



Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)

Call for proposals

LIFE Preparatory Projects
Projects addressing ad hoc Legislative and Policy Priorities (PLP)

(LIFE-2026-PLP)

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HISTORY OF CHANGES			
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1.0	21.04.2026	Initial version.	n/a
2.0	22.05.2026	<p>2nd Version - Topic 1 - LIFE-2026-PLP-NAT-ENV — North Macedonia is no longer included under the specific priority 5 on Capacity-building of authorities. Moldova is now included under that same specific priority.</p> <p>For specific priority 5, the contracting authority expects to award one grant covering Montenegro and one grant covering Moldova.</p>	12 and pages 31 to 34



EUROPEAN CLIMATE, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT EXECUTIVE AGENCY (CINEA)

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

CINEA.D.1 – LIFE Energy + LIFE Climate

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

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0. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU **action grants** 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').

The call covers the following **funding topics**:

- **Topic 1: LIFE-2026-PLP-NAT-ENV — Projects on Legislative and Policy Priorities in the fields of Nature & Biodiversity and Circular Economy & Quality of Life**
- **Topic 2: LIFE-2026-PLP-ENER-GOV: Multilevel climate and energy dialogue to deliver the Governance Regulation and the post-2030 energy and climate policy framework**
- **Topic 3: LIFE-2026-PLP-ENER-COMPLIANCE: Ecodesign and energy labelling compliance support facility for suppliers and retailers**

Each project application under the call must address **only one of these topics**. Applicants wishing to apply for more than one topic, must submit a separate proposal under each topic.

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

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

- the [Call document](#) outlines the:
 - background, objectives, scope, activities that can be funded and the expected results (sections 1 and 2)
 - timetable and available budget (sections 3 and 4)
 - admissibility and eligibility conditions (including mandatory documents; sections 5 and 6)
 - criteria for financial and operational capacity and exclusion (section 7)
 - evaluation and award procedure (section 8)
 - award criteria (section 9)

¹ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 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) ('EU Financial Regulation') (OJ L, 2024/2509, 26.9.2024).

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).

³ Commission Implementing Decision C(2025)955 of 15 April 2025 on the financing of the LIFE Programme and the adoption of the work programme for the years 2025 to 2027.

- legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements (section 10)
- how to submit an application (section 11)
- 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.*).

You are also encouraged to visit the [LIFE database](#) to consult the list of projects funded previously. For the Clean Energy Transition sub-programme, projects funded previously (under the Horizon 2020 programme) can be found on the [CORDIS website](#).

1. Background

What is the LIFE Programme?

The LIFE Programme is the EU Programme for Environment and Climate Action.

As such, it is one of the key contributors to the European Green Deal⁴ which aims to:

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

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

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

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

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).

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;
- to 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 science⁵;
- to 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 Birds⁶ and Habitats⁷ 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 check⁸, the Action plan for nature, people, and the economy⁹ as well as the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030¹⁰ underline the need to increase funding for nature and biodiversity.

⁵ Scientific work undertaken by members of the general public, often in collaboration with or under the direction of professional scientists and scientific institutions.

⁶ 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)

⁷ 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).

⁸ 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').

⁹ 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'.

¹⁰ 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).

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;
- to 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;
- to 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;
- to support the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of relevant Union legislation and policy on climate action, including by improving governance at all levels, in particular through enhancing capacities of public and private actors and the involvement of civil society;
- to catalyse the large-scale deployment of successful technical and policy-related solutions for implementing 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 by contributing to the objectives and targets set out in the European Climate Law¹¹: the goal for Europe's economy and society to 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 that the Commission should propose within six months of the first global stock take carried out under the Paris Agreement¹²; and the obligation for Union institutions and Member States to ensure continuous progress in enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change, in line with the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change¹³.

The sub-programme covers 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:

- to 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;
- to 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;
- to 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.

¹¹ 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.

¹² On 6 February 2024, the Commission recommended reducing the EU's net greenhouse gas emissions by 90% by 2040 relative to 1990 in the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 'Securing our future - Europe's 2040 climate target and path to climate neutrality by 2050 building a sustainable, just and prosperous society', COM/2024/63 final.

¹³ 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.

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

The topics under this call for proposals concern LIFE Other Action Grants (OAGs).

Due to their specific nature, Other Actions are typically more prescriptive in the calls for proposals than bottom-up calls (such as for SAPs), where the identification of needs and possible solutions is in the remit of the applicants.

Other Actions may include:

- Coordination and Support Actions (CSA) – not included in this call;
- Other Projects, including Projects addressing ad hoc Legislative and Policy Priorities (PLP projects).

Other Projects

Other Projects may include:

- Action grants benefitting the organisations mentioned in Annex I of the LIFE Regulation (see also point 2 of section 4.3 below);
- Other specific projects financed according to Article 195 of the Financial Regulation to support EU policies related to environment, climate action and energy fields to be identified during the implementation of this work programme.
- Policy and Legislative Priority Projects addressing specific Union priorities (**PLP projects** – the subject of this call). PLP projects follow a top-down approach in consideration of their potential to address the challenges relating to the political momentum and to the EU legislative landscape. They are defined on an annual basis, following a consultation with the Member States and the third countries associated to the LIFE Programme.

Under this call, proposals may be submitted only to address the specific needs described in the section below, under three funding topics:

- **Topic 1: LIFE-2026-PLP-NAT-ENV — Projects on Legislative and Policy Priorities in the fields of Nature & Biodiversity and Circular Economy & Quality of Life**
- **Topic 2: LIFE-2026-PLP-ENER-GOV: Multilevel climate and energy dialogue to deliver the Governance Regulation and the post-2030 energy and climate policy framework**
- **Topic 3: LIFE-2026-PLP-ENER-COMPLIANCE: Ecodesign and energy labelling compliance support facility for suppliers and retailers**

Topic 1 - LIFE-2026-PLP-NAT-ENV — Projects on Legislative and Policy Priorities in the fields of Nature & Biodiversity and Circular Economy & Quality of Life

The proposed five (5) specific priorities under the topic LIFE-2026-PLP-NAT-ENV aim to address the following specific needs, identified by the Member States, in the sub-programme Circular Economy and Quality of Life and in the sub-programme Nature and Biodiversity.

Each project application under the call must address only one of these specific priorities. Applicants wishing to apply for more than one priority, must submit a separate proposal under each of them.

For specific priorities 1 to 4, the contracting authority expects to award only one grant per specific priority. For specific priority 5, the contracting authority expects to award one grant covering Montenegro and one grant covering Moldova.

1. Digitising environmental assessments and permitting procedures

Sub-Programme	Environment
Objectives	<p>The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) processes evaluate the potential environmental impacts of proposed projects, plans and programmes before authorization or approval. The current process of conducting EIAs and SEAs is often manual and fragmented, facing challenges such as the need to process complex datasets/inputs from various stakeholders/impacts on the environment, often in a cross-boundary context, leading to delays and increased costs. There are also impact assessments done in parallel, under the EIA Directive (EIAD), SEA Directive (SEAD), Habitats and Birds Directives (HD, BD) or the Water Framework Directive (WFD), which as much as possible should be carried out in a way that unnecessary burdens and duplication are avoided. There is a need to streamline these processes to make them more efficient and transparent.</p> <p>The Industrial Emissions Directive (IED) is the main EU instrument regulating pollutant emissions from large industrial installations as well as from large pig and poultry farms. The IED aims to achieve a high level of protection of human health and environmental protection by reducing harmful industrial pollution.</p> <p>The IED provides a permitting framework and addresses emissions, resource efficiency and waste generation. The IED mandates an integrated approach to permit applications, where multiple environmental aspects (air, water, soil) are considered collectively. Installations covered by the Directive</p>

are required to operate according to a permit issued by the competent authority, and reflecting the principles and provisions stipulated by the IED. This includes the Best Available Technique (BAT) Conclusions which are adopted as Commission Implementing Decisions and are the reference for drafting permit conditions by Member States' permitting authorities.

The IED includes provisions for public participation in decision-making processes and mandates transparency, allowing public access to information about permits and emissions. The revised IED requires Member States to develop and implement systems for the electronic permitting of installations by 31 December 2035. These systems will reduce the administrative burden for operators and competent authorities, enhance public access to information and facilitate public participation in permitting procedures.

While EIAD, SEAD, and the IED are separate pieces of legislation, they are interconnected in their objectives to protect the environment. Projects subject to the IED may require EIAs due to their potential environmental impacts. The environmental assessment process informs decision-makers about the environmental consequences of proposed activities, which in turn can influence permit conditions under the IED. All these frameworks require meaningful public involvement. The information gathered during environmental assessment related consultations – be it at the planning or project stage – can be valuable for setting appropriate conditions in IED permits. The measures and conditions identified in an EIA can be incorporated into the operational compliance and monitoring requirements of an IED permit. Cross-border consultations add to the complexity of the procedures and can eventually cause administrative hurdles, if not applied in a seamless and efficient manner. Digitalisation of processes can contribute a great deal to streamlining environmental assessments and related exchange of information between authorities and the developers/other stakeholders/consulted public within a given Member State or between different Member States.

