



Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)

Call for proposals

Framework Partnership Agreements for operating grants in view to support non profit organisations primarily active in the fields of environment and/or climate action, including clean energy transition

LIFE-2024-NGO-OG-FPA

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	4
<i>LIFE-2024-NGO-OG-FPA – Framework Partnership Agreements for operating grants to European environmental, climate and energy non-profit organisations</i>	4
1. Background.....	5
What is the LIFE Programme?	5
Nature and Biodiversity	6
Circular Economy and Quality of Life	6
Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation	7
Clean Energy Transition.....	8
2. Type of action — Objectives — Themes and priorities — Activities that can be funded — Expected impact	8
Type of action	8
Objectives / Themes and Priorities	9
Scope — Activities that can be funded.....	9
Expected impact.....	9
Funding rate	9
Flat rate	10
3. Available budget	10
4. Timetable and deadlines	11
5. Admissibility and documents	11
6. Eligibility.....	12
Eligible participants.....	12
Eligible activities.....	14
Geographic location (target countries).....	14
7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion.....	14
Financial capacity	14
Operational capacity	15
Exclusion	15
8. Evaluation and award procedure	16
9. Award criteria.....	17

10. How to submit an application.....	18
11. Help	19
12. Important	21

0. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for **EU framework partnerships for 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](#)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').

It is linked with call LIFE-2024-NGO-OG-SGA.

The call covers the following **topic**:

LIFE-2024-NGO-OG-FPA – Framework Partnership 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)
 - how to submit an application (section 10)

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 C(2021)499 on the financing of the LIFE Programme and the adoption of the work programme for the years 2021 to 2024 available on the [LIFE Programme Website](#).

- 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.

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

Environment:

- sub-programme Nature and Biodiversity

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).

- 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

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

and into public and private sector practices, mobilising investment and improving access to finance.

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

Clean Energy Transition

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

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

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

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

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

Type of action

This call for proposals concerns LIFE Framework Partnership Agreements for Operating Grant (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 clean 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 Framework Partnership Agreements for Operating Grant 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 LIFE Specific Operating Grant Agreements please consult call LIFE-2024-NGO-OG-SGA via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (accessible via the Topic page in the [Search Funding & Tenders](#) section).

Objectives / Themes and Priorities

The LIFE Framework Partnership Agreements with 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 framework partnerships aimed at achieving the objectives of the Circular Economy and Quality of Life, Nature and Biodiversity, Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation 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 Framework Partnership Agreements 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

The Framework Partnership Agreements will set out the framework conditions governing grants to partners carrying out activities, on the basis of a 2-year outline action plan and agreed general objectives. This first-level agreement does not however constitute an obligation for the granting authority to conclude a Specific Grant Agreement for an annual operating grant.

Expected impact

Applicants are expected to explain and define the impact of their organisation's activities (both generally and with regard to the proposed activities), including qualitative and quantitative indicators where possible. This will be used in the assessment of Award criteria 1 to 4 (see section 9).

Funding rate

For specific operating grants that will be financed in the context of the framework partnership agreements, the amount of the grant will be defined by applying a maximum co-financing rate of 70% to the eligible costs. The maximum operating grant amount per financial year will be EUR 700,000. The amounts indicated in the FPA application form must take this into account.

Flat rate

The amounts of eligible costs of the operating grant that will be financed in the context of the framework partnership agreements will be calculated using a flat-rate of 50% over personnel 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 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 indicative budget earmarked for operating grants under this call for framework partnership agreement is EUR 28,740,000, i.e. EUR 14,370,000 per SGA year.

Depending on the number and quality of proposals, we expect to sign between 30 and 35 framework partnerships.

