



Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)

Call for proposals

[LIFE Technical Assistance projects for Capacity Building]
LIFE-2024-TA-CAP

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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

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU **action grants** in the fields of environment and climate action under the **Programme for Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)**.

The regulatory framework for this EU Funding Programme is set out in:

- Regulation 2018/1046 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))
- the basic act (LIFE Regulation [2021/783](#)¹).

The call is launched in accordance with the 2021-2024 Multiannual Work Programme² and will be managed by the **European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA)** ('Agency').

The call covers the following **topic**:

- **LIFE-2024-TA-CAP -Technical Assistance projects for Capacity Building**

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:

¹ Regulation (EU) 2021/783 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2021 establishing a Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) (OJ L 172, 17.5.2021, p. 53).

² Commission Implementing Decision C(2021) 4997 final of 9 July 2021 on the financing of the LIFE Programme and the adoption of the work programme for the years 2021 to 2024 .

- background, objectives, scope, activities that can be funded and the expected results (sections 1 and 2)
- timetable and available budget (sections 3 and 4)
- admissibility and eligibility conditions (including mandatory documents; sections 5 and 6)
- criteria for financial and operational capacity and exclusion (section 7)
- evaluation and award procedure (section 8)
- award criteria (section 9)
- legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements (section 10)
- how to submit an application (section 11)
- the Online Manual outlines the:
 - procedures to register and submit proposals online via the EU Funding & Tenders Portal ('Portal')
 - recommendations for the preparation of the application
- the AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement contains:
 - detailed annotations on all the provisions in the Grant Agreement you will have to sign in order to obtain the grant (*including cost eligibility, payment schedule, accessory obligations, etc*).

1. Background

What is the LIFE Programme?

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

As such, it is one of the key contributors to the European Green Deal³ which aims to:

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

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

- boosting and integrating the implementation of the EU's policy objectives for halting and reversing loss of wildlife habitats and species across all sectors
- supporting the transition to a circular economy and protecting and improving the quality of EU's natural resources, including air, soil and water among others

³ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: The European Green Deal (COM (2019)640 final).

- supporting implementation of the 2030 energy and climate policy framework, the EU's climate neutrality objective by 2050, and the new EU strategy on adaptation to climate change and
- building capacity, stimulating investments and supporting implementation of policies focused on energy efficiency and small-scale renewables.

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

Environment:

- sub-programme Nature and Biodiversity
- sub-programme Circular Economy and Quality of Life

Climate Action:

- sub-programme Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation
- sub-programme Clean Energy Transition.

Nature and Biodiversity

The specific objectives of the sub-programme 'Nature and Biodiversity' are the following:

- to develop, demonstrate, promote and stimulate scale up of innovative techniques, methods and approaches (including nature-based solutions and ecosystem approach) for reaching the objectives of the EU legislation and policy on nature and biodiversity, and to contribute to the knowledge base and to the application of best practices, including through the support of the Natura 2000
- to support the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of EU legislation and policy on nature and biodiversity, including by improving governance at all levels, in particular through enhancing capacities of public and private actors and the involvement of civil society, also taking into due consideration the possible contributions provided by citizen science
- to catalyse the large-scale deployment of successful solutions/approaches for implementing EU legislation and policy on nature and biodiversity, by replicating results, integrating related objectives into other policies and into public and private sector practices, mobilising investment and improving access to finance.

Circular Economy and Quality of Life

The specific objectives of the sub-programme 'Circular Economy and Quality of Life' are:

- to develop, demonstrate and promote innovative techniques, methods and approaches for reaching the objectives of the EU legislation and policy on environment, and to contribute to the knowledge base and, where relevant, to the application of best practices
- to support the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of the EU legislation and policy on environment, including by improving governance at all levels, in particular through enhancing capacities of public and private actors and the involvement of civil society
- to catalyse the large-scale deployment of successful technical and policy-related solutions for implementing the EU legislation and policy on

environment, by replicating results, integrating related objectives into other policies and into public and private sector practices, mobilising investment and improving access to finance.

