



Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)

Call for proposals

LIFE Technical Assistance for Replication
[LIFE-2025-TA-R]

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 CINEA.D – Natural Resources, Climate, Sustainable Blue Economy and Clean Energy
CINEA.D.1 – LIFE Energy + LIFE Climate

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

0. Introduction	5
1. Background.....	6
What is the LIFE Programme?	6
Nature and Biodiversity	7
Circular Economy and Quality of Life	7
2. Type of action — Objectives — Themes and priorities — Activities that can be funded — Expected impact	8
Type of action	8
LIFE-2025-TA-R — Technical Assistance for Replication	8
Objectives	8
Scope — Activities that can be funded.....	8
Expected impact.....	9
Funding rate	10
3. Available budget	10
4. Timetable and deadlines	10
5. Admissibility and documents	10
6. Eligibility.....	12
Eligible participants (eligible countries).....	12
Consortium composition	13
Eligible activities.....	13
Geographic location (target countries).....	14
7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion.....	15
Financial capacity	15
Operational capacity	15
Exclusion	16
8. Evaluation and award procedure	17
9. Award criteria.....	18
10. Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements.....	19
Starting date and project duration	19
Milestones and deliverables.....	19

Form of grant, funding rate and maximum grant amount.....	19
Budget categories and cost eligibility rules.....	20
Reporting and payment arrangements.....	21
Prefinancing guarantees	22
Certificates	22
Liability regime for recoveries	22
Provisions concerning the project implementation.....	23
Other specificities	23
Non-compliance and breach of contract	23
11. How to submit an application.....	24
12. Help	25
13. Important	26

0. Introduction

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

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

- Regulation 2024/2509 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))¹
- the basic act (LIFE Regulation [2021/783](#))².

The call is launched in accordance with the 2025-2027 Multiannual Work Programme³ and will be managed by the **European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA)** ('Agency').

The call covers the following **topic**:

- **LIFE-2025-TA-R – Technical Assistance for Replication**

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:

¹ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast) ('EU Financial Regulation') (OJ L, 2024/2509, 26.9.2024).

² 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).

³ Commission Implementing Decision C(2025)955 of 15 April 2025 on the financing of the LIFE Programme and the adoption of the work programme for the years 2025 to 2027.

- 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.*)

You are also encouraged to visit the [LIFE database](#) to consult the list of projects funded previously. For the Clean Energy Transition sub-programme, projects funded previously (under the Horizon 2020 programme) can be found on the [CORDIS website](#).

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 Deal⁴ 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:

- 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 (described in more detail below):

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.

⁴ 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).

Only sub-programmes 'Nature and Biodiversity' and 'Circular Economy and Quality of Life' are concerned by this call.

Nature and Biodiversity

In line with the specific objectives of the LIFE Programme as set out in Article 3(2) of the LIFE Regulation, the sub-programme 'Nature and Biodiversity' aims:

- to develop, demonstrate, promote and stimulate the scale up of innovative techniques, methods and approaches (including nature-based solutions and ecosystem approaches) for reaching the objectives set out under the Union legislation and policy on or related to 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 network
- to support the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of the relevant Union legislation and policy on or related to nature and biodiversity, including by improving governance at all levels, in particular through enhancing the capacities of public and private actors and the involvement of civil society, also taking into due consideration the possible contributions provided by citizen science⁵
- to catalyse the large-scale deployment of successful solutions/approaches for implementing relevant Union 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.

LIFE has been a key tool supporting the implementation of the EU Birds⁶ and Habitats⁷ Directives since 1992 and has been instrumental and, in some cases crucial, to ensure the establishment of the Natura 2000 network.

The Nature Directives' fitness check⁸, the Action plan for nature, people, and the economy⁹ as well as the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030¹⁰ underline the need to increase funding for nature and biodiversity.

The sub-programme covers two priority areas:

- 1) EU Nature and Biodiversity
- 2) Awareness raising, compliance assurance and access to justice related to nature and biodiversity legislation.