4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
FPA call for proposals (followed by yearly SGA calls)	
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
First SGA call	
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’s 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 applicant (future beneficiary) and the summarised budget for the work plan (*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 plan (*to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed and then assembled and re-uploaded*)
- Part C contains additional data and the project’s contribution to EU programme key performance indicators (*to be filled in directly online*)
- Mandatory annexes and supporting documents (*to be uploaded*):
 - Statutes of the non-profit entity – mandatory
 - Applicant’s activity report of previous year – if the applicant is a newly created entity that has less than one year of existence, it is acceptable that the activity report covers less than 12 months
 - Participant information (*mandatory template available to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed and re-uploaded*)
 - A list of the members of the executive board or administration (names and title/function within the applicant organisation)

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 framework partnership agreement, 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 are limited to maximum 90 **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*).



Please be aware that some proposal information may be shared with the LIFE programme committee established under Regulation No [182/2011](#)⁶, 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.

⁶ 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).

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

6. Eligibility

Eligible participants

In order to be eligible, the applicants must:

- be legal entities (private bodies)
- be established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
 - EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs))
 - non-EU countries:
 - listed EEA countries and countries associated to the LIFE Programme ([list of participating countries](#))⁷
- be non-governmental organisations which are:
 - non-profit making entities
 - independent, in particular from government, other public authorities, political parties and commercial interests
 - primarily active in the areas of environment or climate action (including clean energy transition) and have an environmental/climate objective which is aimed at:
 - the public good and/or
 - sustainable development and/or
 - the development, implementation and enforcement of EU environmental and/or climate policy and legislation
 - active at EU level with a structure and activities covering at least three EU Member States or countries associated to the LIFE Programme

Applicants will have to demonstrate both a structure and activities covering at least three European Union Member States or countries associated to the LIFE Programme. To this end, partnerships, networks and memberships are considered if they are formally established as legal entities.

Partnerships, networks and memberships must be represented by a management board or any other administrative forum that is mandated by its members to represent them at EU level and is responsible for the activities of the network. So-called "loose co-operations" or temporary partnerships are not eligible under this call.

⁷ Applicants from countries which have requested to be associated to the LIFE Programme may participate in this call for proposals. However, no grant agreement will be signed if the association agreement is not entered into force by the end of the selection procedure.

Memberships comprise exclusively legal entities, i.e. not natural persons. All members must be listed in the application. Nevertheless, members are not eligible for funding. Only the applicant non-profit entity, if selected, will become the single beneficiary of the grant and can claim costs. Entities affiliated to the applicant are not eligible to receive funding under this Call for proposals.

Statutes and/or activity reports of memberships, partnerships or networks will serve as evidence for the structure and activities covering at least three EU countries.

Beneficiaries 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.

Specific cases

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

EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for 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)*⁸). 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).

Measures for the protection of the Union budget against breaches of the principles of the rule of law in Hungary — Following the [Council Implementing Decision \(EU\) 2022/2506](#), as of 16 December 2022, no legal commitments can be entered into with Hungarian public interest trusts established under the Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity they maintain. Affected entities may continue to apply to calls for proposals. However, as long as 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, etc). In case of multi-beneficiary grant calls, 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](#).

Eligible activities

⁸ 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](#).

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.

Geographic location (target countries)

Proposals must relate to activities taking place in the eligible countries (see above). Activities outside the eligible countries must be necessary to achieve the EU environmental and climate objectives and ensure the effectiveness of interventions carried 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 satisfactory⁹, we may require:

- further information
- prefinancing paid in instalments (SGA)
- (one or more) prefinancing guarantees (SGA) or
- propose no prefinancing (SGA)
- If needed, reject the entire proposal.

For framework partnerships, the financial capacity check will be done both at FPA and SGA levels.

⁹ verifications of the financial capacity will be repeated before awarding the SGA.

 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 work plans and contribute their share (including sufficient experience in actions of comparable size and nature).

This capacity will be assessed on the basis of the competence and experience of the applicants and their teams, including operational resources (human, technical and other) or, exceptionally, the measures proposed to obtain it by the time the task implementation starts.

Applicants will have to show their capacity via the following:

- general profiles (qualifications and experiences) of the staff responsible for managing and implementing the work plan
- description of previous actions, if any
- applicant's activity report of last year.

Additional supporting documents may be requested, if needed to confirm the operational capacity of any applicant.

