

# Frequently Asked Questions

(last update 15.05.2025)

LIFE-2025-Calls for

Standard Action Projects (**SAP**)

Strategic (Integrated/Nature) Projects (**SIP/SNaP**)

Sub-Programmes **Nature and Biodiversity, Circular Economy and**

**Quality of Life, and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation**

Project addressing ad hoc Legislative and Policy priorities (**PLP**)

Technical Assistance for Replication (**TA-R**)

(For [generic questions on submission in IT tool](#) )

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# 1. Questions applicable to all Calls

## 1.1. General questions

For guidance on the [Model Grant Agreement](#), please refer to the [Annotated Grant Agreement](#). The AGA — Annotated Model Grant Agreement is a user guide that aims to explain to applicants and beneficiaries the EU Model Grant Agreements (General MGA, Lump Sum MGA, Unit MGA, Operating Grants MGA and FPA) for the EU funding programmes 2021-2027.

### Q.1. Who can submit a proposal?

Any public or private organisation legally registered in the European Union (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs)) or countries associated to the LIFE Programme ([participating countries](#)). The details are described in the ***Call Document section on Eligibility***

### Q.2. In which language should I submit my proposal?

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. Please note that the grant agreement, project management, formal reporting, key deliverables and all communication with the Granting Authority will be in English. To save time and effort, it is strongly recommended to draft the detailed budget table, as part of the proposal, already in English as it will become an annex to the grant agreement.

### Q.3. Where can a LIFE project take place?

LIFE projects shall take place in an eligible country (see 1.1 Q.1). In exceptional cases, the LIFE programme can also finance activities in non-eligible countries. Such projects need to fulfil two conditions:

1. The project leader (“Coordinator beneficiary”) must be based in an eligible country (see 1.1 Q.1)
2. Applicants must prove that the activities that will be carried out outside the eligible countries are necessary to achieve EU environmental or climate objectives. They must provide strong qualitative and quantitative evidence that interventions in eligible countries would not be effective or successful unless actions are also carried out in non-eligible countries. The details are described in the ***Call Document section on Eligibility***. For example, actions aimed at the conservation of migratory birds in wintering areas, actions implemented on a transboundary river, or projects aimed to address environmental problems that cannot be solved successfully or efficiently unless actions are carried out also in non-eligible countries may be eligible. (see more under 1.1. Q.40)

Furthermore, the objectives of non-eligible countries cannot be in contrast with those of the EU.

### Q.4. What is the optimal budget for a LIFE project?

The project budget depends on the project type and the Call you apply to. Please carefully read the ***Call Document section on Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements***.

For Standard Action Project, there are no specifications for project budgets. LIFE has co-funded large

ambitious projects with total costs of more than €5 million several times in the past. However, proposals for small projects with total costs below €500 000 have rarely been selected in the evaluation due to the limited output and consequently a low added value.

**Q.5. What is the best starting date and duration for a project?**

The project starting date and duration will be fixed in the Grant Agreement. 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.

The project duration must correspond to what is necessary to complete all the project's actions and to reach all its objectives. Standard Action Projects last on average 3-5 years. Please note that the call document (section 10) may indicate a maximum project duration.

During implementation, and only under exceptional circumstances, the Granting Authority may grant an extension of the project's duration. Experience has shown that many LIFE projects had difficulties completing all actions within the proposed project duration due to unforeseen delays and difficulties. Applicants are therefore strongly advised to build an appropriate safety margin (e.g., 3 to 6 months) into the timetable of their proposal.

**Q.6. How voluminous should the project proposal be?**

A proposal should be as concise and clear as possible. Applicants should avoid voluminous proposals and should not provide excessively detailed descriptions of project areas, environmental technologies, lists of species, etc. You should, however, describe all project activities in a clear and detailed way. The page limit applied to your proposal is defined in the ***Call Document section on Admissibility and documents***.

**Q.7. Can we receive funding from other EU programmes in addition to LIFE?**

LIFE programme funding must not overlap with funding from other EU programmes. Applicants must inform the Granting Authority in their project proposal about any related funding that they have received from the EU budget as well as any ongoing applications for funding from the EU budget. They must also check that they are not receiving ongoing operating grants from LIFE (or other EU programmes) that could lead to double financing.

The Granting Authority has noticed that an increasing number of similar or identical proposals are submitted to various programmes and carries out systematic checks and cross-checks. Failure to declare that the same or a similar proposal has been submitted to another programme (or worse, already even been partly financed) has serious consequences.

**Q.8. Is it possible for some project beneficiaries to give up part of the share of EU contribution in favour of one or several other project beneficiaries?**

The maximum amount of EU Contribution that can be requested by a specific beneficiary is the maximum set in the grant agreement. However, as specified under the ***Call documents Section 13 Important***, beneficiaries can decide to distribute the EU financing differently in accordance with what they agreed in the consortium agreement.

**Q.9. My project is a resubmission of an application from a previous Call, but I cannot include the reference to it in Part A (administrative forms). Where should I mention this?**

If your project is a resubmission from LIFE2020 or a previous call, you must state this in Part B (technical description), in section "1.1 Background and general project objectives". Please include there the code and acronym of the proposal submitted in a previous Call.

However, if the project is a resubmission from LIFE21, then you have to include this information in the Part A.

**Q.10. Can I delete the instructions that are redundant such as those under "Activities" and "Milestones" when I am copying the work-package table?**

No. All instructions must remain. Please do NOT delete any instructions in the document. The overall page limit has been established to ensure equal treatment for all applicants. Removing the instructions may result in your proposal being considered inadmissible.

**Q.11. Is it possible to submit parts of a LIFE project to another EU call for proposals, if it is clearly explained in section 6 of the application form?**

Yes, it is possible to submit different projects to different programs even if they contain some actions that are the same. However, beneficiaries have to declare this openly. The Granting Authority will then check if the other project was successful and then see where to cut the action and the related costs to avoid double-funding. However please note that this approach may be risky for the applicant. If the action that will be cut was a core one that largely determined the final score of the proposal, then the applicant risks that the whole project is cancelled.

In addition, applicants should be made aware of the complications of ensuring completion at the same time, which would be under their responsibility, and the risk that we will consider their LIFE project not to have reached its objectives.

**Q.12. I have three letters of support to provide. Is there a template and how can I upload them, there is only one field?**

There is no template provided for the letters of support. Letters of support can refer to any kind of commitment or support by a third party/stakeholder and can have any format.

Please note that if you have several letters of support to upload the system only allows one file to be uploaded under the Part B and annexes upload section. When the number of letters are exceeding 5, it is recommended to have an overview page listing the name of the organisations supporting the project. So, you should merge the documents into one file. Please note that the size is limited (10M). If the resulting size is too large, you should upload a file with a download link. You could use also the "other annexes".

Please note that the same logic applies to all the annexes that may be uploaded at the submission stage e.g. description of sites etc.

**Q.13. Where can I find the "call identifier" and the "call name"?**

This information is on the 1st page of the Call document; as an example:

- Call name: Nature & Biodiversity - Standard Action Projects (SAP)
- Call identifier: LIFE-2025-SAP-NAT

**Q.14. Which forms should be signed at the submission level?**

At the submission stage, no signed forms are expected to be uploaded in the system .

The Grant Agreement signature and/or signature of accession forms will be done in the system only for the projects selected for funding, after the Grant Agreement Preparation. Please find more information [here](#).

**Q.15. How should we fill in the staff categories and qualifications in the participant information forms? Do we, for example, use our organizations' own titles for staff category and degrees for qualifications?**

With "staff category" we mean the title of your position within your organisation/company, e.g. "Technical Manager" or "Public Affairs Department Director". What is important when filling out that part of the form is to briefly present only "key" staff strictly linked to the core objectives and output of the project. Depending on the project, we would expect applicants to present e.g. the project manager, senior technical expert, marketing/commercial profile (when applicable), communication manager (when applicable).

**Q.16. Where do I find which annexes to attach to Part B?**

Under **section 5 Admissibility and documents**, the list of the mandatory annexes is available. However you may decide to upload optional annexes e.g. maps, if you consider deemed for your proposal clarity.