This sub-programme aims at facilitating the transition toward a sustainable, circular, toxic-free, energy-efficient and climate-resilient economy and at protecting, restoring and improving the quality of the environment.

It will contribute to the EU priorities by:

- reducing resource consumption and facilitating the transition toward a sustainable, circular, toxic-free, energy-efficient and climate-resilient economy
- developing circular systems, in line with the new Circular Economy Action Plan and reflecting its focus on sustainable products, material and energy intensive sectors and circular business models for value retention
- bringing down waste generation in line with the Waste Framework Directive [2019/1004](#)⁴ and the reduction of hazardous waste in view of the EU's commitment under the [Basel Convention](#)⁵
- improving waste management with respect to collection and storage of waste, recovery options and end-of-life disposal, including in islands where waste management has to face specific challenges
- reducing emissions of pollutants to air and ensuring clean air for EU citizens in line with the EU legislation and the objectives of the Zero Pollution Action Plan
- achieving and maintaining a good status of the EU water bodies
- ensuring clean surface water and ground-water, in sufficient quantities for human and other species, including by increasing efficiency of water use
- reducing production, use and emissions of hazardous chemicals as well as reducing the exposure of humans and the environment to those chemicals
- promoting the development, commercialisation and uptake of safe and sustainable-by-design substances, materials and products
- diminishing exposure to harmful noise levels
- protecting the quality of EU soil, preventing soil degradation through sustainable practices of soil and land management, remediating from soil pollution and enhancing the capacity to improve water quality through reduced nitrate leakage and to reduce emissions through carbon storage.

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

The specific objectives of the sub-programme 'Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation' are:

- to develop, demonstrate and promote innovative techniques, methods and approaches for reaching the objectives of the EU legislation and policy on climate action and to contribute to the knowledge base and to the application of best practice
- to support the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of the EU legislation and policy on climate action, including by improving

⁴ Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2019/1004 of 7 June 2019 laying down rules for the calculation, verification and reporting of data on waste in accordance with Directive 2008/98/EC (OJ L 163, 20.6.2019, p. 66).

⁵ Basel Convention on the control of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal

governance at all levels, in particular through enhancing capacities of public and private actors and the involvement of civil society

- to catalyse the large-scale deployment of successful technical and policy-related solutions for implementing the EU legislation and policy on climate action by replicating results, integrating related objectives into other policies and into public and private sector practices, mobilising investment and improving access to finance.

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

Clean Energy Transition

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

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

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

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

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

Type of action

The topic under this call for proposals concern LIFE Technical Assistance Projects (TA-CAP). TA-CAP projects as a primary objective should support the authorities of

Member States and of associated countries in improving effective participation of national beneficiaries in the LIFE Programme.

The aim of this call is to build up capacity in the Member States and the countries associated to the LIFE Programme to reach and support (potential) applicants in the submission of their proposals. Projects should impact one or both of the following objectives:

- (1) increased participation in the calls for proposals and
- (2) improvement in the quality of submitted proposals

LIFE-2024-TA-CAP — Technical Assistance projects for Capacity Building

Objective

In line with article 11(4) of the LIFE Regulation (EU) 2021/783, technical assistance projects for capacity building aim at supporting public bodies responsible for the implementation of the LIFE programme in improving the participation and increasing the quality of submitted proposals from those countries. Proposals are meant to increase participation of various types of organisations in the LIFE calls for proposals, particularly for standard action projects, coordination and support actions, strategic integrated projects and strategic nature projects. This call represents an opportunity for Member States and countries associated to the LIFE Programme to receive EU funding for improving their capacity to support potential beneficiaries in the LIFE calls.

In line with this objective, only public bodies responsible for implementation of LIFE programme in an eligible Member State or associated country to the LIFE Programme may apply for a capacity-building project. Consortiums may include additional entities provided that their participation is justified by the project objectives and their role is clearly defined. In principle, the project should be coordinated by the public body responsible for implementation of LIFE. LIFE National Contact Points should be closely involved in the TA-CAP project.