Circular Economy and Quality of Life

⁵ Scientific work undertaken by members of the general public, often in collaboration with or under the direction of professional scientists and scientific institutions.

⁶ Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (OJ L 20, 26.1.2010, p. 7)

⁷ Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7).

⁸ Commission Staff Working Document SWD(2016) 472 final of 16 December 2016 'Fitness-check of the EU Nature Legislation (Birds and Habitats Directives) Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds and Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora' (hereinafter referred to as 'the Fitness-check of the Birds and Habitats Directives').

⁹ Communication COM(2017) 198 final of 27 April 2017 from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 'An Action Plan for nature, people and the economy'.

¹⁰ 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).

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 Union 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 relevant Union 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 relevant Union 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 covers three priority areas:

- 1) Circular economy and waste
- 2) Zero pollution and sustainable management of natural resources
- 3) Environmental governance.

This sub-programme aims at facilitating the transition toward a sustainable, circular, energy-efficient and climate-resilient economy, a toxic-free environment and at protecting, restoring and improving the quality of the environment in line with the European Green Deal and recent policy developments.

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 Technical Assistance for Replication Projects (TA-R). TA-R projects should provide technical assistance to prepare for and/or facilitate the up-scaling and replication of results from other projects funded by the LIFE Programme, its predecessor programmes or other EU funding programmes.

LIFE-2025-TA-R — Technical Assistance for Replication

Objectives

The objectives of Technical Assistance – Replication (TA-R) projects are to facilitate and enable the upscaling or replication of results achieved by projects funded under the LIFE programme or, funded under another EU programme provided that these results fulfil the objectives of the LIFE programme.

Only proposals responding to the priorities of the sub-programmes 'Nature and Biodiversity' and/or 'Circular Economy and Quality of Life' as described above will be eligible for this call.

Scope — Activities that can be funded

LIFE TA-R projects can co-finance the activities necessary:

(1) to enable and support the up-scaling and/or replication of the results from other projects funded by the LIFE Programme or by other Union programmes,

and/or

(2) to facilitate the access of an operation to other financial instruments for the purpose of upscaling the results of a previous project which contribute to the objectives of the LIFE programme.

The ultimate aim shall be to concretely and substantially multiply the impacts of previous projects' solutions by mobilising a wider uptake or application.

As a general principle, all activities included in the TA-R project must be new and additional to the work undertaken or launched by the applicant prior to the submission of the proposal.

In general, and amongst others, the activities should be clearly related to the objective(s) of the TA-R project and should be completed within the duration of the TA-R project.

Activities shall include one or a combination of the following:

- Assistance to substantially scale up and/or replicate under different conditions the results of successful projects (in eligible countries). The proposal should not address the scale up and/or replication itself, but rather focus on the steps leading towards and enabling a successful scale up and/or replication;
- Assistance to the removal of local/regional/national legislative or regulatory barriers that prevent the replication or the upscaling of finalised projects' results;
- Assistance to the removal of technical barriers that were not foreseen but emerged during a preceding project and which could not be solved during its duration despite their high relevance to the success and sustainability of the project's results. Such action should pave the way for a significant scale up and/or replication of project results, during the TA-R project or at a later time;
- Facilitation of access to other EU or non-EU financial instruments (i.e., preparing and submitting applications) and leverage additional funding in line with the LIFE objectives (i.e., by incorporating schemes and measures developed or piloted by LIFE projects into other funding streams).

Activities should not be focused on research and should not include statutory responsibilities of the competent authority.

Expected impact

A proposal for a Technical Assistance – Replication (TA-R) project is expected to facilitate the upscaling or replication of results achieved by projects funded under the LIFE programme or funded under another EU programme. The scope of its actions should exceed the replication/transfer efforts and objectives foreseen in the preceding project. In addition, the preceding project should have finished and submitted their Final Report before the start of the TA-R project.