In any case, when you start to fill in your application in the Funding & Tenders Portal, you will see that the system is configured so that it shows which documents/files are mandatory annexes to Part B, and which ones are optional.

**Q.17. How can I estimate the staff effort in Work Package under Part B?**

You need to compile your estimated number of person-months per Work Package and per participant. As per the [LIFE General Model Grant Agreement](#) (art. 6.2) the number of annual productive days is fixed at 215 days per year per person. i.e. 18 days = 1 person/month. A person working 18 days at 50% (working time factor 0.5) = 0.5 person/month. 18 days = 1 person/month.

**Q.18. Do Associated partners (which are not financially involved and don't receive any contribution from the EU) have to get registered in the Funding & Tender Portal and organise their own PIC number and provide their own template "Participant info"?**

Associated partners need to have their own PIC and they need to be listed in the Part A; for more information, please see section 9.1 on 'Associated Partners' in the [Annotated Grant Agreement](#). In the Participant Information form, associated partners can be:

- either included under the beneficiary they would implement the activities
- or if their involvement in the action is very important, they may provide their own form so they can include more information that would be used to assess their operational capacity (see **section 7 Financial and operational capacity and exclusion** of the Call document).

**Q.19. Do we need to provide CVs?**

No. Under the LIFE programme, we are not requesting CVs; please only include in the Participant information annex the essential details on the main profiles involved.

**Q.20. I have tried to upload the file Tpl\_detailed budget table (LIFE) and participant info (LIFE) and always get an error message because of the presence of illegal characters. Can you help?**

The system only accepts alphanumeric characters, the "\_" and the ".", nothing else. Therefore, please remove the bracket symbols "(" ")" from the file naming.

**Q.21. In the application instructions it says that “The milestones and deliverables for each project will be managed through the Portal Grant Management System” and in the application template it says that “For each deliverable you will have to indicate a due month by when you commit to upload it in the Portal”. What about the milestones – are they to be uploaded into the Portal as well, since they are not mentioned in the second case?**

Contrary to project deliverables, milestones represent significant stages or events but not “outputs”; they are control points in the project that help to chart progress. Thus, milestones are not expected to be uploaded in the Portal Grant Management System during implementation. However, please note that milestones should be reported under section 3.2 of Part B for all Work Packages.

**Q.22. Is it possible to change the dissemination level of deliverables during project implementation if such a need arises? For example, from public to sensitive? Can a deliverable be public under specific conditions, i.e., becoming public only after having been accepted for publication?**

Yes, it is possible to change the dissemination level of deliverables, through an amendment providing reasonable justification for doing so.

A deliverable with PUBLIC (PU) dissemination level may be published on the Funding and Tender Portal.

If your deliverables have some degree of confidentiality, you may want to mark them with dissemination level SENSITIVE (SEN). Those deliverables will not be published.

In the system, the dissemination level goes from public (PU) to EU classified. However, please note that the dissemination levels [R-UE/EU-R — EU Classified], [C-UE/EU-C — EU Classified], [S-UE/EU-S — EU Classified] refer to Commission Decision 2015/444 of 13 March 2015 on the security rules for protecting EU classified information. Those dissemination levels should not be used for the LIFE programme.

**Q.23. Is there a recommendation for the number of milestones or deliverables?**

The same recommendation applies to the milestones as to the deliverables – they have to be relevant and to the point, and the number depends on the need and scope of the project. Please use your own discretion in this regard.

**Q.24. Can you provide more explanation on requirements for bonus points?**

Firstly, bonus points can only be awarded if there is a clear link between the description provided and project activities described in the Work Packages. They are only awarded if all stringent conditions are met for the different types of bonuses (e.g.: exceptional synergies and co-benefits)

**Synergies.** Synergies need to be exceptional, clearly described, well developed, and justified in the proposal, included in the project tasks. The project needs to bring substantial concrete benefits to those other areas (contribute to the priorities/objectives of the other sub-programmes). These benefits need to be quantified (i.e., through project indicators) and their monitoring should be foreseen.

**Uptake.** The use of the concrete results of other projects needs to be clearly demonstrated in the intervention logic/actions and necessary to achieve project objectives. The proposal must be clear about how the results of other EU projects will be used. the transfer of best practices and experiences, while welcomed and encouraged in LIFE projects, is not sufficient to obtain this bonus point.

**Transnationality.** Implementation of the project activities in two or more countries is a precondition for receiving bonus points. The cooperation must be essential to reach the objectives. In addition, the

proposal should convincingly describe the environmental / climate benefit of the activities implemented in each of the countries.

**Q.25. In the application form, Part B, section 3.2 Work packages and activities, one of the mandatory deliverables listed is *exploitation plan including replication component / business plan including replication component / 'After-LIFE Conservation Plan'*. Which of these applies to which Call?**

- After-LIFE Conservation Plan: all SAP nature projects (call LIFE-2025-SAP-NAT)
- Exploitation plan including replication component: ENV SAP and CLIMA SAP projects, **except** for close-to-market projects (calls LIFE-2025-SAP-ENV and LIFE-2025-SAP-CLIMA)
- Business plan including replication component: only close-to-market projects in ENV SAP, CLIMA SAP (calls LIFE-2025-SAP-ENV and LIFE-2025-SAP-CLIMA)

For more info on close-to-market projects, see Q.1 in section 2.3 or Q.21 in section 2.4.

The expected contents of these documents is as follows:

- **After-LIFE Conservation Plan:** document describing how the project will be continued after the end of the LIFE funding, and what actions are required to consolidate the results in order to ensure the favourable conservation status of the targeted species and / or habitats and / or biodiversity aspects. Please describe a clear strategy or mechanism to ensure that the results of the project will continue after the funding period.
- **Exploitation plan:** document which could include the 2 points below and would basically detail and present the planned activities, resources (technical and financial) through which the project results will be maintained and exploited:
  - Clear definition of the technical and human resources needed. In case of public authorities, definition of the necessary administrative and legislative acts;
  - Clear definition of the necessary financial resources and identification of the relevant financial sources
- **Business plan:** Business plan is a document that summarizes the operational and financial objectives of a business and contains detailed plans and budgets showing how the objectives are to be realized. It helps to evaluate the feasibility of a new business idea in an objective, critical, and unemotional way. It serves as the main data source and decision-making tool.

**Q.26. Is there a template for the Consortium Agreement and when should it be signed?**

The Consortium Agreement should be set up and signed before the signature of the Grant Agreement. It is an internal document that should not be submitted for information or review to the Granting Authority. There is no specific -template for it but further guidance can be found in the Annotated Grant Agreement under Article 7 section 4 'Internal arrangements between beneficiaries – consortium agreement'. It also includes a link to a guidance document that can be used for inspiration. When preparing the consortium agreement please refer to the guidance included under Article 7 of the [LIFE Model Grant Agreement](#).

**Q.27. Can we have different % of EU Contribution by beneficiaries**

Please note that the maximum amount of EU Contribution that can be requested by a specific beneficiary/affiliate is the maximum set in the grant agreement (= total estimated eligible cost \* % EU funding of the call). However, as specified under the Call documents Section '13. Important', beneficiaries can decide to distribute the EU finance differently in accordance with what they agreed in the consortium agreement.

**Q.28. How can I give access to the National Contact Point (NCP)?**

We want to draw your attention to the possibility to get support from your National Contact Point ([https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/life/history-life/life-contacts/european-national-contact-points\\_en](https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/life/history-life/life-contacts/european-national-contact-points_en)). To facilitate such support, it would be beneficial to ask your National Contact Point (NCP) if they wish to be added under the “Participants” step of the application, by clicking on “Add contact”. Then, under “Project role”, use the option “Contact person” and add your NCP’s data.

**Q.29. Under which conditions can an entity from a third country get LIFE co-financing?**

Article 12, paragraphs 4 and 5 of the 2021-2027 LIFE Regulation lay out the conditions for the participation of entities from countries which do not participate in LIFE:

- Legal entities established in a third country which is not associated to the LIFE Programme shall be exceptionally eligible to participate where this is necessary for the achievement of the objectives of a given action to ensure the effectiveness of interventions carried out in the Union.
- Legal entities established in a third country which is not associated to the LIFE Programme shall in principle bear the cost of their participation.

