



Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)

Call for proposals

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

(LIFE-2023-PLP)

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EUROPEAN CLIMATE, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT EXECUTIVE AGENCY (CINEA)

CINEA.D – Natural Resources, Climate, Sustainable Blue Economy and Clean Energy
 CINEA.D.2 – LIFE Environment (Nature & Circular Economy)

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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0. Introduction

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

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

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

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

The call covers the 4 following topics:

- **LIFE 2023-PLP-Bauhaus-Phoenix-Emerald - Projects to support Bauhaus, the Phoenix initiative and the Emerald Network**
- **LIFE-2023-PLP-NAT-ENV – Nature & Biodiversity and Circular Economy & Quality of LIFE**
- **LIFE-2023-PLP-CLIMA – Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation**
- **LIFE-2023-PLP-ENER – Implementation of the Ecodesign, Energy labelling and Tyre labelling policy**

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

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

- the call document outlines the:
 - background, objectives, scope, activities that can be funded and the expected results (sections 1 and 2)
 - timetable and available budget (sections 3 and 4)
 - admissibility and eligibility conditions (including mandatory documents; sections 5 and 6)
 - criteria for financial and operational capacity and exclusion (section 7)
 - evaluation and award procedure (section 8)
 - award criteria (section 9)
 - legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements (section 10)
 - how to submit an application (section 11)

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

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

- the Online Manual outlines the:
 - procedures to register and submit proposals online via the EU Funding & Tenders Portal ('Portal')
 - recommendations for the preparation of the application
- the AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement contains:
 - detailed annotations on all the provisions in the Grant Agreement you will have to sign in order to obtain the grant (*including cost eligibility, payment schedule, accessory obligations, etc*).

1. Background

What is the LIFE Programme?

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

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

- transform the EU into a fair and prosperous society, with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy where there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050 and where economic growth is decoupled from resource use and
- protect, conserve and enhance the EU's natural capital, and protect the health and well-being of citizens from environment and climate related risks and impacts.

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

- 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.

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

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

Environment:

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

Climate Action:

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

Nature and Biodiversity

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

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

Circular Economy and Quality of Life

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

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

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

It will contribute to the EU priorities by:

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

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

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

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

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

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

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

This call for proposals concerns LIFE Other Action Grants (OAGs) and more specifically

- **Projects addressing ad hoc Legislative and Policy Priorities (PLP)** determined following a consultation with Member States

Based on Article 11 of the LIFE Regulation [2021/783](#)⁶, the LIFE Multi Annual Work Programme 2021-2024⁷, includes the possibility to finance each year a limited number of

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

projects designed to support specific needs for the development and implementation of Union environment policy and legislation.

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

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

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

Under this call, proposals may be submitted only to address the specific needs described in the section below.

LIFE 2023-PLP-Bauhaus-Phoenix-Emerald - Projects to support Bauhaus, the Phoenix initiative and the Emerald Network

Objectives

The proposed projects under the topic LIFE 2023-PLP-Bauhaus-Phoenix-Emerald shall address the following specific needs and policy priorities identified by the Member States.

Scope – activities that can be funded

A maximum of 1 grant is expected to be awarded per specific project as described below.

1) New European Bauhaus⁸ – LIFE in the building and construction sector

Specific needs addressed:

Pollution is the largest environmental cause of multiple mental and physical diseases and of premature deaths, especially among children, people with certain medical conditions and the elderly. In addition to affecting people’s health, pollution is one of the main reasons for the loss of biodiversity. It reduces the ability of ecosystems to provide services such as carbon sequestration and decontamination.

In the EU, 40% of total Greenhouse Gas emissions stem from the operation of buildings and additional 10-20 % are embodied emissions from buildings, including construction products.

An estimated 3 billion people (40 percent of the world population) will need new housing by 2030, which translates into a need for 300 million

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

⁸ https://new-european-bauhaus.europa.eu/index_en

new dwellings between 2016 and 2030.

To make the European Green Deal a success while maintaining the competitiveness of the European construction and building eco-systems, there must be a transition to a sustainable, digital, and inclusive future within the sector. The New European Bauhaus (NEB) is a major enabler for this transition, and is taking steps to accelerate and support change. The New European Bauhaus is part of the Flagship initiatives 2 (Supporting urban zero pollution action) and 6 (Showcasing zero pollution solutions for buildings) of the Zero Pollution Action Plan. The NEB Academy is a further important initiative on the journey.

Already during the co-creating process of the NEB, it became very clear that a lack of skills and knowledge in the sector is a big obstacle to the transition, but also a big opportunity to accelerate the needed changes.

Currently, training modules are not sufficiently available to meet skills demands in the areas of sufficiency, end-of-waste (EoW) and bio-based materials for the construction eco-system. Because of the lack of information, architects and engineers often report reluctance to introduce EoW and bio-based materials. Well-organised, open, promoted, and supported content would help accelerate a green, digital, and inclusive transition in the construction sector.

Therefore, as one flagship initiative of the European Year of Skills, the European Commission will initiate the New European Bauhaus Academy (NEB Academy) to develop, foster and increase skills. This includes, for example, the use of EoW and bio-based materials, digital technologies as well as increased circularity in order to accelerate decarbonisation of our homes and buildings in Europe and beyond. Training and capacity building activities should include:

- the design/planning phase (architects, engineers) - designing sustainable solutions, including procurement strategies;
- the construction and refurbishment/renovation phase (engineers, contractors, craftspersons, installers, producers of sustainable construction materials; including bio-based materials);
- operations and facility management (engineers and architects);
- solutions for sustainable demolition (engineers, architects, construction companies);
- enable sustainable construction through policy and building administration (policy makers, construction oversight administrators);
- inter-regional exchange and capacity building among the LIFE members and associated countries.

Specific project:

It is expected that the specific projects awarded in the framework of this call will have a substantial support to:

- test pilot projects on using sustainable materials for construction (focussing on wood);
 - promote and support technology transfer;
 - provide capacity building, support visits for exchange of ideas;
-

- support specific training of technicians, land planners and others for the development of New European Bauhaus specific projects.

Targeted beneficiaries will include members of the New European Bauhaus community, such as universities, training providers, associations, public-private consortia.

The project should ideally present proposals for further actions (content, planning and budget).

Expected impacts:

The project is expected:

- to enhance skills in the construction eco-system for sustainable construction; with special focus on use of bio-based materials and circularity
- to contribute to the NEBAcademy with hubs, trainings, summer academies, online learning material or other relevant activities
- to support the identification and further needs especially concerning transformational skills in the construction eco-system

Expected project duration: 24 months

Funding rate and EU contribution: Funding rate: 90% - Maximum EU contribution: EUR 1 million

2) Supporting the implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directive and Natura 2000 in Ukraine and Moldova, on the basis of their current Emerald network of sites under the Bern Convention

Specific needs addressed:

Following the decision by the European Council on 23 June 2022, Ukraine and Moldova were granted the status of candidate country for EU membership, which further reinforces their commitment to progressing towards implementation of EU policy and the acquis. The Association agreement allows those countries to be eligible to LIFE funding opportunities and it is a real opportunity to get familiar and align to EU standards and legislation.

The Emerald Network is a pan-European ecological network with the goal to preserve the biodiversity of Europe. Its establishment is one of the requirements of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern, 1979 - the Bern Convention) and is one of the main mechanisms for its implementation. The Bern Convention extends beyond the borders of the European Union (e.g. Moldova, Georgia, and Ukraine). The Emerald Network is considered as the equivalent of Natura 2000 in non-EU European countries. Both networks aim to protect important animal and plant species as well as their habitats, but with a different geographical scope.

