



# Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)

## Call for proposals

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation – Standard Action Projects  
(SAP)

LIFE-2021-SAP-CLIMA - LIFE Subprogramme Climate Action

Version 1.0  
8 July 2021



<b>HISTORY OF CHANGES</b>			
<b>Version</b>	<b>Publication Date</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Page</b>
1.0	8 July 2021	▪ Initial version (new MFF).	
		▪	
		▪	
		▪	



**EUROPEAN CLIMATE, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT EXECUTIVE AGENCY (CINEA)**  
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
Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation .....	8
Clean Energy Transition .....	9
2. Type of action — Objectives — Themes and priorities — Activities that can be funded — Expected impact .....	10
Type of action .....	10
LIFE-2021-SAP-CLIMA-CCM - Climate Change Mitigation .....	10
Objectives .....	10
Expected impact .....	16
Funding rate .....	16
LIFE-2021-SAP-CLIMA-CCA - Climate Change Adaptation .....	16
Objectives: .....	16
Expected impact .....	22
Funding rate .....	22
LIFE-2021-SAP-CLIMA-GOV - Climate Governance and Information .....	22
Objectives: .....	22
Expected impact .....	28
Funding rate .....	28
3. Available budget .....	28
4. Timetable and deadlines .....	29
5. Admissibility and documents .....	29
6. Eligibility .....	30
Eligible participants (eligible countries) .....	30
Consortium composition .....	31
Eligible activities .....	31

Geographic location (target countries).....	32
7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion.....	32
Financial capacity .....	32
Operational capacity .....	33
Exclusion .....	33
8. Evaluation and award procedure .....	34
9. Award criteria.....	35
10. Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements.....	37
Starting date and project duration .....	37
Milestones and deliverables.....	38
Form of grant, funding rate and maximum grant amount.....	38
Budget categories and cost eligibility rules.....	38
Reporting and payment arrangements.....	40
Prefinancing guarantees .....	40
Certificates .....	41
Liability regime for recoveries .....	41
Provisions concerning the project implementation.....	41
Other specificities .....	42
Non-compliance and breach of contract .....	42
11. How to submit an application.....	42
12. Help .....	43
13. Important .....	44

## 0. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU **action grants** in the field of Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation 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](#)<sup>1</sup>).

The call is launched in accordance with the 2021-2024 Multiannual Work Programme<sup>2</sup> and will be managed by the **European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA)** ('Agency').

The call covers the following **topics**:

- **LIFE-2021-SAP-CLIMA-CCM - Climate Change Mitigation**
- **LIFE-2021-SAP-CLIMA-CCA - Climate Change Adaptation**
- **LIFE-2021-SAP-CLIMA-GOV - Climate Governance and Information**

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. However, a project application under one topic can contain elements of the other topics.

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)

---

<sup>1</sup> 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).

<sup>2</sup> Commission Implementing Decision C(2021)4997 final of 9 July 2021 on the financing of the LIFE Programme and the adoption of the work programme for the years 2021 to 2024.

- 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*).

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 Deal<sup>3</sup> 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.

---

<sup>3</sup> 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 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.

### *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](#)<sup>4</sup> and the reduction of hazardous waste in view of the EU's commitment under the [Basel Convention](#)<sup>5</sup>.
- 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:

- 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

---

<sup>4</sup> 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).

<sup>5</sup> Basel Convention on the control of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal.

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 Standard Action Projects (SAPs).

Standard Action Projects aim to:

- develop, demonstrate and promote innovative techniques, methods and approaches;  
'Innovative techniques, methods and approaches' means solutions which are new when compared to the state of the art at Member State and sector level and which are implemented at an operational scale and under conditions that allow the achievement of the impacts set out in the award criterion 'Impact' first paragraph (see Section 9. Award criteria);
- contribute to the knowledge base and to the application of best practice;  
'Best practice' means solutions, techniques, methods and approaches which are appropriate, cost-effective and state of the art (at Member State and sector level), and which are implemented at an operational scale and under conditions that allow the achievement of the impacts set out in the award criterion 'Impact' first paragraph;
- support the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of the EU legislation and policy, including by improving governance at all levels, in particular through enhancing capacities of public and private actors and the involvement of civil society;

Projects can be close-to-market (i.e. aim not only at delivering improved environmental solutions, but also at making sure such solutions are widely taken up by society in general and, more particularly, by the economy through an explicit market-oriented approach). In this case, applicants will be required to highlight specific market-related information in their Application Forms (e.g. *planned production capacity, reference market, economic feasibility etc.*).

### **LIFE-2021-SAP-CLIMA-CCM - Climate Change Mitigation**

#### Objectives

Projects under the Climate Change Mitigation Priority Area should contribute to the socially just and sustainable transition towards a climate neutral economy by 2050 and to reaching the EU emission reduction target for 2030 of at least 55% compared with 1990 levels.

Union climate policy and legislation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions focuses in particular on:

- renewable energy,
- energy efficiency,
- the emissions trading system,
- energy and greenhouse gas intensive industrial production,
- land use, agriculture and forestry,
- conservation and enhancement of natural carbon sinks,
- transport and fuels,
- fluorinated gases and ozone depleting substances,
- carbon capture and use; as well as carbon capture and storage,
- greenhouse gas monitoring and reporting,

- efforts by all sectors of society and economy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including public bodies (national, regional and local authorities); private commercial entities; or non-commercial organisations (unions, civil society organisations, educational institutions, consumer groups), and
- behavioural change, also through activities of the European Climate Pact.

### Scope and areas of intervention:

#### 1. Actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the sectors not covered by the EU Emissions Trading System, including the reduction of use of fluorinated greenhouse gases and ozone-depleting substances.

- a) Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) and other fluorinated greenhouse gases do not deplete the ozone layer, but are climate gases with high Global Warming Potential (GWP), therefore their use needs to be reduced. This is why Regulation (EU) No 517/2014 on fluorinated greenhouse gases includes a phase-down of HFCs by almost 80% by 2030. In 2016, an agreement was also reached under the Montreal Protocol (the "Kigali Amendment") to phase-down HFCs at global level. Therefore, in general terms, projects shall help the implementation of the Kigali Amendment and the EU Regulation on reducing the use of fluorinated greenhouse gases.

