

# Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)

## Specific provisions and opportunities for EU outermost regions

The EU's outermost regions can benefit from many new opportunities for support under EU policies to help them shape, implement and fund their tailored regional development strategies. The permanent constraints faced by these regions and their specificities are recognised in Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which provides for specific measures to support these regions. It is in this spirit that most EU funds and programmes 2021-27 include specific provisions applicable to the outermost regions. In its [Communication](#) "Putting People first, securing sustainable and inclusive growth and unlocking the potential of the EU's outermost regions", the European Commission has committed itself to facilitating outermost regions' uptake of EU tools to achieve a sustainable, environmentally friendly and climate neutral transformation. The LIFE programme is a key tool for this purpose<sup>1</sup>.

## About LIFE

The LIFE Programme is the EU's funding instrument for the environment and climate action. Created in 1992, it has co-financed thousands of projects.

The LIFE programme 2021-2027 objectives are to contribute to the shift to a circular, energy-efficient, renewable energy based and climate resilient economy; to protect and improve the quality of the environment; and to halt and reverse biodiversity loss.

It is divided into two strands: Environment and Climate Action. The Environment strand has two sub-programmes: **Nature and Biodiversity** and **Circular Economy and Quality of Life**. The Climate Action strand also has two sub-programmes: **Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation**, and **Clean Energy Transition**.

The LIFE Programme is managed by the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA).

## Key Facts

**Programme duration:** 2021-2027

**Total budget:** € 5 432 000 000

**Thematic categories:** Environment, Climate, Energy

**Target group:** Private enterprises, NGOs and civil society organisations, public authorities.

**Type of funding:** Grants (action grants and operating grants for non-profit entities), procurement, prizes, technical assistance for investment support.

**Type of grants:** Standard Action Projects (SAP), Strategic Nature Projects (SNAP), Strategic Integrated Projects (SIP) and Technical Assistance Projects (TA), Other Action Grants (OAG), Operating Grants (OG). *More details in Annex below.*

## Opportunities for EU Outermost Regions (OR)

Outermost regions have specific constraints, such as their particular vulnerability to climate change impacts and natural disasters, dependence on resource imports and high waste generation. They also have valuable assets, such as their unique biodiversity and rich renewable energy sources. The LIFE programme reflects outermost regions' specificities in all its sub-programmes and provides many opportunities. The programme can finance renewable energy technology roll-out and related skills to support the energy transition in outermost regions. It can also support, for instance, circular economy and climate adaptation solutions in outermost regions.

The LIFE Regulation includes specific provisions to match the particular needs of the regions, such as the LIFE BEST Action Grant Scheme for Biodiversity in the Outermost Regions. The LIFE work programme 2021-2024 also makes explicit references to outermost regions' particularities, with specific consideration and bonus points given to projects in these regions under several of the LIFE sub-programmes' actions, as detailed below.

## Funding opportunities

Outermost regions can benefit from funding opportunities under each of the four LIFE sub-programmes, as presented below.

### Sub-programme Nature and Biodiversity

<sup>1</sup> This factsheet has been elaborated as part of the organisation of seven virtual workshops for EU outermost regions on the following EU competitive programmes: Connecting Europe Facility (CEF); Digital Europe Programme; Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE); Erasmus+; Horizon Europe; Creative Europe Programme; Single Market Programme.

**Supported actions:** this sub-programme contributes to halting and reversing biodiversity loss, supporting Natura 2000 network and Prioritised Action Frameworks, and mainstreaming nature and biodiversity objectives into other policies and financing programmes. It supports actions such as projects for nature conservation and restoration in the Natura 2000 network, species protection, invasive alien species, and ecosystem restoration.

**Specific opportunities for OR:** This sub-programme will contribute to EU's objectives for the protection, maintenance, and restoration of the outermost regions' natural capital in its marine, freshwater, and terrestrial ecosystems, as outlined notably in the European Strategy for Outermost Regions.

