



# Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)

## Call for proposals

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

**LIFE-2026-NGO-OG-FPA**

Version 1.0  
12 May 2026



**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-2026-NGO-OG-FPA (**Framework partnership agreement**) by 08 September 2026.
- One proposal under the LIFE-2026-NGO-OG-SGA (**Specific grant agreement**) by 22 September 2026.

Via the Funding & tender opportunities portal:

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>

<b>HISTORY OF CHANGES</b>			
<b>Version</b>	<b>Publication Date</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Page</b>
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## EUROPEAN CLIMATE, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT EXECUTIVE AGENCY (CINEA)

CINEA.D – Natural Resources, Climate, Sustainable Blue Economy and Clean Energy

**CINEA Unit D.1** – LIFE Energy + LIFE Climate

**CINEA Unit D.2** – LIFE Environment (Nature & Circular Economy)

### CALL FOR PROPOSALS

#### Table of Contents

0. Introduction .....	4
1. Background.....	5
What is the LIFE Programme? .....	5
Nature and Biodiversity .....	6
Circular Economy and Quality of Life .....	7
Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation .....	8
Clean Energy Transition.....	9
2. Type of action — Objectives — Themes and priorities — Activities that can be funded — Expected impact .....	10
Type of action .....	10
Objectives / Themes and Priorities .....	10
Scope.....	11
Expected impact.....	12
Funding rate .....	12
Flat rate .....	12
3. Available budget .....	12
4. Timetable and deadlines .....	12
5. Admissibility and documents .....	13
6. Eligibility.....	14
Eligible participants.....	14
Specific cases.....	16
Eligible activities.....	16
Geographic location (target countries).....	17
7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion.....	17
Financial capacity .....	17
Operational capacity .....	18
Exclusion .....	18
8. Evaluation and award procedure .....	19
9. Award criteria.....	20
10. How to submit an application.....	22
11. Help .....	23
12. Important .....	24

## 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 2024/2509 (EU Financial Regulation)<sup>1</sup>
- the basic act (LIFE Regulation 2021/783)<sup>2</sup>

The call is launched in accordance with the 2025-2027 Multiannual Work Programme<sup>3</sup> and will be managed by the **European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA)** ('Agency').

It is linked with the call LIFE-2026-NGO-OG-SGA.

The call covers the following **topic**:

**LIFE-2026-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 (the present 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)

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast) available on the [LIFE Programme Website](#).

<sup>2</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) available on the [LIFE Programme Website](#).

<sup>3</sup> Commission Implementing Decision C(2025)955 and C(2025)6797 on the financing of the LIFE Programme and the adoption of the work programme for the years 2025 to 2027 available on the [LIFE Programme Website](#).

- award criteria (section 9)
- how to submit an application (section 10)
- 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's funding instrument for environment and climate action.

Its overall objective is to support the transition to a sustainable, circular, energy-efficient and climate-neutral economy based on renewable energy, while strengthening resilience. It aims to protect and improve the environment (air, water and soil), halt biodiversity loss, and restore ecosystems, including through support to the Natura 2000 network, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

As a key pillar of the European Green Deal<sup>(4)</sup> and the Clean Industrial Deal<sup>(5)</sup>, it also seeks to build a fair and competitive economy with net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, decouple growth from resource use, safeguard citizens' health, and turn decarbonisation and the energy transition into drivers of innovation, jobs and long-term prosperity.

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 and targets, the EU's climate neutrality objective by 2050, the new EU strategy

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(4) 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, 11.12.2019.

(5) 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 Clean Industrial Deal: A joint roadmap for competitiveness and decarbonisation](#)", COM(2025) 85 final, 26.2.2025.

on adaptation to climate change, the affordable energy action plan<sup>6</sup> and the Citizens Energy Package <sup>(7)</sup>.

- supporting the energy transition of the EU economy based on homegrown clean energy generation, energy efficiency, a functioning cross-border energy market, accelerated deployment of renewable and grids infrastructures, electrification and energy system integration, 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

### *Nature and Biodiversity*

In line with the specific objectives of the LIFE Programme as set out in Article 3(2) of the LIFE Regulation, the sub-programme 'Nature and Biodiversity' aims 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;
- 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<sup>8</sup>;
- 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.

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<sup>6</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, "[Action Plan for Affordable Energy — Unlocking the true value of our Energy Union to secure affordable, efficient and clean energy for all Europeans](#)", COM(2025) 79 final, 26.2.2025.