Financing of entities from third countries is only possible under exceptional and limited circumstances. Each case will be examined individually but the application must show beyond a doubt that the involvement of the third country entity is essential to the project to reach its expected impact in the EU territories and/or participating countries, and that this participation is not possible without the EU financing. However, an entity from a third country can never be coordinating beneficiary.

In case the project could still stand without the involvement of the third country entity, that entity may only participate if it has a clear role and it will bear its own costs (i.e., as an associated beneficiary).

**Q.30. What do you mean by relevant stakeholders?**

It is fundamental that relevant stakeholders are engaged. By relevant we mean entities or individuals that could be interested in the proposed solution, etc. As relevant, gender equality should be considered when identifying stakeholders. The proposal should describe how the project intends to engage and mobilize them, in order to enhance its impact and to embed the project in a broader context. Letters confirming the interest and support of relevant actors and stakeholders to the project should be provided.

**Q.31. Can we have two or more open projects?**

Yes, it is possible to have two or more open projects. Please refer to the Q.7 regarding the rules on double financing.

**Q.32. Is it advisable to reapply for a project, improved, that was rejected in a recent previous application?**

Yes, it is certainly advised. A lot of effort and resources are put on the part of the Granting Authority so that the feedback given to the applicant is as clear and specific as possible and includes all the aspects that can be improved. It is a common practice to resubmit a project.



**Q.33. What should an applicant who has received the Seal of Excellence for their project do? Is there any way established to present a project with a Seal of Excellence to another source of financing?**

Currently, there is no direct channel for submitting a project with a Seal of Excellence to another source of funding. The European Commission will inform the national authorities of the regional funds about the projects that have obtained the seal of excellence in each call. Projects could be submitted to other funds by regional / local authorities / especially if the applicants are limited to one region / one country.

According to Article 16.2 of the LIFE Regulation, projects with a Seal of Excellence may potentially receive support from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) or the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

**Q.34 How can an applicant, more in particular a private entity wanting to assume the role of coordinator, check upfront its financial capacity situation?**

Please use the following tool: [LFV Simulation](#). Please take into consideration that this is only a simulation. If a formal financial capacity assessment is required, you will have to go through the formal procedure and the final decision on eventual measures to be implemented further to the outcome of the financial capacity remains with the granting authority.

**Q.35. When filling in Part C, what does 'KPI' stand for?**

KPI stands for the LIFE Project Indicators; in the context of the Part C, and depending on the Call you are applying for, at full proposal, Applicants will see different versions of Part C:

- a. All Applicants will see the section "Horizontal KPIs for all LIFE applicants (Mandatory to report on all the KPIs if this section)". These are horizontal indicators linked mostly to Section 1 of Annex II of the new LIFE Regulation (Output Indicators and Catalytic effect indicators) and they mostly require yes/no answers.
- b. In addition to the mandatory section, and depending on the Call, Applicants may see a section with non-mandatory indicators linked mostly to Section 2 of Annex II of the new LIFE regulation (Results indicators). This non-mandatory section may differ between Calls (e.g. CET and non-CET calls).

## 1.2. Financial questions

For guidance on the [Model Grant Agreement](#), please refer to the [Annotated Grant Agreement](#). The AGA — Annotated Model Grant Agreement is a user guide that aims to explain to applicants and beneficiaries the EU Model Grant Agreements (General MGA, Lump Sum MGA, Unit MGA, Operating Grants SGA and FPA) for the EU funding programmes 2021-2027.

### **Q.1. What is the maximum funding from the EU budget that we can expect?**

The maximum amount of EU contribution depends on the maximum funding rate applicable to the Call you select to apply to. Please carefully read the ***Call Document section on Legal and financial setup of the Grant Agreements***.

### **Q.2. Do applicants no longer need to provide details concerning the hourly or daily rates?**

Following the AGA and the revised call documents, monthly rates are to be used. For the calculation and reporting of the actual personnel costs, we refer you to the [Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

### **Q.3. Does the 2% rule for permanent/additional staff of government organisations apply to the beneficiaries of projects under this programming period 2021-2027?**

The “2% rule for public bodies” does not apply for the LIFE 2021-2027 calls.

### **Q.4. Is it possible for a public body that the cost of personnel is higher than its financial contribution to the project? (e.g., staff € 260,000 contribution to the project € 200,000)?**

The financial contribution of every partner to the project and the allocation of costs between different cost categories (including public bodies) is subject to a decision taken by the partnership itself. Nevertheless, please note that the estimated budget for the action is set out in Annex 2 (Model Grant Agreement) / Application Form, Administrative Forms, Part A, Section 3 – Budget. It contains the estimated eligible costs and contributions for the action, broken down by participant and budget category. Finally, please note that the overall project funding rate for costs will be in any case a percentage (see respective call for the rate) of the action’s eligible costs.

Note that the previously applied “2 % rule” does no longer apply. See previous question on that.

### **Q.5. Can in-kind contribution be used as co-financing?**

In-kind cannot be used as co-financing at the submission level (in the budget part A). Beneficiaries are allowed to use in-kind contributions for the project implementation; however, they cannot be declared as a cost or income.

### **Q.6. Can a public entity have an affiliate?**

Yes this is possible.

### **Q.7. Which nationalities can affiliated entities have?**

Affiliated entities are bound to the same eligibility conditions as beneficiaries. For more information, please see the specific section (Article 8 - Affiliated entity) of the [Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

**Q.8. Should we add any additional description on the budget in the application form (part B, section 4.4 “Budget”) on top of the already mentioned “see budget table”? In the case where we define the cost for a Work Package, should we provide a breakdown of the costs into personnel, travel, subcontracting, other costs or just the overall cost for the Work Package in question? How detailed must the justifications for each cost be?**

You don't have to write anything in Section 4.4.

A justified link between the costs and descriptions included in the “Detailed Budget Table” and in the Work Packages, as detailed in Part B, should be demonstrated, without however, including unnecessary repetitions and / or details that are not pertinent for either the assessment of the overall quality of the budget and the implementation and monitoring of the proposal itself (e.g., no need to break down costs of small cost items).

The information / justifications provided under the respective sections in the “Detailed Budget Table”, notably under columns “Subcontract Description” and “Justification” (for the “Other direct Costs”), should demonstrate and allow for the assessment of the cost efficiency, the value for money and the role / necessity of the cost items for the implementation of the project activities / achievement of the project objectives.

For **major cost items and items critical for achieving** the scope of the project, please include information on the quantity (e.g., of equipment planned to be purchased), their unit prices and the Work Package.

Furthermore, as stated in the instructions in the detailed budget table, for these cost items **additional lines can be added below the existing ones**, in order to provide a detailed breakdown within one cost category for a given applicant.

**Q.9. Where should I include the infrastructure costs?**

In Part A, in the “Budget” section, in the column “Equipment” (which includes costs for equipment, infrastructure and other assets).

Please **click in the “?” symbol that appears on top of the budget table** to see the explanations on what kind of costs/income should be included in each column.

In Part B, in the excel annex “Detailed Budget Table”, in the rows “Equipment (incl. infrastructure)”. Please note that you should explain there if the cost represents the full cost or the depreciation.

**Q.10. Is it still possible to depreciate an industrial plant at 100% on the project if it is used after the project for the same purpose?**

If allowed by the call, equipment can either be claimed in full cost (if complying with the durability clause) or it can be depreciated according to international standards and your internal practices (Art. 6 of the [Model Grant Agreement](#)).

The durability clause means that, unless exempted by the granting authority, beneficiaries must commit to continue to use and maintain after the end of the action equipment bought and eligible at full costs, for activities pursuing the action's objectives. Such equipment must be used for these purposes — for at least five years after the end of the action or until the end of its economic lifespan (i.e. until it has been fully depreciated) — whichever is earlier.

**Q.11. In the Call for Proposals document, you mention the "specific cost eligibility conditions for this call" and referring to Equipment costs, it states "full cost + depreciation for listed equipment". This statement is a bit confusing, what is the eligible cost for Equipment? Full cost or Cost depreciated during the execution of the project?**

See previous question.

If for a given piece of equipment the durability conditions are not fulfilled, then you should include only the depreciation cost during the project's lifetime.