This project aligns with the European Green Deal and the Digital Strategy by promoting digital transformation and environmental sustainability. It also seeks synergies with national efforts to digitise public service procedures. Additionally, in order to enhance knowledge and application of e-permitting, the project will also foresee training and capacity building.

The main objectives of this project are:

- To streamline the environmental assessment processes under different pieces of legislation (SEAD, EIAD, HD, WFD, IED) also by introducing digital tools that standardise data collection, data-sharing and assessments, where possible relying on state-of-the-art tools, such as automated digitalisation services, including Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- To enhance transparency and accessibility for stakeholders of data and information gathered under environmental assessments, with a view to improving engagement of the general public.
- To reduce the time and cost involved in conducting environmental assessments while maintaining or improving their accuracy and quality.
- To foster the integration and streamlining of processes under various directives, at least the WFD, HD, EIAD, SEAD, and IED. It will facilitate environmental assessments and eventually permitting across all Member States, ensuring seamless interoperability and effective data sharing.
- To support capacity building and knowledge transfer by training Member State competent authorities and stakeholders in implementing e-permitting or e-assessment systems also as required by the revised IED, by developing training materials and providing training sessions accessible to stakeholders, including public administration, planning/permitting authorities, judiciary authorities, inspectors, etc.

Scope

Implementing pilots:

Identify regions/territories/areas, jointly covering three or more Member States, where digitalisation of the environmental assessment and permitting procedures could be improved and initiate pilots accordingly. These pilots should include one or several of the following aspects:

- Pilot standardised digital tools and platforms that can at a later stage be re-used by all Member States for permitting, pre-permitting and environmental assessments.
- Ensuring seamless interoperability across borders also to facilitate data sharing between authorities as well as effective general public engagement, with a view to potential scale-up and transboundary consultation in all Member States.
- Integrate AI and data analytics to improve data processing and support decision-making.

The pilots will serve as a testbed for innovative digital solutions, helping to refine approaches before larger-scale implementation. They will facilitate streamlining and integration of diverse procedures, such as those under the WFD, HD, EIAD, SEAD and/or

IED, also to help develop integrated digital platforms with the possible support of AI and data analytics tools. These activities will serve to streamline processes, reduce redundancy, avoid duplication and reduce administrative burden both for public administration and business or other stakeholders.

Support for training and capacity building:

Complementary to the digital pilots, the proposal should support the upskilling of public authorities (such as planning/permitting/environmental competent authorities, etc.) involved in permitting and environmental assessments and the development of guidance/recommendations for Member States on environmental assessments/e-permitting under the IED, HD, WFD, EIAD and/or SEAD. The training activities may include:

- Organising workshops and knowledge-sharing events for competent authorities, project developers;
- Developing and delivering training materials and modules on e-permitting, environmental assessments, and related EU legal frameworks such as the above-mentioned Directives.
- Producing guidance and collecting good practices on the implementation of e-permitting systems and the digitalisation of environmental assessments processes.
- Supporting knowledge exchange between Member States to facilitate streamlining of environmental assessments and promoting mutual recognition of assessments.

The budget foreseen for training and capacity building should be limited to 10% of the total budget.

It is recommended that the consortium includes technological partners with expertise in digitalisation as well as experts in environmental assessments and permitting. The consortium must ensure that project data are stored and processed within the European Union or the European Economic Area (EU/EEA) and that appropriate safeguards are applied in accordance with applicable Union data-protection and security rules.

Where processing data outside the EU/EEA is technically necessary for specific research purposes, the consortium must duly justify such processing, inform the granting authority, and ensure compliance with applicable Union legislation, including data protection requirements.

Where artificial intelligence (AI) tools are used in the project, preference should be given to solutions hosted and operated on infrastructure located within the EU/EEA.

Project data must not be used to train or improve external AI models or services without the prior agreement of the granting authority.

Expected results and impacts	<p>The project would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve efficiency and speed: By developing standardised digital tools, the permitting and environmental assessment processes will become more streamlined and efficient. This will reduce the time required for approvals and assessments, benefiting both public authorities and businesses. • Reduce administrative burden: Automation, streamlined workflows and the integration of processes will minimise redundancy, potential duplication and may lead to cost savings. • Enhance transparency and public engagement: Digital tools and platforms will facilitate easy access to information, strengthening transparency, improving public access and fostering stakeholder engagement. • Increase uptake of digital solutions: The project will give an opportunity to develop and pilot digital solutions delivering better efficiency on the ground, while reducing administrative burden, which can consequently be re-used by other Member States or regions. • Enhance compliance and environmental protection: Streamlined processes will support more effective monitoring and compliance with environmental regulations. • Ensure capacity building and upskilling: Targeted training programmes will enable authorities and stakeholders to navigate new digital systems effectively.
Specific consortium requirements	<p>The consortium must include the competent authorities at least of the regions/territories/areas in each of the countries of intervention.</p> <p>The consortium must include entities from at least three different EU Member States.</p>
Expected project duration	24 months
Maximum Funding rate and maximum EU contribution	<p>Maximum funding rate: 90%</p> <p>Maximum EU contribution: EUR 2 million</p>

2. Preserving primary and old-growth forest in critical regions of Europe through mapping and awareness raising

Sub-Programme

Nature and Biodiversity

Objectives

The main objective of the project selected under this specific priority is to support efforts related to the protection of primary and old-growth forests, in line with the EU commitment to strictly protect these forests by 2030, as stated in the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and confirmed by the Council in October 2020¹⁴. In addition, the project will contribute to the **implementation** of the **Nature Restoration Regulation (NRR)**. The NRR obliges Member States to restore protected forest habitats to good condition and improve a range of biodiversity-related indicators such as “deadwood volumes” or “presence of large and old trees”. Protection of primary and old-growth forests can contribute substantially to both of these objectives.

Primary and old-growth forests are some of the EU’s richest ecosystems. They store significant carbon stocks and are of paramount importance for biodiversity and the provision of multiple ecosystem services. They provide a habitat for many of the EU’s endangered and endemic species and are also prime examples of our natural heritage. In the EU today, these forest areas are rare, often small, and fragmented, representing around 3% of EU’s forest area.

The project’s geographical scope should focus on the critical regions with the highest representation of such forests in the EU, namely the Boreal region, Romania and Bulgaria.

More specifically, the project will support national actions by:

1. **Developing support tools and methods** for mapping of primary and old-growth forests in those forest habitats and forest types where sound science-based approaches are currently missing or are not fully developed. The methodologies must be in line with Commission’s [Guidelines for Defining, Mapping, Monitoring and Strictly Protecting EU Primary and Old-Growth Forests](#). The project will focus on critical regions with the highest representation of such forests in the EU, namely the Boreal region, Romania and Bulgaria.
2. **Demonstrating cost-effective mapping** of primary and old-growth forests in the identified forest types and regions, including with the use of remote sensing technology and ground surveys.
3. **Promoting understanding and application** of the methodologies and the mapping work with the critical

¹⁴ EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: bringing nature back into our lives, COM(2020) 380 final

stakeholders in the region, i.e. national and local authorities, forest managers and civil society.

4. **Exploring and testing funding, measures and tools** that can facilitate long-term protection of the mapped forests, including the use of **voluntary market mechanisms** such as **nature credits**.

This specific priority is aligned with the **goal** of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and EU Forest Strategy for 2030 of **defining, mapping, monitoring and strictly protecting all the EU's remaining primary and old-growth forests by 2030**, further specified in Commission's *Guidelines for Defining, Mapping, Monitoring and Strictly Protecting EU Primary and Old-Growth Forests*.

This project should build on the results and tools provided by the [LIFE Prognoses project](#). More specifically, it should extend that project's work on the methodologies for mapping of temperate beech forests and extend it to other critical forest types and regions.

Reference documentation

[New EU Forest Strategy for 2030](#)

[Nature Restoration Regulation](#)

[Guidelines for Defining, Mapping, Monitoring and Strictly Protecting EU Primary and Old-Growth Forests](#)

[Mapping and assessment of primary and old-growth forests in Europe](#)

Scope

The project must include the following activities:

1. Development of **support tools and methods** (e.g. thresholds and identification criteria) based on **desk research** and **ground surveys** in **model primary and old-growth forests** of **at least two relevant forest types**;
 2. **Demonstration of mapping** of the primary and old-growth forests based on the methodologies developed under point 1, covering the regions with the highest representation of such forests in the EU, namely the **Boreal region, and Romania and Bulgaria**.
 3. **Awareness-raising and training campaigns** of stakeholders in the relevant countries to promote
-

further applications of the developed methods and tools.

4. **Small-scale demonstration** of a funding model for long-term protection of a selected primary or old-growth forest. This activity must start by exploring and analyzing **different funding models** based on relevant research (including, but not limited to EU Horizon projects), including the use of **voluntary market mechanisms** such as **nature credits**. The most suitable funding model must then be applied through a small-scale demonstration pilot.