<sup>(7)</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the Citizens, [COM\(2026\) 115 final](#).

<sup>8</sup> Scientific work undertaken by members of the general public, often in collaboration with or under the direction of professional scientists and scientific institutions.

LIFE has been a key tool supporting the implementation of the EU Birds<sup>9</sup> and Habitats<sup>10</sup> Directives (the “Nature Directives”) since 1992 and has been instrumental and, in some cases crucial, to ensure the establishment of the Natura 2000 network.

The Nature Directives' fitness check<sup>11</sup>, the Action plan for nature, people, and the economy<sup>12</sup> as well as the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030<sup>13</sup> underline the need to increase funding for nature and biodiversity, a need further reinforced by the binding restoration targets set out in the Nature Restoration Law<sup>13</sup>.

The sub-programme covers two priority areas:

- 1) EU Nature and Biodiversity
- 2) Awareness raising, compliance assurance and access to justice related to nature and biodiversity legislation.

### 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
- 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
- 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 covers three priority areas:

- 1) Circular economy and waste

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<sup>9</sup> Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (OJ L 20, 26.1.2010, p. 7)

<sup>10</sup> Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7).

<sup>11</sup> Commission Staff Working Document SWD(2016) 472 final of 16 December 2016 ‘Fitness-check of the EU Nature Legislation (Birds and Habitats Directives) Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds and Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora’ (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Fitness-check of the Birds and Habitats Directives’).

<sup>12</sup> Communication COM(2017) 198 final of 27 April 2017 from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions ‘An Action Plan for nature, people and the economy’.

<sup>13</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).

- 2) Zero pollution and sustainable management of natural resources
- 3) Environmental governance.

This sub-programme aims at facilitating the transition toward a sustainable, circular, energy-efficient and climate-resilient economy, a toxic-free environment, and at protecting, restoring and improving the quality of the environment in line with the European Green Deal and recent policy developments.

### 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 practices;
- 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;
- 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 support the implementation of the European Green Deal and the Clean Industrial Deal by contributing to the objectives and targets set out in the European Climate Law<sup>14</sup>: the goal for Europe's economy and society to reach net-zero and become climate-neutral by 2050; the intermediate Union climate target to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% compared to 1990 levels by 2030; the 2040 Union climate target; and the obligation for Union institutions and Member States to ensure continuous progress in enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening climate resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change, in line with the EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change<sup>15</sup>.

The sub-programme covers three priority areas:

1. Climate Change Mitigation
2. Climate Change Adaptation
3. Climate Change Governance and Information.

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<sup>14</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/1119 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 June 2021 establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amending Regulations (EC) No 401/2009 and (EU) 2018/1999 ('European Climate Law'), OJ L 243, 9.7.2021, p. 1–17.

<sup>15</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 'Forging a climate-resilient Europe - the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change', COM/2021/82 final.

### Clean Energy Transition

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

- develop, demonstrate and promote innovative regulatory, governance and market-oriented techniques, methods and approaches for reaching the objectives of Union legislation and policy on the clean, sustainable and just energy transition by upscaling renewable energy solutions and increasing energy efficiency, and contributing to the knowledge base and to the application of best practices
- support the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of relevant Union legislation and policy on the clean, sustainable, and just energy transition upscaling renewable energy solutions and increasing energy efficiency, including by improving governance at all levels, by enhancing capacities of public and private actors, by assisting and engaging citizens and the involvement of civil society, and by structuring the market to enable and foster the uptake of energy transition technologies
- catalyse the large-scale deployment of successful technical and policy-related solutions supporting cross-European actions integrating market and regulatory approaches able to favour the implementation of relevant Union legislation and objectives on the clean, sustainable, and just energy transition upscaling renewable energy solutions and increasing energy efficiency, by replicating results and successful best practices, by mobilising investment, upscaling the use of financial instruments and improving access to finance, and by fostering cross-sectoral business cooperations, public-private partnerships and activities of EU cross-border market actors.

This sub-programme aims at facilitating the transition toward an energy-efficient, renewable energy-based, climate-neutral and -resilient economy by funding mainly Coordination and Support Actions (CSA). These actions aim at capacity building, at dissemination of information and of knowledge, and at awareness-raising to support the transition to renewable energy and increased energy efficiency. They support breaking market barriers that hamper the socio-economic transition to sustainable energy, typically engaging multiple small and medium-size stakeholders, including but not limited to local and regional public authorities, non-profit organisations, energy services companies and utilities, project developers, net-zero technologies manufacturers, financial institutions, professional organisations, consumers associations and citizens initiatives.