Specific project:

The projects activities will support Ukraine and Moldova in advancing the establishment and management of the Emerald

Network of protected sites and this will also aid to move closer to the EU standards for the conservation of species and habitats. Activities include support in different areas:

- Legal: support for a preliminary study to define baselines, identify barriers and risks and propose a roadmap, legal recommendations and best practices that can be applied in order to establish and improve the management of Emerald sites;
- Technical: support for mapping sites and identifying site-specific conservation objectives and measures, creating arrangements for information and knowledge sharing among key audiences and for building capacity of competent authority and site managers;
- Operational: support for assessments, for the preparation of action plans, codes of conducts, and guidelines for appropriate management, and support for the enhancement of monitoring and reporting.

Targeted beneficiaries are relevant stakeholders and authorities in Ukraine and Moldova.

Applicants could submit a proposal covering one country, separated proposals covering each country or a proposal covering both countries.

Expected impacts: The outcomes of the project are expected to facilitate the future implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directive and Natura 2000 in Ukraine and Moldova, with a good assessment of the baseline situation, improved knowledge about the actual presence of the habitats and species listed in the Birds and Habitats Directive and in the potential Natura 2000 sites, such as confirming and quantifying the presence of the species and habitats, producing more detailed maps, setting site-specific conservation objectives; as well the project will contribute to better guidance and enhanced competencies for establishing a Natura 2000 site management.

Further, this project is a first step for strengthening the partnership between Ukraine and Moldova and EU countries, sharing the same values, and setting the basis for enhancing joint efforts of cooperation and thus protecting biodiversity across and beyond the EU borders.

Expected project duration: 24 months

Funding rate and EU contribution: Funding rate: 90% - Maximum EU contribution: EUR 1 million

Minimum requirements for applicants:

- The applicants shall be part of a consortium
- The consortium shall include the relevant national authorities.

3) Phoenix: Project for a holistic orientation towards environmental new infrastructure in Ukrainian Cities - waste

Specific needs addressed:

In the context of the Eastern Partnership, Ukraine has signed an Association Agreement with the EU, which explicitly foresees approximation to EU legislation. Chapter 6 (Environment) of Title V, Article 363 of this agreement foresees gradual approximation of Ukrainian legislation to EU law and policy on environment, including the EU waste directives.

Following the decision by the European Council on 23 June 2022, Ukraine was granted the status of candidate country for EU membership, which further reinforces the country's commitment to progressing towards implementation of EU policy and the acquis.

In synergy with actions under the City Mission (Horizon Europe), in line with the Regulation⁹ on minimum requirements for water reuse, this project under the LIFE Circular Economy and Quality of Life sub-programme aims, in the framework of the Phoenix initiative, to support Ukraine's progress in approximation of the EU waste acquis by providing support to Ukrainian municipalities to develop, demonstrate and promote innovative techniques, methods and approaches for reaching the objectives of Union waste policy. The Phoenix initiative will combine twinning and awareness raising in green smart city management (sustainability and climate neutrality) with administrative capacity building, training in urban planning and permitting and in EC environmental acquis in order to ensure a holistic, sustainable city planning approach, including in innovative solutions for the rapid reconstruction of destroyed or damaged water and waste facilities.

The present project addresses the waste topic which is paramount considering the present situation.

Ukraine has a policy framework for waste management:

- its National Strategy on Waste Management until 2030 – adopted in 2017 - sets out the course for construction and demolition waste recycling and for the sustainable use of resources in construction;
- its National Plan on Waste Management until 2030 – adopted in 201 - lays out a plan for the new laws about different types of waste;

⁹ Regulation (UE) 2020/741 *on minimum requirements for water reuse*, to be applied from 26.6.2023

In 2022, the following additional measures have been adopted:

- in June 2022, a law "On Waste Management". It is the foundation of the future waste management legislation; it will be followed by sectoral laws and by regional and local waste management plans; according to experts the process to set up legislation for waste management on all levels will take at least 3-4 years.
- in September 2022: the new "Procedure for handling demolition waste generated by hostilities". It introduces categories of construction and demolition waste and how they can be treated. It does not cover hazardous waste (such as asbestos)

This project will build on this legislative and policy framework to showcase solutions to waste management challenges in Ukraine and in the context of its path towards the European Union.

Specific project:

The project aims to support, in cooperation with EU cities, some small or medium-sized Ukrainian cities and contribute to the implementation of the waste management framework. It should include:

- 1) the development of relevant urban planning and permitting actions in the municipality administrations;
- 2) the identification and design of innovative solutions in waste management to support, e.g.
 - the use of value-added recycled materials, components or products in reconstruction;
 - the demonstration of innovative solutions for the identification, tracking, separation, prevention and decontamination of waste containing hazardous substances;
 - the implementation of design for the environment solutions, including circular design, to improve durability, reparability, reusability, upgradability, recycling and use of recycled content in new construction products, pharmaceutical products, reducing the uncontrolled burning of waste by individuals (either for getting rid of it or for domestic heating) thus reducing emissions of highly toxic air pollutants..
- 3) Promotion of innovative solutions for the design and (re)construction of waste management facilities.

The project should also develop proposals for further actions (content, planning and budget) to be implemented under other EU, and national programmes or public private partnerships.

Targeted beneficiaries are Ukrainian small or medium cities in cooperation with EU cities.

Expected impacts:

It is expected that the specific project awarded in the framework of this call will have a substantial support to:

- improve of waste management for several Ukrainian cities;
 - facilitate the use of innovative and state of the art waste services management approaches through twinning with EU cities
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	<p>(preferably members of Covenant of Mayors or Green City Accord, or participating in LIFE Strategic Integrated Projects for waste management plans);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ provide capacity building and training for relevant city administrative, technical and political staff on strategic planning; ▪ identify further needs to the full implementation of waste management; ▪ facilitate replication.
Expected project duration:	48 months
Funding rate and EU contribution:	Funding rate: 90% - Maximum EU contribution: EUR 1 million
Minimum requirements for applicants:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicants shall be part of a consortium • The consortium shall include both one or more EU city and the municipal authorities of one or more Ukrainian small or medium-sized city

4) Phoenix: Project for a holistic orientation towards environmental new infrastructure in Ukrainian Cities - Water

Specific needs addressed:	<p>In the context of the Eastern Partnership, Ukraine has signed an Association Agreement with the EU, which explicitly foresees approximation to EU legislation. Chapter 6 (Environment) of Title V, Article 363 of this agreement foresees gradual approximation of Ukrainian legislation to EU law and policy on environment, including the EU water directives.</p> <p>Following the decision by the European Council on 23 June 2022, Ukraine was granted the status of candidate country for EU membership, which further reinforces the country's commitment to progressing towards implementation of EU policy and the acquis.</p> <p>In synergy with actions under the City Mission (Horizon Europe), this project financed under the LIFE Circular Economy and Quality of Life sub-programme in the framework of the Phoenix initiative aims to support Ukraine's progress in approximation to the EU acquis on water - including the Water Framework Directive, the Drinking Water and the Urban Waste Water Directives - by providing support to Ukrainian municipalities to develop, demonstrate and promote innovative techniques, methods and approaches for reaching the objectives of Union water policy. The Phoenix initiative will combine twinning and awareness raising for green smart city management (sustainability and climate neutrality) with administrative capacity building, training in urban planning and permitting and in EC environmental acquis in order to ensure a holistic, sustainable city planning approach, including innovative solutions for the rapid reconstruction of destroyed or</p>
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damaged water and waste facilities.

