e. they cannot be declared as cost
 - kick off meeting: costs for kick-off meeting organised by the granting authority are eligible (travel costs for maximum 2 persons, return ticket to

²⁷ Commission [Decision](#) of 20 October 2020 authorising the use of unit costs for the personnel costs of the owners of small and medium-sized enterprises and beneficiaries that are natural persons not receiving a salary for the work carried out by themselves under an action or work programme (C(2020)7715).

²⁹ Commission [Decision](#) of 12 January 2021 authorising the use of unit costs for travel, accommodation and subsistence costs under an action or work programme under the 2021-2027 multi-annual financial framework (C(2021)35).

Brussels and accommodation for one night) only if the meeting takes place after the project starting date set out in the Grant Agreement; the starting date can be changed through an amendment, if needed

- common information and dissemination activities: foresee resources to increase synergies between, and the visibility of LIFE and EU supported actions (for example 1 travel/year, 5 days) n/a
- other ineligible costs: Yes:
 - land purchase costs are not eligible
 - Infrastructure cost are not eligible
- Volunteers costs are not eligible

 Volunteers costs — Volunteers costs are not a classic cost category. There are no costs because volunteers work for free, but they may nonetheless be added to the budget in the form of a prefixed unit cost (per volunteer) and thus allow you to benefit from the volunteers' work for the grant (by increasing the amount of reimbursement up to 100% of the normal costs, i.e. cost categories other than volunteers). More information is available in the [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6.2.A.5](#).

Reporting and payment arrangements


The reporting and payment arrangements are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4 and art 21 and 22*).

After grant signature, you will normally receive a **prefinancing** to start working on the project (float of normally **30 %** of the maximum grant amount; exceptionally less or no prefinancing). The prefinancing will be paid 30 days from entry into force/financial guarantee (if required) — whichever is the latest.

There will be no **interim payments**. There will be one or more **additional prefinancing payments** linked to a prefinancing report.

Payment of the balance: At the end of the project, we will calculate your final grant amount. If the total of earlier payments is higher than the final grant amount, we will ask you (your coordinator) to pay back the difference (recovery).

All payments will be made to the coordinator.

 Please be aware that payments will be automatically lowered if one of your consortium members has outstanding debts towards the EU (granting authority or other EU bodies). Such debts will be offset by us — in line with the conditions set out in the Grant Agreement (*see art 22*).

Please also note that you are responsible for keeping records on all the work done and the costs declared. The Grant Agreement contains additional record-keeping rules (*Data Sheet, point 3 and art 20*).

Prefinancing guarantees

If a prefinancing guarantee is required, it will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4*). The amount will be set during grant preparation and it will normally be equal or lower than the prefinancing for your grant.

The guarantee should be in euro and issued by an approved bank/financial institution established in an EU Member State. If you are established in a non-EU country and would like to provide a guarantee from a bank/financial institution in your country, please contact us (this may be exceptionally accepted, if it offers equivalent security).

Amounts blocked in bank accounts will NOT be accepted as financial guarantees.

Prefinancing guarantees are formally NOT linked to individual consortium members, which means that you are free to organise how to provide the guarantee amount (*by one or several beneficiaries, for the overall amount or several guarantees for partial amounts, by the beneficiary concerned or by another beneficiary, etc*). It is however important that the requested amount is covered and that the guarantee(s) are sent to us in time to make the prefinancing (scanned copy via Portal AND original by post).

If agreed with us, the bank guarantee may be replaced by a guarantee from a third party.

The guarantee will be released at the end of the grant, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Grant Agreement.

Certificates

Depending on the type of action, size of grant amount and type of beneficiaries, you may be requested to submit different certificates. The types, schedules and thresholds for each certificate are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4 and art 24*).

Liability regime for recoveries

The liability regime for recoveries will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet point 4.4 and art 22*).

For beneficiaries, it is one of the following:

- limited joint and several liability with individual ceilings — *each beneficiary up to their maximum grant amount*
 - unconditional joint and several liability — *each beneficiary up to the maximum grant amount for the action*
- or
- individual financial responsibility — *each beneficiary only for their own debts*.

In addition, the granting authority may require joint and several liability of affiliated entities (with their beneficiary).