For framework partnerships, the operational capacity check will be done generally at FPA level and then again for each grant application in the grants calls.

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 participate¹⁰:

- 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 misconduct¹¹ (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 framework partnership)
- 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 framework partnership)

¹⁰ See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

¹¹ 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.

- 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 framework partnership)
- 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 framework partnership)
- 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 framework partnership).

Applicants will also be rejected if it turns out that¹²:

- 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).

For framework partnerships, exclusion will be checked before FPA signature and then again before signature of each grant.

8. Evaluation and award procedure

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

An **evaluation committee** (assisted by independent outside experts) will assess all applications. Proposals will first be checked for formal requirements (admissibility and eligibility, *see sections 5 and 6*). Proposals found admissible and eligible will be evaluated against the operational capacity and award criteria (*see sections 7 and 9*) and then ranked according to their scores.

For proposals with the same score, 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:

- 1) Proposal submitted by an organisation that has not benefitted from a LIFE Operating Grant in the previous 3 years.
- 2) Proposals focusing on a theme that is not otherwise covered by higher ranked proposals.
- 3) Thereafter, applications according to their estimated value for money.

¹² See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

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

 No commitment for funding — Invitation to Framework Partnership Agreement preparation does NOT constitute a formal commitment for funding.

Framework Partnership 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 framework partnership.

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

9. Award criteria

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

1) Relevance (0-20 points)

- Relevance of the contribution to one or several of the specific objectives of the LIFE Programme.
- Extent to which the work plan is in line with the relevant policies covered by the call for proposals.
- Extent to which the proposal demonstrates EU added value.

2) EU policy shaping (0-20 points)

- Extent to which the proposal shows an in-depth understanding of the EU policy process.
- Extent to which the applicant improves the knowledge and evidence base, thus supporting the Union's environment, climate and energy policies.
- Extent to which the applicant fosters the integration of environmental, climate and/or energy policies and coherence with other policies, *e.g. agriculture, transport, cohesion policy*.
- Extent to which the applicant will act as a channel between the EU level and civil society, providing coordinated policy input.
- Appropriateness of means and structures aimed at voicing the concerns of EU citizens and at ensuring their democratic representation vis-à-vis the relevant institutions.

3) EU policy implementation (0-20 points)

- Extent to which the strategy improves implementation and enforcement of EU environmental, climate and/or energy legislation on local, Member State and/or European level.
- Extent to which the applicant will act as a channel between the EU level and civil society, promoting and ensuring acceptance of policy implementation.

- Extent to which the applicant uses its network to identify obstacles to policy implementation at national/regional level, for policy feedback.
- Appropriateness and quality of the measures to communicate and disseminate in order to create leverage.
- Extent to which the strategy helps to secure investment for environment, climate and/or energy policy, addressing environmental externalities.

4) Sensor function (0-20 points)

- Extent to which the proposal helps to detect new or emerging issues in the area of environment, climate change and/or energy and is able to analyse the causes of such issues and their possible effects.
- Capacity of the applicant to propose appropriate solutions and to provide feedback or improve policy making on the identified new or emerging issues.

5) Organisational development (0-20 points)

- Quality of the strategy to address the identified organisational development needs and areas for improvement.
- Extent to which the applicant represents relevant stakeholders and endeavours to develop its membership (grassroots or members base).
- Extent to which the fundraising strategy of the applicant ensures the diversification and sustainability of the organisation.
- Analysis of the applicant's dependence on the LIFE operating grant and strategies addressing this dependence.
- Value for money of the proposed work.

Award criteria	Maximum score	Weighting	Weighted score
1) Relevance	20	1	20
2) EU policy shaping	20	1	20
3) EU policy implementation	20	1	20
4) Sensor function	20	0,25	5
5) Organisational development	20	0,75	15
Maximum total score	100	N/A	80
Overall pass threshold	N/A	N/A	45

10. 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 (future 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 contains 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.

11. 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)

- [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.



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*).

12. 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:
 - 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.
- **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](#).