



Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)

Call for proposals

Specific Grant Agreements to support non-profit organisations primarily active in the fields of environment and/or climate action, including clean energy transition
(LIFE-2026-NGO-OG-SGA)

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>

HISTORY OF CHANGES			
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1.0	12.05.2026	Initial version.	



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

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O. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU operating grants in the field of 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](#))¹
- the basic act (LIFE Regulation [2021/783](#))².

The call is launched in accordance with the 2025-2027 Multiannual Work Programme³ 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-FPA.

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

The call covers the following topics:

LIFE-2026-NGO-OG-SGA – Specific Grant Agreements for operating grants to European environmental, climate and energy non-profit organisations

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

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

- the [Call document](#) (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)
 - award criteria (section 9)
 - legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements (section 10)
 - how to submit an application (section 11)
- the [Online Manual](#) outlines the:

¹ 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](#).

² 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](#).

³ 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](#).

- 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⁽⁴⁾ and the Clean Industrial Deal⁽⁵⁾, 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 contributes 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, and the new EU strategy on adaptation to climate change.** the affordable energy action plan ⁽⁶⁾ and the Citizens Energy Package ⁽⁷⁾,
- 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 into two fields and four sub-programmes (described in more detail below):

⁽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.

⁽⁶⁾ 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.

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

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 the scale up of innovative techniques, methods and approaches (including nature-based solutions and ecosystem approaches) for reaching the objectives set out under the Union legislation and policy on or related to 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 network;
- support the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of the relevant Union legislation and policy on or related to nature and biodiversity, including by improving governance at all levels, in particular through enhancing the capacities of public and private actors and the involvement of civil society, also taking into due consideration the possible contributions provided by citizen science⁸;
- catalyse the large-scale deployment of successful solutions/approaches for implementing relevant Union 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.

LIFE has been a key tool supporting the implementation of the EU Birds⁹ and Habitats¹⁰ 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 check¹¹, the Action plan for nature, people, and the economy¹² as well as the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030¹³ underline the need to

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

⁹ 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)

¹⁰ 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).

¹¹ 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’).

¹² 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’.

¹³ 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).

increase funding for nature and biodiversity, a need further reinforced by the binding restoration targets set out in the Nature Restoration Law¹⁴.

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 Union 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 relevant Union 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 relevant Union 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,
- 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 Union 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 relevant Union legislation and policy on climate action, including by improving

14 Regulation (EU) 2024/1991 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2024 on nature restoration and amending Regulation (EU) 2022/869 (OJ L, 2024/1991, 29.7.2024)

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 relevant Union 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 Law¹⁵: **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 Change¹⁶.**

The sub-programme has three priority areas:

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

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

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ 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.

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.

The sub-programme Clean Energy Transition 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 Clean Energy Transition covers the following priority areas of intervention:

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 Specific Grant Agreements for Operating Grants (SGA OG). LIFE Specific Operating Grant Agreements will be concluded with organisations that have successfully signed a LIFE 2026 Operating Grant Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA OG).

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

Framework Partnership Agreements that will be concluded following the 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 2026 Call for Proposals for LIFE Framework Partnership Agreements please consult the call LIFE-2026-NGO-OG-FPA via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (accessible via the Topic page in the [Search Funding & Tenders](#) section).

Objectives

The EU Strategy for Civil Society¹⁷ 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.”

Accordingly, the LIFE operating grants for non-profit making entities aim to strengthen the participation of civil society in the EU policy dialogue, as well as to support implementation and enforcement of Union environmental and climate objectives. The present invitation to submit a proposal targets operating grants 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 clean energy transition.

Scope

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

¹⁷ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions COM(2025) 790 final

In accordance with the LIFE Regulation, LIFE operating grant 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.

Their 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 some of their members or staff, and presenting specific positions, including examining and explaining the impact of a given policy or policy proposal, rests with SGA beneficiaries¹⁸. 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.

 Please note that specific visibility obligations apply for this call (*see section 10*).

Expected impact

Applicants are expected to outline how they plan to measure results and describe immediate as well as medium term results/impact of the work programme, including some qualitative and quantitative indicators for each work package.

