



# Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)

## Call for proposals

Specific Grant Agreements in support of non-profit organisations primarily active in the fields of environment and/or climate action, including the clean energy transition  
(LIFE-2024-NGO-OG-SGA)

Version 1.0  
18 April 2024



HISTORY OF CHANGES			
Version	Publication Date	Change	Page
1.0	18.04.2024	▪ Initial version	
		▪	
		▪	
		▪	
		▪	

Important notice!

In order to be considered for a LIFE operating grant, applicants must submit proposals under **BOTH the FPA and the SGA calls:**

- One proposal under the LIFE-2024-NGO-OG-FPA (**Framework partnership agreement**) by 05 September 2024.
- One proposal under the LIFE-2024-NGO-OG-SGA (**Specific grant agreement**) by 17 September 2024.

Via the Funding & tender opportunities portal:  
<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>



**EUROPEAN CLIMATE, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT EXECUTIVE AGENCY (CINEA)**  
 CINEA.D – Natural Resources, Climate, Sustainable Blue Economy and Clean Energy

## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

0. Introduction .....	5
1. Background.....	6
What is the LIFE Programme? .....	6
Nature and Biodiversity .....	7
Circular Economy and Quality of Life .....	7
Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation .....	8
Clean Energy Transition.....	9
2. Type of action — Objectives — Themes and priorities — Activities that can be funded — Expected impact .....	9
Type of action .....	9
Objectives .....	10
Scope — Activities that can be funded .....	10
Expected impact.....	10
Funding rate .....	10
Total eligible costs and flat rate .....	11
3. Available budget .....	11
4. Timetable and deadlines .....	12
5. Admissibility and documents .....	12
6. Eligibility.....	13
Eligible participants.....	13
Eligible activities.....	14
Geographic location (target countries).....	14
7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion.....	14
8. Evaluation and award procedure .....	16
9. Award criteria.....	16
10. Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements.....	17
Starting date and work programme duration .....	17
Form of grant, funding rate and maximum grant amount.....	18
Reporting and payment arrangements.....	19

Prefinancing guarantees .....	19
Certificates .....	20
Liability regime for recoveries .....	20
Provisions concerning the work programme implementation.....	20
Other specificities .....	21
Non-compliance and breach of contract .....	21
11. How to submit an application.....	21
12. Help .....	22
13. Important .....	23

## 0. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU **operating grants** in the field of environment and/or climate action, including clean energy transition, under the **Programme for Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)**.

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

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

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

It is linked with LIFE-2024-NGO-OG-FPA.

Only applications that pass the FPA evaluation are considered for the SGA evaluation.

The call covers the following **topics**:

***LIFE-2024-NGO-OG-SGA – Specific Grant Agreements for operating grants to European environmental, climate and energy non-profit organisations***

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

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

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

---

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

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

- 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 Deal<sup>3</sup> which aims to:

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

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

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

The LIFE Programme is structured in two fields and four sub-programmes (described in more detail below):

Environment:

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

Climate Action:

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

---

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

### Nature and Biodiversity

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

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

### Circular Economy and Quality of Life

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

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

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

It will contribute to the EU priorities by:

- reducing resource consumption and facilitating the transition toward a sustainable, circular, toxic-free, energy-efficient and climate-resilient economy
- developing circular systems, in line with the new Circular Economy Action Plan and reflecting its focus on sustainable products, material and energy intensive sectors and circular business models for value retention

- bringing down waste generation in line with the Waste Framework Directive [2019/1004](#)<sup>4</sup> and the reduction of hazardous waste in view of the EU's commitment under the [Basel Convention](#)<sup>5</sup>
- improving waste management with respect to collection and storage of waste, recovery options and end-of-life disposal, including in islands where waste management has to face specific challenges
- reducing emissions of pollutants to air and ensuring clean air for EU citizens in line with the EU legislation and the objectives of the Zero Pollution Action Plan
- achieving and maintaining a good status of the EU water bodies
- ensuring clean surface water and ground-water, in sufficient quantities for human and other species, including by increasing efficiency of water use
- reducing production, use and emissions of hazardous chemicals as well as reducing the exposure of humans and the environment to those chemicals
- promoting the development, commercialisation and uptake of safe and sustainable-by-design substances, materials and products
- diminishing exposure to harmful noise levels
- protecting the quality of EU soil, preventing soil degradation through sustainable practices of soil and land management, remediating from soil pollution and enhancing the capacity to improve water quality through reduced nitrate leakage and to reduce emissions through carbon storage.

