



*LIFE*  
Cyclamen

# General Information and Hints & Tips about the LIFE Programme



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# The LIFE Programme

LIFE is the EU's funding instrument for environment and climate action which contributes to the implementation and development of EU policy and legislation. After more than 25 years, over €3.4 billion of investing and more than 4.170 projects, LIFE continues to co-finance nature conservation, environmental and climate action projects.

For the 2021-2027 funding period, LIFE will contribute approximately €5.4 billion to the protection of the environment and climate.

## Programme structure

During the current Programming Period the LIFE Programme has four Sub-Programmes under the two fields:

### 1 Environment

- 📄 "Nature and Biodiversity"
- 📄 "Circular Economy and Quality of Life"

### 2 Climate Action

- 📄 "Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation"
- 📄 "Clean Energy Transition"

## How to apply

On the European Commission's [funding & tender opportunities portal](#), interested stakeholders will find all LIFE Calls for proposals, as well as further instructions on how to submit their application. Applicants can only submit proposals electronically through the portal.

## Who can apply?

You are eligible to submit a proposal under the LIFE Programme, if you are:

- 1 a public or private legal entity registered in the EU or an overseas country or territory linked to it;
- 2 a third country associated to the LIFE Programme; or
- 3 a legal entity created under Union law or any international organisation.

Natural persons are not eligible to apply.

## Types of activities funded under LIFE

### a) Action grants

#### Standard Action Projects (SAPs)

What was previously known as Traditional LIFE Projects is now the Standard Action Projects (SAPs)  
These projects aim to:

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

#### Strategic Nature Projects (SNAPs)

These projects support the achievement of Union nature and biodiversity objectives by implementing coherent programmes of action in Member States in order to mainstream those objectives and priorities into other policies and financing instruments, including through coordinated implementation of the prioritized action frameworks adopted pursuant to Directive 92/43/EEC.

#### Strategic Integrated Projects (SIPs)

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

#### Technical Assistance (TA)

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

#### Other Actions (OA)

These include:

- Coordination and Support Actions for the transition to renewable energy and increased energy efficiency.
- A Small Grant Facility on Biodiversity (BEST)
- Projects developed in the framework of the cooperation with the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KIC) of the European Institute for Innovation and Technology
- Pilot projects in the framework of the 'New European Bauhaus'
- Action grants benefiting the organisations mentioned in Annex I of the LIFE Regulation
- Additional projects responding to the Union legislative and policy priorities could also be determined on annual basis, following a consultation with Member States
- Other specific projects financed according to Article 195 of the Financial Regulation

### b) Operating grants

Operating grants shall support the functioning of non-profit making entities, which are involved in the development, implementation and enforcement of Union legislation and policy and which are primarily active in the field of environment or climate action, including clean energy transition.

## Co-financing rate

### 1 “Circular Economy and Quality of Life” and “Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation”

For the sub-programmes ‘Circular Economy and Quality of Life’ and ‘Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation’, the maximum co-financing rate is 60%.

### 2 “Nature and Biodiversity”

For the Nature & Biodiversity sub-programme, the co-financing rate is:

- Maximum 67% for projects targeting both priority and non-priority habitat and/or species
- Maximum 75% for projects targeting exclusively priority habitats and/or species

Duration: maximum 10 years.

### 3 “Clean Energy Transition”

Regarding the ‘Clean Energy Transition’ sub-programme, this is financed under Other Actions (Coordination and Support Actions) and the maximum co-financing rate is 95% of eligible costs.

Duration: between 18 and 36 months.

## Award criteria

### 1 Relevance

- ☑ Relevance of the contribution to one or several of the specific objectives of the LIFE Programme and the targeted sub-programme
- ☑ Extent to which the proposal is in line with the description included in the call for proposals, including, where relevant, its specific priorities
- ☑ Concept and methodology: soundness of the overall intervention logic
- ☑ Extent to which the proposal offers co-benefits and promotes synergies with other policy areas relevant for achieving environment and climate policy objectives

### 2 Impact

- ☑ Ambition and credibility of impacts expected during and/or after the project due to the activities, including ensuring that no substantial harm is done to the other specific objectives of the LIFE Programme
- ☑ Sustainability of the project results after the end of the project
- ☑ Quality of the measures for the exploitation of project results
- ☑ Potential for the project results to be replicated in the same or other sectors or places, or to be up-scaled by public or private actors or through mobilising larger investments or financial resources (catalytic potential).

### 3 Quality

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

#### 4 Resources

- ✔ Composition of the project team - in terms of expertise, skills and responsibilities and appropriateness of the management structure
- ✔ Appropriateness of the budget and resources and their consistency with the work plan
- ✔ Transparency of the budget, i.e. the cost items should be sufficiently described
- ✔ Extent to which the project environmental impact is considered and mitigated, including through the use of green procurement. The use of recognised methods for the calculation of the project environmental footprint (e.g. PEF or OEF methods or similar ones such as PEFCRs/ OEFSRs) or environmental management systems (e.g. EMAS) would be an asset
- ✔ Value for money of the proposal

#### **Possible bonus points:**

- The proposal offers exceptional synergies and promotes significant co-benefits between LIFE sub-programmes
- The proposal is primarily implemented in the Outermost Region
- Building on or up-scaling the results of other EU funded projects
- Exceptional catalytic potential
- Transnational cooperation among Member States

## Admissibility and documents

#### **Your proposal must:**

- Be submitted electronically through the [Funding & Tenders Portal](#) before call deadline
- Be complete using the forms/templates provided
- Be readable, accessible and printable
- Respect the page limit set out in the application form (this includes the instructions, which need to remain in the form).