Activities described above must be implemented with the involvement of competent authorities (national, regional or local) from the target regions. Activities under points 2 to 4 should be implemented with the appropriate participation of forest owners and civil society organisations.

The following outputs are expected:

- Report and guidance on the developed tools and methods.
- Online map(s) and the corresponding shapefile showing the identified primary and old-growth forest areas as part of the mapping demonstration.
- Report on the awareness raising and training campaigns carried out.
- Report on the small-scale demonstration pilot. This report must include recommendations on how to upscale the demonstrated funding model to other forest types and regions.

The material developed by the project must be in English, and translation in at least two other EU languages corresponding to the target regions is recommended to help country-specific practitioners use it. The material developed must be in formats suitable for being accessible online. It must also be suitable to fit in dedicated DG ENV² geospatial infrastructure for ensuring the continuation of its use after the end of the project.

It is recommended that the project consortium includes:

- relevant research organisations in the targeted countries or wider biogeographical region;
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> competent authorities in the countries where the demonstration of mapping takes place, as referred to in point 2.
Expected results and impacts	<p>It is expected that the project will have a substantial impact on ensuring the identification of additional (i.e. not yet identified or protected) areas of primary and old-growth forest in the relevant forest types and on laying the groundwork for the protection of these areas, in particular in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established cooperation between the critical stakeholders; Having a roadmap in place for protection and, where relevant, funding of additional areas, developed in cooperation with the stakeholders
Specific consortium requirements	Not applicable
Expected project duration	36 months
Maximum Funding rate and maximum EU contribution	<p>Maximum funding rate: 90%</p> <p>Maximum EU contribution: EUR 1.5 million</p>

3. Development and implementation of an analytical methodology to distinguish between virgin and recycled polymers at custom controls

Sub-Programme	Circular Economy and Quality of life
Objectives	<p>The European Commission invites proposals for a project to develop and test comprehensive analytical methodologies to verify whether consignments declared to contain recycled plastic sourced from post-consumer plastic waste made of Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET), Polyethylene (PE), Polypropylene (PP) and Polystyrene (PS) at customs controls are genuinely recycled. The project should ensure close collaboration with EU Member states' customs authorities to guarantee alignment of analytical protocols with national enforcement practices and to facilitate practical uptake of results at the operational level.</p> <p>Polymers are typically made of virgin raw-materials (e.g. petroleum-based raw materials) or recycled ones (e.g. post-consumer plastic waste). In the latter case, plastic waste is typically collected, sorted, and then processed into new plastic products, e.g. PET bottles or packaging.</p>

The objective is to promote recycled plastic materials made of PET, PE, PP and PS to reduce waste landfilling, ensure circularity, and preserve resources.

The EU plastics recycling industry currently faces the challenge of unfair competition due to fraudulent import from third countries threatening its competitiveness and potentially its long-term viability. Without robust mechanisms to verify recycled content claims, materials falsely declared as recycled can escape detection and taxation, perpetuating competitive inequalities between domestic recyclers and importers. These mislabelled imports threaten the EU recycling industry by undermining demand and hindering investment in domestic infrastructure that is essential for the circular economy.

These recent developments underscore the importance of ensuring that recycled materials entering the EU market comply with environmental standards. The European Commission, through its measures proposed in the Winter Package designed to support industries crucial to the circular economy, is driving efforts to enhance uniform application and enforcement of EU rules. There is a growing need for sophisticated methods to distinguish between legitimate recycled plastics and falsely declared recyclates.

This initiative aims to improve the ability of the EU member states’ customs authorities to detect and prevent fraudulent imports from third countries by reinforcing and deploying protocols addressing materials made of PET, PE, PS, and PP.

Reference documentation

- Regulation 2025/40 (Packaging and Packaging Waste)
- Directive 2019/904 (Single Use Plastics)
- Regulation 2022/1616 (Recycling Food Contact Materials)
- Directive 2000/53/EC (End-of-Life Vehicles; ongoing negotiations for regulation)
- Regulation 2024/1781 (Ecodesign and Sustainable Products)

Scope	The main scope of the project is to develop, reinforce and deploy protocols addressing materials made of PET, PE, PP and PS as described below.
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Each protocol should be developed by a minimum of three laboratories. It is expected that the protocols are developed in the following order of priority: PET, PE, PP and PS.

To ensure reliability and representativeness and to facilitate timely advancements in verification processes across the Union, the protocols must be tested in at least the following Member States, where the largest plastics converters are established, representing over 75% of the industry: Germany, Italy, France, Spain, Poland, Belgium, and the Netherlands.

Package 1- Reinforcement and deployment of a protocol addressing materials made of PET

The National Technical Center for Plastics and Composites Industries, tasked and financed by the French Ministry of Economy, developed a protocol to distinguish virgin from recycled PET (DISTINGO). It is expected that the protocol DISTINGO will serve as a basis for further developments/refinement under that package. This first package must include:

- a. Conduct Round Robin tests in a minimum of three labs with at least 100 samples measured in each laboratory, to refine the methodology.
- b. Promote the testing of the protocol in the respective national customs labs of the Member States mentioned above, and recommend the appropriate equipment meeting the technical requirements of the protocols.

Package 2 - Development, reinforcement and deployment of a protocol addressing materials made of PE

Package 3 - Development, reinforcement and deployment of a protocol addressing materials made of PP

Package 4 - Development, reinforcement and deployment of a protocol addressing materials made of PS

Each of the packages 2, 3 and 4 must include:

- a. Creation of the Technical Protocol. This includes:
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i. Developing a chemistry route combined with Artificial Intelligence (AI) for the different substances and molecular mass characterization, and

ii. Establishing a physical route combined with AI tools if feasible, utilising hyperspectral optics and thermodynamics.

b. Conduct Round Robin tests in a minimum of three labs within the Member States mentioned above, with at least 100 reference samples measured in each lab.

c. Promote the testing of the newly created protocol referred to in a) in the respective customs labs of the Member States mentioned above, and recommend the appropriate equipment meeting the protocol's technical requirements.

In addition, the proposed project should set the basis of further enhancement of recycling claims verification methods. In particular, it is expected that applicants develop a library of sample sets, comprising virgin and recycled materials collected from the targeted MS that will serve as a solid baseline enabling sophisticated chemical and physical analysis in core labs.

Academic input on refining testing protocols would be beneficial, but partners should focus on achieving uniformity in testing conditions through tangible actions, enabling reliable outcomes across the Member States involved.

Applicants must ensure effective collaboration and communication among participating labs and the customs authorities of targeted Member States, guaranteeing smooth execution of tests and required adaptations for the protocols. They should have a robust understanding of customs procedures and technical requirements (test methods for quantifying polymers; manufacturing of recycled plastics), reflecting readiness to implement protocols in national labs and adapt equipment accordingly.

Expected results and impacts

The initiative's expected impact revolves around enhancing the robustness of verification methods to ensure that imported plastic recyclates or products with plastic recycled content are correctly declared.

This will foster fair competition between domestic recyclers and recyclers located in third countries. Evaluating and refining protocols to exceed a 97% success rate will be instrumental in consistently verifying recycling claims.

	<p>Recommendation for upgrading national lab equipment will ensure uniformity in testing conditions, thereby supporting the reliability of tests made in the customs labs of the Member States.</p> <p>By implementing these methodologies, the project anticipates generating significant qualitative impacts, such as improved stakeholder trust and investment in domestic recycling infrastructure, essential for the circular economy.</p> <p>The project's scale will involve multiple EU member states working in tandem, amplifying uniform application and enforcement of EU rules, with press events and meetings designed to promote transparency and showcase achievements.</p> <p>This collaborative effort aims to establish a model for precision and reliability in distinguishing legitimate recycled materials, ultimately strengthening the EU's commitment to environmental integrity and economic competitiveness.</p>
Specific consortium requirements	The consortium must include participation of laboratories with expertise in chemistry for substances and molecular mass characterization, as well as capabilities in hyperspectral optics and thermodynamics for physical evaluations.
Expected project duration	48 months
Maximum Funding rate and maximum EU contribution	<p>Maximum funding rate: 90%</p> <p>Maximum EU contribution: EUR 8 million</p>

4. Support for reducing discharges into marine waters from exhaust gas cleaning systems (scrubbers) installed onboard ships

Sub-Programme	Environment
Objectives	<p>Globally, over 5 000 ships are equipped with exhaust gas cleaning systems ("scrubbers"). These systems treat exhaust gases with seawater and discharge the resulting polluted wastewater directly into the sea when operating in open loop mode. Systems operating in close loop modes also releases bleed off waters. Scrubbers are recognised as a compliance option for air pollution rules aimed at reducing emissions from the combustion of heavy fuel oils, particularly sulphur oxides (SOx) in international¹⁵ and EU</p>

¹⁵ MARPOL Annex VI (Regulations 4 and 14, with the EGCS Guidelines, e.g. MEPC.259(68))

law¹⁶. However, they create a new environmental problem: highly contaminated discharges into the seas and oceans.