**Q.12. What is the ceiling for the eligible costs where depreciation is to be applied (equipment)? Is it only half of the purchase price or the full price and does the rule apply differently for public and private bodies?**

Depending on the LIFE call (e.g. SAP, SIP, SNAP, TA-R), purchase costs for equipment can be declared in full as an eligible cost if the durability conditions (as specified in Annex 5 of the [Model Grant Agreement](#)) are complied with.

For calls that do not foresee the durability clause or if those durability conditions are not fulfilled for a given piece of equipment, you should include only the depreciation cost during the project's lifetime. There is no pre-defined ceiling, and the rule applies equally to public and private bodies.

**Q.13. Could you clarify the term financial contributions, the term in the budget table 3 in Part A. Does this refer to contributions from the 3<sup>rd</sup> parties?**

The column „financial contributions/ EUR" refers indeed to co-financing from third-party co-financers to provide part of the project budget that is not covered by the LIFE co-funding or other income sources listed in other columns of the budget table.

**Q.14. From what sources and how can the beneficiaries' own contribution be funded?**

Under 'own resources', applicants must enter the amount of their own resources they expect to use for the implementation of the action. 'Own resources' refer to the resources at the disposal of a beneficiary that are not linked specifically to the action submitted for funding. Typical examples could be financial resources that a beneficiary draws directly from its commercial activity; or resources coming from the beneficiary's annual operating allocation (like a public university receiving a general annual subsidy from its national Ministry).

Under 'financial contributions', applicants must enter the amount of financial contributions they expect to receive/they already received from other sources. 'Financial contributions' refer to funding given by third parties to a beneficiary for being used specifically for the same action as the one submitted for funding (e.g., a specific nationally-funded grant/donation to a beneficiary that covers the same action).

**Q.15. I understand that according to the provisions of the call document, own contribution can be salaries of volunteers? Can the own contribution be non-financial, e.g. running costs of the beneficiary's activity, salaries of employees delegated to project realisation, etc.?**

Own contribution is the part of the eligible costs that are financed/paid by the beneficiary himself (i.e. not through income of the project or third party co-financers or the EU grant).

So, if the eligible costs are 100 and the EU finances 60, then the 40 remaining should be either financed by own contribution unless there are financial contributions (third party co-financers) or income of the project. So, in the above example, if there is no revenue expected from third party co-financers nor income of the project, then the 40 will need to be covered by "own resources" of the

beneficiary himself (meaning that the beneficiary will pay costs from his own financial resources).

The guidance you have in the online tool (clicking in the “?” that appears above the budget table in Part A) shows the following:

<b>Income generated by the project</b>
Please enter the expected income generated by the project (revenues).
<b>In kind contributions</b>
Please enter the in-kind contributions you expect to receive (i.e. non-financial resources made available free of charge by third parties) . Not applicable for Horizon Europe.
<b>Financial contributions</b>
Please enter the financial contributions you expect to receive.
<b>Own resources</b>
Please enter the amount of expected own resources used for the implementation of the action.

Note that in kind contributions are not eligible under the LIFE programme.

Volunteers are not receiving a salary so there should not be salary costs of volunteers in the accounting system. However, they can be declared as a cost in the form of unit rates and the amount will be taken into account to define the EU contribution (so the EU contribution is artificially increased). Volunteers are not allowed in some LIFE calls so please read the call text.

Running costs are covered by the 7% indirect costs flat rate and are also part of the eligible cost.

#### **Q.17. Is internal invoicing and invoicing between beneficiaries allowed**

Internal invoicing and invoicing between beneficiaries is not allowed under the LIFE programme.

#### **Q.18. What limitations does a public administration have to subcontract?**

The same limitations as private entities that participate in the project.

Subcontracting may only cover a limited part of the project and some tasks may not be subcontracted by the Coordinator (see Article 7 of the [Model Grant Agreement](#)) . Within the LIFE program there is a limit of 30% of the total eligible costs for subcontracting. Exceptionally the limit could be exceeded, but only if well justified, in cases where the necessary skills are not available to carry out all the activities. Subcontracts must fulfil the general eligibility conditions and should be awarded using the beneficiary’s usual purchasing practices — provided these ensure subcontracts with best value for money (or if appropriate the lowest price) and that there is no conflict of interest.

In addition, beneficiaries that are ‘contracting authorities/entities’ within the meaning of the EU Directives on public procurement must also comply with the applicable national law on public procurement.

#### **Q.19. Can the remaining 40% be co-financed with other public funds or is the beneficiary obliged to contribute a minimum % of its own resources? If so, how much would that minimum % be?**

The remaining percentage not financed by EU funding can be financed with other private or public funds as long as these do not come from the EU. The beneficiary is not obliged to co-finance with its own resources. (See 1.1.Q.7. for more information).

**Q.20. Can the beneficiary, after the end of the Project, sell or lease the equipment to a third party (not beneficiary) if there is a contract that specifies that the new entity will also meet the durability clause?** Transfer of equipment (either free of charge, sale or lease) under the durability clause after the end of the action is not permitted. The durability clause mentions that the beneficiary/affiliated entity must commit to continue to use and maintain the equipment.

**Q.21. Will a part of the EU contribution be transferred at the beginning of the project? If so, will it be transferred to the coordinator or directly to each beneficiary?**

All the payments are made to the coordinator who is then responsible for distributing the financial resources among the beneficiaries as required.

The first pre-financing payment to the coordinator will be made within 30 calendar days from the entry into force of the Grant Agreement (or from the moment when we receive the financial guarantee if that is applicable).

### 1.3. LIFE Project Indicators

**Q.1. Are the LIFE Programme (2021-27) indicators the same as the previous (2014-2020)?**

No, in the present LIFE Regulation the Programme indicators differ from the previous ones. More information on the present LIFE Programme indicators can be found in the Annex II of the new LIFE Regulation ("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), and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013"). Please note that the Programme indicators are different from the LIFE Project Indicators. However, the two are linked as some of the project indicators contribute to monitoring the performance of the LIFE programme. More information on the monitoring and evaluation of the LIFE Programme can be found [here](#).

**Q.2. At application stage, will applicants need to submit an excel file with their choice of project-level indicators as in the previous LIFE programme calls (2014-20)?**

No, the excel-file of the previous LIFE Programme (2014-20), used at full proposal application stage, is no longer needed. It has been replaced by the Part C Dynamic forms that applicants will need to fill in directly in the Funding & Tenders Portal along with the rest of their application.

**Q.3. Will applicants need to fill in the Part C forms for Concept Notes?**

No, applicants will only be requested to complete the Part C form when providing Full Proposals (e.g. in Single-stage Calls or the full proposal stage of Two-stage Calls).

**Q.4. I am applying with different proposals for different LIFE calls and at full proposal stage the Part C forms are different for each Call. Is that normal?**

Yes, depending on the Call you are applying for, at full proposal, Applicants will see different versions of Part C:

- a. All Applicants will see the section "Horizontal KPIs for all LIFE applicants (Mandatory to report on all the KPIs if this section)". These are horizontal indicators linked mostly to Section 1 of Annex II of the new LIFE Regulation (Output Indicators and Catalytic effect indicators) and they mostly require yes/no answers.
- b. In addition to the mandatory section, and depending on the Call, Applicants may see a section with non-mandatory indicators linked mostly to Section 2 of Annex II of the LIFE regulation (Results indicators). This non-mandatory section may differ between Calls (e.g. CET and non-CET calls).

**Q.5. I am applying for LIFE funding and the Part C form includes a mandatory and a non-mandatory section. Do I have to enter data in all sections and indicators?**

No, Applicants are obliged to provide data (mostly yes/no answers) in the mandatory indicators section only. They are not obliged to report on the available non-mandatory indicators. Applicants may provide data on these non-mandatory indicators that they consider relevant to their proposal. However, if none of the non-mandatory indicators are completed then evaluators may question the added-value and environmental impact of the proposal, as well as the proposal's clarity.