The LIFE call 2021 encourages in particular projects which address:

- **Availability of suitable alternatives to fluorinated gases:** In most HFC-using sectors alternatives are available today. However, in a few application areas, there is an urgent need to innovate further and/or demonstrate the suitability (safety, costs, energy efficiency, fit-for-purpose) of climate-friendly alternatives. Other fluorinated gases, such as sulphur hexafluoride (SF<sub>6</sub>), nitrogen trifluoride (NF<sub>3</sub>), and perfluorocarbons (PFC), have particularly high climate-warming properties (up to 23.000 times more than CO<sub>2</sub>); therefore, it is a high priority to find suitable alternatives for their uses.

Demonstration, pilot or best practice projects showing the use of low GWP alternatives to fluorinated gases should be trialled in particular in the following sectors:

- MDIs (metered dose inhalers = "asthma sprays");
  - Air conditioning and refrigeration equipment for high ambient temperatures;
  - ORCs (Organic Rankine Cycles);
  - Heat pumps;
  - Niche applications where no alternatives to HFCs are readily available;
  - Improving system design to address flammability/pressure issues to encourage use of natural refrigerants (e.g. hydrocarbons, CO<sub>2</sub>) for any kind of F-gas using equipment;
  - SF<sub>6</sub> use in electrical switchgear, in particular primary medium voltage, and high voltage;
  - Fluorinated gases (SF<sub>6</sub>, NF<sub>3</sub>, PFCs, etc.) used in manufacturing processes such as in the electronics industry (semiconductors, photovoltaics) and other emissive uses (aircrafts, industrial processes etc.).
- **Reclamation and recycling of fluorinated greenhouse gases.** At the end of the life of equipment/products using fluorinated greenhouse gases it is important that these gases are efficiently recovered and preferably recycled or reclaimed for re-use in servicing existing or charging new equipment.

Demonstration or best practice projects supporting and ensuring an efficient recovery and reclamation/recycling of fluorinated greenhouse gases, in particular for HFC blends (mixtures), are sought.

- **Removal of barriers posed by standards:** Another important barrier to the use of climate-friendly alternatives to fluorinated gases are standards in the area of refrigeration and air conditioning. A major gap is that relevant information on risk management and minimization approaches for flammable refrigerants, in particular hydrocarbons, are not available to the relevant standard-setting bodies.

Demonstration, pilot or best practice projects should demonstrate how risks of flammable refrigerants, in particular hydrocarbons, are minimized in design, use, servicing and disposal of equipment to maximize refrigerant charge sizes without compromising safety. The minimization of risks should be guided by objective data. The development of additional technical specifications for the installation and operation of flammable alternatives, in particular hydrocarbons, in relevant standards for refrigeration and air conditioning technologies, in support of the on-going standard setting process, are particularly requested. This could involve bringing relevant existing information together with new complementary laboratory and field studies in support of standard setting processes and the work of existing standard committees.

#### b) Actions to support the shift to zero-emission mobility

The European Green Deal calls for a 90% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from transport sector, in order for the EU to become a climate-neutral economy by 2050, while also working towards a zero-pollution ambition. Given that transport represents a high proportion of total EU greenhouse gas emissions, the EU's goal of an at least 55% greenhouse gas reduction target by 2030 and of climate neutrality by 2050 will be reached only by introducing more ambitious policies and initiatives to reduce transport's reliance on fossil fuels without delay, and in synergy with zero pollution efforts. On the other hand, the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy sets out a vision for an irreversible shift to zero-emission mobility.

All policy levers must be pulled:

- 1) measures to significantly reduce the current dependence on fossil fuels
- 2) decisive action to shift more activity towards more sustainable transport modes
- 3) internalisation of external costs

The LIFE call 2021 encourages in particular projects which address zero-emission vehicles<sup>6</sup> and related accompanying refuelling and recharging infrastructure.

For road transport, although it is growing rapidly, the proportion of zero-emission vehicles in the vehicle fleet is far too low today. Standards on CO<sub>2</sub>, air pollutant emissions, and public procurement rules will continue to be key policy-drivers in our transition towards zero-emission mobility in road transport and through the increased supply of zero-emission vehicles, will make sustainable mobility more affordable for all.

This must go hand-in-hand with the creation of a comprehensive and meaningful

---

<sup>6</sup> See definition of 'zero-emission heavy-duty vehicle' and 'low-emission heavy-duty vehicle' on Regulation (EU) 2019/1242 and definition of 'zero- and low-emission vehicle' on Regulation (EU) 2019/631. In particular, purely electric and hydrogen-powered vehicles are considered zero-emission vehicles.

network of recharging and refuelling infrastructure to fully enable the widespread uptake of these vehicles. On the infrastructure side, preferred projects may address the following non-exhaustive list of topics:

- Fast and superfast recharging points both for light-duty and heavy-duty vehicles
- High-pressure hydrogen refuelling facilities
- Removal of technical barriers endangering the EU single market, as requirements of specific technical national conditions.
- Projects improving the adoption of common technical standards leading to an increased interoperability, as to ensure physical connections and communication standards between infrastructures.
- Improvement of the consumer experience by addressing their needs and widening the range of available market options. For instance, promoting full price transparency at public accessible recharging points on both ad-hoc and contract-based prices, enabling innovative market services, increasing digitalization, expanding payment capabilities (payment digitalisation - NFC, bank card, QR codes...), etc.
- Smart recharging solutions, i.e. introducing smart and bidirectional recharging and thereby shifting charging to times when there are capacities in the network, leading to significant reduced investments in energy grids.
- Actions exploiting digitalization capabilities to maximize the overall efficiency of the energy system
- Initiatives creating clear synergies with the energy network and especially the Trans-European Networks of Energy (TEN-E)
- Proposals accelerating technology roll-out of transport technologies based on renewable fuels, especially if benefitting from direct contribution from local or nearly-local renewable energy sources and leading to an optimization of the overall energy system efficiency.

## **2. Actions which enhance the functioning of the Emissions Trading System and which have an impact on energy and greenhouse gas intensive industrial production.**

In order to reach the targets set out in the EU's 2030 Climate and Energy Framework and to contribute to the transformation towards a climate-neutral economy by 2050, significant investments in industrial innovation and demonstration plants are necessary. In this context, LIFE programme supports the development and implementation of advanced low-carbon manufacturing and processing breakthrough solutions. These are essential to maintain the competitiveness of EU industries while ensuring the climate objectives are reached.

Proposals shall focus and target **energy-intensive industries (EIIs)** and in particular those industries which may be exposed to a **significant risk of carbon leakage**.