Scrubber discharges are a significant source of marine pollution, releasing persistent toxic heavy metals and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons that harm marine life and ecosystems, and may pose risks to communities reliant on seafood. This concern has also been highlighted by the European Court of Auditors in a recent special report¹⁷. Numerous studies, including several funded by the EU, have highlighted the toxic effects of scrubber water discharge on marine life and habitats.

There is currently no EU-wide ban on scrubber discharges. Instead, several EU Member States have introduced local or national restrictions on scrubber water discharges in their ports and inner harbours, specific coastal areas and in some cases, across all territorial waters (12 nautical miles). In these restricted areas, ships are typically required to switch to low-sulphur fuel, operate scrubbers at zero discharge mode and deliver residues to port reception facilities, or, in some cases to refrain using scrubbers altogether.

The EU aims to protect marine ecosystems and achieve Good Environmental Status under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive¹⁸ by supporting efforts to eliminate contaminants such as heavy metals and hydrocarbons from the marine environment.

Nevertheless, awareness of the negative impacts of scrubber discharges remains limited at political, administrative, and public levels in many EU Member States.

The expected project should aim to achieve **five complementary objectives** to support the development and uptake of effective restrictions on scrubber water discharges at EU level, while also increasing awareness of their negative environmental, health, and socio-economic impacts:

1. **Consolidate and enhance existing knowledge** on the environmental and socio-economic impacts of scrubber water discharges and systematically document existing restriction regimes and enforcement practices in EU and selected non-EU-states.

¹⁶ Directive (EU) 2016/802 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on the reduction of the sulphur content of certain liquid fuels

¹⁷ [EUROPEAN COURT OF AUDITORS Special report 06/2025: EU actions tackling sea pollution by ships – Not yet out of troubled waters](#)

¹⁸ Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive) (Text with EEA relevance).ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2008/56/oj>

2. **Disseminate evidence and best practices and provide targeted capacity-building** support to EU Member States to encourage, design and implement environmentally effective and economically viable restrictions on scrubber water discharges.
3. **Coordinate and reinforce technical and advocacy efforts** at regional (HELCOM, OSPAR, as well as the Barcelona Convention), EU, and international (the International Maritime Organization, IMO) levels to promote coherent, region-wide approaches to restricting scrubber water discharges.
4. **Mitigate detrimental impacts on marine life** while maintaining economic competitiveness of the maritime sector and ports.
5. **Engage collaboratively with non-EU states at IMO level** to effectively advocate for advancing global regulations on scrubber water discharges under the IMO framework, particularly in Emission Control Areas (ECAs) and sensitive sea areas.

Reference documentation

The project aligns with EU policy goals, including the European Green Deal, the zero-pollution ambition¹⁹, the European Water Resilience Strategy²⁰ as well as contributing to the legal objectives of core environmental directives, *i.e.*, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the Water Framework Directive²¹.

Although not EU law in a strict sense, the EU and its Member States are contracting parties to several regional seas conventions that are highly relevant in this context : the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area²² (the Helsinki Convention - HELCOM), the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic²³ (the OSPAR Convention) and the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean²⁴ (the Barcelona Convention). These frameworks are increasingly examining

¹⁹ COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS Pathway to a Healthy Planet for All EU Action Plan: 'Towards Zero Pollution for Air, Water and Soil', COM/2021/400 final, [EUR-Lex - 52021DC0400 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

²⁰ COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS **European Water Resilience Strategy**, COM/2025/280 final, [EUR-Lex - 52025DC0280 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

²¹ Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2000/60/oj>

²² [The Helsinki Convention – HELCOM](#)

²³ [Convention | OSPAR Commission](#)

²⁴ [Barcelona Convention and Protocols | UNEP MAP](#)

the environmental impact of scrubber discharges and considering coordinated regional measures or bans.

The EU actively supports this regional work, including efforts to introduce coordinated restrictions on scrubber discharges in the sea basin and other sensitive sea areas.

The PLP project is designed to bridge these frameworks by consolidating scientific knowledge, supporting Member States and regional bodies in introducing restrictions on scrubber water discharges, and contributing to a level playing field across EU ports and waters.

Scope

To support the achievement of the five objectives listed above, and ultimately the introduction of effective restrictions on scrubber water discharges that protect marine ecosystems while safeguarding the economic competitiveness of the maritime sector and ports, and to promote coherent EU, regional and global regulation, the following actions are expected:

1. Mapping pollutants and effects:

Identify and synthesise studies on key pollutants in scrubber water discharges, such as heavy metals, PAHs and microplastics, and their adverse effects on marine wildlife and ecosystems, with a focus on local level impacts and on bridging remaining knowledge gaps. Based on data from two or three high-traffic EU ports, this activity should provide the evidence base for future restriction measures.

2. Mapping potential socio-economic and human health impacts:

Gather information on how scrubber water discharge restrictions impact the competitiveness of ports and coastal economies, socio-economic sectors such as fisheries and aquaculture, as well as seafood safety and consumer risk. The impact assessment should be based on data from two to three case study regions.

3. Mapping existing restrictions:

Analyse existing scrubber water discharge restrictions in the EU and other states that have introduced national restrictions or prohibitions on scrubbers' discharges, including associated enforcement strategies and further develop and update a publicly accessible database and interactive map documenting existing scrubber discharge restrictions and enforcement practices in EU and selected non-EU states, including ports, territorial waters and ECAs. Furthermore, this activity should include a policy analysis and comparison and where possible integration with the EU Open Data Portal. As a final element, applicants are expected

to review the main policy, legal, technical, monitoring and enforcement barriers in four to six Member States, including lessons learned from existing restrictions and recommended strategies for adopting and enforcing future measures.

4. Best-practice workshops:

Organise workshops in six to eight EU states that have not yet introduced national restrictions to share knowledge, lessons learned and practical approaches and to encourage consideration of restriction measures.

5. Expert support for EU Member States:

Provide tailored expertise and capacity-building, including cost-benefit analyses (with a focus on Exclusive Economic Zones, EEZs) to support four to six Member States interested in introducing or strengthening restrictions. This must include the development of tailored policy toolkits including cost-benefit analyses, legal templates, and enforcement guidelines.

6. Support regional collaboration:

Provide input, share analysis and exploit synergies with current initiatives in regional bodies like HELCOM, OSPAR, and the Barcelona Convention to develop and adopt regional restrictions on scrubber water discharges. Applicants are expected to draft policy submissions and supporting briefs for the regional sea conventions, prepared on the basis of two to three regional roundtables and aligned with their work programmes, with a view to promoting more harmonised restrictions.

7. Stakeholder consultation:

Organise a stakeholder consultation, with the support of the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) providing technical guidance, involving representatives of national competent authorities, relevant EU institutions and other stakeholders to discuss and assess options for a possible EU-level action on scrubber water discharges. It is expected the stakeholder consultation will take place in Brussels and will involve at least 60 participants from the principal stakeholder groups concerned by restrictions on discharges from exhaust gas cleaning systems, including Member State competent authorities, EU institutions and agencies, regional sea conventions, port and shipping stakeholders, scientific and technical organisations, and civil society, setting out recommendations for EU-level action.

8. International outreach and IMO support:

Draft and compile evidence-based policy brief(s) to support potential submissions to the IMO Marine Environment

Protection Committee (MEPC), in coordination with the European Commission, EMSA and Member States. Alongside this, facilitate outreach and dialogue with non-EU States regarding bans or stringent restrictions on scrubber water discharges in Emission Control Areas and other sensitive regions.

9. Public knowledge sharing and awareness raising:

Develop and maintain a public website to share project outputs, maps, and case studies, and to highlight further needs identified during the project and implement a targeted communication strategy to raise awareness among policymakers, administrations, industry and civil society. The set of communication outputs should include:

- a public project website presenting outputs, maps and case studies;
- a targeted communication strategy;
- dissemination materials such as policy briefs, newsletters and presentations at relevant events;
- online knowledge hub – a centralised digital platform gathering project reports, tools and stakeholder resources to support longer-term knowledge sharing.

10. Exploitation and legacy plan:

A strategy for sustaining stakeholder engagement and uptake of results after the end of the project, including follow-up actions and possible funding opportunities.

Additional actions

In addition to the actions set out above, proposals may also include the following optional actions:

11. Organise targeted training for port authorities and environmental agencies

Development and delivery of training modules, including e-learning and/or in-person formats, on scrubber discharge restrictions, available alternatives, and enforcement approaches, with a view to strengthening future implementation capacity.

12. Develop online cost-benefit tool

Development of an online calculator or similar practical tool to support the assessment of the costs and benefits of introducing scrubber discharge restrictions.