### Sub-programme Circular Economy and Quality of life

**Supported actions:** this sub-programme contributes to the areas of circular economy, noise, air, chemicals, green and circular economy, industrial accidents, marine and coastal management, soil, waste, water, and the urban environment. It supports actions such as support to public authorities and other stakeholders to implement EU environment legislation, support to technologies and solutions that are ready to be implemented, integrated circular economy projects.

**Specific opportunities for OR:** The work programme 2021-2024 indicates that specific consideration will be given to projects from EU outermost regions which contribute to develop circular systems. Moreover, this sub-programme can contribute to improve waste management with respect to the collection and storage of waste, recovery options and end-of-life disposal, in particular in outermost regions, where waste management faces specific challenges.

### Sub-programme Climate Mitigation and Adaptation

**Supported actions:** this sub-programme contributes to the transformation of the EU into a climate-neutral and resilient society through climate mitigation, adaptation and governance. It supports projects that contributes to the 2030 energy and climate policy, EU's Member States National and Energy Climate Plans (NECP), the EU's mid-century and long-term climate and energy strategy, and the EU adaptation strategy and related national adaptation strategies.

**Specific opportunities for OR:** this sub-programme can specifically support preparedness for extreme weather events in outermost regions.

### Sub-programme Clean Energy Transition

**Supported actions:** this sub-programme contributes to creating market and regulatory conditions in EU territories, enabling the energy transition. It supports actions such as developing and spreading best practice, mobilising investments, improving skills, removing market barriers, raising awareness, educating, and empowering.

**Specific opportunities for OR:** this sub-programme gives specific consideration to territories not connected to the European energy grids such as outermost regions.

As a general rule, the co-financing rate is **up to 60%** for most projects supported by the LIFE programme (SAP, SNAP, SIP and TA). The co-financing rate could reach **up to 75%** for projects funded under the subprogramme 'Nature and Biodiversity', provided that the project targets exclusively priority habitats and/or species and **up to 95%** for Other Action Grants, including projects under the sub-programme Clean Energy Transition.

### Award criteria

The award criteria outlined in the calls for proposals underline the importance attributed to the expected impact of the project, which is to be quantified. The award criteria shall, among other principles and where appropriate, give special attention to projects in geographical areas with specific needs or vulnerabilities, such as outermost regions<sup>2</sup>. The general LIFE work programme 2021-2024 indicates that **2 bonus points** (out of 100 possible points for proposals) will be granted for project primarily implemented in outermost regions when scoring proposals under the main LIFE programme for SAP, TA and OAG. For scoring proposal for Strategic Projects (SNAP and SIP), no bonus points are included, except where the proposed project primarily covers the outermost regions<sup>3</sup>.

### Complementarities with other programmes

The Green Advisory Service for Sustainable Investments Support ([Green Assist](#)) is an advisory initiative under InvestEU funded from the LIFE programme. Projects promoters and partners can benefit from on demand, free and customised advisory services from experts that enable beneficiaries to prepare green/greener investment projects.

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<sup>2</sup> LIFE Regulation, article 14(h)

<sup>3</sup> The types of grants are detailed below in Annex.

## Small Grant Facility on Biodiversity (BEST)

The LIFE programme addresses specific needs through Other Action Grants (OAG). The BEST initiative is an OAG which specifically targets outermost regions and Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs). The voluntary scheme for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Territories of European Overseas (BEST) aims to facilitate access to EU funds for actors in the OR and so as to unlock initiatives and potential in the fields of biodiversity conservation and the sustainable use of ecosystem services, including ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and mitigation, as a basis for sustainable development. It also aims to increase the capacity of OR actors to access and effectively manage EU funds, and to increase the visibility of OR as key contributors to the achievement of EU global biodiversity targets and strategies.

Several calls for proposals<sup>4</sup> will be launched throughout the funding period 2021-2027 for awarding small grants (max EUR 100 000 of EU co-financing) in the OR to support projects on biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and sustainable use of ecosystem services, including ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and mitigation.