The actions included in proposals for capacity-building projects must take place primarily within the territory of the Member State(s) or the associated country(-ies) to the LIFE Programme of the applicant(s).

Scope — Activities that can be funded

Activities financed under this call will improve the capacity of the Member State, in supporting the participation of possible applicants in the LIFE programme calls, thus improving the number and the quality of the submitted proposals. Each proposal should preferably include analysis of the participation from that country and the success rate in the last calls. The analysis should include also the potential and current type of organisations that benefit from the call and why some organisations are more applying than others.

Based on this needs assessment the applicants should identify the most effective activities addressing the participation and/or the ineffective participation rate of different types of applicants (public organisations, private entities and civil society organisations) for the different types of calls (standard action projects, coordinated and support actions, strategic integrated and strategic nature projects).

Activities may include:

- targeted and tailor-made communication campaigns on the LIFE Programme addressed, among others, to public national and local authorities responsible for the implementation of environmental and climate action policies and plans at all levels 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.
- Trainings 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 key performance indicators, etc.
- Screening of national environmental and climate actions priorities to support, through LIFE projects, the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of relevant Union legislations,
- Actions aimed at increasing the participation of those types of applicants that struggle to access LIFE funding in a given Member State or country associated to the LIFE Programme (e.g., public organisations, private entities, civil society organisations) as identified in the needs assessment,
- Actions aimed at increasing the use of certain types of LIFE projects. In particular, in the context of increasing use of SIPs and SNAPs in a given Member State or country associated to the LIFE Programme. Capacity building projects may include 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 in the preparation of a proposal,⁶
- Gap analysis and assessment of policy uptake of LIFE project results.

The Commission expects that the budget will be proportionate to the activities that will be implemented under each project to address the participation rate of the different types of applicants. Proposals can cover the 4 sub programmes of LIFE or focus only on those more relevant for the Member State or associated country to the LIFE Programme as resulting from the needs analysis.

Expected impact

⁶ The same level of support must be provided to any entity planning to prepare a proposal. Drafting of proposals for submission under the annual LIFE calls for proposals would be considered as an ineligible expense.

The expected impact is an increase of the participation and the quality of the proposals submitted under the LIFE calls by applicants from the Member State or associated country. This can cover all kinds of projects, with particular scope for standard action projects, coordination and support actions, strategic nature and strategic integrated projects. The technical assistance for capacity building aims at supporting the country in facilitating participation of relevant national entities to the EU programme. The impact in terms of higher participation or better scoring of proposals should, as far as possible, be estimated.

Funding rate

Technical Assistance Projects (TA CAP) — 95% funding rate

LIFE Networking activities: n/a

3. Available budget

The available call budget is **EUR 8.000.000**:

Topic	Topic budget	Range of budget per project	Estimated number of projects to be funded	Expected project duration
1 — Technical Assistance projects for Capacity Building – TA CAP	EUR 8.000.000	EUR 350.000 – EUR 450.000	20 projects	36 months

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

4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines(indicative)	
Call opening:	3 September 2024
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	28 January 2025 17:00:00 CET (Brussels)
Information on evaluation results:	May 2025
GA signature:	October 2025

5. Admissibility and documents

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

Proposals must be submitted **electronically** via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (accessible via the Topic page in the [Search Funding & Tenders](#) section). Paper submissions are NOT possible.

Proposals (including annexes and supporting documents) must be submitted using the forms provided *inside* the Submission System (⚠ NOT the documents available on the Topic page — they are only for information).

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*)
- Application Form Part B — contains the technical description of the project (*to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed and then assembled and re-uploaded*)
- Part C (*to be filled in directly online*) containing additional project data
- **mandatory annexes and supporting documents** (*to be uploaded*):
 - for single stage:
 - detailed budget table (*mandatory excel template available in the Submission System*)
 - activity reports of last year: not applicable
 - list of previous projects: not applicable

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 the 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**.

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*).