Mandatory elements

- Multilingual outputs: All public deliverables must be available in English and two other EU official languages.
- IT Requirements: compatibility with the EU Open Data Portal for public access.
- It is expected that the consortium demonstrates knowledge and experience in fields relevant to the action, including marine environmental policy, shipping-related pollution, port regulation, and the scientific or environmental, socio-economic impact assessment of maritime regulatory measures. Previous experience in stakeholder coordination with European institutions, Member States, regional sea conventions and/or the IMO is recommended.
- It is recommended that the consortium ensures a balanced and complementary composition, covering legal/policy, scientific, technical, stakeholder engagement, and communication capacities relevant to scrubber discharges and their environmental, regulatory, and socio-economic impacts. It is further recommended that the consortium provide appropriate geographical coverage, including, where relevant, Member States with significant traffic of ships equipped with scrubbers, existing or planned national restrictions, or participation in relevant regional sea conventions.

Expected results and impacts

This project will support the European Commission and Member States in preparing the ground for future policy and possible legislative measures on scrubber water discharges, in line with the relevant strategic priorities.

The project is expected to contribute to the targeted priority by improving the evidence base, policy coordination, and institutional capacity needed to support restrictions on discharges from exhaust gas cleaning systems in marine waters. Expected changes include increased awareness of the environmental, socio-economic and public health impacts of scrubber discharges, stronger capacity of national and port authorities to design and enforce restriction measures, and greater alignment of approaches across Member States and regional sea frameworks. The project is expected to generate both qualitative and quantitative results, including baseline environmental and socio-economic assessments, policy and enforcement analyses in four to six Member States, six to eight national workshops, targeted training activities, policy toolkits, an online cost-benefit tool, regional policy proposals, one EU-level stakeholder consultation involving at least 60 participants,

	and evidence-based policy briefs to support action at EU and IMO level.
	The expected impacts are structured to reflect the call's emphasis on policy preparation, stakeholder engagement, and proportional environmental benefits, all within the 3-year timeframe and available budget.
Specific consortium requirements	Proposals must be submitted by at least three applicants (beneficiaries, not affiliated entities) from three different EU Member States.
Expected project duration	36 months
Maximum Funding rate and maximum EU contribution	Maximum funding rate: 90% Maximum EU contribution: EUR 1 million

5. Capacity-building of authorities in Montenegro and Moldova

A maximum of one project will be funded per country.

Sub-Programme	Nature and Biodiversity and CEQL
Objectives	<p>Montenegro and Moldova are EU candidate countries and are in the process of aligning their national plans, strategies and legislation with the EU environmental acquis. They have both made significant progress over the last years and have also recently become associated to the LIFE Programme.</p> <p>Montenegro has included in its constitution the commitment of becoming an "ecological state" while at the same time developing an extensive framework of environmental legislation, covering nature protection; chemicals management; protection of air, water, sea, land, forests and geological resources; etc. These strategies follow the initiative of the 2016 Law on Environment, which aligned Montenegrin legislation with the EU acquis and international conventions.</p> <p>The National Development Strategy "European Moldova 2030" commits Moldova to a healthy, safe environment and a sustainable low-carbon economy and in recent years, the country has accelerated reforms in areas such as waste management, water quality, industrial pollution control, biodiversity protection, and climate policy. Moldova has adopted new framework laws on environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment that</p>

mirror EU standards, while also strengthening institutions responsible for monitoring and enforcement.

However, despite bold commitments, the two countries still face significant challenges in implementation of the acquis. Joining the LIFE Programme will enable them to develop and showcase innovative methods and solutions, promote the adoption of best practices and behavioural change, and reinforce the implementation and enforcement of environmental and climate legislation aligned with EU standards.

The objectives of the action(s) to be funded will therefore be to support the authorities of Montenegro and Moldova in improving effective participation of various national stakeholders in the LIFE Programme as well as in other EU funding programmes relevant to the priorities of the LIFE Programme. Actions will seek to build up capacity in both countries to reach and support (potential) applicants in the submission of funding proposals, increase participation in calls for proposals/funding opportunities in the fields concerned and improve the quality of submitted proposals.

Scope

Proposals submitted under this call should include a needs analysis illustrating how to improve the capacity of the authority responsible for the LIFE programme to reach and support the different types of organisations that could be interested in participating in the LIFE calls for proposals (i.e., public bodies, research and civil society organisations, private companies). Applicants should identify the most effective activities for supporting the participation of these organisations, with a particular focus on the different action types under the LIFE programme, namely standard action projects, coordinated and support actions, strategic integrated and strategic nature projects.

Proposals can cover all four sub programmes of LIFE, or focus only on some types of potential applicants more relevant for Moldova or Montenegro as resulting from the needs analysis.

Activities included in proposals must take place within the territory of the Member State(s) or the LIFE-associated country(-ies) of the applicant(s).

Activities may include:

- targeted and tailor-made communication campaigns on the LIFE Programme and other relevant EU funding programmes addressed, among others, to public national and local authorities responsible for the implementation of environmental and climate action policies and plans at all levels
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and across the entire national territory (e.g. municipalities, provinces, environment protection agencies, ecological operational units responsible for the enforcement of national environmental laws, public research institutes, academia), as well as to private sector stakeholders which are relevant for the programme.

- Training activities for the staff members of the National Contact Points and possible exchanges with more experienced staff members of National Contact Points of other countries.
- Tailor-made workshops on writing solid proposals; helping applicants to build (transnational) consortia; trainings on the use and monitoring of performance indicators, etc.
- Screening of national environmental and climate action priorities to support the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of relevant Union legislations.
- Actions aimed at increasing the participation of applicants that might encounter greater difficulties in accessing funding programmes such as LIFE, as identified in the needs analysis.
- Actions aimed at increasing the use of certain types of LIFE projects.
- Actions reinforcing the mainstreaming of environmental and climate actions into other sectors, enhancing synergies between LIFE and other EU funds, and supporting the use of cumulative financing from other Union programmes or the private sector
- Procurement of external experts to address ad-hoc gaps, to provide advice and to support the preparation of a proposal.

Expected results and impacts

The following impacts are illustrative of what is expected to be attained by the actions that will be funded. Impacts should, as far as possible, be quantitatively estimated in the proposal:

- Awareness and engagement across public, private and civil society sectors in the LIFE programme and other relevant EU funding opportunities are increased.
 - Skills and knowledge of staff at National Contact Points are improved.
 - Participation in upcoming calls for proposals is increased.
 - Success rate in upcoming calls for proposals is increased
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-source financing approaches, enhancing the impact and sustainability of projects by integrating LIFE funds with other public and private sector resources are implemented.
Specific consortium requirements	<p>The competent national authority responsible for the implementation of the LIFE programme in Montenegro and/or in Moldova should in principle participate in the consortium as coordinator. In well justified cases it may participate in a different capacity, but it should in any case be part of the consortium. The LIFE National Contact Points of the respective countries must be closely involved.</p> <p>Consortiums may include additional entities provided that their participation is justified by the action's objectives and their role is clearly defined.</p> <p>A maximum of one project will be funded per country.</p>
Expected project duration	12 to 24 months
Maximum Funding rate and maximum EU contribution	<p>Maximum funding rate: 90%</p> <p>Maximum EU contribution: EUR 0.5 million per country</p>

Topic 2 - LIFE-2026-PLP-ENER-GOV: Multilevel climate and energy dialogue to deliver the Governance Regulation and the post-2030 energy and climate policy framework

The contracting authority expects to award only 1 grant under this funding topic.

Sub-Programme	Clean Energy Transition
Objectives	<p>The Governance Regulation²⁵ sets out the rules for planning, reporting and monitoring on the Energy Union and Climate Action. It requires Member States to ensure reasonable timeframes for the public to be informed, to participate, and to express their views in the preparation of National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs) and Long-Term Strategies. It also requires Member States to establish a permanent multilevel climate and energy dialogue bringing together local authorities, civil society organisations, the business community, investors and other relevant stakeholders to discuss energy and climate policies.</p> <p>However, the 2025 European Commission EU-wide assessment²⁶ of the final NECPs found that implementation of these provisions has been uneven across Member States.</p>

²⁵ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018R1999&from=EN>

²⁶ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52025SC0140>

The European Commission²⁷ encourages them to maintain and improve dialogue processes at all levels of society to ensure effective implementation of policies. This involves coordinating different governance layers alongside civil society organisations, business community, investors and other relevant stakeholders - in view of the update of the NECPs and for their monitoring and reporting, foreseen every other year.

The upcoming revision of the Regulation on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action planned for Q4 2026 will review the NECPs as a governance tool for the post-2030 period. In this context, the European Commission will work to simplify, strengthen and modernise the referred regulation. The NECPs must evolve into strategic investment plans that foster investment predictability and credibility, consumer confidence, innovation and market growth for clean technologies.

To address this, the topic aims to support Member States in fostering a multilevel climate and energy dialogue to deliver a comprehensive Energy Governance, the Fit for 55 Package and prepare the post-2030 energy and climate policy framework.