**Q.6. I wish to report additional indicators that are not included in the Part C form. Can I do it?**

Applicants may report additional indicators through the Part C form of SAP (NAT, CEQL and CLIMA) and STRAT (SIP/SNAP) Calls only. In this case, Applicants may select from the non-mandatory section

menu the “Other project specific KPIs” and report the values and units they consider appropriate. It can be useful for applicants to consult the LIFE Project Indicators Guidance Document available on the LIFE Website to identify indicators that are not included in Part C but that are relevant to their project and will be available for further selection and reporting during implementation. For other Calls such reporting on additional indicators can only be done via the main proposal text.

**Q.7. For the non-mandatory indicators, do Applicants need to follow the warnings/instructions in the Part C Dynamic forms (e.g. in terms of increase or reduction expected for each indicator)?**

No, Applicants are not obliged to follow the warnings/instructions. However, if they do not follow the instructions then they risk having their proposal penalised as the proposal may appear to be environmentally or socio-economically harmful (e.g. because they do not have a problem baseline or because they are increasing harmful emissions instead of decreasing them).

**Q.8. For the non-mandatory indicators, there are pre-set values. Could I change them?**

Yes, Applicants may change pre-set values in accordance with the specificities of their proposal. However, we advise applicants to follow any warnings/instructions provided with each indicator. Please note that the description of indicators with pre-set values includes a mention of this pre-setting. If Applicants identify pre-set values in indicators which do not correspond to the indicator-description, then they should feel free to ignore the pre-set values as they are probably due to a technical IT issue.

**Q.9. For the non-mandatory indicators, could applicants report on an indicator using a unit other than the units provided in the Part C form?**

No, Applicants should report values using the units indicated for each non-mandatory indicator. If not, then they risk having their proposal penalised due to lack of clarity. Using the comments to enter the right unit will not reduce this risk.

**Q.10. What are the meanings of the "?", "+", "-" and ">" next to the indicators?**

The “?” provides additional information about the corresponding indicator. The “+” indicates that you may report multiple times on the same indicator. By clicking on the “+” new entries of the corresponding indicator will appear. This is the case especially for indicators which include a selection panel (e.g. Waste management) and hence Applicants may wish to report values on multiple elements (e.g. in Waste they may wish to report values on end-of-life batteries and end-of-life vehicles). The “-” can be used to delete one of the entries made using the “+”. Once you have clicked on “+” and completed and saved the values of an indicator then the values entered will appear under the indicator header. Next to the values you will see a “-” and an “>”. If you click on the “-” you will delete the entry you made. If you click on “>” you will see the full data you entered in that specific entry.

**Q.11. Is there a limit on how many Natura 2000 sites I can select in the Context Selection Section of Part C?**

Depending on the LIFE call, the non-mandatory section of Part C may include a Context Selection Section. This Context Selection allows the applicant to select Natura 2000 sites that their project plans to address. In order to avoid overloading the eGrants IT system we strongly suggest that the applicants limit the number of selected Natura 2000 sites to under 100 and to select only those with clear relevance to the project (e.g.. where concrete conservation measures are foreseen to take place, land purchased and/or where there will be a new management plan/site designated as a direct result of the project). If they wish to include more than 100 sites then we suggest that in addition to the 100 Natura 2000 sites selected in Part C, the applicants should also provide an additional list with



all the relevant Natura 2000 sites in Part B of their application as an image or attachment. They should include a short comment in Part B highlighting the issue.

**Q.12. Could we see the list of project indicators or the actual environment through which applicants need to provide the indicators in advance?**

To help you with providing Project Indicators in your application you can find on the LIFE Website information on the LIFE project indicators applicable to different Calls and watch the relevant video presentation that demonstrates the Part C Dynamic Form environment.

Guidance documents of LIFE project indicators:

- [LIFE Project Indicators Guidance Document \(non-CET\)](#)
- [LIFE CET-specific Project Indicators Guidance](#)
- Video demo of Part C: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b6yQFTN09kA>

## 2. Standard Action Projects (SAP)

### 2.1. Questions relevant for all SAP Calls

#### **Q.1. Is it mandatory to have activities in several countries and if yes how many?**

Under the calls for Standard Action Projects, it is not mandatory to have activities in several eligible countries (see 1.1 Q.1). However, a project proposal could get bonus points in the selection process if there is sufficient evidence that the transnational cooperation will contribute substantially to environmental, nature or climate protection.

In this context, "transnational" refers to the cooperation among eligible countries.

Activities outside the eligible countries will not result in additional points in the proposal evaluation.

#### **Q.2. Can we include ongoing activities in the project proposal?**

No, actions that are already ongoing before the official start of the LIFE project are not eligible. You can only include actions in your proposal that are significantly different from previous or ongoing activities in terms of frequency or intensity.

Exceptionally, a proposal could include actions that were undertaken and completed in the past and that would be repeated at a similar frequency or intensity during the new LIFE project. In these cases, applicants must provide evidence that such actions could not be carried out without the LIFE project.

#### **Q.3. What do you mean by "sustainability of the project"?**

LIFE projects are a considerable investment, and the European Union attaches great importance to the sustainability of these investments. Medium- and long-term sustainability means that project results are maintained after the official end of the LIFE project. Project partners must consider how the programme's investments will be secured, developed, made use of, replicated or transferred during or after the end of the project.

Applicants should outline a strategy for a successful continuation, replication and/or transfer of project results in their proposal. This includes tasks to multiply the impacts of the project's solutions and to mobilise a wider uptake reaching a critical mass, during and/or in the short or medium term after the end of the LIFE project. This goes beyond the transfer of knowledge and networking and involves putting the solutions developed or applied in the project into practice beyond the project period, elsewhere or for a different purpose.

#### **Q.4. Does LIFE fund research in any way? Or does it only focus on technology development and best practice?**

Horizon Europe is the EU instrument specifically targeting research. Research is not the main focus of the LIFE Programme, and should not be the main focus of a LIFE project. However, limited research aimed to improve and enhance the knowledge data underpinning the project may be carried out within a LIFE project. Research must be strictly limited and intrinsically related to the project's objectives and the applicant shall explain in detail how the proper implementation of the project relies on these research activities, showing that the existing scientific basis is insufficient, and how the additional knowledge will be used to implement the project actions. In such a case, scientific publications are considered important deliverables of the project.

Keep in mind that, in line with the definition of LIFE SAP projects, projects developing a new technology should be implemented at an operational scale and under conditions that allow the achievement of the impacts set out in the award criterion 'Impact' (see section 9 of the

corresponding Call Document).

**Q.5. Could you give a definition of the income of the action?**

When a project generates revenues during its lifetime, they need to be reported, to prevent the situation where the LIFE funding would result in a global positive figure when adding costs + LIFE grant + non-LIFE co-financing + revenues.

The expected project revenues should be included in the overview budget table in Form A under the column "Income generated by the project".

**Q.6. In part B templates for several sections, it states "n/a for stage 1", what does this mean?**

Some calls may entail a two-stage procedure, in that case, the forms with "n/a for stage 1" should not be filled in at the 1st stage.

If your call follows a single-stage process, all the sections in the forms should be filled in.

**Q.7. Could you give examples of replication activities? What is the difference between activities of replication, transferability, networking and long-term sustainability of the project results?**

Replication would be the implementation of the solutions of a project, which has been developed and implemented, in the same sectors elsewhere. Transferability refers to strategic projects and refers to the implementation of solutions that have been obtained in a project, which are applied in another sector and other areas. It must be a project that has proven to be replicable. The replication strategy should not be confused with a dissemination strategy or networking.

**Q.8. SAP calls have a very practical approach. Can decision-making be addressed?**

Yes, LIFE projects experience shows they traditionally can help to shape the decision-making process of the environmental issue targeted. Informing policy making can therefore be an element of the proposal, but only provided that the relevant activities conform to the [Commission guidance on funding for activities related to the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of Union legislation and policy](#). Furthermore, such activities can only be a complement to core project technical actions. Please refer to the call documents for further information.

## 2.2. Questions relevant only for SAP Nature and Biodiversity

### **Q.1. Does the 25% rule related to the budget dedicated to concrete conservation action still apply?**

The rule no longer applies; however all projects must have SMART (specific measurable achievable relevant and time-bound) objectives and results. This will enable the evaluators to understand how important and how urgent the project is. Concrete outcome-based activities are a pre-condition for prioritization of the proposals. Projects must still deliver concrete and substantial conservation benefits and impacts in order to be scored higher. Pure intellectual, academic or research projects are out of scope.