Therefore, **priority will be given to projects focusing on the development and demonstration of innovative and cost-effective technologies and processes**, with the objective of reducing the greenhouse gases (GHG) emission intensity<sup>7</sup> of manufacturing and processing industries. Applicants for this type of projects are invited to consider the following key features:

---

<sup>7</sup> Ratio between direct GHG emissions and output units of an activity

- **EII proposals should focus on the design, development and implementation of innovative solutions** mainly via demonstration programmes with a long-term impact, including in real industrial environments. Projects should deliver economically viable solutions, processes and technologies, new raw-materials or products that allow a significant reduction in specific GHG emission intensity<sup>8</sup>. The reduction of GHG emissions should not be achieved solely through fuel switching.
- **Activities are intended to start at Technology Readiness Level 4-5 and target Technology Readiness 8-9.** Applicants can propose preparatory work, such as development of strategies and pre-feasibility studies on innovative solutions provided that these are used for the development of concrete activities implemented during the project. The activities are expected to be led by industries with support from partners and technology providers.
- The proposals **may address a variety of technological solutions and processes** with potential widespread applications or combine different technologies and processes across the sectors. Cooperation between industrial sectors is encouraged, and applicants should, whenever possible, seek synergies, including possibilities for funding from relevant national/regional research, innovation or climate programmes and/or cumulative funding.
- A dedicated action should address the transferability of the developed technologies processes or products within the sector and possibly to other sectors. It is expected that they transfer solutions and technologies or enhance innovations of suppliers to energy intensive industries.
- Projects should boost Europe's industrial leadership in advanced manufacturing and processing and foster employment particularly in the small and medium-sized enterprises and open new market opportunities in this field.

Synergies exist with the Innovation Fund which is also supporting projects in sectors covered by the Emission Trading System<sup>9</sup>.

### **3. Increase the generation and use of renewable energy and improvement of energy efficiency (as far as not covered by specific calls under the Clean Energy Transition sub-programme).**

The Climate Change Mitigation topic may cover activities related to energy efficiency and renewable energy, which do not address the specific requirements of the calls defined under the LIFE Clean energy-transition sub-programme.

---

<sup>8</sup> The best available techniques are defined in the relevant Best Available Techniques Reference Documents and are in line with the benchmarks set in the Benchmarking Decision. <http://eippcb.jrc.ec.europa.eu/reference>

<sup>9</sup> Small-scale calls are organised on a yearly basis for projects with capital expenditure between €4.5 and €7.5 million which are innovative, close to market, and have a potential for avoiding greenhouse gases emissions. Successful projects under LIFE could subsequently apply for further upscaling with the Innovation Fund.

#### 4. The development of land and sea management practices which have an impact on emissions and removals of emissions, conservation and enhancement of natural carbon sinks. <sup>10</sup>

The land sector has an important role to play towards achieving the EU's ambitious climate mitigation goals. It can contribute by: decreasing its emissions, increasing its capacity to store and sequester carbon, and providing other sectors with renewable and circular bio-based materials that are less GHG-intensive than fossil-based ones. These mitigation objectives must be pursued in synergy with other important land-related objectives, such as climate change adaptation and biodiversity protection.

In the context of the European Green Deal, the Commission is reviewing its main climate policy instruments to make them fit for the EU's increased 2030 mitigation target of an at least 55% reduction in net emissions<sup>11</sup>. The review also addresses legislation that is relevant for the land sector, such as the Effort Sharing Regulation (which covers emissions from agriculture) and the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) Regulation; this legislation mainly addresses Member States by means of national targets. In addition, the Commission will promote the concept of Carbon Farming to encourage land-based mitigation action at the level of individual actors in the land sectors; in particular, the Farm to Fork Strategy<sup>12</sup> announced that the Commission will launch a carbon farming initiative by the end of 2021 to promote carbon sequestration as new green business model. This initiative will be followed, in 2023, by a Commission's proposal for a mechanism to certify carbon removals, as announced in the Circular Economy Action Plan<sup>13</sup>.

Against this policy background, Standard Action Projects under this area of intervention should be in line with both the EU's higher mitigation ambition and the objective to provide individual actors with financial incentives for land-based climate action.

The LIFE call 2021 encourages in particular projects which address:

- Practices that enhance carbon removals in soils and biomass (e.g. improved forest management, afforestation and forest restoration);
- Practices that protect existing carbon stocks in soils and biomass (e.g. peatland restoration);
- Use of harvested biomass in long-lived products to ensure long-term carbon storage (e.g. production and promotion of wooden construction materials);
- Practices that decrease non-CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from agricultural activities (e.g. sustainable livestock and manure management, precision farming).

To promote a **carbon farming** approach, projects are strongly encouraged to include one or more of the following elements:

- Development and uptake of GHG monitoring tools at the land parcel level to enable robust certification of climate impacts;
- Development of a business model to remunerate individual actors for the

<sup>10</sup> The construction of carbon capture and storage infrastructure is considered beyond the scope of the LIFE programme and is supported via other EU Programmes (for example Connecting Europe Facility for CO<sub>2</sub> transport pipelines or Innovation Fund).

<sup>11</sup> Stepping up Europe's 2030 climate ambition - Investing in a climate-neutral future for the benefit of our people (COM(2020) 562 final).

<sup>12</sup> A Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system (COM(2020) 381 final).

<sup>13</sup> A new Circular Economy Action Plan for a Cleaner and More Competitive Europe (COM(2020) 98 final).

result of climate-friendly land management practices (e.g. sales of carbon certificates to local stakeholders or along the value chain), ideally with additional rewards for relevant adaptation or biodiversity co-benefits.

Involvement of Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) managing authorities to ensure upscale of the project's carbon farming methodology in the national CAP Strategic Plans will be an asset.

### Expected impact

Applicants are expected to define, calculate, explain and achieve the expected impacts as described in the Award criterion 'Impacts' (see section 9).

All LIFE projects will have to report on their expected outputs and impacts taking into account the LIFE Key Performance indicators (KPIs). These KPIs will contribute to evaluating the impact of the LIFE project on an environmental but also socio-economic level (e.g. via actions impacting the local economy and population). Please review the indicators in Part C of the eGrant application and complete them with the estimated impact of the project. More detailed information will be requested during the project time.

### Funding rate

Standard Action Projects (SAPs) — Maximum 60% funding rate.

## **LIFE-2021-SAP-CLIMA-CCA - Climate Change Adaptation**

### Objectives:

While the EU does everything within its power to mitigate climate change, domestically and internationally, we must also get ready to face its unavoidable consequences. Climate change is having far-reaching effects ranging from unprecedented forest fires, heatwaves, droughts or other extreme events to slow-onset processes like desertification, biodiversity loss, ocean acidification or sea level rise.