Scope

Proposals should

- Establish a permanent dialogue and create/strengthen structured synergies between different administrative levels (regions, cities, national governments) and stakeholders to reach ambitious and shared decarbonisation targets. The aim is to better define the role and contribution of the regional/local level to the national energy and climate policies, ensuring complementarity among various actors and political leadership to provide legitimacy and continuity to the dialogue process.
 - Increase co-definition and coherence of strategies and measures at different governance levels, and improve reporting schemes at local level (e.g. Heating and Cooling plans, Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAPs), European Energy Award (EEA), etc.) and national level (e.g. NECPs, National Building Renovation Plans, Social Climate Plans) to support the Energy Union Governance Regulation, increase sharing of good practices, institutionalise the improved governance processes and strengthen political commitment.
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²⁷https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:61de6ed0-3b8d-11f0-8a44-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF

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- Deliver governance or process models to allow for robust and consistent reporting mechanisms, integrating vertical and horizontal administrative layers and delivering innovative monitoring and verification schemes mixing different approaches (e.g. top-down and bottom-up) and applying such models for the updating of NECPs in appropriate time horizon.
 - Make links to other ongoing initiatives and existing dialogue fora aimed at enhancing and implementing connected and relevant policies (e.g. National Building Renovation plans, Social Climate Plans²⁸) and / or initiatives (e.g. national hubs of the European Energy Efficiency Financing Coalition).

Proposals are not expected to develop any new tools, databases, or digital platforms, unless their added value is clearly justified and their potential scale-up beyond the project convincingly addressed.

Proposals should seek to ensure the sustainability of the newly created dialogue structures or strengthen existing dialogue structures in the long-term, e.g. through their institutionalisation. Proposals should demonstrate that their concept makes strong use of established successful practices developed in previous EU initiatives and projects^[3] and/or other already existing national initiatives aiming at strengthening multilevel governance in national energy and climate policies.

Proposals should aim to establish or strengthen permanent multilevel climate and energy dialogues in 6 to 10 EU Member States. They should provide a clear rationale for the selection of each country, including the current level of development of multi-level climate and energy dialogue, an analysis of existing mechanisms and how the proposed activities will complement them. Priority will be given to proposals focusing on geographic areas in which multi-level climate and energy dialogue are less developed. Proposals should identify which stakeholders they would rely on to ensure a neutral facilitation process which allows to include all relevant stakeholders. The proposed approach should be fully participatory giving stakeholders an active role in the multilevel dialogues.

Expected results and impacts

Proposals should present the concrete results which will be delivered by the activities and demonstrate how these results will contribute to the topic-specific impacts. This demonstration should rely on a solid analysis of the current situation, realistic assumptions and baselines, and establish clear causality links between proposed activities, results and impacts.

²⁸ such as LIFE21-CET-GOV-NECPlatform

In terms of qualitative impact, proposals under this topic should demonstrate how they will contribute to the following outcomes, as relevant:

- Improved Member States multilevel dialogues in the context of the achievement of the Union's climate-neutrality objective and the different scenarios envisaged for energy and climate policies, including for the long term, and review progress.
- Improved coherence and synergies in strategies and measures across different stakeholders and governance levels.
- Improved engagement of different administrative levels and stakeholders on energy and climate matters to ensure an effective and shared implementation of policies and delivery of related investments.
- Improved sharing of information and good practices for an effective and timely multilevel dialogue.

In terms of quantitative impact, proposals should quantify their results and impacts using the indicators provided for the topic, when they are relevant for the proposed activities. Proposals are not expected to address all the listed impacts and indicators. The results and impacts should be quantified for the end of the project and for 5 years after the end of the project. The quantitative indicators for this topic include:

- Newly developed/reinforced governance structures/dialogue platforms to enhance exchanges between different administrative layers and stakeholders.
- Newly developed/reinforced governance or process models establishing a solid reporting mechanism for the NECPs.
- Number of institutionalised collaborations on the energy transition between public authorities with different administrative layers (local, regional, national) and stakeholders (civil society, communities, youth, academia, industry and business).
- Number of updated NECPs integrating the outcomes of the project measures.
- Number of contributions/synergies built with other European and national initiatives (e.g. National and Regional Partnership Plans, National Building Renovation plans, Social Climate Plans, EU Agenda for Cities, Heating and Cooling plans).
- Number of stakeholders (organisations) engaged in the process, broken down by administrative layers and stakeholder groups.

Proposals should also provide indicators which are specific to their proposed activities.

Proposals should also quantify their impacts related to the following common indicators for the LIFE Clean Energy Transition sub-programme:

- Primary energy savings triggered by the project in GWh/year.
 - Final energy savings triggered by the project in GWh/year.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Renewable energy generation triggered by the project (in GWh/year). - Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (in t CO₂-eq/year). - Investments in sustainable energy (energy efficiency and renewable energy) triggered by the project (cumulative, in million Euro).
Specific consortium requirements	Proposals must be submitted by at least 3 applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities) from 3 different eligible countries.
Expected project duration	Indicatively 36 months
Maximum Funding rate and maximum EU contribution	<p>Maximum funding rate: 90%</p> <p>Maximum EU contribution: The Commission considers that proposals requesting an EU contribution of up to EUR 2 million would allow the specific objectives to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.</p>

Topic 3 - LIFE-2026-PLP-ENER-COMPLIANCE: Ecodesign and energy labelling compliance support facility for suppliers and retailers

The contracting authority expects to award only 1 grant under this funding topic.

Sub-Programme	Clean Energy Transition
Objectives	<p>Ecodesign and energy labelling²⁹ for energy-related products enjoy widespread support by suppliers, retailers, consumers and citizens. By eliminating worst performing products from the market and by providing relevant information on product sustainability and energy consumption, these policy instruments help consumers make better informed purchase decisions and create economic benefits for them, support producers to better promote and market their sustainable and energy efficient products and contribute to major EU policy objectives (Green Deal, EU energy independency etc.).</p> <p>However, non-compliance with the requirements remains a concern as a significant portion of products on the European market still fails to meet the information and performance requirements. Economic operators such as manufacturers, suppliers and (online) dealers (e.g. retailers, installers) too often lack awareness, knowledge or detailed understanding of the legislative provisions. In addition, recent policy reports such as the Letta³⁰ and Draghi³¹ reports on the EU single market and competitiveness, but also the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products and Energy Labelling Working Plan 2025-</p>

²⁹ https://energy-efficient-products.ec.europa.eu/ecodesign-and-energy-label_en

³⁰ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/ny3j24sm/much-more-than-a-market-report-by-enrico-letta.pdf>

³¹ https://commission.europa.eu/topics/competitiveness/draghi-report_en

2030³² highlight the importance of enforcing compliance with product legislation and effective market surveillance to ensure market integrity and a level playing field for economic operators active in the European market.

The objective of this topic is to ultimately increase compliance of products on the European market with ecodesign and energy labelling requirements through proactive outreach to and engagement of economic operators fostering an improved understanding and implementation of product performance and information requirements and facilitating the uptake of (existing) resources available.

Scope

The proposed action should establish a facility combining both reactive and proactive assistance to economic operators, in particular manufacturers, suppliers and (online) dealers (e.g. retailers, installers), through targeted and timely information to increase their awareness, knowledge and understanding of the relevant ecodesign and energy labelling regulations. Attention should be given to engaging small and medium-sized suppliers and dealers, for example, those not engaged in trade associations and/or located in remote areas.

Proposals should cover at least the following with both a reactive and proactive approach:

- Raise the capacity of manufacturers, suppliers and (online) dealers (e.g. retailers, installers) on ecodesign and energy labelling requirements and developments through targeted and timely communication, dissemination and capacity building activities.
 - Set-up a help-line service to address enquiries from economic operators (which are often too specific to be dealt with effectively by the Commission's Europe Direct service). Questions for which no authoritative or clear answers exist yet may simply be acknowledged as such and "escalated" to the authorities.
 - Develop and deploy effective communication and dissemination strategies and channels to target and reach out to relevant economic operators across the whole of Europe including importers who place products from third countries on the Union market.
 - Disseminate, create and/or adapt existing technical guidance and promotional material, as necessary, for example, covering new (and revised) product groups by current and upcoming legislation. The proposed facility should not invent or take responsibility for interpretations of legislation or other formal guidance but rather support economic operators in accessing and applying relevant information and guidance and refer questions where no answers or guidance exists to the competent national authorities, including market surveillance authorities or the European Commission.
 - Promote the use and uptake of EPREL - European Product Registry for Energy Labelling³³ amongst economic operators. In addition, promote the use of
-

³² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52025DC0187>

³³ <https://eprel.ec.europa.eu/screen/home>

EPREL to the wider public and public authorities as a reference point for informed purchase decisions as well as a tool for bulk purchasers and for public procurement. Proposals are invited to outline their promotion strategy to this end.

- Promote relevant available guidance/resources such as the European Commission efficient products portal³⁴ through appropriate channels (e.g. websites, targeted campaigns, webinars, conferences, sectoral trade fairs, industry associations, specialised networks etc.) with the aim to increase suppliers and dealers' awareness and stimulate their potential role as multipliers.
- Compliance support through online sweeps: organise 2 pilot spot checks of energy labelling on online shops in multiple Member States simultaneously, within the same quarter, focused on a (few) product group(s), including bilateral follow up with online stores showing problems with compliance to offer support in terms of training and tips for better compliance.
- Develop appropriate monitoring and measurement activities to adequately capture the impacts of the proposed action such as increased compliance, awareness, knowledge and engagement of economic operators in ecodesign and energy labelling regulations.