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**⁷, i.e.:
 - EU Member States
 - Non-EU countries: [countries associated to the LIFE programme](#)

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

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 not 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 persons⁸.

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

Countries currently negotiating association agreements — Beneficiaries from countries with ongoing negotiations (*see above*) may participate in the call and can sign grants if the negotiations are concluded before grant signature (with retroactive effect, if provided in the agreement).

EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for certain entities (*e.g. entities subject to [EU restrictive measures](#) under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)*⁹). Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).

Measures for the protection of the Union budget against breaches of the principles of the rule of law in Hungary — Following the [Council Implementing Decision \(EU\) 2022/2506](#), as of 16 December 2022, no legal commitments can be entered into with Hungarian public interest trusts established under the Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or

⁷ Member States and countries associated to the LIFE Programme at the time of grant agreement signature without a running Grant Agreement under the previous TA-CAP call. Member States being already a beneficiary of 2021-TA-CAP funding are: Bulgaria, Czechia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Portugal and Slovenia.

⁸ See Article 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

⁹ 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](#).

any entity they maintain. Affected entities may continue to apply to calls for proposals. However, as long as the Council measures are not lifted, such entities are not eligible to participate in any funded role (beneficiaries, affiliated entities, subcontractors, recipients of financial support to third parties, etc). In case of multi-beneficiary grant calls, applicants will be invited to remove or replace that entity and/or to change its status into associated partner. Tasks and budget may be redistributed accordingly.



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

Consortium composition

At least one participant must be a competent authority responsible for the implementation of the LIFE programme from one of the Member States or the countries associated to the LIFE programme.

The national authority should in principle participate in the consortium as coordinator of the TA-CAP project. In well justified cases it may participate not as coordinator, but it should in any case be part of the consortium.

Each eligible country could be awarded with only one TA-CAP project grant.

Eligible activities

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

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

In general and amongst others:

- research;
- statutory responsibilities of the competent authority;
- activities outside the duration of the project;
- activities which are not clearly related to the objective(s) of the project;
- financial support to the NCP network;
- financial support to third parties is not allowed.

Projects must comply with EU policy interests and priorities (*such as environment, social, security, industrial and trade policy, etc.*).

Geographic location (target countries)

Proposals must relate to core activities taking place in the eligible countries (see 6. Eligibility).

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 these 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.

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

If the Commission considers that your financial capacity is not satisfactory, the following may be required:

- further information
- an enhanced financial responsibility regime, i.e. joint and several responsibility for all beneficiaries or joint and several liability of affiliated entities (*see below, section 10*)
- prefinancing paid in instalments
- (one or more) prefinancing guarantees (*see below, section 10*)

or

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



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

Operational capacity

Applicants must have the **know-how, qualifications** and **resources** to successfully implement the 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 participate¹²:

- bankruptcy, winding up, affairs administered by the courts, arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or other similar procedures (including procedures for persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- in breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- guilty of grave professional misconduct¹³ (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 Regulation No [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the 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).

Applicants will also be refused if it turns out that¹⁴:

- 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** will assess all applications. Proposals will first be checked for formal

¹² See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

¹³ Professional misconduct includes: violation of ethical standards of the profession, wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility, false declarations/misrepresentation of information, participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition, violation of IPR, attempting to influence decision-making processes or obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain advantage.


¹⁴ See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

requirements (admissibility, and eligibility, *see sections 5 and 6*). Proposals found admissible and eligible will be evaluated (for each topic) against the operational capacity and award criteria (*see sections 7 and 9*) and then ranked according to their scores.

For proposals with the same score (within a topic 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**). Applicants of 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. Compliance will be a pre-condition for signing the grant.