## What is the structure of the proposal?

**Part A** - contains administrative information about the participants and the summarised budget for the project

**Part B** - contains the technical description of the project

**Part C** - contains additional project data

For the 'Circular Economy and Quality of Life', 'Nature & Biodiversity' and 'Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation' sub-programmes proposals are limited to maximum 120 pages (Part B). For the Clean Energy Transition sub-programme proposals are limited to maximum 70 pages (Part B). Evaluators will not consider any additional pages.

For the submission process please consult the [Online Manual](#).

## How to write a successful LIFE proposal

### Do's

#### A. Overall

- Start preparing your proposal early
- Devote time to read all the Call documents. This can help you build your idea on strong foundation and avoid wasting precious time.
- Check the completeness of your proposal before you submit it
- Your proposal needs to support the mission of the LIFE Programme
- Consult your National Contact Point early in advance

#### B. Proposal design

- Before you start working on your proposal consult the LIFE project database. See what projects relevant to your topic have already received funding to avoid repetition and perhaps identify potential partners.
- Choose your idea, structure it well and stick to it
  - ✔ Clear baseline description. Do compare yourself to a realistic state of the art situation that is out there and not with the worst case scenario.
  - ✔ Clear project objective
  - ✔ Clear understanding of current situation (research or market)
  - ✔ Logical sequence of actions and clear link to the project's description
  - ✔ Clear expected results and quantitative estimations of project impacts (during the LIFE financing and After LIFE)
  - ✔ Clear path to make a difference (clear impact you want to have)
  - ✔ Include activities and plans to ensure the sustainability of the project results
  - ✔ Uptake and replication need to be taken into account and related actions need to be well conceived
  - ✔ Clear description of beneficiaries involved
  - ✔ Clear target group(s)
  - ✔ Limit the number of actions to the ones essential to achieve the project objectives
  - ✔ Ensure there is coherence in the description and output in Part B and in the Work Packages.
- Build a good consortium
  - ✔ Be consistent. Remain relevant to your objective and target group(s)
  - ✔ Be adaptable. Be ready to renounce a country if you cannot secure the right partner.
  - ✔ Choose your partners well
  - ✔ Look for complementarity in your partner selection and avoid redundancy of expertise (key stakeholders should be involved)
  - ✔ Involve partners in the proposal preparation to avoid surprises after submission
  - ✔ Keep the consortium motivated. Agree a working method for the proposal phase and make a plan for their input.



- When defining the project duration take into account:
  - 🕒 Sufficient time to gather information and the impact of project activities
  - 🕒 Delays in obtaining permits and authorisations
- Establish your project budget
  - 🕒 Define your budget 'bottom-up'. First describe the tasks, then estimate the effort needed and lastly translate that into EUR.
  - 🕒 Be realistic
  - 🕒 In Part A the summarized budget table needs to be filled in online
  - 🕒 Upload the detailed budget per cost category in Annexes
  - 🕒 Check the applicability of cost categories in the Call documents
  - 🕒 Your budget should support the value-for-money aspect of your proposal
- Define the communication and dissemination methods you will use (what, for whom, how, how often, for what purpose)
  - 🕒 Communication: Promoting the action itself and its results
  - 🕒 Dissemination: Public disclosure of the results
- Define how your project results will be exploited. Utilisation of results in:
  - 🕒 Research
  - 🕒 Creating / offering a product, process or service
  - 🕒 Standardisation activities
- Ensure that the EU funding you are requesting makes a real impact on the environment
- Your proposal should support the uptake and implementation of EU legislation, targets and initiatives
- Final polishing before submission
  - 🕒 Check the completeness of your proposal
  - 🕒 Check the consistency of your description of activities and budget
  - 🕒 Ask an 'informed outsider' for critical reading and feedback
  - 🕒 If possible, have a native speaker check the English



## Don'ts

- Insufficient background information (why, who and how)
- Rationale for projects is defined during the project
- Objectives too broad and too many
- Poor consortium (partners don't fit regarding know-how or insufficient budget)
- Over-optimistic / unrealistic or lack of quantification of impacts
- Replication confused with networking and dissemination
- Vague plans to sustain the project / results after project end
- Poorly prepared proposal
- Limited ambition or risk taking



LIFE National Contact Point in Cyprus  
Department of Environment, Ministry  
of Agriculture, Rural Development  
and Environment



With the contribution of the LIFE financial  
instrument of the European Community,  
through a Capacity Building Grant, 100%  
Funding of Total Eligible Budget €951.828

### Useful Links

[LIFE Programme](#)  
[LIFE Work Programme 2021-2024](#)  
[LIFE Regulation 2021/783](#)  
[EU Financial Regulation 2018/1046](#)  
[LIFE Database](#)

### Contact Us

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