### **Q.2. If my project fits only in one policy priority (e.g., I plan to work only on bringing nature to agriculture land), will it have a lower priority for funding? Should I also make sure my project fits into an intervention area ("Space for nature" or "Safeguarding our species")?**

A project that is focussed on a single policy priority rather than on multiple priorities will not necessarily be disadvantaged for that reason. However, applicants should keep in mind that the prioritisation of proposals has two dimensions: conservation urgency on one hand (based on the conservation status, red list status etc. of the species and habitats targeted) and policy priorities on the other hand (see Section 2 of the Call document). In order to optimize their chances of receiving funding, applicants will need to show that their proposals fall into the priorities with regard to both dimensions.

### **Q.3. Can the inventory of the target priority species be included as an activity/task in the proposal?**

It is advised that inventories for particular species are only included in the proposal if this is a necessary pre-condition for the achievement of the project's objectives for these species. Applicants are advised to argue in their proposal the reasons why the inventory is needed and include concrete conservation activities targeting the species.

### **Q.4. Is it possible to include activities targeting red list species or Annex IV species when working in a Natura 2000 site? Does the Standard Data Form (SDF) for that site have to be updated before the end of the project?**

Project activities targeting EU red listed species or species listed in Annex IV of the Habitats Directive can take place inside a Natura 2000 site, as long as they are consistent with the conservation objectives of this site and do not contradict or undermine these objectives in any way. However, it is expected that the project's main focus is the site's conservation objectives for the species and habitats in the annexes (EU protected Natura 2000 triggering features).

Even though there is no strict requirement to report on such species in the Natura 2000 Standard Data form, Member States are encouraged to provide information on their presence in section "3.3 Other important species of flora and fauna (optional)".

### **Q.5. Can I include in the project budget for a visitors' center?**

Visitor infrastructures are a priori not eligible. However, in exceptional cases, the creation of small-scale visitor infrastructures could be eligible if all the following criteria are fulfilled:

- (i) Such infrastructure is essential to achieve project objectives and must be clearly related to the threats/pressure addressed in the project.
- (ii) The investment in the infrastructure is limited in comparison to the overall project budget and it is cost effective.
- (iii) The investment cannot be financed by other funding instruments at regional, national or EU level. The applicant should justify in the proposal why other sources of funding cannot be used to finance this investment.

**Q.6. Can my project target domestic species (e.g. honeybees)?**

No. Only wild flora and fauna and natural and semi-natural habitats may be targeted by the project.

**Q.7. If a project targets 4 annex V species and only 3 are U2-. Which co-financing applies?**

60% applies. It will not be eligible for 75% because not ALL species targeted are either priority species in the annexes of the Habitats Directive (i.e., asterisk species), or species in unfavorable-bad conservation status with a declining trend (U2-) in the EU- and national-level biogeographical region assessments, or species endangered or worse in the European red list.

**Q.8. If we request 75 % co-financing but the project is then assessed to be entitled to 60 % cofinancing, will our application be rejected?**

The application will not be rejected but this can have an impact on the score of the award criterion 4 "Resources". In case the project is successful, the co-financing rate will need to be adjusted during the Grant Agreement Preparation phase.

**Q.9. In case the project is aimed at restoring EU habitats outside N2000, is it obligatory to designate the site as a N2000 site? Are there other means compliant with LIFE requirements?**

Where the actions involve land acquisition and habitat restoration, the area in question should receive the most appropriate legal protection (nationally protected area, Natura 2000 etc.). For other investments that involve reducing pressures and threats (e.g. blocking of ditches or reducing nitrogen run off from agricultural land) on land which does not in itself have high natural value to justify designation but acts as a buffer zone around Natura 2000 sites and/or protected areas, a long term contractual agreement (at least 20 years) to ensure that the pressures and threats are irreversibly alleviated is required. When, for some reasons, legal protection/contractual agreements are not possible, the applicant should provide a thorough justification and clear evidence that the investment to be made is backed by an appropriate land use planning at the most relevant administrative level. Private land conservation initiatives can also be supported in this context.

See the Call Document Section 2 "Additional conditions" for more details.

**Q.10. To what extent is it required to provide precise measurements in case of habitat restoration?**

Evaluators will assess the technical and financial qualities of the proposal regarding the clarity of the description of the proposed measures and cost-effectiveness of the proposal. It is therefore in the interest of the applicant to be as clear as possible in this respect.

**Q.11. Is it required to mainly target Natura2000 sites in a project where there are only a few protected areas due to the limitations of an urban setting?**

As indicated in the LIFE Regulation, the implementation of EU nature legislation is a key policy priority for the program. However, there is no requirement to include Natura 2000 sites in a given proposal.

**Q.12. In nature projects is large infrastructure such as eco-ducts or fish passes eligible?**

Investments in infrastructure that is essential to achieve conservation objectives of the projects can be eligible and there is no financial ceiling for such investments. The following conditions need to be met:

- (iv) The entity that directly owns or will own the infrastructure assets must be part of the project partnership.
- (v) It is proven that the investment cannot be financed by other EU, national or regional funds.

- (vi) If the infrastructure acts as a migration corridor (e.g., eco-ducts, fish passes) evidence needs to be provided that is indispensable to ensure connectivity and movement of species.
- (vii) It is located inside Natura 2000, or in case it is located outside Natura 2000, the long-term conservation purpose of the infrastructure must be guaranteed in the most appropriate way (e.g., land use planning, contractual agreements).

See the Call Document Section 2 “Additional conditions” for more details.

### 2.3. Questions relevant only for SAP Circular Economy and Quality of Life

#### **Q.1. What are close-to-market projects and are there specific requirements for them?**

Close-to-market projects are Standard Action Projects (SAP) whose aim is not only delivering improved environmental solutions, but also making sure that such solutions are widely taken up by society in general and, more particularly, by the economy through an explicit market-oriented approach.

There are no specific requirements as to who the coordinating beneficiary should be, however the inclusion in the consortium of at least one company that can guarantee the implementation of a market approach is expected (although not formally required).

There are specific requirements for close-to-market projects indicated in the instructions contained in the Standard Application Forms (e.g.: target production capacity should be industrial/commercial scale already during the project), so pay particular attention to those specific requirements.

As for all SAPs projects, close-to-market project must include a compulsory work package called 'Sustainability, replication and exploitation of project results' in which typically all the activities aimed at reaching the market will be included as well as the mandatory deliverable Business plan including replication.

#### **Q.2. Are best practices allowed and if yes under which conditions? Do innovative projects get more points? Where are the definitions?**

The definitions of 'Best practice' and 'Innovative techniques, methods and approaches' are part of the SAPs definition to be found in section 2 of the call documents:

[SAPs represent the 'traditional LIFE projects' aimed to:

- *develop, demonstrate and promote innovative techniques, methods and approaches*  
'Innovative techniques, methods and approaches' means solutions which are new when compared to the state of the art at Member State and sector level and which are implemented at an operational scale and under conditions that allow the achievement of the impacts set out in the award criterion 'Impact' first paragraph.
- *contribute to the knowledge base and to the application of best practice*  
'Best practice' means solutions, techniques, methods and approaches which are appropriate, cost-effective and state of the art (at Member State and sector level), and which are implemented at an operational scale and under conditions that allow the achievement of the impacts set out in the award criterion 'Impact' first paragraph. ...]

So, SAPs that implement best practice are allowed, but only if they can be considered as such when compared to the state of the art at Member State level or in a specific sector. In other words, a solution that can be considered a best practice at regional level, but not at national level, because more advanced best practices are implemented in other regions in the same Member State, will not be eligible.

Similarly, we consider a SAP innovative when the project is implementing a solution that can be considered new at national level or in its application in a specific sector (e.g.: a technology known and applied in France in the context of waste management which has never been used in France in the wastewater management sector).

The description of the state of the art at national level is then crucial to determine if the project can be, at least, regarded as a best practice and therefore eligible for the call.