### *Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation*

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

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

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

---

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

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



### Clean Energy Transition

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

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

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

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

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

### Type of action

This call for proposals concerns **LIFE Specific Operating Grant Agreements (SGA OG)**. LIFE Specific Operating Grant Agreements will be concluded with organisations that have successfully signed a **LIFE 2024 Operating Grant Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA OG)**.

Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs) under the LIFE Programme are long-term cooperation instruments that serve as umbrella for regular or recurrent grants to non-profit making entities which are involved in the development, implementation and enforcement of EU legislation and policy and which are primarily active in the field of environment or climate action, including energy transition, in line with the objectives of the LIFE Programme. FPAs are a prerequisite for being able to sign annual Specific Operating Grant Agreements (SGAs), but do not create any legitimate expectations or entitlement to get them.

Framework Partnership Agreements that will be concluded following the 2024 Call for Proposals for LIFE Operating Grant Framework Partnership Agreements will cover the following two financial years of beneficiary organisations (i.e. FY 2025 and FY 2026).

Specific Operating Grant Agreements (SGAs) will be awarded on an annual basis following an invitation to submit a proposal addressed to the framework partners and an evaluation process. SGA OG can only be signed if an FPA has been signed, and before the end date of that FPA.

In 2024, the call for LIFE Framework Partnership Agreements and the call for LIFE Specific Operating Grant Agreements addressed to framework partners are launched simultaneously. Applicants must first complete the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) application, and then use the FPA application reference number in their Specific Operating Grant Agreement application form.

For further information on the call for 2024 Call for Proposals for LIFE Framework Partnership Agreements please consult the call LIFE-2024-NGO-OG-FPA via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (accessible via the Topic page in the [Search Funding & Tenders](#) section).

### Objectives

The LIFE operating grants for non-profit making entities aim to strengthen the participation of civil society in the EU policy dialogue, as well as to support implementation and enforcement of Union environmental and climate objectives, including energy transition, by the beneficiaries. The present call for proposals targets operating grants aimed at achieving the objectives of the Environment, Nature, Climate and Clean Energy Transition LIFE sub-programmes. With the approval of the Fit-for-55 legislation, in particular in the area of the clean energy transition, the LIFE Framework Partnership Agreements will aim at supporting in particular NGOs engaging on implementation and monitoring of transposition in Member States.

In line with the recital 23 of the LIFE regulation, the LIFE operating grants for non-profit making entities aim at supporting a broad range of NGOs as well as networks of non-profit-making entities that pursue an aim which is of general Union interest, and that are primarily active in the area of the environment or climate action, by awarding, in a competitive and transparent manner, operating grants, in order to help such NGOs, networks and entities, to make effective contributions to Union policy, and to build and strengthen their capacity to become more efficient partners.

### Scope – Activities that can be funded

Operating grants provide a financial contribution for the implementation of the work programme of the successful organisations. Operating grants follow the same rules for the grant agreements as action grants, but do not differentiate between direct and indirect costs. Operating grants are always mono-beneficiary grants supporting the annual activities of an organisation. Receiving an operating grant may have an impact on the possibility to receive the indirect costs flat-rate in an EU action grant (see EU Grants AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6.2.E).

### Expected impact

Applicants are expected to explain and define how they will achieve the expected contributions as described in their Framework Partnership Agreement during their 2025 Financial Year, including qualitative and quantitative indicators where possible. This will be used in the assessment of Award criteria 2 (see section 9).

### Funding rate

The EU contribution to the specific operating grant will be defined by applying a maximum co-financing rate of 70% to the total eligible costs.

The maximum EU contribution to the operating grant amount per financial year will be EUR 700,000.

*Total eligible costs and flat rate*

The amount of total eligible costs will be calculated based on actual personnel costs, adding a flat-rate of 50% over those actual costs, in order to simplify the application, implementation and reporting processes. The only actual costs that applicants must declare are personnel costs. The flat-rate of 50% personnel costs will cover all other costs that will be incurred by the beneficiary:

- Travel and subsistence
- Equipment and depreciation
- Subcontracting
- Rental
- Other direct costs

**3. Available budget**

The total budget earmarked for grants under this call is EUR 14,370,000.

Depending on the number and quality of proposals, we expect to sign between 30 and 35 specific grant agreements.