Projects under this strand should help to achieve the long-term vision of the **new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change**<sup>14</sup> that, in 2050, the EU will be a climate-resilient society which is fully adapted to the unavoidable impacts of climate change.

In general, projects should help to reinforce adaptive capacity, strengthen resilience, and reduce vulnerability, in line with the **Paris Agreement** and the **proposed European Climate Law**<sup>15</sup>.

More specifically, projects under this call should support the ambition of the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change to:

---

<sup>14</sup> Forging a climate-resilient Europe - the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change (COM/2021/82 final).

<sup>15</sup> Proposal for a European Climate Law (COM/2020/80 final).

- **make adaptation smarter** (improving knowledge, managing uncertainty, and informing adaptation actions by robust data and risk assessment tools that are available to all);
- **make adaptation more systemic** (incorporating climate resilience considerations in all relevant policy fields, because climate change has impacts at all levels of society and across all sectors of the economy);
- **make adaptation faster** (developing and rolling out adaptation solutions that allow us to adapt more quickly and comprehensively).

In order to contribute to these ambitions and objectives, projects should

- demonstrate a **clear and convincing intervention logic** which details the specific climate change risks and vulnerabilities to be addressed, the assessment and selection of the proposed adaptation options and approaches, and the monitoring and evaluation of the results (for more guidance on adaptation methodology, applicants are strongly encouraged to consult the **Adaptation Support Tool** provided on the Climate-ADAPT web portal<sup>16</sup>);
- develop, demonstrate and promote innovative techniques, methods and approaches for reaching the objectives of Union legislation and policy on adaptation to climate change and to contribute to the knowledge base and to the application of best practices;
- support the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of relevant Union legislation and policy on adaptation to climate change, including by improving governance at all levels, in particular through enhancing capacities of public and private actors and the involvement of civil society;
- catalyse the large-scale deployment of successful technical, non-technical and policy-related solutions for implementing relevant Union legislation and policy on adaptation to climate change by disseminating, replicating results, integrating related objectives into other policies and into public and private sector practices, mobilising investment and improving access to finance.

Finally, this call also encourages projects which

- realise possible synergies with the 2030 Climate Target Plan<sup>17</sup>, the EU Covenant of Mayors<sup>18</sup>, the European Climate Pact<sup>19</sup>, the Biodiversity strategy for 2030<sup>20</sup>, disaster risk management<sup>21</sup> or other relevant policies and initiatives under the European Green Deal<sup>22</sup>;
- work in partnership with the private sector, cities, city-networks, unions, civil society organisations, educational institutions, and research and innovation organisations;
- mobilise additional adaptation finance and resilience investments.

---

<sup>16</sup> <https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/knowledge/tools/adaptation-support-tool>

<sup>17</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/eu-climate-action/2030\\_ctp\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/eu-climate-action/2030_ctp_en)

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.covenantofmayors.eu/>

<sup>19</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/eu-climate-action/pact\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/eu-climate-action/pact_en)

<sup>20</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/environment/strategy/biodiversity-strategy-2030\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/strategy/biodiversity-strategy-2030_en)

<sup>21</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/civil-protection/european-disaster-risk-management\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/civil-protection/european-disaster-risk-management_en)

<sup>22</sup> The European Green Deal (COM/2019/640 final)

## **Scope and areas of intervention:**

### **1. Adaptation policy development, and adaptation strategies and plans**

Projects addressing this area should help national, regional and local authorities to further develop and improve effective and science-based adaptation policies and strategies. Across policy levels and sectors, this year's LIFE call encourages in particular projects which

- support cooperation across borders through the EU macro-regional strategies cooperation frameworks<sup>23</sup> and sea-basin and other maritime strategies<sup>24</sup>, Interreg funding programmes, and cooperation and networking opportunities under the Common Agricultural Policy;
- support to the national adaptation policy cycle and in particular to the revision of national or regional adaptation strategies and plans;
- foster the exchange of best practices and solutions to common adaptation challenges among the outermost regions and with their neighbours;
- strengthen the application of key principles of climate-risk management to ensure policy coherence (regulation and funding take into account disaster risk to avoid creating new exposure; reduce existing risk by building up resilience, prevention and preparedness; manage residual risk).

### **2. State-of-the art tools and solutions for adaptation**

The lack of access to actionable solutions is one of the main barriers to adaptation. Climate resilience decision support systems and rapid response solutions for decision-makers and adaptation practitioners must become more accessible and rapid to foster their take-up. Monitoring, reporting and evaluation are essential to setting a robust baseline against which to measure progress on adaptation.

The LIFE call 2021 therefore encourages projects that improve, promote and upscale

- the use of state-of-the-art tools and solutions for adaptation modelling, risk assessment, management and decision support;
- adaptation monitoring, reporting and evaluation;
- ex-ante project assessment tools to better identify co-benefits and positive impacts on the economy of adaptation and prevention projects.

### **3. Nature-based solutions in the management of land, coasts and marine areas**

Implementing nature-based solutions on a larger scale would increase climate resilience and contribute to multiple Green Deal objectives.

Blue-green infrastructures are multipurpose 'no regret' solutions, which simultaneously provide environmental, social and economic benefits and help build climate resilience. They include the protection and restoration of wetlands, peatlands,

---

<sup>23</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/policy/cooperation/macro-regional-strategies](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/cooperation/macro-regional-strategies)

<sup>24</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/sea\\_basins\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/sea_basins_en)

coastal and marine ecosystems; the development of urban blue-green infrastructure; or the sustainable management of forests and farmland.

The LIFE call 2021 encourages projects which support the roll out of viable nature-based solutions for adaptation in the management of land, coastal and marine areas, including projects which

- provide the necessary assessments, guidance, capacity building, and suitable financial approaches and products;
- quantify the benefits of nature-based solutions and better communicate them to decision-makers and practitioners at all levels to improve take-up;
- leverage more investments in nature-based solutions to generate gains for adaptation, mitigation, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity, and health;
- work in synergy with carbon farming approaches which support land-based carbon removals.

#### **4. Adapting cities and regions to climate change**

The local level is the bedrock of adaptation, and whilst climate change affects European regions and citizens directly, their exposure and vulnerability to climate impacts is unequal, often worsening pre-existing inequalities and vulnerabilities. This area is therefore all about local and regional projects, which foster local, individual and just resilience.