Formally no additional points are awarded to innovative SAPs as opposed to best practice ones. However, some of the priority topics described under section 2 of the call document require the implementation of innovative solutions. In those cases, proposals that do not comply with this requirement will score lower in Award criterion 1 (Relevance) that, among other things, requires to assess the 'Extent to which the proposal is in line with the description included in the call for proposals, including, where relevant, its specific priorities'.

**Q.3. Can you give examples for a 2 year and 10 year project relating to the starting and ending Technical Readiness Level (TRL)?**

The Call does not prescribe certain TRLs. What you should keep in mind is that a LIFE project should allow the delivery of sufficiently credible and ambitious environmental benefits, within the lifetime of the project and/or shortly after its end.

**Q.4. Are land purchases eligible for Circular Economy and Quality of Life projects?**

Yes, they are. However only when fulfilling the conditions specified in Art. 6.2 - D.2 "Eligible and ineligible costs and contributions" of the [Model Grant Agreement](#). Applicants must address each of these conditions in the proposal, explaining how each one is met or will be met during the project. Such conditions refer, for example, to the contribution to the integrity of the Natura 2000 network, to the guarantee that in the long term the land will be used consistently with the specific objectives of the LIFE Programme, to the fact that land purchase is the only or most cost-effective way of achieving the desired conservation outcome etc.

**Q.5. Does the Circular Economy & Quality of Life sub-programme fund research activities, construction and analysis of pilot projects, and the patent of an innovation?**

See Q&A "Does LIFE fund research in any way?" in section 2.1 regarding the funding of research activities.

In line with the definition of LIFE SAP projects, projects developing a new technology should be implemented at an operational scale and under conditions that allow the achievement of the impacts set out in the award criterion 'Impact' (see section 9 of the corresponding Call Document). In this sense, construction and analysis of a pilot project, and the patent of the innovation, are costs which are typically eligible for funding as long as they comply with the cost eligibility conditions specified in Art. 6 of the [Model Grant Agreement](#).

**Q.6. SAP-ENV-GOV: what are the most crucial issues that a proposal must cover in order to be eligible?**

SAP-ENV-GOV includes all governance topics specifically related to environment (*other than nature and biodiversity*) and circular economy, which in the past were embedded in the broader LIFE Governance & Information (GIE) call. To be eligible under SAP-ENV-GOV, a proposal must target at least one of the three sub-topics and related Circular Economy & Quality of Life priorities explicitly indicated in the section 2 of the call document (1. support to public administration decision making process and voluntary approaches, 2. environmental compliance assurance and access to justice, 3. behavioural change and awareness raising), as well as complying with the eligibility and award criteria described in the call document common to SAP-ENV-Environment. As per SAP Environment, attention will therefore be given to project impact Indicators and project sustainability as well.



**Q.7. SAP-ENV-GOV: Are capacity-building projects for public administrations and/or other environmental governance projects also intended to achieve direct environmental benefits (e.g. results on water quality for projects implementing River Basin or Flood risk Management Plans)? Are specific indicators mandatory?**

Project proposals submitted under SAP-ENV-GOV shall compulsorily fill in Part C of the application form. There are no specific indicators for environmental governance. However, it is possible to add specific ones using the option "other". It is strongly advised that not only behavioural change and awareness raising indicators are reported, but that direct and/or indirect environmental benefits (e.g., reduction of air, water pollutants, use of chemicals, etc) are also included where applicable to the possible extent.

**Q.8. LIFE SAP ENV: Can my project target environmental education/awareness issues?**

Yes, please have a look at the dedicated sub-topic and corresponding Circular Economy & Quality of Life priorities under LIFE-SAP-ENV-GOV.

**Q.9. CLIMA Transport topics and Circular Economy & Quality of Life Air transport topics are often similar. Any suggestions to choose the right one?**

Applicants are advised to target the sub-programme based on the environmental problem primarily targeted in the specific context of the project. If the main problem is bad air quality in a specific area/city targeted by the project, then the project has a relevant "air quality" objective and air pollutants (e.g., PM, NOx, etc.) represent the main indicators to describe the impacts. In this case, co-benefits related to GHGs mitigation can be quantified too. Vice versa, if the project targets, for example, a strategy to mitigate climate change in specific sector (e.g., the automotive industry), the primary indicator is CO<sub>2</sub>eq. reduced/avoided: in this case CLIMA topic might better fit the purpose of the project and air pollution reduction represents a co-benefit. This is ultimately, however, the choice of the applicant.

**Q.10. Does LIFE offer support/advice for Business plan development?**

The support for development / preparation of the Business plan is eligible.

## **2.4. Question relevant to Circular economy and quality of life - Topic 7 A New European Bauhaus (NEB)**

**Q.1. What are the main elements that qualify a project as a New European Bauhaus one?**

The concept behind the New European Bauhaus initiative is that the transition is as much a cultural and social transition as a green one. The NEB initiative aims at transforming different sectors of the economy, especially the built environment, making them contribute to the Green Deal and to an improvement of the quality of life of all citizens. The three core values for a project to be a NEB project are: beautiful, sustainable and together. The three processes that describe the NEB way of working are: participatory approach, multi-level engagement and a transdisciplinary approach. A NEB project may have different levels of ambition for what concerns the three core values and the three working principles. The higher the levels of ambition, the more the project will qualify as fitting the New European Bauhaus topic.

For further details, you can refer to the New European Bauhaus Compass.

**Q.2. Is it important that the results of my project are clear and measurable?**

Yes, as it is the case with all LIFE projects, despite its markedly transdisciplinary and transversal

nature, also for NEB projects, the actual impact on the environment and on the other sectors it affects have to be clear and measurable. To this end, it is essential that the baseline is described in the most complete and detailed way possible and that the impacts of the project are measured through adequate indicators. If for example, a high number of different technologies and approaches is applied within the project, it is important to provide adequate information on their individual performance and state-of the art. Illustration, maps and blueprints should be included to the greatest extent possible in the proposal, to illustrate the starting situation and the expected evolution during the project. A well-developed business model should also be included, if relevant.

**Q.3. What is the appropriate scale of the tested solution?**

There is no pre-established appropriate scale for the solution to be tested. However, if the project proposes a small-scale solution with a limited impact on the targeted sectors, this will be taken into account during the evaluation process and reflected in final scores, which may be lower than for a project with a broader impact. It is recommended to describe in a clear and detailed way, how the proposed solution will be replicated and transferred during and after the project, in order to have the widest possible impact. Always keep in mind that replicating a solution goes beyond communication, dissemination and networking. A replication strategy has to include concrete activities to triggers an effect that amplifies the project outcome on a wide scale i.e. in other sectors or cities, at regional or country level, in other countries, etc

**Q.4. Can large infrastructures be funded under the LIFE New European Bauhaus topic?**

No, the construction of large infrastructures does not fall within the scope of the LIFE Programme. Nevertheless, the LIFE programme can finance pilot projects and demos to show that a solution works; it can finance a component of a structure, show how eco-compatible materials can be used instead of non-eco-friendly ones...

**Q.5. Is it important to engage stakeholders?**

As with all LIFE projects, it is fundamental that relevant stakeholders are engaged. This is especially relevant for a NEB projects for which the participatory approach is a fundamental and characterizing working method. The project should clearly identify the relevant stakeholders (such as local communities, policy makers, companies and business operators that could be interested in the proposed solution, etc) and describe how it intends to engage and mobilize them, in order to enhance its impact and to embed the project in a broader context. Partnering with relevant institutions which can promote the proposed approach in the long term is also a plus. Letters confirming the interest and support of relevant actors and stakeholders to the project should be provided.

## 2.5. Questions relevant only for SAP Climate Action

**Q.1. If the project focuses fully on one of the areas of intervention but no one of the bullet points, may it equally be considered aligned with the priorities?**

Yes, if the project complies with one designated scope it will be assessed as complying with the priorities. The areas of intervention (bullet points) are given as examples, they are non-exhaustive.

**Q.2. CCA priorities 1&2&6: may adaptation strategies, solutions and decision support systems focus on determined climate-related threats, or should they be holistic?**

Adaptation strategies, solutions and decision support systems can be focused on determined climate-related threats. However, it should be noted that Award Criteria 1 "Relevance" will assess the extent to which proposals offer co-benefits and promote synergies with other policy areas.