All applicants must fill in the LIFE Project indicators (LPis). Please review the indicators in Part C of the eGrant application and complete them.

Funding rate

Operating Grant — 70% funding rate with a maximum grant amount per financial year of EUR 700 000.

Total eligible costs and flat rate

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

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

¹⁸ See [Guidance on funding for activities related to the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of Union legislation and policy](#).

3. Available budget

The available call budget is EUR 14 500 000.

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


4. Timetable and deadlines


Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
Call opening:	12 May 2026
Opening for submission:	12 May 2026
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>22 September 2025 – 17:00:00 CET</u> <u>(Brussels)</u>
Evaluation:	September - December 2026
Information on evaluation results:	January 2027
GA signature:	February 2027 - April 2027

5. Admissibility and documents

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

Proposals must be submitted electronically via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (accessible via the link in the invitation letter). 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. on font size limit, deletion of instructions, etc*) may lead to the inadmissibility of your proposal. Furthermore, to ensure a proper evaluation of your project the appropriate sections of the template must be filled in.

Project acronym — Your project 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 participants (potential future beneficiary) and the summarised budget for the project (*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 project (*template to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded*)
- Part C — contains additional project data (*to be filled in directly online*)
- mandatory annexes and supporting documents (*to be uploaded*):
 - detailed budget table (*mandatory excel template available in the Submission System*)


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


At proposal submission, you will have to confirm that you have the mandate to act for all applicants. Moreover, you will have to confirm that the information in the application is correct and complete and that all participants comply with the conditions for receiving EU funding (*especially eligibility, financial and operational capacity, exclusion, etc*). Before signing the grant, each 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 (please check carefully the layout of the documents uploaded).

Proposals are limited to maximum 45 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](#)¹⁹, i.e. this may include the 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 \(eligible countries\)](#)

The eligibility of applicants is assessed during the Framework Partnership Agreement evaluation (Call LIFE-2026-NGO-OG-FPA).

EU restrictive measures: Special rules apply for 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)²⁰. 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 \(EU\)](#)

¹⁹ 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).

²⁰ 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](#).

[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 involving capacity building, policy support, awareness raising, communication, dissemination, etc*)²¹.

 Please note that specific visibility obligations apply for this call (*see section 10*).

Financial support to third parties is not allowed.

Geographic location (target countries)

Proposals must relate to activities taking place in the countries eligible under the LIFE Programme. Any proposed activities outside the eligible countries must be necessary to achieve the EU environmental and climate objectives and ensure the effectiveness of interventions carried within the eligible countries. Such actions outside eligible countries could be, e.g., aimed at the conservation of migratory birds in wintering areas, actions implemented on a transboundary river, or projects aimed to address environmental problems that cannot be solved successfully or efficiently unless 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 projects must have sufficient capacity to implement all projects.

The financial capacity check will be carried out on the basis of the documents you will be requested to upload in the [Participant Register](#) during grant preparation (*e.g. profit and loss account and balance sheet, business plan, audit report produced by an*

²¹ See, for instance, [Guidance on funding for activities related to the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of Union legislation and policy](#).

approved external auditor, certifying the accounts for the last closed financial year, etc.). The analysis will be based on neutral financial indicators, but will also take into account other aspects, such as dependency on EU funding and deficit and revenue in previous years.

The check will normally be done for all coordinators except:

- if the project 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
- an enhanced financial responsibility regime, i.e. joint and several responsibility for all beneficiaries or joint and several liability of affiliated entities (*see below, section 10*)

- prefinancing paid in instalments

- (one or more) prefinancing guarantees (*see below, section 10*)

or

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

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

Operational capacity

Applicants must have the know-how, qualifications and resources to successfully implement the work programme and contribute their share (including sufficient experience in projects of comparable size and nature).