LIFE 2021 projects addressing this area should pilot, promote and transfer approaches and solutions for adapting cities and regions to climate change, including projects which

- work with and through the Covenant of Mayors, the European Climate Pact, and the Education for Climate Coalition;
- enhance resilience in a just and fair way, so that the costs and benefits of climate adaptation are widely and equitably shared;
- support the local uptake of data, digital and smart solutions related to climate adaptation, building on initiatives and instruments such as the European Innovation Partnership on Smart Cities and Communities<sup>25</sup>, the Digital Europe Programme, Horizon Europe, and the Intelligent Cities Challenge<sup>26</sup>;
- inspire, engage, empower and connect individual Europeans to take direct adaptation action;
- support education, training and reskilling initiatives and economic diversification strategies that lead to green jobs.

#### **5. Climate-proofing and resilience of infrastructure and buildings**

The built environment (like transport and energy networks, or security, telecommunications, health, water and waste management infrastructures, or buildings), which is characterised by a long life span and high investment and

<sup>25</sup> <https://smart-cities-marketplace.ec.europa.eu/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.intelligentcitieschallenge.eu/>

maintenance costs, needs to withstand the current and future climate extremes and global warming effects. The new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change therefore includes specific actions to continue updating the extensive EU climate proofing guidance for new major infrastructure projects<sup>27, 28</sup>, to advance relevant EU-level standardisation work, and to keep preparing Europe's built environment for the impacts of climate change.

Within this context, projects addressing this intervention area should pilot, roll out and promote solutions to climate-proofing and enhancing the resilience of buildings and infrastructures, including by using blue-green infrastructure and nature-based solutions.

The LIFE call 2021 encourages projects responding to this objective, and those projects that seek:

- synergies with broader work on disaster risk prevention and reduction;
- integration of climate resilience considerations into the national and regional criteria applicable to construction and renovation of buildings and infrastructure, including cooperation with national standardisation organisations to climate-proof national standards (such as building codes and national annexes to the Eurocodes series).

## **6. Adaptation solutions for farmers, forest managers, Natura 2000 managers and other land managers**

Climate change will have far-reaching consequences and will increase the risks for agriculture, forest management, and Natura 2000 and other land management, both through the growing frequency and severity of extreme weather events, but also through slow-onset processes like desertification, biodiversity loss, ocean acidification or sea level rise.

Projects addressing this intervention area should therefore help to speed up the rollout of adaptation solutions, which help farmers, forest managers, Natura 2000 managers and other land managers to tackle climate risks and to identify and implement suitable adaptation approaches.

The LIFE call 2021 encourages in particular projects which:

- incentivise and assist the rollout of nature-based solutions through assessments, guidance, and capacity building;
- encourage the better use of genetic diversity and non-harmful plant genetic resources, including by broadening the supply of suitable high-quality plant reproductive material, and by encouraging collaborative, transnational production and transfer of seeds and planting material through active policies and actions;
- speed and improve the delivery, accessibility and uptake of climate resilience decision support systems and technical advice;
- encourage solutions in enhancing water retention capacity of the landscape, in particular through participatory landscape planning and management;

---

<sup>27</sup> Commission Notice on Technical guidance on the climate proofing of infrastructure in the period 2021-2027 (to be published in 2021)

<sup>28</sup> SWD(2020)330 final [https://ec.europa.eu/echo/news/european-commission-publishes-new-report-disaster-risks-eu\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/news/european-commission-publishes-new-report-disaster-risks-eu_en)

- promote the transition to water-saving technologies and practices in agriculture through knowledge-based approaches, high-tech (e.g. precision farming) and nature-based solutions;
- pilot new business models and financial incentives for land-based carbon removals ('carbon farming') which offer climate adaptation co-benefits.

## **7. Water management**

Europe is increasingly facing situations of either too much or not enough water, and climate change exacerbates the challenge of sharing water resources. Ensuring that freshwater is available in a sustainable manner is fundamental for climate resilience. It requires transformational changes in all sectors, and the wider use of nature-based solutions. We also need to reduce water use sharply and to maintain water quality.

Within this context, and in support of the Common Implementation Strategy of the Water Framework and Floods Directives, this intervention area encourages approaches and solutions, which ensure a stable and secure supply of high quality freshwater, prevent droughts, reduce water use, protect and restore wetlands, and prevent floods.

More specifically, the LIFE call 2021 encourages in particular projects which help to

- ensure climate-resilient, sustainable use and management of water across sectors and borders by improving coordination of thematic plans and other mechanisms, such as water resource allocation and water-permits;
- reduce water use by raising the water-saving performance of products, encouraging water efficiency and savings, and by promoting the wider use of drought management plans as well as sustainable soil management and land-use;
- guarantee a stable and secure supply of drinking water, by encouraging the incorporation of the risks of climate change in risk analyses of water management.

## **8. Preparedness for extreme weather events**

Whilst the importance of adaptation is increasingly recognised, multiple reports highlight the lack of preparedness. Extreme weather events and their impacts have an almost constant presence in the media, and their increased intensity and frequency due to climate change is a particular concern for the EU outermost regions<sup>29</sup>, which are exposed e.g. to hurricanes. Yet, many European cities must also step up their preparedness e.g. for heatwaves and other climate-related health threats, or for growing damages to buildings and infrastructures.

The LIFE call 2021 encourages projects, which support preparedness for extreme weather events, notably at a local level and in the outermost regions, and which foster 'no regret' adaptation solutions with multiple co-benefits, like nature-based solutions and disaster risk prevention measures.

---

<sup>29</sup> Canary Islands, La Réunion, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Madeira, French Guiana, Azores, Mayotte, and Saint Martin

## **9. Financial instruments, innovative solutions and public-private collaboration on insurance and loss data**

The share of non-insured economic losses caused by climate-related disasters appears to be widening because of slow adaptation action and more frequent extreme weather events. It is therefore important to examine and promote natural disaster insurance penetration in Member States and to promote national disaster insurance schemes that encourage users to invest in adaptation.

Projects in this area should therefore work to promote financial instruments and innovative solutions to deal with climate-induced risks, and public-private collaboration to reduce the share of uninsured climate-related economic losses (including by improving collection and access to climate-related economic loss data).

The LIFE call 2021 encourages in particular projects which

- identify and promote best practices in financial instruments for risk management;
- promote natural disaster insurance penetration;
- strengthen dialogue between insurers, policymakers, local and regional authorities and other stakeholders.