The sub-programme covers five priority areas:

1. Building a national, regional and local policy framework supporting the clean energy transition
2. Accelerating technology roll-out, digitalisation, new services and business models and enhancement of the related professional skills on the market for the clean energy transition
3. Attracting private finance for sustainable energy
4. Supporting the development of local and regional investment projects
5. Involving and empowering citizens in the clean energy transition.

## **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 an SGA.

Framework Partnership Agreements that will be concluded following this 2026 Call for Proposals for LIFE FPA OG will cover the following two financial years of beneficiary organisations (i.e. FY 2027 and FY 2028).

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 2026, 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-2026-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 EU Strategy for Civil Society<sup>16</sup> acknowledges the importance of civil society organisations (CSOs) in the policy process: “Civil society plays an important role in providing advice, support and expertise in the development and implementation of EU legislation and policies”. It also states that “the EU has increasingly recognised that civil society needs an enabling, safe and supportive environment throughout the EU” and that: “As part of an overall enabling environment, CSOs need adequate and sustainable support to carry out their vital work, effectively engage with decision-makers, and continue making meaningful contributions to our societies”. The Strategy stresses that “long-term, predictable, and sufficient funding is key so as to provide the stability that CSOs need to operate independently and effectively.”

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Accordingly, 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 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.

According to Article 11(6) of the LIFE Regulation, "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 area of the environment or climate action, including energy transition, in line with the objectives of the LIFE Programme set out in Article 3"

In line with Recital 23 of the LIFE Regulation, the LIFE Framework Partnership Agreements aim at "support[ing] a broad range of NGOs [non-governmental organisations] 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." Under the LIFE Regulation, NGOs "active in the area of climate action", include those active in the area of clean energy transition.

### Scope

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


In accordance with the LIFE Regulation, LIFE Framework Partnership Agreements are designed to support non-profit entities engaged across the full cycle of Union law and policy, from development through to implementation and enforcement, with particular emphasis on effective implementation and monitoring - reflecting the needs arising from the European Green Deal and the Fit-for-55 legislative package.

The work programme must not include, as part of the description of activities, specific and detailed activities targeting directly Union institutions, specific staff or members of the institution.

The choice of engaging with Union institutions or their members or staff, and presenting specific positions, including examining and explaining the impact of a given policy or policy proposal, rests with FPA beneficiaries<sup>17</sup>. Beneficiaries remain fully and solely responsible for their own opinions, views, and actions carried out through their work programme. Any communication or dissemination activity related to the beneficiaries' work programme must use factually accurate information.

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<sup>17</sup> See [Guidance on funding for activities related to the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of Union legislation and policy](#).

 Please note that specific visibility obligations apply for this call (see section 10 of the LIFE-2026-NGO-OG-SGA call for proposals).

### 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

Framework Partnership Agreements do not include a funding amount or rate. However, 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 14,500,000 per year.

Depending on the number and quality of proposals, it is expected to sign between 30 and 35 framework partnerships.

## **4. Timetable and deadlines**

<b>Timetable and deadlines (indicative)</b>	
<b>FPA call for proposals (followed by yearly SGA calls)</b>	
Call opening:	12 May 2026
Deadline for submission:	<u>08 September 2026 – 17:00:00 CET</u> (Brussels)
Evaluation:	September - December 2026
Information on evaluation results:	January 2027
FPA signature:	January – March 2027

First SGA call	
Call opening:	12 May 2026
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>22 September 2026 – 17:00:00 CET</u>
Evaluation:	September - December 2026
Information on evaluation results:	January 2027
GA signature:	February - April 2027

## 5. Admissibility and documents

Proposals must be submitted before the **call deadline** (see *timetable section 4, above*).

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 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 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](#)<sup>18</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.

    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 European Economic Area (EEA) countries and countries

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<sup>18</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).

associated to the LIFE Programme ([list of participating countries](#))<sup>19</sup>

- be non-governmental organisations which<sup>20</sup>:
  - are non-profit making entities,
  - are independent from government and other public authorities, as well as from political parties and commercial interests,
  - are not a trade union,
  - are 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
  - have 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 across borders and is responsible for the activities of the network. So-called "loose co-operations" or temporary partnerships are not eligible under this call.