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

9. Award criteria

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

1. Relevance (0-20 points)

- Extent to which the proposal is in line with the description included in the call for proposals, including, where relevant, its specific priorities
- Extent to which the proposal is in line with the topic description of the call for proposals
- Concept and methodology: soundness of the overall intervention logic

2. Impact (0-20 points)

- Ambition and credibility of the impacts
- Sustainability of the project results after the end of the project

3. Quality (0-20 points)

- Clarity, relevance and feasibility of the work plan
- Identification and mobilisation of the relevant stakeholders
- 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
- Extent to which the project environmental impact is considered and mitigated, including through the use of green procurement. The use of recognised methods for the calculation of the project environmental footprint (*e.g. PEF or OEF methods or similar ones such as PEFCRs/OEFSRs*) or environmental management systems (*e.g. EMAS*) would be an asset
- Value for money of the proposal

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) score (without bonus)	55	90	N/A

Maximum points : **90** points.

Individual thresholds per criterion : **10** points.

Overall threshold : **55** points.

Proposals that pass the individual thresholds **AND** the overall threshold will be considered for funding — within the limits of the available call budget. 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. Retroactive

application can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons — but never earlier than the proposal submission date.

Recommended Project duration: 36 months (extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment). Maximum eligibility period for the implementation of the project: 60 months

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 (maximum grant amount): *see section 3 above*. The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

The grant will be a budget-based mixed actual cost grant (actual costs, with unit cost 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 (**95%**).

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*).

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*).

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
- B. Subcontracting costs
- C. Purchase costs
 - C.1 Travel and subsistence
 - C.2 Equipment
 - C.3 Other goods, works and services
- D. Other cost categories: n/a
- E. Indirect costs: n/a

Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:

- personnel costs:
 - SME owner/natural person unit cost¹⁵: Yes
 - Volunteers unit cost: No
- travel and subsistence unit cost¹⁶: No (only actual costs)
- equipment costs: full cost + depreciation for listed equipment
- other cost categories:
- costs for financial support to third parties: not allowed; indirect cost flat-rate: [0%] of the eligible direct costs
- VAT: non-deductible VAT is eligible (but please note that since 2013 VAT paid by beneficiaries that are public bodies acting as public authority is NOT eligible)
- other:
 - in-kind contributions for free are allowed, but cost-neutral, i.e. they cannot be declared as cost
 - kick off meeting: costs for kick off meeting organised by the granting authority are not eligible for TA-CAP
 - 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
 - common information and dissemination activities: foresee resources to increase synergies between, and the visibility of LIFE and EU supported actions (for example 1 travel/year, 5 days)
 - other ineligible costs: Yes:
 - land purchase costs are not eligible
 - infrastructure 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.

¹⁵ Commission [Decision](#) of 20 October 2020 authorising the use of unit costs for the personnel costs of the owners of small and medium-sized enterprises and beneficiaries that are natural persons not receiving a salary for the work carried out by themselves under an action or work programme (C(2020)7715).

¹⁶ 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).

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 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 formally NOT linked to individual consortium members, which means that you are free to organise how to provide the guarantee amount (*by one or several beneficiaries, for the overall amount or several guarantees for partial amounts, by the beneficiary concerned or by another beneficiary, etc*). It is however important that the requested amount is covered and that the guarantee(s) are sent to us 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.

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: No
- special logos: Yes

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

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

Other specificities

n/a

Non-compliance and breach of contract

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



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

11. How to submit an application

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

Submission is a **2-step process**:

a) create a user account and register your organisation

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

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

b) submit the proposal

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

Submit your proposal in 4 parts, as follows:

- Part A includes administrative information about the applicant 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 might be considered incomplete and thus inadmissible.

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

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

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

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).

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

Contact

For individual questions on the Portal Submission System, please contact the [IT Helpdesk](#).

Non-IT related questions should be sent to the following email address: CINEA-LIFE-ENQUIRIES@ec.europa.eu.

 Please:

- send your questions at the latest 7 days before the submission deadline (*see section 4*)

- indicate clearly the reference of the call and topic to which your question relates (*see cover page*).

13. Important



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).
- **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).
- **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 double funding** — There is a strict prohibition of double 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 declared to two different EU actions.
- **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).
- **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 Model 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 a 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 one of them (or it 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](#).