To ensure full alignment with ecodesign and energy labelling regulations as well as developments and respective information provided by the proposed action, successful beneficiaries are requested to proactively liaise and closely coordinate with the European Commission and/or the competent national authorities, including national market surveillance authorities, where appropriate.

Proposals should ensure that information, services and tools developed are accessible in national languages of the targeted countries in order to ensure accessibility and uptake.

Access to (networks of) experts with technical knowledge on the concerned products, regulations and standards as well as the wider legal framework is necessary and should be demonstrated in the proposal. The facility would need to be sufficiently resourced to provide swift follow-up to economic operators using effective channels such as a help-line service. Expertise in communication and outreach are also needed and should be demonstrated in the proposal.

The proposal should clearly demonstrate how it builds on existing experiences and lessons learnt from LIFE Compliance Services³⁵, EEPLIANT4³⁶ and other relevant projects and initiatives.

Expected results and impacts

Proposals should present the concrete results which will be delivered by the activities and demonstrate how these results will contribute to the topic-specific impacts. This demonstration should rely on a solid analysis of the current

³⁴ https://energy-efficient-products.ec.europa.eu/index_en

³⁵ <https://www.product-compliance-services.eu/>

³⁶ <https://www.eepliant.eu/>

	<p>situation, realistic assumptions and baselines, and establish clear causality links between proposed activities, results and impacts.</p> <p>In terms of qualitative impact, proposals under this topic should demonstrate how they will contribute to increased understanding of and compliance with EU ecodesign and energy labelling legislation by economic operators.</p> <p>In terms of quantitative impact, proposals should quantify their results and impacts using the indicators provided for the topic, when they are relevant for the proposed activities. Proposals are not expected to address all the listed impacts and indicators. The results and impacts should be quantified for the end of the project and for 5 years after the end of the project. The quantitative indicators for this topic include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of economic operators engaged and informed by actions aiming at improving their understanding of new legislative acts, at least 5 000 per million EUR of EU funding. - Primary energy savings triggered by the project (in GWh/year). - Renewable energy generation triggered by the project (in GWh/year). - Investments in sustainable energy renovation triggered by the project (cumulative, in million Euro). <p>Proposals should also provide indicators which are specific to their proposed activities.</p> <p>These impacts should be demonstrated during the project and within 5 years after the project lifetime.</p>
Specific consortium requirements	<p>Relevant stakeholders (e.g. European and national level organisations) necessary for the successful implementation of the action should be involved in the project consortium with an adequate balance of interests, including at least:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - European organisations representing relevant economic operators in different sectors such as associations of suppliers and associations of dealers, with a minimum of 5 partners covering together through their membership at least 2/3 of the EU Member States. - European organisations representing relevant actors in the public or non-profit sector, with a minimum of 3 partners representing consumer associations, standardisation bodies and Market Surveillance Authorities' organisations, covering together through their membership at least 2/3 of the EU Member States. <p>Proposals must be submitted by at least 3 applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities) from 3 different eligible countries.</p>
Expected project duration	Indicatively 36 months

Maximum Funding rate and maximum EU contribution

Maximum funding rate: 90%

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of up to EUR 2.5 million would allow the specific objectives to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

3. Available budget

The available call budget is **EUR 18 000 000**.

Specific budget information per topic can be found in the table below:

Topic	Topic budget	Estimated number of projects to be funded	Expected maximum EU contribution and project duration
Topic 1 — LIFE-2026-NAT-ENV - Projects on Legislative and Policy Priorities in the fields of Nature & Biodiversity and Circular Economy & Quality of Life	EUR 13 500 000	1 project per specific priority 1 to 4 2 projects for specific priority 5	See description above
Topic 2 - LIFE-2026-PLP-ENER-GOV: Multilevel climate and energy dialogue to deliver the Governance Regulation and the post-2030 energy and climate policy framework	EUR 2 000 000	1 project	See description above
Topic 3 - LIFE-2026-PLP-ENER-COMPLIANCE: Ecodesign and energy labelling compliance support facility for suppliers and retailers	EUR 2 500 000	1 project	See description above

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:	21 April 2026
<u>Deadline for submission</u>	22 September 2026 – 17:00:00 CET (Brussels)
Information on evaluation results:	January 2027
GA signature:	April/May 2027

5. Admissibility and documents

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

Proposals must be submitted **electronically** via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (accessible via the Topic page in the [Calls for proposals](#) 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 the appropriate sections of the template must be filled in depending on whether the call has one or two submission stages.

Project acronym — Your project acronym must include the word LIFE.

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 (future coordinator, beneficiaries and affiliated entities) 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 and the project’s contribution to EU programme indicators (*to be filled in directly online*)
- **mandatory annexes and supporting documents** (*templates to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded*):
 - detailed budget table
 - activity reports of last year: not applicable
 - participant information (including previous projects, if any)

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 and affiliated entity 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 **50 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](#)³⁷, 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 (eligible countries)

In order to be eligible, the applicants (beneficiaries and affiliated entities) must:

- be legal entities (public or private bodies)
- be established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
 - EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs))
 - non-EU countries:
 - listed EEA countries and countries associated to the LIFE Programme ([list of participating countries](#))³⁸
- the coordinator must be established in an eligible country

Beneficiaries and affiliated entities 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.

Other entities may participate in other consortium roles, such as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions, etc (*see section 13*).

Specific cases and definitions

³⁷ 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).

³⁸ Applicants from countries which have requested to be associated to the LIFE Programme may participate in this call for proposals. However, no grant agreement will be signed if the association agreement is not entered into force by the end of the selection procedure.

Exceptional funding — Entities from other countries (not listed above) are exceptionally eligible, if the granting authority considers their participation essential for the implementation of the action (*see work programme*).

Natural persons — Natural persons are NOT eligible (with the exception of self-employed persons, i.e. sole traders, where the company does not have legal personality separate from that of the natural person).

International organisations — International organisations are eligible. The rules on eligible countries do not apply to them.

Entities without legal personality — Entities which do not have legal personality under their national law may exceptionally participate, provided that their representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf and offer guarantees for the protection of the EU financial interests equivalent to that offered by legal persons³⁹.

EU bodies — EU bodies (with the exception of the European Commission Joint Research Centre) can NOT be part of the consortium.

Associations and interest groupings — Entities composed of members may participate as 'sole beneficiaries' or 'beneficiaries without legal personality'⁴⁰. ⚠ Please note that if the action will be implemented by the members, they should also participate (either as beneficiaries or as affiliated entities, otherwise their costs will NOT be eligible).

Countries currently negotiating association agreements — Beneficiaries from countries with ongoing negotiations for participating 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 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)⁴¹. 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).

EU conditionality measures — Special rules apply for entities subject to measures adopted on the basis of EU Regulation 2020/2092⁴². Such entities are not eligible to participate in any funded role (beneficiaries, affiliated entities, subcontractors, recipients of financial support to third parties, etc.). Currently such measures are in place for Hungarian public interest trusts established under the Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity they maintain (see [Council Implementing Decision \(EU\) 2022/2506](#), as of 16 December 2022).

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

[Consortium composition](#)

³⁹ See Article 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

⁴⁰ For the definitions, see Articles 190(2) and 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

⁴¹ 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](#).

⁴² Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2092 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2020 on a general regime of conditionality for the protection of the Union budget (OJ L 325, 20.12.2022, p. 94).

Consortium composition - please see section 2 above for specific consortium requirement if any.

Eligible activities

Applications will only be considered eligible if their content corresponds wholly (or at least in part) to the topic and/or specific priority description for which they are submitted as set out in section 2 above.

The following activities are not considered as eligible for funding under this call:

- land purchase
- volunteer work.

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

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.*)⁴³.

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 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 projects 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 projects 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 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:

- public bodies (entities established as public body under national law, including local, regional or national authorities) or international organisations
- if the project requested grant amount is not more than EUR 60 000.

⁴³ See, for instance, [Guidance on funding for activities related to the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of Union legislation and policy](#).

If needed, it may also be done for affiliated entities.

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 responsibilities 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 projects and contribute their share (including sufficient experience in projects of comparable size and nature).

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

If the evaluation of the award criterion is positive, the applicants are considered to have sufficient operational capacity.

Applicants will have to show their capacity via the following:

- general profiles (qualifications and experiences) of the staff responsible for managing and implementing the project
- description of the consortium participants (and previous projects, if any)

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

Exclusion

Applicants which are subject to an **EU exclusion decision** or in one of the following **exclusion situations** that bar them from receiving EU funding can NOT participate⁴⁴:

- 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)

⁴⁴ See Articles 138 and 143 of EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

- guilty of grave professional misconduct⁴⁵ (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of 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, decision making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- intentionally and without proper justification resisted⁴⁶ 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 that⁴⁷:

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

8. Evaluation and award procedure

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

An **evaluation committee** (assisted by independent outside experts) will assess all applications. Proposals will first be checked for formal requirements (admissibility, and eligibility, *see sections 5 and 6*). Proposals found admissible and eligible will be

⁴⁵ '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.