Provisions concerning the project implementation

IPR rules: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 16 and Annex 5)*:

- rights of use on results: Yes

Communication, dissemination and visibility of funding: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 17 and Annex 5)*:

- communication and dissemination plan: Yes
- additional communication and dissemination activities: Yes
- special logos: Yes

Specific rules for carrying out the action: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 18 and Annex 5)*:

- durability: Yes
- specific rules for blending operations: No other specificities

Non-compliance and breach of contract

The Grant Agreement (chapter 5) provides for the measures we may take in case of breach of contract (and other non-compliance issues).



For more information, see [AGA – Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

11. How to submit an application

All proposals must be submitted directly online via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System. Paper applications are NOT accepted.

Submission is a **2-step process**:

a) create a user account and register your organisation

To use the Submission System (the only way to apply), all participants need to [create an EU Login user account](#).

Once you have an EULogin account, you can [register your organisation](#) in the Participant Register. When your registration is finalised, you will receive a 9-digit participant identification code (PIC).

b) submit the proposal

Access the Electronic Submission System via the Topic page in the [Search Funding & Tenders](#) section (or, for calls sent by invitation to submit a proposal, through the link provided in the invitation letter).

Submit your proposal in 4 parts, as follows:

- Part A includes administrative information about the applicant organisations (future coordinator, beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners) and the summarised budget for the proposal. Fill it in directly online
- Part B (description of the action) covers the technical content of the proposal. Download the mandatory word template from the Submission System, fill it in and upload it as a PDF file
- Part C containing additional project data. To be filled in directly online.
- Annexes (*see section 5*). Upload them as PDF file (single or multiple depending on the slots). Excel upload is sometimes possible, depending on the file type.

The proposal must keep to the **page limits** (*see section 5*); excess pages will be disregarded.

Documents must be uploaded to the **right category** in the Submission System otherwise the proposal might be considered incomplete and thus inadmissible.

The proposal must be submitted **before the call deadline** (see *section 4*). After this deadline, the system is closed and proposals can no longer be submitted.

Once the proposal is submitted, you will receive a **confirmation e-mail** (with date and time of your application). If you do not receive this confirmation e-mail, it means your proposal has NOT been submitted. If you believe this is due to a fault in the Submission System, you should immediately file a complaint via the [IT Helpdesk webform](#), explaining the circumstances and attaching a copy of the proposal (and, if possible, screenshots to show what happened).

Details on processes and procedures are described in the [Online Manual](#). The Online Manual also contains the links to FAQs and detailed instructions regarding the Portal Electronic Exchange System.

12. Help

As far as possible, ***please try to find the answers you need yourself***, in this and the other documentation (we have limited resources for handling direct enquiries):

- [Online Manual](#)
- [Portal FAQ](#) (for general questions).
- [LIFE Info Days](#)

Please also consult the Topic page regularly, since we will use it to publish call updates. (For invitations, we will contact you directly in case of a call update).

Contact

For individual questions on the Portal Submission System, please contact the [IT Helpdesk](#).

Non-IT related questions should be sent to the following email address: CINEA-LIFE-ENQUIRIES@ec.europa.eu.

 Please:

- send your questions at the latest 7 days before the submission deadline (see *section 4*)
- indicate clearly the reference of the call and topic to which your question relates (see *cover page*).

– 13. Important



IMPORTANT

- **Don't wait until the end** — Complete your application sufficiently in advance of the deadline to avoid any last minute **technical problems**. Problems due to last minute submissions (*e.g. congestion, etc.*) will be entirely at your risk. Call deadlines can NOT be extended.
- **Consult** the Portal Topic page regularly. We will use it to publish updates and additional information on the call (call and topic updates).
- **Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Exchange System** — By submitting the application, all participants **accept** to use the electronic exchange system in accordance with the [Portal Terms & Conditions](#).
- **Registration** — Before submitting the application, all beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners must be registered in the [Participant Register](#). The participant identification code (PIC) (one per participant) is mandatory for the Application Form.
- **Consortium roles** — When setting up your consortium, you should think of organisations that help you reach objectives and solve problems.

The roles should be attributed according to the level of participation in the project. Main participants should participate as **beneficiaries** or **affiliated entities**; other entities can participate as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions. **Associated partners** and third parties giving in-kind contributions should bear their own costs (they will not become formal recipients of EU funding). **Subcontracting** should normally constitute a limited part and must be performed by third parties (not by one of the beneficiaries/affiliated entities). Subcontracting going beyond 30% of the total eligible costs must be justified in the application.