#### 4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
<b>FPA call for proposals (followed by yearly SGA calls)</b>	
Call opening:	18 April 2024
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>05 September 2024 – 17:00:00 CET</u> (Brussels)
Evaluation:	September - December 2024
Information on evaluation results:	January 2025
FPA signature:	January – February 2025
<b>First SGA call</b>	
Invitations to submit proposals:	18 April 2024
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>17 September 2024 – 17:00:00 CET</u>
Evaluation:	September - December 2024
Information on evaluation results:	January 2025
GA signature:	March - April 2025

#### 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, all sections of the template must be appropriately filled.

**Project acronym** — Your project name and acronym are the name and acronym of your organisation.

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 participant (beneficiary) and the summarised budget for the work programme (*to be filled in directly online*)



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

- Application Form Part B — contains the technical description of the work programme (*to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed and then assembled and re-uploaded*)
- Part C - contains additional project data and the project’s contribution to EU programme key performance indicators (*to be filled in directly online*)
- **mandatory annexes and supporting documents** (*mandatory template available to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed and re-uploaded*)
  - detailed budget table

At proposal submission, you will have to confirm that the information in the application is correct and complete and that the applicant complies with the conditions for receiving EU funding (especially eligibility, financial and operational capacity, exclusion, etc). Before signing the grant, the beneficiary 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 (Part B) are limited to maximum 45 **pages**. 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*).



Please be aware that some proposal information may be shared with the LIFE programme committee established under Regulation No [182/2011](#)<sup>6</sup>, i.e. name and country of all applicants (coordinating organisation and partners), project title, total eligible costs, LIFE funding requested, result of the assessment of the admissibility and eligibility of the proposal, and scores by criterion for eligible proposals.

- ④ For more information about the submission process (including IT aspects), consult the [Online Manual](#).

## 6. Eligibility

### Eligible participants

Eligibility of applicants is assessed during the FPA evaluation (Call LIFE-2024-NGO-OG-FPA).

---

<sup>6</sup> Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 2011 laying down the rules and general principles concerning mechanisms for control by Member States of the Commission’s exercise of implementing powers (OJ L 55, 28.2.2011, p. 13).

### Eligible activities

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

Proposals 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.

Work programmes should be consistent with the action plan submitted for the framework partnership. Only applications that have first been awarded a framework partnership will be considered eligible.

### Geographic location (target countries)

Proposals must relate to activities taking place in eligible countries.

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

## **7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion**

### Financial capacity

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

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 it 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 applicants except:

- if the requested grant amount is not more than EUR 60 000.

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

- further information
- prefinancing paid in instalments
- (one or more) prefinancing guarantees (*see below, section 10*)

or

- propose no prefinancing
- 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 'Quality' 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)
- applicants' activity reports of last year.

The supporting documents submitted by the applicant with their application under the LIFE-2024-NGO-OG-FPA will be used to assess the operational capacity. Additional supporting documents may be requested, if needed to confirm the operational capacity of any applicant.

### Exclusion

Applicants which are subject to an **EU exclusion decision** or in one of the following **exclusion situations** that bar them from receiving EU funding can NOT participate<sup>7</sup>:

- bankruptcy, winding up, affairs administered by the courts, arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or other similar procedures (including procedures for persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- in breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- guilty of grave professional misconduct<sup>8</sup> (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)

- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).

Applicants will also be rejected if it turns out that<sup>9</sup>:


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

## 8. Evaluation and award procedure

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

An **evaluation committee** (assisted by independent outside experts) will assess all applications. Proposals will first be checked for formal requirements (admissibility, see *section 5*). Proposals found admissible will be evaluated against the operational capacity and award criteria (see *section 7 and 9*). Proposals that have successfully passed the award evaluation will be ranked in accordance with the order established for the Framework Partnership Agreements.

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.*

Specific Grant Agreement preparation will involve a dialogue in order to fine-tune technical aspects 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 Specific Grant Agreement.

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

## 9. Award criteria

---



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

**1. Relevance** (0-20 points)

- Extent to which the work programme is in line with the NGO applicant’s framework partnership agreement. Any deviations are justified.

**2. Quality** (0-20 points)

- Clarity, relevance and feasibility of the work plan.
- Ambition and credibility of impacts expected due to the proposed activities.

**3. Resources** (0-20 points)

- Appropriateness of the organisation and management of the work
- Appropriateness of the budget and resources and their consistency with the work plan.
- Revenue and expenditure are in balance.

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score	Weighting
Relevance	N/A	20	1
Quality of the proposal	N/A	20	1
Resources	N/A	20	1
<b>Maximum Total Score</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>60</b>	N/A
<b>Overall Pass Threshold</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>N/A</b>	N/A

There is no minimum pass score for individual criteria.

Maximum points: 60 points.

Overall threshold: 35 points.

Proposals that pass the overall threshold will be considered for funding — within the limits of the available call budget. Other proposals will be rejected.