The present project addresses the water topic which is paramount considering approximately 10 million people do not have access to safely managed water services and 20 million people do not have access to sanitation and centralised wastewater collection and treatment services. It should promote:

- integrated approaches for the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive;
- activities to ensure safe and efficient use of water resources, improving quantitative water management and resilience, preserving a high level of water quality and avoiding misuse and deterioration of water resources.

Ukraine has adopted in October 2016 a framework law implementing the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60 / EC).

There is limited alignment with the acquis on water management. Ukraine updated its Water Code and established some river basin districts. Ukraine joined the Water Convention and ratified the Water Protocol. Alignment with the Urban Waste Water Treatment (currently under revision) and Bathing Water Directives is still needed, as well as with the recast Drinking Water Directive.

The State program 2022 to 2026 for construction and reconstruction of drinking water infrastructure is not in line with latest EU standards. In terms of enforcement, clean water services are in place but there is no clear responsibility on drinking water and wastewater. General principles of marine water protection are reflected in the legislation.

This project will build on this legislative and policy framework to showcase solutions to water management challenges in Ukraine and in the context of its path towards the European Union.

Specific project:

The project aims to support, in cooperation with EU cities several small or medium size Ukrainian cities and contribute to the implementation of the water management framework. It should include:

- 1) the development of relevant urban planning approaches and permitting actions at municipal level, with possible use of dedicated Geographical Information Systems or satellites;
- 2) the identification and design of innovative solutions to improve access to safe drinking water and wastewater treatment;
- 3) the promotion of innovative solutions for the design and reconstruction of water and wastewater infrastructures and treatment facilities.

The project should also develop proposals for further actions (content, planning and budget) to be implemented under other EU and national programmes or public private partnerships.

Targeted beneficiaries are Ukrainian small or medium cities in cooperation with EU cities.

Expected impacts:	<p>It is expected that the specific project awarded in the framework of this call will have a substantial support to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ improve water and sanitation services management for several Ukrainian cities▪ facilitate the use of innovative and state of the art water services management approaches through twinning with EU cities (preferably members of Covenant of Mayors or Green City Accord, or participating in LIFE Strategic Integrated Projects for water management plans)▪ Provide capacity building and training for relevant city administrative, technical and political staff on strategic planning;▪ identify further needs to the full implementation of water management▪ facilitate replication
Expected project duration:	48 months
Funding rate and EU contribution:	Funding rate: 90% - Maximum EU contribution: EUR 1 million
Minimum requirements for applicants:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The applicants shall be part of a consortium• The consortium shall include both one or more EU city and the municipal authorities of one or more Ukrainian small or medium-sized city

LIFE-2023-PLP-NAT-ENV - Nature & Biodiversity and Circular Economy & Quality of Life

Objectives

The proposed projects under the topic LIFE 2023-PLP-ENV-NAT shall aim to address the following specific needs identified by the Member States in the sub-programme Circular Economy and Quality of LIFE in the sub-programme Nature and Biodiversity.

Scope — activities that can be funded

A maximum of 1 grant is expected to be awarded per specific project as described below.

1) Facilitating knowledge sharing & good implementation practices for implementation of the EU Regulation on Deforestation-free products

Sub-Programme: Nature & Biodiversity

Specific needs addressed: On 17 November 2021, the European Commission adopted a Proposal for an EU Regulation on Deforestation-free Products. Once the Regulation on Deforestation-free Products is in force, operators and traders will have 18 months to implement the new rules. Micro and small enterprises will enjoy a longer adaptation period, as well as other specific provisions. The objective of this project is to support the efforts of Member States to prepare for the full implementation of the Regulation, at large territorial scale and with the involvement of all concerned stakeholders.

Specific project: The objective of this project is to support Member States to implement the Regulation with knowledge sharing and capacity building activities: sharing good practice, targeted innovation, common training, educational and orientation materials at national or regional scale.

Expected impacts: By supporting Member States to implement the new rules and to promote the consumption of 'deforestation-free' products, it is expected that the project will contribute to reduce the EU's impact on global deforestation and forest degradation, bringing down greenhouse gas emissions and biodiversity loss.

Expected project duration: 36 months

Funding rate and EU contribution Funding rate: 90% - Maximum EU contribution: EUR 0.9 million

2) An EU system to assess management effectiveness of Natura 2000 sites and other protected areas (EU-PAME)

Sub-Programme: Nature & Biodiversity

Specific needs addressed:

One of the key commitments of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 is to legally protect at least 30% of the EU's land and 30% of the EU's sea area (the latter also being a commitment under the EU Mission: Restore our Oceans and Waters). At least one third of these areas should be strictly protected. Most importantly, all protected areas must be effectively managed, including by defining clear conservation objectives and measures, and monitoring them appropriately. Only well managed protected areas can deliver benefits for biodiversity and society. Effective management of Natura 2000 sites (which make up majority of EU protected areas) is also a legal obligation under the Birds and Habitats Directives. The information about the management effectiveness is not systematically collected in the EU, but recent studies confirm that most protected areas are not well managed. DG Environment has funded a project to develop an EU methodology to assess management effectiveness of marine Natura 2000 sites and other EU marine protected areas. The project ended in 2022 and has proposed a methodology which is a starting point to build a comprehensive EU system to regularly assess and report on the management effectiveness. However, this would require additional efforts to finalise the methodology and an IT system for its implementation, ensure Member States' support and buy-in, as well as to provide practical and continuous support to managers and authorities in the first few years of its implementation.

Specific project:

The proposed project should:

- 1) finalise the proposed EU methodology and test an IT system for its implementation that will be developed during 2023 with the European Environment Agency, providing a fully operational EU-PAME system (for Protected Area Management Effectiveness);
- 2) Ensure engagement and support of Member States and protected area managers to practically implement the methodology, including through elaboration of guidance and support mechanism;
- 3) Increase awareness about the EU-PAME system.

The project should be implemented in close collaboration with DG Environment and the EEA.

Expected impacts:

- Fully operational EU system for assessment of management effectiveness of protected areas established
 - Guidance and support to Member States ensured
 - Increased awareness about the EU PAME system and engagement of stakeholders ensured
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- Information provided for the tracking of commitments under the Biodiversity strategy and for the implementation of Nature Directives
 - Actual improvement in the management effectiveness of protected areas
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Expected project duration: 48 months

Funding rate and EU contribution: Funding rate: 90% - Maximum EU contribution: EUR 1.5 million

3) Training for a better management of Natura 2000 sites and restoration of nature

Sub-Programme: Nature & Biodiversity

Specific needs addressed: The EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 (BDS) includes among its key commitments that by 2030:

- Legally protect a minimum of 30% of the EU land area and 30% of the EU sea area and integrate ecological corridors, as part of a coherent Trans-European Nature Network. The protection of EU sea areas is also a commitment under the EU Mission: Restore our Ocean and Waters.
- Strictly protect at least a third of the EU's protected areas, including all remaining EU primary and old-growth forests.
- Effectively manage all protected areas, defining clear conservation objectives and measures, and monitoring them appropriately.
- The Strategy also states that "Protecting the nature we have will not be enough to bring nature back into our lives. To reverse biodiversity loss, the world needs to be more ambitious on nature restoration. With a new EU Nature Restoration Plan, Europe will lead the way." Accordingly, the Strategy includes further commitments, in particular stating that:
 - "Legally binding EU nature restoration targets to be proposed in 2021, subject to an impact assessment. By 2030, significant areas of degraded and carbon-rich ecosystems are restored; habitats and species show no deterioration in conservation trends and status; and at least 30% reach favourable conservation status or at least show a positive trend."
 - The Commission adopted a Nature Restoration Law in June 2022, which sets ambitious targets for 2030, 2040 and 2050.
 - The fulfilment of these commitments/targets will require a significant increase in the capacity of those responsible for the management of

protected areas and of restoration in general and Natura 2000 sites in particular.