### Expected impact

Applicants are expected to define, calculate, explain and achieve the expected impacts as described in the Award criterion 'Impacts' (see section 9).

All LIFE projects will have to report on their expected outputs and impacts taking into account the LIFE Key Performance indicators (KPIs). These KPIs will contribute to evaluating the impact of the LIFE project on an environmental but also socio-economic level (e.g. via actions impacting the local economy and population). Please review the indicators in Part C of the eGrant application and complete them with the estimated impact of the project. More detailed information will be requested during the project time.

### Funding rate

Standard Action Projects (SAPs) — Maximum 60% funding rate.

## **LIFE-2021-SAP-CLIMA-GOV - Climate Governance and Information**

### Objectives:

LIFE Climate Change Governance and Information supports the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of the Union legislation and policy on climate change, contributing to climate change mitigation and/or adaptation. This includes improving governance through enhancing the capacities of public and private actors and the involvement of civil society.

Activities for the sole purpose of raising the awareness of certain groups are deemed insufficient to achieve these objectives, and are therefore not encouraged. Projects which set out to develop tools or studies must include specific and concrete action to implement these tools and studies during the duration of the project.

## **Scope and areas of intervention:**

### **1. Support to the operation of the European Climate Pact**

Under this area, when contributing to the European Climate Pact<sup>30</sup>, proposals submitted under the LIFE call 2021 shall define and implement as well as identify existing climate awareness initiatives, strategies and working methods at the local and regional (if relevant also national and EU) level, which:

- they carry out on their own as well as which they mobilise or identify externally as relevant projects (by third parties) to be supported;
- give the local or regional community a voice and space to design new climate actions, share information, generate support for the adoption of climate friendly behaviours and practices (e.g. dialogues and round tables, co-creation initiatives, systemic societal transformation labs, awareness campaigns);
- foster behavioural change and change of practices;
- support societal transformations through bridging environmental, social and economic divides, using innovative ways of working.

Many organisations and initiatives from all parts of society – some already fully established and others only emerging or completely new – are valuable contributors to the Climate Pact and can help to make their local or regional community more climate aware. LIFE call 2021 proposals under this area shall support and build on the enthusiasm, creativity, innovative potential, of these initiatives and mobilise and channel them under the umbrella of the Climate Pact and its pledges.

Proposals must demonstrate significant potential for being able to identify, boost existing or trigger new actions. In doing so, applicants are strongly encouraged to make use of the possibility of financial support to third parties while providing also a clear vision and outline of the work with these third parties. Proposals can give examples of actions and topics they would consider as relevant for inclusion based on their expected results, impact, innovativeness and replicability. The applicants should already be active in, and knowledgeable about climate action.

Areas of intervention could be e.g. tree planting, improving climate resilience of existing plantations, and green spaces; water retention measures in the landscape and green roofs; mobility and switching to climate friendly transport modes; buildings and their climate proofing; climate adaptation and mitigation; involvement of specific groups, including less active segments of the society; communicating climate in a creative and innovative way, including gamification and citizen-science; digital tools for accelerating the transition; democracy, finance and new economic models for climate neutrality; education and training.

### **2. Incentivising behavioural change, mainstream emission reduction and resource and energy efficiency actions**

#### Scale-up labelling and certification.

A way to incentivise behavioural change to reduce carbon emissions is to label and certify skills necessary for climate change mitigation and adaptation action. Such

---

<sup>30</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/eu-climate-action/pact\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/eu-climate-action/pact_en)

labelling supports the decarbonisation of the buildings and industrial sectors, fosters market uptake of innovative solutions, including digitalisation and circular design, in line with 2050 climate neutrality. Labelling and certification for mitigation and adaptation action incentivises job creation while addressing market barriers to the development of new skills.

In this regard, there is need

- to develop cross-border curricula to develop labelling and certification schemes to facilitate the development of the labour market in order to implement agreed national 2030 climate and energy strategies and plans and long-term strategies, promoting 2050 climate neutrality;
- to facilitate the upgrading and implementation of existing skills for emissions reduction in the context of national strategies and plans, promoting 2050 climate neutrality;
- to facilitate the development of an EU label (regarding an agreed set of green skills) for the upgraded skills for emissions reduction in the context of national strategies and plans, promoting 2050 climate neutrality;
- to implement labelling and certification schemes for green skills for mitigation and adaptation action in cooperation with national, regional and local authorities, civil society organisations, businesses, think tanks and other actors, aiming at mutual acceptance ready to implement in the labour market.

### **3. Awareness-raising activities addressing adaptation and mitigation needs**

In the LIFE call 2021, project proposals targeting this area should work in support of the objectives and areas of intervention of the 'Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation' sub-programme including:

- projects to help national, regional and local authorities to further develop and improve effective and efficient adaptation policies and strategies;
- projects developing and promoting actionable climate resilience decision support systems; rapid response solutions for decision-makers and adaptation practitioners; and monitoring, reporting and evaluation activities;
- projects which support the roll out viable nature-based solutions for adaptation in the management of land, coastal and marine areas;
- projects which pilot, promote and transfer approaches and solutions for adapting cities and regions to climate change;
- projects to pilot, roll out and promote solutions to climate-proofing and enhancing the resilience of buildings and infrastructures, including by using blue-green infrastructure and nature-based solutions;
- projects promoting adaptation solutions which help farmers, forest managers, Natura 2000 managers and other land managers to tackle climate risks and to identify and implement suitable adaptation approaches;
- approaches and solutions, which ensure a stable and secure supply of high quality freshwater, prevent droughts, reduce water use, protect and restore wetlands, and prevent floods;

- projects, which support preparedness for extreme weather events, notably at a local level and in the outermost regions, and which foster 'no regret' adaptation solutions with multiple co-benefits, like nature-based solutions and disaster risk prevention measures;
- projects which promote financial instruments and innovative solutions to deal with climate-induced risks, and public-private collaboration to reduce the share of uninsured climate-related economic losses.

#### **4. Activities linked to the development and implementation of the Sustainable Finance actions**

Driving the integration of climate mitigation and adaptation considerations into the EU financial system. An orderly transition to a climate neutral, resilient economy requires a rapid shift in the capital allocation in the EU. The Commission action plan on financing sustainable growth<sup>31</sup> and the Renewed Sustainable Finance Strategy [expected June 2021]<sup>32</sup> outlines areas of actions to this end. These take place in the context of broader actions announced in the European Green Deal and, the EU adaptation strategy<sup>33</sup>.