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.

Applicants are required to describe, in the Participant Information Form, their structure and activities covering at least three EU Member States or countries associated to the LIFE Programme. Statutes and/or activity reports of memberships, partnerships or networks will serve as evidence.

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<sup>19</sup> 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 has not entered into force by the end of the selection procedure.

<sup>20</sup> Regulation (EU) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union defines "non-governmental organisation" as "voluntary, independent from government, non-profit organisation, which is not a political party or a trade union".

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)*<sup>21</sup>). Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).

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

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


The work programme must not mention specific or detailed actions targeting directly Union institutions, individual members, or staff thereof. Any engagement with Union institutions or their members and staff - including the presentation of specific positions or analysis of particular policies or policy proposals - is entirely at the discretion of beneficiaries, who bear full and sole responsibility for their own views and actions carried out under their work programme.

Projects must comply with EU policy interests and priorities (such as environment, social, security, industrial and trade policy, etc). Projects must also respect EU values and European Commission policy regarding reputational matters (*e.g. activities*

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<sup>21</sup> Please note that the EU Official Journal contains the official list and, in case of conflict, its content prevails over that of the [EU Sanctions Map](#).

*involving capacity building, policy support, awareness raising, communication, dissemination, etc.)<sup>22</sup>.*

 Please note that specific visibility obligations apply for this call (see section 10 of the LIFE-2026-NGO-OG-SGA call for proposals).

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 programme 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 (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.

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<sup>22</sup> See, for instance, [Guidance on funding for activities related to the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of Union legislation and policy](#).



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 programme 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 programme
- 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 participate<sup>23</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>24</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 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

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<sup>23</sup> See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

<sup>24</sup> Professional misconduct includes: violation of ethical standards of the profession, wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility, false declarations/misrepresentation of information, participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition, violation of IPR, attempting to influence decision-making processes or obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain advantage.

- representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the framework partnership)
- 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 that<sup>25</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).

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 and one-step evaluation).

An **evaluation committee** will assess all applications. Proposals will first be checked for formal requirements (admissibility and eligibility, *see sections 5 and 6*). Proposals found admissible and eligible will be evaluated 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 under the previous call for Framework Partnership Agreements (LIFE-2024-NGO-OG-FPA).

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<sup>25</sup> See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

- 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.

All proponents 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 may 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 with such recommendations 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 proposed work programme is in line with the relevant policies covered by the call for proposals.
- Extent to which the proposal demonstrates EU added value.

### 2) Support to EU policy development <sup>26</sup> (0-20 points)

- Extent to which the proposal shows an in-depth understanding of the EU policy in the area of environment, climate action, and energy transition.
- Extent to which the applicant improves the knowledge and evidence base, thus supporting the Union's environment, climate and energy policies.

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<sup>(26)</sup>Support to EU policy development is not to be understood as the extent to which an organisation operates at EU level but the extent to which it will act across borders to pool and channel civil society contribution and the concerns of EU citizens.

- Extent to which the applicant supports 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 across borders as a channel with civil society in the area of the environment, climate action, and energy transition.
- The appropriateness of means and structures aimed at voicing the concerns of EU citizens and at ensuring their democratic representation

### **3) Support to EU policy implementation (0-20 points)**

- Extent to which the proposed strategy supports the improvement to 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 with civil society in the area of the environment, climate action, and energy transition.
- 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 proposed measures to communicate and disseminate in order to create leverage.
- Extent to which the proposed 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 proposed 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 are convincing.
- The 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
<b>Maximum total score</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Overall pass threshold</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>45</b>

## 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](#)
- [Portal FAQ](#) (for general questions).
- [LIFE website FAQs](#)
- [LIFE Info Days](#)

Please also consult the Topic page regularly, since we will use it to publish call updates.

### Contact

Only in case you did not find an answer in the above links, you may contact:

- for individual questions on the Portal Submission System: [IT Helpdesk](#)
- for non-IT related questions: [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*).

## 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 under this call.
- **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; if any one of them doesn't, they must be replaced or the entire proposal will be rejected.
- **Cancellation** — There may be circumstances which may require the cancellation of the 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 grant will use the specific visibility obligations that apply for this Call (see section 10 of the LIFE-2026-NGO-OG-SGA call for proposals).
- **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](#).