- However, several obstacles have been identified that are expected to hinder the timely development of these capacities and the achievement of the set targets:
- Limited communication and connection between site managers and poor sharing of information at national and international level leads to lack of knowledge of best practices or difficulties in their application.
- Lack of common understanding and adequate communication leads to disagreements and conflicts between site managers and local stakeholders, hindering their cooperation that would be essential for effective management and restoration efforts.
- Insufficient knowledge on the conservation status of protected habitats and species by many Natura 2000 site managers, mainly due to limited access to scientific information and poor communication with the research community.
- Lack of standardised and harmonised methods for monitoring and conservation measures at pan-European level.
- Poor connectivity between Natura 2000 sites at ecological level, due to a management system mainly focused at site level.
- Limited professional capacity on restoration activities.

Specific project:

In order to facilitate and speed up the capacity building necessary for the fulfilment of the commitments under the BDS and the targets set in the Nature Restoration Law and to remove the main obstacles hindering that process, it is proposed to set up and operate an EU level training system for the managers of Natura 2000 sites and – eventually - other protected areas, that would also develop skills on nature restoration.

The training system and its curricula shall cover all main ecosystem types (both terrestrial and marine) and be available to site managers in all Member States, irrespective of their legal status, using a balanced mix of online and in-person methods, as well as field experiences, reaching directly or indirectly (via train the trainers or advisors) the target audience. It may be enlarged to cover a wider audience, in particular in view of the need to build capacity, both theoretical and practical, on restoration beyond protected areas.

The training system and its training modules should build on and possibly incorporate - or collaborate with - any existing national/international or ecosystem specific training systems related to the subject.

Expected impacts:

- Training system and modules available potentially to all site managers/restoration managers across the EU by the end of the project.
 - Knowledge and skills of site/restoration managers from all MS improved by the end of the project, facilitating (mainly thereafter)
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	<p>the effective management and restoration of a significant portion of the protected area network and beyond.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key obstacles to the capacity building of site managers are removed as a) a result of a communication network among the participants of the trainings, and b) with the establishment of a reference knowledge depository (for guidelines, best practices, practical experiences, governance). ▪ Communication with and engagement of stakeholders improved.
Expected project duration:	48 months
Funding rate and EU contribution:	Funding rate: 90% - Maximum EU contribution: EUR 1.5 million

4) Overcoming the coordination barriers to implement nature-based water retention options

Sub-Programme: Nature & Biodiversity

Specific needs addressed:	<p>Climate change will make us face very strong dilemmas as regards the politically, ecologically and economically sensitive distribution of water resources. Soil is recognised as providing the ecosystem service of water retention crucial for providing a stable water supply and contributing to preventing floods; both policy objectives have become more prominent as part of adaptation responses to climate change challenges. Yet due to unsustainable practices in different sectors, the water retention capacity of soil has steadily decreased in Europe in the last decade.</p> <p>Such retention capacity of the soil is essential to replenish groundwater and surface water bodies, to increase our resilience to extreme weather events and help to restore biodiversity. This project focuses on the intersection of the challenges policy makers and organisations on the ground face in the policy domains of climate adaptation, water management, agriculture, biodiversity / nature restoration, and spatial planning, in particular as regards water retention solutions based on Nature (NbS) to improve the capacity for water infiltration into the soil and subsequent water retention as well increasing the storage capacity in aquifers, urban areas, and upstream surface waters.</p> <p>The cooperation between the competent authorities, both horizontally (between different policy fields) and vertically (EU, national, regional and local level), and with the different stakeholders involved in those policy areas, proved to be challenging in many Member States when they tried to implement these NbS. Strengthening this cooperation, supporting capacity building and exchange of successful large-scale approaches are paramount to be able to transfer a part of the benefits incurred by the downstream beneficiaries to upstream actors and thus promote the uptake of these NbS. It involves participation of many stakeholders, such as farmers, foresters, water managers, infrastructure project designers</p>
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and builders, infrastructure concessionaires, town planners and nature restoration and protection officers.

The project can make use of the results of the work already done in the field of Natural Water Retention Management (such as for instance on www.nwrm.eu) as well as of the insights with regard to climate adaptation measures (Climate-ADAPT-site) with the aim to make a considerable step towards actual take-up and coordinated, large-scale implementation, which is currently lacking.

Specific project:

The objective of this project to strengthen the cooperation and capacity of different competent authorities and public / private sector stakeholders involved in climate adaptation, water, spatial planning, agriculture and nature policy domains in order to implement NbS at the scale of a river basin that will increase the resilience of the landscape and communities along the river and thus the local / regional stakeholders to deal with climate change impacts such as intensive rainfall and or severe droughts. This would entail identifying:

(i) How relevant national legislative and implementing acts, in part reflecting legal instruments in the EU water, nature, agriculture and forestry acquis can be combined at the regional, river basin-wide, level in order to further promote the adoption of the nature-based water retention solutions in the river-basin landscape, specifically expanding water retention in rural land, urban areas and aquifer storage capacity.

(ii) How to apply these acts / instruments to create coherent dedicated programmes / projects that coordinate the relevant actions by policy makers and stakeholders as regards the preparation and successful implementation of such solutions at large scale, and that can be integrated in the River Basin Management Plans, Flood Risk Management Plans, Drought Risk Management Plans, Climate Adaptation Plans, National Energy and Climate Plans, national Strategic Plans under the Common Agriculture Policy, Nitrate Action Plans, and Nature Restoration plans, including the corresponding programmes of measures of the aforementioned Plans.

(iii) How to organise for the relevant river basin territory all relevant national and regional government / public actors that are involved in the planning and implementation as well the potentially affected stakeholders, both upstream and downstream, such as through making use of existing and / or setting up new platforms supporting the preparations and planning, and funding, of such solutions.

(iv) How to promote knowledge sharing and capacity building as regards the previous three dimensions regionally, nationally and, ideally, where there is such a need, across transboundary river basins. The project should build on and enhance the key insights that these NbS serve multiple objectives in different policy fields, that they involve a variety of stakeholders with partly congruent and partly conflicting interests, and thus that they need solid planning from the early stages and robust support from society. Therefore, it should start with a comprehensive overview of these NbS and their current

take-up in the EU as well as relevant examples from elsewhere, including information on costs and benefits, funding sources, and effective approaches to planning and stakeholder involvement. The project should culminate in the production of a case-study based on the actual circumstances for an existing EU river basin (ideally transnational) that convincingly demonstrates the potential for coordinated and large-scale natural water retention as well as the practical steps to achieve that potential. The project should use the identification of the distribution of the cost and benefits as basis for obtaining robust societal and political support for these specific water retention NbS. Some benefits appear widespread, such as the availability of water of good quality, while one should also recognise the policy challenges to obtain a settled agreement between all stakeholder upstream and downstream, recognising that the support from upstream actors, e.g. in rural areas, is required to realise the water retention options, while part of the benefits are reaped downstream.