Within this context, the LIFE call 2021 encourages projects that help to

- further develop metrics and benchmarks;
- improve transparency, accessibility and comparability of data;
- improve transparency, accessibility and comparability of forward-looking analysis, plans and targets, including on scenario analysis on risks and exposures, and corporate investment plans;
- develop and implement measures to increase the use of the new information;
- develop or promote innovative financial solutions that incentivise nature-based climate adaptation solutions.

#### **5. Greenhouse gas emission monitoring and reporting**

The EU and its Member States have committed to greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets internationally and domestically. There are legislative and administrative requirements and arrangements in place to monitor and report on progress towards meeting these targets. For this to succeed, seamless cooperation and coordination by national, regional and local authorities, agencies and other actors is essential and can take place through a multitude of different ways in Member States. Furthermore, monitoring and reporting are iterative processes, within which continues improvements are expected.

In this regard, there is need

- to develop and/or implement activities to strengthen national, regional and local capacities to monitor and report on greenhouse gas emissions, including through

---

<sup>31</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/sustainable-finance-renewed-strategy\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/sustainable-finance-renewed-strategy_en)

<sup>32</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/banking-and-finance/sustainable-finance\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/banking-and-finance/sustainable-finance_en)

<sup>33</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/adaptation/what/docs/eu\\_strategy\\_2021.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/adaptation/what/docs/eu_strategy_2021.pdf)

developing and mobilising state-of-the art technological, technical and other solutions;

- to develop and/or implement solutions to enhance co-operation and coordination between authorities, involved agencies and other actors on greenhouse gas emissions monitoring and reporting.

## **6. Implementation/further development of national 2030 climate and energy strategies plans and/or long-term strategies**

The EU and its Member States have in place climate and energy strategies and plans (e.g. integrated national energy and climate plans), which set and implement EU and national 2030 as well as longer-term climate and energy targets. While many of the strategies and plans are ambitious, they need to be kept under constant review in view of need for enhanced climate action internationally and within the European Union and its Member States, including in particular to reach climate neutrality by 2050.

In this regard, there is need

- to develop activities to implement agreed national 2030 climate and energy strategies and plans and long-term strategies, including with a particular emphasis to promote climate-neutrality by 2050;
- to develop activities to facilitate the upgrading and implementation of existing national strategies and plans, including with a particular emphasis to promote climate-neutrality by 2050;
- to develop and/or implement solutions to enhance co-operation between stakeholders, such as regional and local authorities, civil society organisations, businesses, think tanks and other actors, to implement and develop ambitious, sound, feasible, effective and cost-efficient policies and measures.

## **7. Development and implementation of greenhouse gas accounting and climate change mitigation in the land use sector**

A key challenge for the land use sector is the collection or estimation of robust emission and removal data from biomass and soils in order to enable transparent monitoring and reporting. In this context, projects are encouraged to test and implement solutions building or strengthening the capacity to:

- use spatially-explicit geographical data, exploiting existing EU and national data collection systems (such as LUCAS, LPIS/IACS and Copernicus), for the identification and tracking of land use and land use change;
- monitor and estimate carbon fluxes in soils and biomass at local, regional and cross-regional level.

The Commission is working on a mechanism to certify carbon removals, which will be proposed in 2023 (as announced in the Circular Economy Action Plan). This includes the certification of carbon removals in the land sector. In this context, projects under the LIFE call 2021 are encouraged to:

- set up and test tools and advisory systems to support the application of carbon removals certification protocols in the bioeconomy sectors (land management or long-lived wood products);

- establish operational linkages between the climate-relevant information collected on the ground and the national greenhouse gas inventories.

## **8. Assessment of the functioning of the EU ETS**

Enhanced implementation and development of climate policies also requires transparency and accountability. A solid system for tracking progress through enhanced monitoring and reporting is therefore important, as well as a robust evaluation of the effects of climate policies considering the international dimension of carbon markets. An essential element is the assessment of the functioning of the EU ETS, its impacts and interaction with energy and other policy instruments and the related development of easily accessible information and data with a view to further develop robust carbon pricing policies and disseminate European experience in this regard.

Under the LIFE 2021 call, proposals focusing on the work area of building broader and stronger international networks of experts and ensure wider dissemination of knowledge on building political support for carbon markets and further technical aspects, such as emissions inventories, projections, monitoring and evaluation of policies and measures, are particularly needed.

## **9. Building capacity, raising awareness among end-users and the equipment distribution chain of fluorinated greenhouse gases**

In relation to Regulation (EU) No 517/2014 on fluorinated greenhouse gases, activities increasing the uptake of **training of personnel to service** equipment using climate-friendly alternatives (e.g. ammonia, CO<sub>2</sub>, hydrocarbons) are important. It is especially important to address the existing geographic imbalances in the availability of training and to address the existing shortcomings in the provision of practical “hands-on” training to technicians as regards the installation and servicing of equipment using climate-friendly alternatives. A wider and longer impact could be achieved by train-the-trainer programmes.

Under the LIFE call 2021, projects could also address building capacities, raising awareness among **end-users and the equipment distribution chain**.

Awareness campaigns among end-users and the equipment distribution chain (e.g. wholesalers, supermarkets, large building operators) could promote the training need and facilitate an exchange of best practices.

## **10. Climate policy monitoring, assessment and ex-post evaluation**

The EU and its Member States have adopted various climate policies and measure to implement existing strategies and plans to reach the 2030 and longer-term climate targets. Some policies have proved to be more successful than others in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting adaptation to climate change. It is key to monitor how these policies are developed, implemented and reviewed at national, regional and local levels, including through their assessment and ex-post evaluation. Lessons need to be learnt and disseminated on successful policies and their underlying characteristics and implementation modalities.

In this regard, there is need

- to develop and/or implement activities promoting robust monitoring, assessment and ex-post evaluation of climate policies and measures at national, regional and local levels;
- to develop and/or implement activities to enhance co-operation between stakeholders (such as regional and local authorities, civil society organisations, businesses, think tanks and other actors) to promote robust monitoring, assessment and ex-post evaluation of climate policies and measures at national, regional and local levels.

### Expected impact

Applicants are expected to define, calculate, explain and achieve the expected impacts as described in the Award criterion 'Impacts' (see section 9).

All LIFE projects will have to report on their expected outputs and impacts taking into account the LIFE Key Performance indicators (KPIs). These KPIs will contribute to evaluating the impact of the LIFE project on an environmental but also socio-economic level (e.g. via actions impacting the local economy and population). Please review the indicators in Part C of the eGrant application and complete them with the estimated impact of the project. More detailed information will be requested during the project time.