The proposals must also demonstrate that the proposed action is of Union interest by making a contribution to the achievement of one of the general objectives of the LIFE Programme set out in Article 3 of the LIFE regulation and by contributing to the aims and specific objectives of the LIFE sub-programme "Nature and Biodiversity" or of the LIFE sub-programme "Circular Economy and Quality of Life" as set out in sections 2.1

and 2.2 of the Multiannual work programme for the implementation of the LIFE Programme for the years 2025-2027 (C(2025) 955 of 15 April, 2025).

Funding rate

Technical Assistance Project (TA-R) — 60% funding rate

3. Available budget

The estimated available call budget is **EUR 6 500 000**.

The maximum EU contribution is EUR 1 000 000 per project. Depending on the number and quality of proposals, we expect to sign between 6 and 12 grant agreements.

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:	24 April 2025
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>23 September 2025 – 17:00:00 CET</u> <u>(Brussels)</u>
Information on evaluation results:	January-February 2026
GA signature:	March-April 2026

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 [Calls for proposals](#) 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).

⚠️ Please note that not using the correct template or not complying with the instructions therein (*e.g., font size limit, deletion of instructions, etc.*) may lead to the inadmissibility of your proposal. Furthermore, to ensure a proper evaluation of your project the appropriate sections of the template must be filled in depending on whether the call has one or two submission stages.

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*)

 In order to ensure a proper evaluation of your project, please click on the “?” sign appearing in each screen and carefully check the instructions to correctly fill the different sections.

- Application Form Part B — contains the technical description of the project (*template to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded*)
- Part C — contains additional project data and the project’s contribution to EU programme performance indicators (*to be filled in directly online*)
- **mandatory annexes and supporting documents** (*templates to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded*):
 - for full proposals:
 - detailed budget table
 - participant information (including previous projects, if any)
 - letters of support (optional)
 - other annexes (optional)

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 all 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** (please check carefully the layout of the documents uploaded).

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](#).

 Please be aware that some proposal information may be shared with the LIFE programme committee established under Regulation No [182/2011](#)¹¹, i.e., name and country of all applicants (coordinating organisation and partners), project title, total

¹¹ Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 2011 laying down the rules and general principles concerning mechanisms for control by Member States of the Commission’s exercise of implementing powers (OJ L 55, 28.2.2011, p. 13).

eligible costs, LIFE funding requested, result of the assessment of the admissibility and eligibility of the proposal, and scores by criterion for eligible proposals.

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 ([list of participating countries](#))¹²
- 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 and definitions

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 persons¹³.

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'¹⁴. ⚠ Please note that

¹² Applicants from countries which have requested to be associated to the LIFE Programme may participate in this call for proposals. However, no grant agreement will be signed if the association agreement is not entered into force by the end of the selection procedure.

¹³ See Article 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

¹⁴ For the definitions, see Articles 190(2) and 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

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 for participating in the programme (*see list of participating countries above*) may participate in the call and can sign grants if the negotiations are concluded before grant signature and if the association covers the call (i.e. is retroactive and covers both the part of the programme and the year when the call was launched).

EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for 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)¹⁵. 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).

EU conditionality measures — Special rules apply for entities subject to measures adopted on the basis of EU Regulation 2020/2092¹⁶. Such entities are not eligible to participate in any funded role (beneficiaries, affiliated entities, subcontractors, recipients of financial support to third parties, etc.). Currently such measures are in place for Hungarian public interest trusts established under the Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity they maintain (see [Council Implementing Decision \(EU\) 2022/2506](#), as of 16 December 2022).

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

Consortium composition

TA-R projects are designed to assist with the upscaling and/or replication of results funded under previous LIFE projects or of other Union programmes, as long as they contribute to the objectives of the LIFE programme.

The former project beneficiary should in principle be the coordinator of the TA-R project. In well justified cases it may participate in a role other than as coordinator, but it should in any case be part of the TA-R project consortium.

Eligible activities

Applications will only be considered eligible if their content corresponds wholly (or at least in part) to the topic description for which they are submitted.

Eligible activities are the ones set out in section 2 above.