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

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

The 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 work programme duration

The Specific Grant Agreement starts on the first day of the beneficiary’s financial year and ends on the last day of the beneficiary’s financial year.

### 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 (70%).

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.6 LIFE OG NGO personnel costs
- D. Other cost categories
  - D.1 LIFE OG NGO Subcontracting, purchases and other costs

*Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:*

- personnel costs:
  - SME owner/natural person unit cost<sup>10</sup>: No
  - volunteers unit cost<sup>11</sup>: No
  - other personnel costs: Yes (LIFE OG NGO personnel costs)
- other cost categories:

---

<sup>10</sup> Commission [Decision](#) of 20 October 2020 authorising the use of unit costs for the personnel costs of the owners of small and medium-sized enterprises and beneficiaries that are natural persons not receiving a salary for the work carried out by themselves under an action or work programme (C(2020)7715).

<sup>11</sup> Commission [Decision](#) of 10 April 2019 authorising the use of unit costs for declaring personnel costs for the work carried out by volunteers under an action or a work programme (C(2019)2646).

- LIFE OG NGO subcontracting, purchases and other costs flat-rate<sup>12</sup>: 50% of the eligible LIFE OG NGO personnel costs (category A)
- 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
  - other ineligible costs: No

Indirect costs — For operating grants, there is no differentiation between direct and indirect cost (because the grant aims to a large extent the financing of costs which would normally be considered 'indirect', i.e. general management costs, general running costs, etc). Receiving an operating grant may however make you ineligible for receiving indirect costs in your EU action grants. If you intend to also apply for action grants, please make sure that you either have the accounting tools in place to combine them (or that the operating grants pays off — meaning that it covers enough of your general running costs and overheads to compensate the loss of the indirect costs in the action grants).


### 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 work programme (float of normally 60% 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**.

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

 Please be aware that payments will be automatically lowered if the beneficiary 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 personnel costs declared.

### Prefinancing guarantees

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

<sup>12</sup> [Decision](#) of 25 May 2021 authorising the use of flat-rate financing for the operating grants co-financing the work programme of non-profit entities under the LIFE Programme.

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 must normally be provided during grant preparation, in time to make the prefinancing (scanned copy via Portal AND original by post).

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

The guarantee will be released at the end of the grant, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Grant Agreement (*art 23*).

### Certificates

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

### Liability regime for recoveries

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

For beneficiaries, it is one of the following:

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

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

### Provisions concerning the work programme 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: No
- additional communication and dissemination activities: No
- special logos: Yes

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

- durability: No

- specific rules for blending operations: No

### Other specificities

n/a

### Non-compliance and breach of contract

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



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

## **11. How to submit an application**

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

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

### **a) create a user account and register your organisation**

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

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

### **b) submit the proposal**

Access the Electronic Submission System via the Topic page in the [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 organisation (beneficiary) 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 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 into the **right category** in the Submission System otherwise the proposal might be considered incomplete and thus inadmissible.

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

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

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

## 12. Help

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

- [Online Manual](#)
- FAQs on the Topic page (for call-specific questions in open calls; not applicable for actions by invitation)
- [Portal FAQ](#) (for general questions).
- [LIFE Info Days](#)

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

### Contact

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

Non-IT related questions should be sent to the following email address: [CINEA-LIFE-NGO@ec.europa.eu](mailto:CINEA-LIFE-NGO@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

- **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. The indicated deadline can NOT be extended.
- **Consult** the Portal Topic page regularly. We will use it to publish updates and additional information on the invitation.
- **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, the beneficiary must be registered in the [Participant Register](#). The participant identification code (PIC) (one per participant) is mandatory for the Application Form.
- **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).
- **Multiple proposals** — Applicants may submit only one proposal for this invitation.
- **Resubmission** — Proposals may be changed and re-submitted until the deadline for submission.
- **Rejection** — By submitting the application, all applicants accept the conditions set out in this document (and the documents it refers to). Proposals that do not comply with all these conditions will be **rejected**. This applies also to applicants: all applicants need to fulfil the criteria.
- **Cancellation** — There may be circumstances which may require the cancellation of the invitation. In this case, you will be informed by CINEA. 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:
  - o beneficiary names
  - o beneficiary addresses
  - o the purpose for which the grant was awarded
  - o 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.
- **Communication and dissemination:** Any communication or dissemination activity related to the action will have to use factually accurate information and clearly display a disclaimer (translated into local languages where appropriate): "Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or [name of the granting authority]. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them."
- **Data protection** — The submission of a proposal under this invitation 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](#).