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 participate²²:

- 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 misconduct²³ (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)

²² See Articles 138 and 143 of EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

²³ 'Professional misconduct' includes, in particular, the following: violation of ethical standards of the profession; wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility; breach of generally accepted professional ethical standards; false declarations/misrepresentation of information; participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition; violation of IPR; attempting to influence decision-making processes by taking advantage, through misrepresentation, of a conflict of interests, or to obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain an advantage; incitement to discrimination, hatred or violence or similar activities contrary to the EU values where negatively affecting or risking to affect the performance of a legal commitment.

- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of EU Regulation [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decisionmaking or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- intentionally and without proper justification resisted²⁴ an investigation, check or audit carried out by an EU authorising officer (or their representative or auditor), OLAF, the EPPO, or the European Court of Auditors.

Applicants will also be rejected if it turns out that²⁵:

- 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 specific 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*).


The list of operating grants proposed for award will be made taking into account the proposals which have reached the minimum threshold and for which there is available budget. The ranking of proposals by score and priority order established after the FPA evaluation will also constitute the order in which the applicants will be ranked once their

²⁴ 'Resisting an investigation, check or audit' means carrying out actions with the goal or effect of preventing, hindering or delaying the conduct of any of the activities needed to perform the investigation, check or audit, such as refusing to grant the necessary access to its premises or any other areas used for business purposes, concealing or refusing to disclose information or providing false information.

²⁵ See Article 143 EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

Specific Grant Agreement (SGA) proposals have been evaluated, i.e. no new ranking will be established after the SGA evaluation.

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

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

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

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

9. Award criteria

The award criteria for this call are as follows:

1. Relevance (0-20 points)

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

2. Quality (0-20 points)

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

3. Resources (0-20 points)

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

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score	Weighting
Relevance	n/a	20	1
Quality of the proposal	n/a	20	1
Resources	n/a	20	1
Overall weighted (pass) scores	35	60	N/A

Maximum points: 60 points.

There is no minimum pass score for individual criteria.

Overall threshold: 35 points.

Proposals that pass the overall threshold will be considered for funding — within the limits of the available budget (i.e. up to the budget ceiling). Other proposals will be rejected.

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

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

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

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

Starting date and work programme duration

The Specific Grant Agreement starts on the first day of the beneficiary's financial year and ends on the last day of the beneficiary's financial year. The SGA work programme covers 12 months of activities.

Deliverables

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

Form of grant, funding rate and maximum grant amount

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

Project budget (requested grant amount): *see section 3 above*.

The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.


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

The costs will be reimbursed at the funding rate fixed in the Grant Agreement (70%).

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

Budget categories and cost eligibility rules

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

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

Budget categories for this call:

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

Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:

- personnel costs:
 - SME owner/natural person unit cost²⁶: No
 - volunteers unit cost²⁷: No
 - other personnel costs: Yes (LIFE OG NGO personnel costs)
- other cost categories:
 - LIFE OG NGO subcontracting, purchases and other costs flat-rate²⁸: 50% of the eligible LIFE OG NGO personnel costs (category A)
- VAT: non-deductible VAT is eligible (but please note that since 2013 VAT paid by beneficiaries that are public bodies acting as public authority is NOT eligible)
- other:
 - in-kind contributions for free are allowed, but cost-neutral, i.e. they cannot be declared as cost
 - other ineligible costs: No

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

[Reporting and payment arrangements](#)

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

After grant signature, you will normally receive a prefinancing to start working on the project (float of normally 60% of the maximum grant amount; exceptionally less or no prefinancing). The prefinancing will be paid 30 days from entry into force/financial guarantee (if required) — whichever is the latest.


²⁶ Commission [Decision](#) of 20 October 2020 authorising the use of unit costs for the personnel costs of the owners of small and medium-sized enterprises and beneficiaries that are natural persons not receiving a salary for the work carried out by themselves under an action or work programme (C(2020)7715).

²⁷ Commission [Decision](#) of 10 April 2019 authorising the use of unit costs for declaring personnel costs for the work carried out by volunteers under an action or a work programme (C(2019)2646).

²⁸ [Decision](#) of 25 May 2021 authorising the use of flat-rate financing for the operating grants co-financing the work programme of non-profit entities under the LIFE Programme.