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

- research;
- statutory responsibilities of the competent authority;
- activities outside the duration of the project;
- activities which are not clearly related to the objective(s) of the project.

¹⁵ 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](#).

¹⁶ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2092 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2020 on a general regime of conditionality for the protection of the Union budget (OJ L 325, 20.12.2022, p. 94).

Projects must comply with EU policy interests and priorities (*such as environment, social, security, industrial and trade policy, etc.*). Projects must also respect EU values and European Commission policy regarding reputational matters (*e.g., activities involving capacity building, policy support, awareness raising, communication, dissemination, etc.*)¹⁷.

Financial support to third parties is allowed for grants or similar forms of support under the following conditions:

- the calls must be open, published widely and conform to EU standards concerning transparency, equal treatment, conflict of interest and confidentiality
- the calls must remain open for at least two months
- the outcome of the call must be published on the participants' websites, including a description of the selected projects, award dates, project durations, and final recipient legal names and countries
- the calls must have a clear European dimension.

Financial support to third parties will be accepted in projects which aim to assist entities outside the project partnership (*e.g., non-profit organisations, local authorities or citizens groups*) in the implementation or development of local initiatives that will contribute to the project's objectives.

Your project application must clearly specify why financial support to third parties is needed, how it will be managed and provide a list of the different types of activities for which a third party may receive financial support. The proposal must also clearly describe the results to be obtained.

Geographic location (target countries)

Proposals must relate to activities taking place in the eligible countries (*see above*). Activities outside the eligible countries must be necessary to achieve the EU environmental and climate objectives and ensure the effectiveness of interventions carried within the eligible countries (*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-eligible countries*).

¹⁷ See, for instance, [Guidance on funding for activities related to the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of Union legislation and policy](#).

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 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.

The check will normally be done for coordinators, 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.

 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 participate¹⁸:

- 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 misconduct¹⁹ (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 EU Regulation [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)
- intentionally and without proper justification resisted²⁰ an investigation, check or audit carried out by an EU authorising officer (or their representative or auditor), OLAF, the EPPO, or the European Court of Auditors.

¹⁸ See Articles 138 and 143 of EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

¹⁹ 'Professional misconduct' includes, in particular, the following: violation of ethical standards of the profession; wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility; breach of generally accepted professional ethical standards; false declarations/misrepresentation of information; participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition; violation of IPR; attempting to influence decision-making processes by taking advantage, through misrepresentation, of a conflict of interests, or to obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain an advantage; incitement to discrimination, hatred or violence or similar activities contrary to the EU values where negatively affecting or risking to affect the performance of a legal commitment.

²⁰ 'Resisting an investigation, check or audit' means carrying out actions with the goal or effect of preventing, hindering or delaying the conduct of any of the activities needed to perform the investigation, check or audit, such as refusing to grant the necessary access to its premises or any other areas used for business purposes, concealing or refusing to disclose information or providing false information.

Applicants will also be rejected if it turns out that²¹:

- 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).

An **evaluation committee** (assisted by independent outside experts) 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 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. Full 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 will be 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.

²¹ See Article 143 EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

9. Award criteria

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

1. Relevance (0-20 points)

- Relevance to the objectives of the targeted LIFE sub-programme and to the specific priorities of the call for proposals and, when relevant, topic description.
- Concept and methodology: soundness of the overall intervention logic.
- Extent to which the proposal offers co-benefits and promotes synergies with other policy areas relevant for achieving environment and climate policy objectives.

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 and quality of the measures for the exploitation of project results.

3. Quality (0-20 points)

- Clarity, relevance and feasibility of the work plan. Appropriate geographic focus of the activities.
- Identification and mobilisation of the relevant stakeholders.
- 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.
- Extent to which the project environmental impact is considered and mitigated, including through the use of green procurement. The use of recognised methods for the calculation of the project environmental footprint (*e.g.*, Project Environmental Footprint (*PEF*) or Organizational Environmental Footprint (*OEF*) *methods or similar ones*²²) or environmental management systems (*e.g.*, *Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS)*) would be an asset.
- Value for money of the proposal.