Expected impacts: A tangible step forward in practical, achievable planning and implementation for nature-based water retention applications at river basin scale, namely a concrete and detailed plan, at the regional/river basin-wide scale, that if implemented by the identified authorities and stakeholders (who ideally would be the LIFE project’s partners) would lead to a practical, large-scale approach to the implementation of water-related NbS. It will also result in concrete recommendations to address the challenges of cross-sectoral, possibly also cross-border, coordination involving different levels of governance as well as concrete project proposals or a demonstration project. The project will contribute to the EU’s water resilience agenda by identifying potential implementation gaps and good practices, as well as potential policy changes to be introduced in due time.

Expected project duration: 24 months

Funding rate and EU contribution: Funding rate: 90% - Maximum EU contribution: EUR 0.5 million

5) Developing guidance on crop-specific rules for pest management

Sub programme: Nature & Biodiversity

Specific needs addressed: Conventional farming relies on chemical pesticides (hereafter “pesticides”) as a main tool to prevent harvest losses due to pests. Annually, around 350 000 tonnes of pesticides are sold in the EU. While their use is targeted at specific pests, these chemical compounds also have harmful impacts on non-targeted organisms. It is well-established that pesticide use is a major driver of biodiversity decline.

In 2009, the EU adopted legislation to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides by setting minimum rules to reduce the risks to human health and the environment - Directive 2009/128/EC on the Sustainable use of pesticides (“SUD”). However, to date, there are

significant weaknesses in the implementation and enforcement of the SUD.

In 2020, the European Green Deal, namely its Biodiversity and Farm to Fork strategies, acknowledged the need to urgently reduce the use and risk of pesticides. They set the target to reduce the overall use and risk of pesticides by 50% and the use of more hazardous pesticides by 50% by 2030. To achieve the reduction target, the Commission set to revise the SUD. In June 2022, the Commission adopted a proposal for a Regulation on sustainable use of plant protection products ("SUR"), which makes the reduction targets legally binding and sets out provisions on how to achieve them.

The proposal in particular enhances provisions on integrated pest management ("IPM"), the key tool to reduce dependency on chemicals in controlling pests. IPM promotes a systemic approach when dealing with pests and draws largely on agroecological principles and practices ("working with nature"). The insufficient implementation of IPM was one of the key shortcomings in the implementation of the SUD. The absence of clear criteria and recommendations, and clarity on users' requirements for IPM implementation are regarded as some of the key reasons behind this shortcoming.

Under the SUR, Member States would be required to translate the principles of IPM to crop-specific rules for pest management that would be binding on farmers and other users. It is essential for the implementation and enforcement of this legal requirement to make quickly available concrete recommendations to support Member States in the development of the binding rules and help the Commission in assessing them.

This preparatory project aims to provide that critical support to Member States and the Commission by developing guidance on the crop-specific rules. Launch of this work is of the highest urgency as the adoption of the SUR is expected in 2024. The project needs to prepare the groundwork and establish an effective collaboration with national authorities before they kick off that process. The project also comes at the height of public attention on pesticides. In October 2022, over one million citizens called on the EU for a complete phasing out of chemical pesticides by 2035, through the European Citizens' Initiative "Save Bees and Farmers".

The project would build on existing initiatives, such as the Pilot Project (initiative of the European Parliament) "*Developing a Farmers' Toolbox for Integrated Pest Management Practices from across the Union*" and relevant research projects supported under Horizon 2020/Horizon Europe. The proposed budget is estimated based on resources needed to address well the scope of SUR provisions, including varying biogeographical conditions, coordinate national authorities, and to establish a link to the EU Common Agricultural Policy, as well as on the experience from the implementation of the afore-mentioned pilot project.

Specific project:

The project will contribute to achieving the EU targets for reducing the use and risk of pesticides. The overall aim is to support Member States in the development of crop-specific rules for plant protection

in line with IPM principles. As a result, the uptake of IPM practices by farmers should increase, which should lead to a significant reduction of pesticide use and reduced pressure on biodiversity in agro-ecosystems.

The project will build on the existing knowledge on IPM practices in order to support the development of crop-specific rules for the major arable and permanent crops, as well as grassland. This will involve the coordination of national competent authorities, research bodies and relevant stakeholder groups. The aim is to produce concrete recommendations, which should help the Member States in their development of binding crop-specific rules. It should also help harmonising the EU implementation of IPM and the Commission in assessing national crop-specific rules.

The project will be implemented by three actions:

Action 1) Recommendations for crop-specific rules on plant protection compulsory for farmers

Action 1 will develop concrete recommendations for plant protection that are (1) specific for major arable and permanent crops as well as grassland, (2) differentiated for agro-climatic conditions (3) fully in line with IPM principles, and (4) coherent with the reduction targets for pesticide risk and use under the Biodiversity Strategy and Farm-to-Fork Strategy.

Action 2) Recommendations for voluntary support scheme for zero/low pesticide use, which may be funded by the CAP

Action 2 will develop recommendations for setting up efficient and cost-effective schemes to support practices, which minimise the use and risk of pesticides beyond the obligatory baseline requirements of crop-specific rules (under action 1). These proposals should be in particular suitable for support under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

Action 3) Coordination of national competent authorities, research bodies and relevant stakeholder groups

The cross-cutting action should ensure the application of a coordinated approach to Actions 1 and 2 involving competent authorities (including agricultural and environmental authorities), research bodies and relevant stakeholder groups, and it should support the development of ambitious requirements for IPM practices across all Member States.

Expected impacts: The project will support EU efforts in mitigating the impacts and risks of pesticide use on biodiversity and accelerate transition towards a more sustainable agriculture. It will provide a critical contribution to the objectives of the European Green Deal on biodiversity and sustainable food systems. The results of this project will also contribute to global biodiversity efforts. One of the global targets 2030 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework is to reduce by half the overall risk posed by pesticides.

Targeted beneficiaries: Ideally research institutions and competent public authorities from leading Member States.

Expected project duration: 18 months

Funding rate and EU contribution: Funding rate: 90% - Maximum EU contribution: EUR 2 million

6) Designing closed loop recycling cycles for tyres for mitigating the impacts of the restriction for the use of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) in rubber in-fill materials

Sub programme: Circular Economy & Quality of Life

Specific need addressed: Creating a non-toxic material cycle in the circular economy; stop pollution; creating a resource of waste

Specific project: In July 2021 the Commission adopted a restriction under the chemicals regulation REACH for the use of PAHs in rubber in-fill materials in children’s playgrounds and sports fields. These in-fill materials are made from used tyres and contain PAH (a very harmful chemical). Another REACH restriction, for microplastics, currently under discussion and expected to be adopted in 2023, will also cover the use of rubber granules (derived from end-of-life tyres) as artificial infill in sport pitches. If the Commission proposal is adopted without changes, this particular use for end-of-life tyres (around 100.000 tonnes/year according to ECHA or 500.000 tonnes/year according to the tyres recycling industry) will cease to exist.

On one hand it is necessary to design material for tyres that is safe-and-sustainable-by design, by removing hazardous substance substances either at the manufacturing phase and/or at the recycling phase of tyres. On the other hand, a use needs to be found for the tonnes of used tyres that can no longer be transformed in in-fill material for playgrounds and sports fields, and to stop them from ending up in or incinerators. The most circular solution would be a closed loop recycling for tyres, meaning that rubber from tyres is recycled into new tyres.