The EU co-financing rate is **up to 95% for projects under the BEST initiative**.

## Example of funded projects

Many environment and climate action projects have been funded by the LIFE programme in EU outermost regions, such as the [LIFE Garachico](#) project on coastal flooding adaptation to climate change through flexible strategies in Macaronesia urban areas and the [LIFE BIODIV'OM](#) project to protect the biodiversity of French outermost regions.

## More information

### How to apply?

Calls for proposals are published on the [EU Funding and Tenders Portal](#). More information on the calls can be found on the [CINEA website](#) and [LIFE - Support for applicants \(europa.eu\)](#)

### Applicable EU law

[Regulation \(EU\) 2021/783](#) establishing a Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)

### Other information

LIFE Programme: [information webpage](#)

LIFE Multiannual Work Programme: [2021-2024](#)

LIFE priority topics: [2021-2024](#)

List of national contact points: [NCPs for the LIFE Programme](#)

### Currently open calls

The [LIFE Call for proposals 2023](#) opened on 18 April 2023:

- SAPs for circular economy and quality of life and nature and biodiversity. Closing: 6 September 2023
- SAPs climate change mitigation and adaptation. Closing: 21 September 2023
- LIFE Action Grants for clean energy transition. Opening: 11 May (expected). Closing: 16 November 2023 (expected).
- SIPs. Concept notes closing: 5 September 2023 / Full proposals closing: 5 March.
- TA preparation for SIPs and SNAPs. Opening: 2 May. Closing: 7 September 2023.
- TA Replication: Closing: 27 July 2023.
- Specific Operating Grant Agreements. Closing: 21 September 2023.
- LIFE Projects for addressing ad hoc Legislative and Policy Priorities (PLP). Closing: 7 September 2023.

<sup>4</sup> A first call for proposals BEST was launched in 2022. Resources from the info day are available here: [https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/small-grant-facility-biodiversity-best-info-session-2022-01-18\\_en](https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/small-grant-facility-biodiversity-best-info-session-2022-01-18_en)

## Annex: Type of grants under the LIFE programme

**Standard Action Projects (SAP):** Projects, other than strategic integrated projects, strategic nature projects or technical assistance projects, that pursue the specific objectives of the LIFE programme.

**Strategic Nature Projects (SNAP):** Projects that support the achievement of Union nature and biodiversity objectives by implementing coherent programmes of action in Member States in order to mainstream those objectives and priorities into other policies and financing instruments, including through coordinated implementation of the prioritised action frameworks adopted pursuant to Directive 92/43/EEC.

**Strategic Integrated Projects (SIP):** Projects that implement, on a regional, multi-regional, national or transnational scale, environmental or climate strategies or action plans developed by Member States' authorities and required by specific environmental, climate or relevant energy legislation or policy of the Union, while ensuring that stakeholders are involved and promoting coordination with and mobilisation of at least one other Union, national or private funding source.

**Technical Assistance Projects (TA):** Projects that support the development of capacity for participation in standard action projects, the preparation of strategic nature projects and strategic integrated projects, the preparation for accessing other Union financial instruments or other measures necessary for preparing the upscaling or replication of results from other projects funded by the LIFE programme, its predecessor programmes or other Union programmes, with a view to pursuing the LIFE programme objectives set out in Article 3; such projects can also include capacity-building related to the activities of Member States' authorities for effective participation in the LIFE programme.

**Other Action Grants (OAG):** Actions needed for the purpose of achieving the general objective of the LIFE programme, including coordination and support actions aimed at capacity-building, at dissemination of information and of knowledge, and at awareness-raising to support the transition to renewable energy and increased energy efficiency.

**Operating Grants (OG):** Grants that support the functioning of non-profit making entities which are involved in the development, implementation and enforcement of Union legislation and policy, and which are primarily active in the area of the environment or climate action, including energy transition, in line with the objectives of the LIFE programme.