⁴⁶ '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.

⁴⁷ See Article 143 EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

evaluated (for each topic) against the operational capacity and award criteria (see *sections 7 and 9*) and then ranked according to their scores.

For the LIFE-2026-PLP, the committee will rank the proposals as follows:

- 1) The proposals with the highest passing score per specific priority;
- 2) Other passing proposals ranked by score.

For proposals with the same score (within a topic or a specific priority or budget envelope) 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, the *ex aequo* proposals will be prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for the award criterion 'Impact'. If these scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion 'Relevance', then 'Quality', then 'Resources'.

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 will 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. Full compliance will be a pre-condition for signing the grant.

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)

- Relevance to the objectives of the targeted LIFE sub-programme and to the specific priorities of the call for proposals and, when relevant, topic description;
- Concept and methodology: soundness of the overall intervention logic

2. Impact (0-20 points)

- Ambition and credibility of impacts expected during and/or after the project due to the activities, including ensuring that no substantial harm is done to the other specific objectives of the LIFE Programme
- Sustainability of the project results after the end of the project and quality of the measures for the exploitation of project results

3. Quality (0-20 points)

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

4. Resources (0-20 points)

- Composition of the project team - in terms of expertise, skills and responsibilities and appropriateness of the management structure
- Appropriateness of the budget and resources and their consistency with the work plan
- Transparency of the budget, i.e. the cost items should be sufficiently described
- Value for money of the proposal

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score	Weighting
Relevance	10	20	1
Impact	10	20	1.5
Quality	10	20	1
Resources	10	20	1
Overall weighted (pass) scores (without bonus)	55	90	N/A

Maximum points (full proposals): 90 points.

Individual thresholds per criterion: 10/20, 10/20, 10/20 and 10/20 points (before weighting).

Overall threshold: 55 points (after weighting).

Proposals that pass the individual thresholds AND 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 project duration

The project starting date and duration will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 1*). Normally the starting date will be after grant signature. A retroactive starting date can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons — but never earlier than the proposal submission date.

Project duration: per topic or specific priority, an indicative duration of the project is set under the section 2 above.

Extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment.

Milestones and deliverables

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

Form of grant, funding rate and maximum grant amount

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

Project budget (requested grant amount): *see section 2 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 (**90%**).

Grants may NOT produce a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). For-profit organisations must declare their revenues and, if there is a profit, we will deduct it from the final grant amount (*see art 22.3*).

Please note that the maximum grant amount for each beneficiary will be fixed in the Grant Agreement. The beneficiaries can however decide to distribute the grant money differently in accordance with what they have agreed in the consortium agreement (*see also section 13*).

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.1 Employees, A.2 Natural persons under direct contract, A.3 Seconded persons

- A.4 SME owners and natural person beneficiaries
- A.5 Volunteers
- B. Subcontracting costs
- C. Purchase costs
 - C.1 Travel and subsistence
 - C.2 Equipment
 - C.3 Other goods, works and services
- E. Indirect costs

Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:

- personnel costs:
 - SME owner/natural person unit cost⁴⁸: Yes
 - volunteers unit cost⁴⁹: No
- travel and subsistence unit cost⁵⁰: No (only actual costs)
- equipment costs: depreciation only
- other cost categories:
 - costs for financial support to third parties: not allowed
 - land purchase costs: not allowed
- indirect cost flat-rate: 7% of the eligible direct costs (categories A-D, except volunteers costs and exempted specific cost categories (land purchase), if any)
- VAT: non-deductible/non-refundable 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
 - kick-off meeting: costs for kick-off meeting organised by the granting authority are eligible (travel costs for maximum 2 persons, return ticket to Brussels and accommodation for one night) only if the meeting takes place after the project starting date set out in the Grant Agreement; the starting date can be changed through an amendment, if needed
 - project websites: communication costs for presenting the project on the participants' websites or social media accounts are eligible; costs for *separate* project websites are not eligible unless duly justified by the project objectives
 - common information and dissemination activities: foresee resources to increase synergies between, and the visibility of LIFE and EU supported actions

⁴⁸ 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)7115).

⁴⁹ 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).

⁵⁰ Commission [Decision](#) of 12 January 2021 authorising the use of unit costs for travel, accommodation and subsistence costs under an action or work programme under the 2021-2027 multi-annual financial framework (C(2021)35).

- other ineligible costs: Yes:
 - land purchase costs are not eligible
 - Volunteers costs are not eligible

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 **30%** of the maximum grant amount; exceptionally less or no prefinancing). The prefinancing will be paid 30 days from entry into force/financial guarantee (if required) — whichever is the latest.

There will be no interim payments. There will be one or more **additional prefinancing payments** linked to a prefinancing report.

In addition, for longer or more complex projects, you may be expected to submit one or more progress reports not linked to 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 (your coordinator) to pay back the difference (recovery).

All payments will be made to the coordinator.

 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 costs declared. The Grant Agreement contains additional record-keeping rules (*Data Sheet, point 3 and art 20*).

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: Yes
- additional communication and dissemination activities: Yes
- special logos: Yes

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

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

Other specificities

Consortium agreement: Yes

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 Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [LIFE Info Days](#)

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

Contact

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, contact:

for LIFE-2026-PLP-ENER-GOV and LIFE-2026-PLP-ENER-COMPLIANCE topics: CINEA-LIFE-CET@ec.europa.eu.

for specific priorities under the LIFE-2026-NAT-ENV topic: CINEA-LIFE-ENQUIRIES@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.
- **Consortium roles** — When setting up your consortium, you should think of organisations that help you reach objectives and solve problems.

The roles should be attributed according to the level of participation in the project. Main participants should participate as **beneficiaries** or **affiliated entities**; other entities can participate as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions. **Associated partners** and third parties giving in-kind contributions should bear their own costs (they will not become formal recipients of EU funding). **Subcontracting** should normally constitute a limited part and must be performed by third parties (not by one of the beneficiaries/affiliated entities). Subcontracting going beyond 30% of the total eligible costs must be justified in the application.

- **Coordinator** — In multi-beneficiary grants, the beneficiaries participate as consortium (group of beneficiaries). They will have to choose a coordinator, who will take care of the project management and coordination and will represent the consortium towards the granting authority. In mono-beneficiary grants, the single beneficiary will automatically be coordinator.
- **Affiliated entities** — Applicants may participate with affiliated entities (i.e. entities linked to a beneficiary which participate in the action with similar rights and obligations as the beneficiaries, but do not sign the grant and therefore do not become beneficiaries themselves). They will get a part of the grant money and must therefore comply with all the call conditions and be validated (just like beneficiaries); but they do not count towards the minimum eligibility criteria for consortium composition (if any). If affiliated entities participate in your project, please do not forget to provide documents demonstrating their affiliation link to your organisation as part of your application.
- **Associated partners** — Applicants may participate with associated partners (i.e. partner organisations which participate in the action but without the right to get grant money). They participate without funding and therefore do not need to be validated.
- **Consortium agreement** — For practical and legal reasons it is recommended to set up internal arrangements that allow you to deal with exceptional or unforeseen circumstances (in all cases, even if not mandatory under the Grant Agreement). The consortium agreement also gives you the possibility to redistribute the grant money according to your own consortium-internal principles and parameters (for instance, one beneficiary can reattribute its grant money to another beneficiary). The consortium agreement thus allows you to customise the EU grant to the needs inside your consortium and can also help to protect you in case of disputes.

- **Balanced project budget** — Grant applications must ensure a balanced project budget and sufficient other resources to implement the project successfully (*e.g. own contributions, income generated by the action, financial contributions from third parties, etc*). You may be requested to lower your estimated costs, if they are ineligible (including excessive).
- **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).
- **No-profit rule** — Grants may NOT give a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). This will be checked by us at the end of the project.
- **No cumulation of funding/no double funding** — It is strictly prohibited to cumulate funding from the EU budget (except under 'EU Synergies actions'). Outside such Synergies actions, any given action may receive only ONE grant from the EU budget and cost items may under NO circumstances be declared under two EU grants; projects must be designed as different actions, clearly delineated and separated for each grant (without overlaps).
- **Combination with EU operating grants** — Combination with EU operating grants is possible, if the project remains outside the operating grant work programme and you make sure that cost items are clearly separated in your accounting and NOT declared twice (see [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6.2.E](#)).
- **Multiple proposals** — Applicants may submit more than one proposal for *different* projects under the same call (and be awarded funding for them).
Organisations may participate in several proposals.
BUT: if there are several proposals for *very similar* projects, only one application will be accepted and evaluated; the applicants will be asked to withdraw the others (or they will be rejected).
- **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 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.

- **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](#).