Targeted beneficiaries are technological universities and research bodies, companies.

Expected impacts: Ending stockpiles of used tyres or their export to lower income countries; stopping non-fully circular recycling practices (such as rubber infill for sport pitches); creating opportunities for material that may otherwise be landfilled or incinerated (including outside the EU) and pollute soil and water.

Expected project duration: 18-24 months

Funding rate and EU contribution: Funding rate: 90% - Maximum EU contribution: EUR 1 million

7) Validating New Approach Test Methods for replacing animals in testing and science

Sub programme	Circular Economy & Quality of Life
Specific need addressed	<p>Protecting health and the environment from hazardous chemicals; chemical safety; reducing the number of animals used in testing (REACH, EU Directive 2010/63); Chemical safety assessment has traditionally been based on animal testing, but the EU has been promoting for many years the replacement, reduction, and refinement of animal testing. Further it is also considered that traditional risk assessment approaches are insufficient to adequately predict the potential risk associated with any given substance, especially when considering normal life low-dose exposure.</p> <p>Therefore, new prediction models are needed in a new intelligent and more efficient safety assessment, based on in vitro testing in combination with computational modelling. While more and more NAMs are developed, their validation is lagging.</p>
Specific project	<p>Regulatory testing is the backbone of consumer and societal protection from dangerous chemicals, drugs, and other products. In order to use the most up-to-date science, it is essential to prioritise the evaluation and validation of new methods and approaches. Such assessment of the robustness of the methods is important to keep us safe and protect the environment while upholding values we all share, including animal welfare, good scientific practice, and innovation.</p> <p>Several research projects aimed at the development and initial evaluation of new methods have been developed. The next step is to conduct the actual validation of relevant new methods, such that they are shown to be transferable and reproducible within and outside the developer’s laboratory.</p> <p>The project is need for demonstration of reproducibility/reliability of methods developed in single laboratories, to assist accelerating the pace of chemical safety testing and assessment, to reduce the use of laboratory animals and to better protect human health and the environment.</p> <p>Targeted beneficiaries are NETVAL (European Network of Laboratories for the Validation of Test Methods); Member States; OECD</p>
Expected impacts	Better environmental protection from hazardous chemicals whilst reducing the number of animals being used in testing.
Expected project duration:	24 months
Funding rate and EU contribution:	Funding rate: 90% - Maximum EU contribution: EUR 1 million

8) Promoting and monitoring the Safe and Sustainable by Design framework uptake

Sub programme	Circular Economy & Quality of Life
Specific need addressed	<p>Promoting and monitoring the Safe and Sustainable by Design framework uptake, recently adopted by the Commission in a Recommendation and a deliverable of the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability. Promoting chemicals that are safe and sustainable by design is one of the pillars of the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability. We aim to better protect people and the environment by banning the most harmful chemicals from consumer products on the one hand, and by stimulating and promoting innovation on the other hand (finding solutions to replace the most harmful chemicals). The Framework sets out draft criteria for innovative chemicals that are safe and sustainable by design.</p> <p>The recommendation launches a testing period for these draft criteria and a voluntary reporting mechanism. Based on the feedback, the Commission will launch a revision of the framework (2025). The testing period counts on the engagement of industry, academia, research community and support from Member States.</p>
Specific project	<p>The project should investigate, as a primary objective, the feasibility and effectiveness of application of the safe and sustainable by design (SSbD) framework in the key value chains with the potential to replace substances chemicals of concern. The project's two main objectives are</p> <p>(1) to provide information on the main challenges encountered, based on real use cases of the SSbD framework application for developing chemicals.</p> <p>(2) investigate, map and propose financial and non-financial incentives for supporting the uptake of the SSbD framework by companies and how to set these up. Feasibility of the proposed incentives should also be checked at EU level. In particular, the project should prepare an analysis of the existing incentives in the Member States and their potential to complement EU incentives.</p> <p>Targeted beneficiaries are companies, research institutes, laboratories, universities, Member States</p>
Expected impacts	Better environmental and health protection; non-toxic material cycles
Expected project duration:	18 months
Funding rate and EU contribution:	Funding rate: 90% - Maximum EU contribution: EUR 1 million

9) Implementation of the Mediterranean Emission Control Areas for sulphur oxides and to support a similar process starting in the Atlantic

Sub programme: Circular Economy & Quality of Life

Specific need addressed:

Support for actions to prepare for the implementation of the Mediterranean Emission Control Areas for sulphur oxides and to support a similar process starting in the Atlantic. Support for the preparation of the implementation of Emission Control Areas for sulphur oxides (SECA) in the Mediterranean Sea and the upcoming Atlantic SECA as well as for nitrogen oxides. This fits with zero pollution and decarbonisation aims, under the EU mobility strategy adopted under the EGD ambitions, and is also relevant to the EU Mission: Restore our Ocean and Waters.

Maritime shipping is a major source of pollution (SO_x, PM, NO_x), impacting human health in coastal areas and ecosystems (sea, land), as many projects and studies indicated (the Interreg project Clean North Sea Shipping, a IIASA cost/benefit study as well as and INERIS study carried in 2018-9). Therefore, the IMO and the EU have jointly worked to set clear and uniform rules to address shipping with the aim to significantly protect human health and the environment at global and EU levels. This has resulted in successful Emission Control Areas in the North Sea and Baltic Sea, which substantially reduced air pollution from ships in relevant port cities and coastal areas (see COM Report on Directive 2016/802). The Mediterranean Sea area was declared on 16 December 2022 and its implementation and enforcement should be addressed with high urgency as the protected area will enter into force on 1 May 2025. This is very challenging in terms of the number of countries involved (including non-EU developing countries) and the geographical scope. Some non-EU countries have not ratified international IMO conventions and need support to prepare for the MED SECA implementation as well as in preparing their maritime and oil industry to the required adaptation.

Work is required to lower polluting emissions from ships in the Mediterranean sea areas with very high density of maritime traffic and bordering densely populated port cities and coastlines in EU waters and shared sea basins. In this context, littoral countries have worked intensively towards the creation of an Emission Control Area in the Mediterranean Sea, both in the framework of the Barcelona Convention and at IMO. The Commission was one of the proponents of the request of designation of the Med SECA and is one of the organisations at IMO which committed to support the mentioned process through capacity building, training to reinforce enforcement and monitoring of emissions through smart technologies in the Med Basin in coordination with UNEP MAP and IMO. Furthermore, the Commission will support the information in terms of country profiles and technical needs in the area of maritime safety and protection of the marine environment is really limited, including in specialised agencies such as EMSA.