There will be no interim payments.

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

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

Please also note that you are responsible for keeping records on all the work done and the personnel costs declared.

Prefinancing guarantees

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

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

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

Prefinancing guarantees are normally requested from the coordinator, for the consortium. They must be provided during grant preparation, in time to make the prefinancing (scanned copy via Portal AND original by post).

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

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

Certificates

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

Liability regime for recoveries

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

For beneficiaries, it is one of the following:

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

or

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

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

Provisions concerning the project implementation

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

- rights of use on results: Yes

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

- communication and dissemination plan: No
- additional communication and dissemination activities: No
- special logos: Yes.

 Please note that, by derogation from Article 17.2 and Annex 5, the following specific visibility obligations apply for this call:

- The European flag and funding statement, the LIFE Programme logo and, where **applicable, the Natura 2000 logo must be limited to the beneficiary's main website.**
- The use of the European flag and funding statement, the LIFE Programme logo and, where applicable, the Natura 2000 logo on any other communication and information material (including electronic media and social media accounts) and on infrastructure, equipment, work vehicles, supplies or major result funded by the grant is subject to prior written approval from the granting authority.

By derogation from Article 17.3, the text of the disclaimer that must be used (on the **beneficiary's website and where approved by the granting authority**):

- **"This organisation receives an operating grant from the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the organisation only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or of the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA). Neither the European Union nor CINEA can be held responsible for them.**

All other provisions set out in Article 17 and Annex 5 continue to apply.

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

- durability: No
- specific rules for blending operations: No

Other specificities

n/a

Non-compliance and breach of contract

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

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

11. How to submit an application

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

Submission is a 2-step process:

a) create a user account and register your organisation

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

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

b) submit the proposal

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

Submit your proposal in 4 parts, as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

12. Help

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

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

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

13. Important

- **Don't wait** until the end — Complete your application sufficiently in advance of the deadline to avoid any last minute technical problems. Problems due to last minute submissions (*e.g. congestion, etc.*) will be entirely at your risk. Call deadlines can NOT be extended.
- Consult the Portal Topic page regularly. We will use it to publish updates and additional information on the call (call and topic updates).
- Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Exchange System — By submitting the application, all participants accept to use the electronic exchange system in accordance with the [Portal Terms & Conditions](#).
- Registration — Before submitting the application, all beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners must be registered in the [Participant Register](#). The participant identification code (PIC) (one per participant) is mandatory for the Application Form.
- 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).
- Resubmission — Proposals may be changed and re-submitted until the deadline for submission.
- Rejection — By submitting the application, all applicants accept the call conditions set out in this this Call document (and the documents it refers to). Proposals that do not comply with all the call conditions will be rejected. This applies also to applicants: All applicants need **to fulfil the criteria; if any one of them doesn't, they must be replaced** or the entire proposal will be rejected.
- Cancellation — There may be circumstances which may require the cancellation of the call. In this case, you will be informed via a call or topic update. Please note that cancellations are without entitlement to compensation.
- Language — You can submit your proposal in any official EU language (project abstract/summary should however always be in English). For reasons of efficiency, we strongly advise you to use English for the entire application.
- Transparency — In accordance with Article 38 of the [EU Financial Regulation](#), information about EU grants awarded is published each year on the [Europa website](#). This includes:
 - beneficiary names
 - beneficiary addresses
 - the purpose for which the grant was awarded
 - the maximum amount awarded.The publication can exceptionally be waived (on reasoned and duly substantiated request), if there is a risk that the disclosure could jeopardise your rights and freedoms under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights or harm your commercial interests.
- Communication and dissemination - Any communication or dissemination activity related to the grant will use the specific visibility obligations that apply for this call for proposals. Data protection — The submission of a proposal under this call involves the collection, use and processing of personal data. This data will be processed in accordance with the applicable legal framework. It will be processed solely for the purpose of evaluating your proposal, subsequent management of your grant and, if needed, programme monitoring, evaluation and communication. Details are explained in the [Funding & Tenders Portal Privacy Statement](#).