- **Coordinator** — In multi-beneficiary grants, the beneficiaries participate as consortium (group of beneficiaries). They will have to choose a coordinator, who will take care of the project management and coordination and will represent the consortium towards the granting authority. In mono-beneficiary grants, the single beneficiary will automatically be coordinator.
- **Affiliated entities** — Applicants may participate with affiliated entities (i.e. entities linked to a beneficiary which participate in the action with similar rights and obligations as the beneficiaries, but do not sign the grant and therefore do not become beneficiaries themselves). They will get a part of the grant money and must therefore comply with all the call conditions and be validated (just like beneficiaries); but they do not count towards the minimum eligibility criteria for consortium composition (if any).
- **Associated partners** — Applicants may participate with associated partners (i.e. partner organisations which participate in the action but without the right to get grant money). They participate without funding and therefore do not need to be validated.
- **Consortium agreement** — For practical and legal reasons it is recommended to set up internal arrangements that allow you to deal with exceptional or unforeseen circumstances (in all cases, even if not mandatory under the Grant Agreement). The consortium agreement also gives you the possibility to redistribute the grant money according to your own consortium-internal principles and parameters (for instance, one beneficiary can reattribute its grant money to another beneficiary). The consortium agreement thus allows you to customise the EU grant to the needs inside your consortium and can also help to protect you in case of disputes.

- **Balanced project budget**— Grant applications must ensure a balanced project budget and sufficient other resources to implement the project successfully (*e.g. own contributions, income generated by the action, financial contributions from third parties, etc*). You may be requested to lower your estimated costs, if they are ineligible (including excessive).
- **No-profit rule** — Grants may NOT give a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). This will be checked by us at the end of the project.
- **No double funding** — There is a strict prohibition of double funding from the EU budget (except under EU Synergies actions). Outside such Synergies actions, any given action may receive only ONE grant from the EU budget and cost items may under NO circumstances declared to two different EU actions.
- **Completed/ongoing projects** — Proposals for projects that have already been completed will be rejected; proposals for projects that have already started will be assessed on a case-by-case basis (in this case, no costs can be reimbursed for activities that took place before the project starting date/proposal submission).
- **Combination with EU operating grants**— Combination with EU operating grants is possible, if the project remains outside the operating grant work programme and you make sure that cost items are clearly separated in your accounting and NOT declared twice (see [AGA – Annotated Model Grant Agreement, art 6.2.E](#)).
- **Multiple proposals** — Applicants may submit more than one proposal for *different* projects under the same call (and be awarded a funding for them).
Organisations may participate in several proposals.
BUT: if there are several proposals for *very similar* projects, only one application will be accepted and evaluated; the applicants will be asked to withdraw one of them (or it will be rejected).
- **Resubmission** — Proposals may be changed and re-submitted until the deadline for submission.
- **Rejection** — By submitting the application, all applicants accept the call conditions set out in this Call Document (and the documents it refers to). Proposals that do not comply with all the call conditions will be **rejected**. This applies also to applicants: All applicants need to fulfil the criteria; if any one of them doesn't, they must be replaced or the entire proposal will be rejected.
- **Cancellation** — There may be circumstances which may require the cancellation of the call. In this case, you will be informed via a call or topic update. Please note that cancellations are without entitlement to compensation.
- **Language** — You can submit your proposal in any official EU language (project abstract/summary should however always be in English). For reasons of efficiency, we strongly advise you to use English for the entire application.

- **Transparency** — In accordance with Article 38 of the [EU Financial Regulation](#), information about EU grants awarded is published each year on the [Europa website](#).

This includes:

- beneficiary names
- beneficiary addresses
- the purpose for which the grant was awarded
- the maximum amount awarded.

The publication can exceptionally be waived (on reasoned and duly substantiated request), if there is a risk that the disclosure could jeopardise your rights and freedoms under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights or harm your commercial interests.

- **Data protection** — The submission of a proposal under this call involves the collection, use and processing of personal data. This data will be processed in accordance with the applicable legal framework. It will be processed solely for the purpose of evaluating your proposal, subsequent management of your grant and, if needed, programme monitoring, evaluation and communication. Details are explained in the [Funding & Tenders Portal Privacy Statement](#).