Specific project:

- Building upon needs inventory compiled by the LIFE4MEDECA (ending in early 2023), bottlenecks and barriers for implementing a MED ECA: political and related to governance (at all levels of government/administration in the various prospective MED ECA countries), technical, legal, environmental, economic, financial, ...;
- For the Atlantic SECA - Support to the development of scenarios, including quantifying costs and benefits (socio-economic, environmental);
- Map and facilitate access to existing financial support mechanisms;
- Providing expertise to the MED ECA countries and contribute through technical and exchange of best practice for the Atlantic ECA;
- Setting up coordination structures and incentive mechanisms for cooperation and enforcement, including Ministries of Environment, Ministries of Transport, other authorities responsible for maritime shipping and other relevant authorities;
- Setting up structures for support to legislative governance, transfer of best practice, dialogue with industry (i.e. vessel owners and operators, ports);
- Investigating how, by supporting ratification of international conventions and intensifying enforcement initiatives MED ECA initiative (and the Atlantic ECA in perspective), the issue of substandard ships from non-EU countries can be addressed which would also benefit those ship owners and operators operating in the Mediterranean basin, e.g. by having fewer inspections when calling in EU ports;
- Identifying further needs through communication and dialogue. Exploring the steps to be made in coordination with UNEP MAP and IMO. The project is to build on related initiatives such as the projects SAFEMED V (funded by NEAR) and those carried out under the Wets MED Initiative, create synergies/complementarity. Also, the experiences in the development of the existing ECAs should be used in particular for the Atlantic ECA.

Expected impacts:

The project would therefore have a clear added value in terms of EU policy implementation and development (including the European Green Deal) and help create a level playing field between seaports and ship operators.

Expected project duration:

36 months

Funding rate and EU contribution:

Funding rate: 90% - Maximum EU contribution: EUR 0.7 million

LIFE-2023-PLP-Clima: Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

Objectives

The proposed projects under the topic LIFE 2023-PLP-Clima shall aim to address the following specific needs identified by the Member States in the sub-programme Climate Mitigation and Adaptation.

Scope – activities that can be funded

A maximum of 1 grant is expected to be awarded per specific project as described below.

1) Vehicle-to-grid (V2G) integration - Development of national incentivising framework for the integration of Electric Vehicles as home / building energy storage, in energy communities and in national grids

Sub programme: Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

Specific need addressed:

In quantitative terms EV battery storage is notable relevant as:

- 1) Cars are parked about 95% of the time – most of this time EVs can be plugged-in
- 2) EVs batteries are relatively big, also compared to home batteries (to make a comparison, a standard Power wall is 9 to 18 kWh, an EV battery typically 75 kWh, up to 100 kWh (with city cars around 50 kWh) – a large potential for storage – and for smart charging; as IEA recalls, we will need a huge amount of diffused and concentrated energy storage to decarbonise energy – and EVs will be a large contributor (with thermal energy stored in highly-insulated tanks via Heat Pumps, this is the major source of demand flexibility); we are all evolving not only to prosumers, but to actors in a real-time pricing market, where electricity can be extremely cheap when lots of renewables are producing and no thermal power plant is running, to very expensive in peaks.
- 3) We already supported – at corporate fleet level, through the Innovation Fund, “Virtual Power Plants” constituted by fleets managed by an energy aggregator.

Still, the absence of an incentivising legislative framework might entail administrative barriers and red tape preventing this potential to be exploited.

Specific project:	<p>The proposed project should develop and check the feasibility of legislation/support schemes enabling the use of EV batteries (when connected) as home batteries / to feed energy communities – and removing any potential administrative barrier (including to their authorisation), when plugged in with smart plugs at home / in collective residential buildings / @work / roadside “slow” charging points. The project shall include a dissemination exercise for public authorities across Member States.</p>
Expected impacts:	<p>The specific project awarded in the framework of this call shall have a substantial support to policy development and legislative implementation on Vehicle-to-Grid integration leading to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying Dos (Best practices) and Dons (barriers to a smooth integration) in V2G legislation and regulations across Member States, in order to showcase the best options and to mainstream them throughout the EU support tools; • increasing awareness across Member States and Stakeholders on such practices; • highlighting the legislative / non-legislative needs to support energy systems integration as called by the EC strategy on it, as well as the smooth deployment of the mobility service providers market; • provide grounds for further standardisation / mainstreaming in the framework of the Sustainable Transport Forum / implementation of AFIR/EPBD. <p>These actions shall ultimately contribute significantly to peak-shaving and to decouple electric power generation from fossil fuels.</p>
Minimum requirements for applicants:	<p>The applicants shall be a single NGO or a consortia of NGOs, covering through their membership organisations ideally active in most EU Member States, and able to examine specific national markets and regulation.</p> <p>Applicants shall have an expert understanding of the Electric Vehicles and charging operations, smart grids and smart, bilateral charging, and vehicles charging market, from a technical and regulatory perspective, as well as on the potential for EVs and Grids integration, AFID and AFIR proposal.</p>
Expected project duration:	48 months
Funding rate and EU contribution:	Funding rate: 90% - Maximum EU contribution: EUR 0.25 million

LIFE-2023-PLP-ENER: Implementation of the ecodesign, energy labelling and tyre labelling policy

Objectives

The project aims to provide support to environmental and consumer NGOs for their representation in the preparatory process for ecodesign and energy labelling legislation.

Scope — activities that can be funded

A maximum of 1 grant is expected to be awarded per specific project as described below.

1) Implementation of the ecodesign, energy labelling and tyre labelling policy

Sub-Programme: Clean Energy Transition

Specific need addressed:

The objective of the action is to ensure that the views of European consumer organisations and environmental NGOs are well represented in the preparatory process leading to implementing measures and their reviews under the ecodesign and energy labelling legislation, including the assessment of voluntary agreements, both in the study phase, in the Ecodesign and Energy Labelling Consultation Forum and if appropriate thereafter. In particular, this will be achieved by participating and contributing to the legislative processes, ensuring transparency, consideration of the interests of civil society, understanding and challenging other stakeholders' interests. Representativeness of environmental and consumer organisations is fundamental in ensuring that ecodesign and energy labelling regulations respond to end users' interests, including average real-life usage of energy-related products.

Specific project:

The project aims to provide support to environmental and consumer NGOs for their representation in the preparatory process for ecodesign and energy labelling legislation. The tasks to be undertaken under this grant agreement are focused on two areas:

1) Identifying, elaborating and channelling the contribution of consumer and environmental NGOs to the preparatory work for implementing measures (including voluntary agreements) and their reviews under the Ecodesign Directive and the Energy Labelling framework Regulation (in particular during the preparatory studies' consultation and in the Consultation Forum that will examine the draft implementing measures emerging from the studies). This includes presence in relevant stakeholder meetings, in the Consultation Forum and in other related contexts, and providing the coordinated positions from consumer and environmental organisations at those meetings. The Tyre Labelling Regulation shall also be covered by the project.

2) Ensuring tailored communication to citizens, consumer and environmental organisations of the impacts and benefits of product-specific ecodesign and energy labelling implementing measures, and providing advice to the European Commission as regards its communication activities in this policy area. The deliverables shall include regular progress reports to the Commission concerning their communication process to local, regional and national consumer and environmental organisations.

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

- supporting the effective implementation of ecodesign and energy labelling legislation;
- improving consideration of products’ average real-life usage in related legislation;
- increasing transparency and promoting the consideration of civil society interests in the related processes;
- exchanging and building on best practices between relevant actors.

Minimum requirements for applicants:

- The applicants shall be a single NGO or a consortia of NGOs, covering through their membership at least 2/3 of the EU Member States, able to ensure representation in the framework of the relevant meetings, at different stages of the legislative process.
- Applicants shall have an expert understanding of the ecodesign and energy labelling regulations, and of standardisation activities in the field of energy efficiency. Applicants should also have a good understanding of the wider sustainability of products framework, related upcoming initiatives at EU level and possible novelties introduced by the Fit for 55 package legislative revisions on energy.

Expected project duration: 36 months

Funding rate and EU contribution: Funding rate: 90% - Maximum EU contribution: EUR 0.6 million

3. Available budget

The estimated available call budget is EUR 14 950 000.