### Funding rate

Standard Action Projects (SAPs) — Maximum 60% funding rate.

## **3. Available budget**

The indicative available call budget is **EUR 69,000,000**.

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

Topic	Topic budget	Indicative range of project budgets	Estimated number of projects to be funded
LIFE-2021-SAP-CLIMA-CCM - Climate Change Mitigation	<b>EUR 30,500,000</b>	<b>EUR 1-5 Mln</b>	15 projects
LIFE-2021-SAP-CLIMA-CCA - Climate Change Adaptation	<b>EUR 30,500,000</b>	<b>EUR 1-5 Mln</b>	15 projects
LIFE-2021-SAP-CLIMA-GOV - Climate Governance and Information	<b>EUR 8,000,000</b>	<b>EUR 0.7-2 Mln</b>	5 projects

The availability of the call budget still depends on the adoption of the budget 2021 by the EU budgetary authority.

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:	13 July 2021
Deadline for submission:	<u>30 November 2021 17:00:00 CET</u> (Brussels time)
Information on evaluation results:	April 2022
GA signature:	July - August 2022

#### 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*):
  - detailed budget table (*mandatory excel template available in the Submission System*)
  - participant information

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 **120 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 ([participating countries](#)) or countries which are in ongoing negotiations for an association agreement and where the agreement enters into force before grant signature
- 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 persons<sup>34</sup>.

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'<sup>35</sup>. ⚠ 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)*<sup>36</sup> and entities covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)<sup>37</sup>). 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](#).

### Consortium composition

N/A

### Eligible activities

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

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

---

<sup>34</sup> See Article 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

<sup>35</sup> For the definitions, see Articles 187(2) and 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

<sup>36</sup> 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](#).

<sup>37</sup> 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).

Financial support to third parties is allowed in LIFE-2021-SAP-CLIMA-CCM - Climate Change Mitigation, LIFE-2021-SAP-CLIMA-CCA - Climate Change Adaptation and LIFE-2021-SAP-CLIMA-GOV - Climate Governance and Information for grants and prizes 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.

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 are exceptional and must be necessary to achieve EU (or non-EU eligible countries) environmental and climate objectives and ensure the effectiveness of interventions carried within the eligible countries. The objectives of non-EU countries cannot be in contrast with those of the EU.

## **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.

The check will normally be done for all 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 participate<sup>38</sup>:

- 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 misconduct<sup>39</sup> (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)

---

<sup>38</sup> See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

- 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 that<sup>40</sup>:

- 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 (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'.

---

<sup>39</sup> 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.

<sup>40</sup> See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

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. Proposals that are below the budget threshold (i.e. passed, but not ranked high enough to receive funding) will be awarded a Seal of Excellence.

 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:

### 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, where relevant, its specific priorities
- 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
- Quality of the measures for the exploitation of project results
- Potential for the project results to be replicated in the same or other sectors or places, or to be up-scaled by public or private actors or through mobilising larger investments or financial resources (catalytic potential)

### 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
- 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. PEF or OEF methods or similar ones such as PEFCRs/OEFSRs*) or environmental management systems (*e.g. EMAS*) would be an asset
- Value for money of the proposal

### Bonus points:

- **Bonus 1:** The proposal offers exceptional synergies and promotes significant co-benefits between LIFE sub-programmes. (2 points).
- **Bonus 2:** The proposal is primarily implemented in the Outermost Regions. Where specific regional features are relevant to the needs addressed in the call for proposals, *e.g. islands for waste, coal-intensive regions for clean energy, etc.*, the bonus could be extended to other geographical areas with specific needs and vulnerabilities (2 points).
- **Bonus 3:** The proposal substantially builds on or up-scales the results of other EU funded projects. (2 points).
- **Bonus 4:** The proposal offers an exceptional catalytic potential. (2 points).
- **Bonus 5:** The proposal envisages a transnational cooperation among Member States essential to guarantee the achievement of the project objectives. (2 points).

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
<b>Overall weighted (pass) score (without bonus)</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>90</b>	N/A
Bonus 1	N/A	2	1
Bonus 2	N/A	2	1
Bonus 3	N/A	2	1
Bonus 4	N/A	2	1
Bonus 5	N/A	2	1
<b>Overall weighted (pass) scores (with bonus)</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>	N/A

Maximum points: **100** points.

Individual thresholds per criterion: **10** points.

Overall threshold: **55** points.

Proposals that pass the individual thresholds **AND** the overall threshold will be considered for funding — within the limits of the available call budget. 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. Retroactive application can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons — but never earlier than the proposal submission date. The typical duration of the project is **2 to 5 years**.

Maximum project duration: **10 years**.

### 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 (maximum **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*).

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

- D.2 Land purchase
- E. Indirect costs

*Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:*

- personnel costs:
  - SME owner/natural person unit cost<sup>41</sup>: Yes
  - volunteers unit cost<sup>42</sup>: Yes (without indirect costs)
- travel and subsistence unit cost<sup>43</sup>: No (only actual costs)
- equipment costs: full cost + depreciation for listed equipment
- other cost categories:
  - costs for financial support to third parties: allowed for grants and prizes; maximum total amount for financial support to third parties **EUR 100.000**; maximum amount per third party **EUR 20.000**.
- land purchase costs: subject to the conditions specified in Art. 6.2 - D.2 Eligible and ineligible costs and contributions of the LIFE General Model Grant Agreement. The applicant must address each of these conditions in his proposal, explaining how each one is met or will be met during the project. Such conditions refer, for example, to the contribution to the integrity of the Natura 2000 network, to the guarantee that in the long term the land will be used consistently with the specific objectives of the LIFE Programme, to the fact that land purchase is the only or most cost-effective way of achieving the desired conservation outcome etc.
- indirect cost flat-rate: **7%** of the eligible direct costs (categories A-D, except volunteers costs 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 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

---

<sup>41</sup> 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).

<sup>42</sup> 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).

<sup>43</sup> 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).

- common information and dissemination activities: foresee resources to increase synergies between, and the visibility of LIFE and EU supported actions
- other ineligible costs: No

 **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 one or more **additional prefinancing payments** linked to a prefinancing report.

In addition, for longer or more complex projects, you may be expected to submit one or more progress reports not linked to payments.

**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.

### 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

N/A

### 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 and 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](#)
- FAQs on the Topic page (for call-specific questions in open calls; not applicable for actions by invitation)
- [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](mailto: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 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](#).