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score	Weighting
Relevance	10	20	1
Impact	10	20	1.5

²² See list on https://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/PEFCR_OEFSR_en.htm.

Quality	10	20	1
Resources	10	20	1
Overall weighted (pass) scores	55	90	N/A

Maximum points: 90 points.

Individual thresholds per criterion (full proposals): 10/20, 10/20, 10/20 and 10/20 points (before weighting).

Overall threshold (full proposals): 55 points (after weighting).

Proposals that pass the individual thresholds AND the overall threshold will be considered for funding — within the limits of the available budget (i.e., up to the budget ceiling). Other proposals will be rejected.

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. A retroactive starting date can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons — but never earlier than the proposal submission date.

Project duration: between 12 and 60 months.

Extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment.

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 (requested 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 (**60%**).

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*).

Please note that the maximum grant amount for each beneficiary will be fixed in the Grant Agreement. The beneficiaries can however decide to distribute the grant money differently in accordance with what they have agreed in the consortium agreement (*see also section 13*).

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*).

 When filling in the summarised budget table (directly online in Application Form Part A), please click on the “?” sign appearing in each screen and carefully check the instructions to correctly fill the different sections.

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
- D. Other cost categories
 - D.1 Financial support to third parties
- E. Indirect costs

Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:

- personnel costs:
 - SME owner/natural person unit cost²³: Yes
 - volunteers unit cost²⁴: Yes (without indirect costs)

²³ 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)7115).

²⁴ Commission [Decision](#) of 10 April 2019 authorising the use of unit costs for declaring personnel costs for the work carried out by volunteers under an action or a work programme (C(2019)2646).

- travel and subsistence unit cost²⁵: No (only actual costs)
- equipment costs: full cost + depreciation for listed equipment (*— under the special conditions set out in the Grant Agreement (art 6.2.C.2) and linked to special durability clause (use and maintain for 5 years after end of action; annex 5)*)
- other cost categories:
 - costs for financial support to third parties: allowed for grants or similar; maximum total amount for financial support to third parties EUR 50 000; maximum amount per third party EUR 10 000, unless a higher amount is required because the objective of the action would otherwise be impossible or overly difficult to achieve and this is duly justified in the Application Form.
 - indirect cost flat-rate: 7% of the eligible direct costs (categories A-D, except volunteers costs and exempted specific cost categories, 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 costs
 - kick-off meeting: costs for kick-off meeting organised by the granting authority are eligible (travel costs for maximum 2 persons, return ticket to 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
 - project websites: communication costs for presenting the project on the participants' websites or social media accounts are eligible; costs for *separate* project websites are not eligible unless duly justified by the project objectives
 - 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)
 - other ineligible costs:
 - land purchase 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

²⁵ 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).

guarantee (if required)— whichever is the latest.

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 you or 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 normally requested from the coordinator, for the consortium. They must be provided during grant preparation, 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 (*art 23*).

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

Consortium agreement: Yes

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 EU Login 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 [Calls for proposals](#) 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 may 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)
- Topic Q&A on the Topic page (for call-specific questions in open calls; not applicable for actions by invitation)
- [LIFE website FAQs](#)
- [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

Only in case you did not find an answer in the above links, you may contact:

- for individual questions on the Portal Submission System: [IT Helpdesk](#)
- for non-IT related questions: CINEA-LIFE-ENQUIRIES@ec.europa.eu

 Please send your questions at the latest 7 days before the submission deadline (see section 4) AND 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). If affiliated entities participate in your project, please do not forget to provide documents demonstrating their affiliation link to your organisation as part of your application.
- **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).
- **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).
- **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 cumulation of funding/no double funding** — It is strictly prohibited to cumulate 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 be declared under two EU grants; projects must be designed as different actions, clearly delineated and separated for each grant (without overlaps).
- **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 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 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 the others (or they 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](#).