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

Topic	Topic budget	Maximum number of projects to be funded	Expected project duration
LIFE 2023-PLP-Bauhaus-Phoenix-Emerald	EUR 4 000 000	4 Projects	See description above
LIFE-2023-PLP-NAT-ENV	EUR 10 100 000	9 Projects	See description above
LIFE-2023-PLP-CLIMA	EUR 250 000	1 Project	See description above
LIFE-2023-PLP-ENER	EUR 600 000	1 Project	See description above

The availability of the call budget still depends on the adoption of the budget 2023 by the EU budgetary authority.

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

4. Timetable and deadlines

LIFE 2023-PLP-Bauhaus-Phoenix-Emerald

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
Call opening:	18 April 2023
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	7 September 2023 17:00 CET (Brussels)
Information on evaluation results:	October 2023
Grant Agreement signature:	November 2023

LIFE 2023-PLP-NAT-ENV / LIFE-2023-PLP-CLIMA / LIFE-2023-PLP-ENER

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
Call opening:	18 April 2023
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	7 September 2023 17:00 CET (Brussels)
Information on evaluation results:	January 2024
Grant Agreement signature:	March/April 2024

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).

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

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

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

- Application **Form Part A** — contains administrative information about the participants (future coordinator, beneficiaries and affiliated entities) and the summarised budget for the project (*to be filled in directly online*)
- Application **Form Part B** — contains the technical description of the project (*to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed and then assembled and re-uploaded*)
- **Part C** (*to be filled in directly online*) containing additional project data
- **mandatory annexes and supporting documents** (*to be uploaded*):
 - for single stage:
 - detailed budget table (*mandatory excel template available in the Submission System*)
 - CVs of core project team: *not applicable*

- activity reports of last year: *not applicable*
- list of previous projects: *not applicable*
- participant information
- letters of support from competent authorities, if available
- other annexes, if available.

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

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

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

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

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



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

6. Eligibility

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

Eligible participants (eligible countries)

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

- be legal entities (public or private bodies)
- be established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
 - EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs))
 - non-EU countries:
 - listed EEA countries and countries associated to the LIFE Programme (associated countries) or countries which are in ongoing negotiations for an association agreement and where the agreement enters into force before grant signature ([list of participating countries](#))¹⁰

¹⁰ Applicants from countries which requested to be associated to the LIFE Programme may participate in this call for proposals. However, no grant agreement will be signed if the related association agreement is not entered into force by the finalisation of the evaluation process.

- 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.

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 persons¹¹.

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'¹².  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)*¹³ and entities covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)¹⁴). 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).

Following the Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/2506, as of 16th December 2022, no legal commitments (including the grant agreement itself as well as subcontracts, purchase contracts, financial support to third parties etc.) can be signed with Hungarian public interest

¹¹ See Article 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

¹² For the definitions, see Articles 187(2) and 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

¹³ 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](#).

¹⁴ 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).

trusts established under Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity they maintain. Affected entities may continue to apply to calls for proposals. However, in case the Council measures are not lifted, such entities are not eligible to participate in any funded role (beneficiaries, affiliated entities, subcontractors, recipients of financial support to third parties). In this case, co-applicants will be invited to remove or replace that entity and/or to change its status into associated partner. Tasks and budget may be redistributed accordingly.

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

Consortium composition

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

Eligible activities

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

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

- land purchase
- volunteer work.

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

Financial support to third parties is not allowed.

Geographic location (target countries)

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

7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion

Financial capacity

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

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

The check will normally be done for all consortiums except:

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

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

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

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

or

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

 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 participate¹⁵:

- 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 misconduct¹⁶ (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).

¹⁵ See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

¹⁶ 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.

Applicants will also be rejected if it turns out that¹⁷:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁷ See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

9. Award criteria

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

single stage:

1. Relevance (0-20 points)

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

2. Impact (0-20 points)

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

3. Quality (0-20 points)

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

4. Resources (0-20 points)

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

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

Maximum points 90 points.

Individual thresholds per criterion: 10 points.

Overall threshold: 55 points.

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

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

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

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

Starting date and project duration

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

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

Milestones and deliverables

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

Form of grant, funding rate and maximum grant amount

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

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

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

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

- 90% for the topic LIFE 2023-PLP-Bauhaus-Phoenix-Emerald
- 90% for the topic LIFE-2023-PLP-NAT-ENV – Nature & Biodiversity and Circular Economy and Quality of LIFE
- 90% for the topic LIFE-2023-PLP-CLIMA – Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation
- 90% for the topic LIFE-2023-PLP-ENER — Implementation of the eco-design, energy labelling and tyre labelling policy

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

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

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

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

Budget categories and cost eligibility rules

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

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

Budget categories for this call:

- A. Personnel costs
 - A.1 Employees, A.2 Natural persons under direct contract, A.3 Seconded persons
 - A.4 SME owners and natural person beneficiaries
 - A.5 Volunteers

- B. Subcontracting costs
- C. Purchase costs
 - C.1 Travel and subsistence
 - C.2 Equipment
 - C.3 Other goods, works and services
- E. Indirect costs

Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:

- personnel costs:
 - SME owner/natural person unit cost¹⁸: Yes
 - volunteers unit cost: No
- travel and subsistence unit cost¹⁹: No (only actual costs)
- equipment costs: depreciation
- other cost categories:
 - costs for financial support to third parties: not allowed
 - land purchase costs: n/a
- indirect cost flat-rate: 7% of the eligible direct costs (categories A-D, and exempted specific cost categories (land purchase), if any)
- VAT: non-deductible VAT is eligible (but please note that since 2013 VAT paid by beneficiaries that are public bodies acting as public authority is NOT eligible)
- other:
 - in-kind contributions for free are allowed, but cost-neutral, i.e. they cannot be declared as cost
 - kick off meeting: costs for kick-off meeting organised by the granting authority are eligible (travel costs for maximum 2 persons, return ticket to Brussels and accommodation for one night) only if the meeting takes place after the project starting date set out in the Grant Agreement; the starting date can be changed through an amendment, if needed
 - project websites: communication costs for presenting the project on the participants' websites or social media accounts are eligible; costs for *separate* project websites are not eligible unless duly justified by the project objectives
 - common information and dissemination activities: foresee resources to increase synergies between, and the visibility of LIFE and EU supported actions (for example 1 travel/year, 5 days) n/a
 - other ineligible costs: Yes
 - land purchase costs are not eligible
 - Volunteers costs are not eligible

¹⁸ 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).

¹⁹ 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).

Reporting and payment arrangements

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

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

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

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

All payments will be made to the coordinator.

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

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

Prefinancing guarantees

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

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

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

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

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

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

Certificates

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

Liability regime for recoveries

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

For beneficiaries, it is one of the following:

- limited joint and several liability with individual ceilings — *each beneficiary up to their maximum grant amount*
- unconditional joint and several liability — *each beneficiary up to the maximum grant amount for the action*

or

- individual financial responsibility — *each beneficiary only for their own debts*.

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

Provisions concerning the project implementation

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

- rights of use on results: Yes

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

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

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

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

Non-compliance and breach of contract

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



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

11. How to submit an application

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

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

a) create a user account and register your organisation

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

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

b) submit the proposal

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

Submit your proposal in 4 parts, as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

12. Help

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

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

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

Contact

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

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

 Please:

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

13. Important



IMPORTANT

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

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

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

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

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

This includes:

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

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

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