**Q.3. We want to prevent water runoff by placing adaptation measures. Also, we touch protected habitats and species. How can we underscore this to opt to an additional 7%?**

If the main objective of your project is to introduce adaptation measures to increase resilience to water-related risks, you may apply under Climate Adaptation topic. All Standard Action Projects (SAPs) in the CLIMA sub-programme have a maximum 60% funding rate. Sub-programme LIFE Nature & Biodiversity offers under certain conditions a higher co-financing rate (up to 75%). For further details, please check the call documents of LIFE CLIMA and LIFE Nature & Biodiversity.

**Q.4. CCM - Are conditions elaborated on p. 17 of the call (4 bullet points on how project should contribute to objectives) cumulative?**

The catalogue of objectives does not have a cumulative character. This inclusive approach helps to gather projects, which contribute to key call objectives from different points of views / approaches / types of projects. Therefore, it is not necessary to tick all of the boxes, but of course achieving as many as possible will help to gain more points on the evaluation.

**Q.5. Does LIFE offer support/advice for Business plan development?**

The support for development / preparation of the Business plan is eligible.

**Q.6. We would like to submit a proposal focused on forest management - should we submit it under Climate Adaptation or Climate Mitigation?**

Forestry projects are eligible under both CCA and CCM and an action can have impact on both climate change adaptation and mitigation. Under CCM, the main actions focus on decreasing GHG emissions and increasing Carbon sequestration (and those impacts need to be measured), meanwhile adaptation projects improve forest resilience and different types of indicators (such as the area of the more resilient forest) are measured.

**Q.7. CLIMA intervention area Natural carbon sinks - Are projects related to sea management practices encouraged? The call seems very focused on land and relation to the CAP.**

Scope 6 of LIFE-2025-SAP-CLIMA-CCM - Climate Change Mitigation covers

“Development and implementation of land and coastal management practices which have an impact on emissions and carbon removals, including the conservation and enhancement of natural carbon sinks in soils and forests and the storage of carbon in long-lasting products”. Thus, sea management practices are included, although this type of action is not explicitly listed amongst the areas of intervention. The list of areas of intervention is considered only indicative.

**Q.8. CCM - For peatlands restoration, concrete actions can be very expensive even for small sites - how can we justify the cost-efficiency?**

As in any project, you have to provide as much information as possible to describe the project actions and their costs, the impact of the project, how the project results will be sustained etc. The proposals are evaluated by external experts who are aware of the costs of different types of work and on the basis of information provided, they will evaluate “the value for money” of the proposals.

**Q.9. CCM: what are the specificities of #4 "Increase the generation (...) of renewable energy (...)" compared to the Clean Energy Transition sub programme?**

This possible area of intervention is deliberately open to follow the bottom-up approach of LIFE SAP CLIMA call. Applicants may consider the following information when choosing between Clima Action and Clean Energy Transition Subprograms:

- Durable goods such as equipment, infrastructure and prototype are traditionally eligible under LIFE SAP CLIMA (depreciation or even full costs if some conditions are respected). Therefore, the development, installation and test of technology related to renewable energy would fit under LIFE SAP CLIMA call.
- Transnationality: under LIFE SAP CLIMA there is no condition of transnational partnership. A proposal can be submitted by one applicant coming from one country. Bonus points for transnationally may be awarded but it is not a requirement.

**Q.10. Under the CCM on the Energy Intensive Industries (EII), are EII defined somewhere? Is there a limited list of EII?**

The priority on energy intensive industries remains the same as in previous years. There is no defined list, but we consider industries with high energy consumption and with high saving potentials as EII. This includes for instance steel, aluminium, glass, ceramics, cement and chemical industries. This does not limit it to big industries, on the contrary, we would like to target SMEs which have high energy consumption, and which could have a transformative impact in their respective sectors.

**Q.11. CCM: Is it possible to submit a project focusing on reduction of GHG and air pollution at the same time?**

Yes, a project under can target reduction of GHG of an industrial process but have additional impact on reducing air pollution. This approach will allow proposal to 'offer co-benefits and promote synergies with other policy areas relevant for achieving environment and climate policy objectives' (Award Criteria - relevance).

**Q.12. CLIMA Transport topics and Circular Economy & Quality of Life AIR transport topics are often similar. Any suggestions to choose the right one?**

An approach to selecting the right sub-programme could be the one based on the environmental problem primarily targeted in the specific context of the project. If the main problem is bad air quality in a specific area/city targeted by the project, then the project has a relevant “air quality” objective and air pollutants (e.g., PM, NOx, etc.) represent the main indicators to describe the impacts. In this case, co-benefits related to GHGs mitigation can be quantified too. Vice versa, if the project targets, for example, a strategy to mitigate climate change in specific sector (e.g., the automotive industry), the primary indicator is CO<sub>2</sub>eq. reduced/avoided: in this case Clima topic might better fit the purpose of the project and air pollution reduction represents a co-benefit. It is ultimately the decision of the applicant.

**Q.13. As stated in the call, projects should start at TRL 4-5 and end at TRL 8-9. It means that we are considering very long projects. Is this really the objective of LIFE programme?**

Projects with TRL lower than 4-5 are below the scope of LIFE SAP CLIMA call. A project can also start at a higher TRL than 4-5. In any case, the maximum length of a project is 10 years as stated in the call document (section 10).

**Q.14. CLIMA GOV: producing measurable results for this kind of project seems difficult, is there any example from past projects showing how to get measurable impact?**

GOV projects direct impacts are generally increased level of awareness, of knowledge, changed consumption patterns, enhanced coordination of institutions or plans, mainstreaming of climate objectives into the different policies, better monitoring or enforcement. You can demonstrate these impacts via surveys, changed consumption patterns, new legislation or strategies and plans adopted/implemented. Climate and environmental impacts are generally indirect for GOV projects and are visible usually in the medium term after the end of the project.

**Q.15. Does LIFE programme support development of tools, decision support services or studies to increase climate-resilience?**

Yes, it does, mainly in the GOV topic. Project developing tools or studies need to include concrete actions that these tools are implemented, or studies are used in policy making/monitoring during the duration of the project.

**Q.16. May we use a part of the LIFE funding to support another entity developing a local initiative? What are the conditions?**

It is allowed for grants and prizes. Financial support to third parties will be accepted in projects which aim to assist entities outside the project partnership (e.g., non-profit organisations, local authorities, citizens groups, individual farmers) in the implementation or development of local initiatives that will contribute to the project's objectives. Maximum total amount for financial support to third parties EUR 100.000; maximum amount per third party EUR 20.000. The application must clearly specify why financial support to third parties is needed, the criteria and procedures for giving financial support, provide a list of the different types of activities for which a third party may receive financial support. The proposal must also clearly describe the results to be obtained.

**Q.17. I want to develop a project that enhances capacities for energy efficiency. Should I apply under the LIFE CET or CLIMA Governance and Information?**

Generally, LIFE CET requirements are more prescriptive in terms of topics, scale, and partnership. LIFE GOV follows a more bottom-up approach and allows more flexibility in terms of actions to be proposed, scale of the project (even local actions are eligible). There are also differences in the funding rates. In any case, please check the call documents of both sub-programmes to see where your idea fits best.

**Q.18. Does CLIMA-GOV have equipment and infrastructure eligible costs?**

Yes, it does, but such investments are rather limited and exceptional in the CLIMA-GOV topic.

**Q.19. CLIMA GOV&INFO: how large is the total budget that the EU will award? And approximately how many projects are expected to share this budget?**

For call 2025, the CLIMA GOV topic has an indicative budget of 5.5 million euros. Based on the experience of the previous calls, around 4 projects are likely to get funded.

**Q.20. Are water projects eligible under Climate change governance and information?**

**Water related projects are eligible under Climate Change Governance and Information. Depending on its specificities, you may build your project within relevant scopes such as 1. Raising awareness, incentivising behavioural change and supporting the activities of the European Climate Pact, 2. I Green skills & capacity building to implement climate mitigation and adaptation policies.Q.21. What are close-to-market projects and are there specific requirements for them?**

Close-to-market projects are Standard Action Projects (SAP) whose aim is not only delivering improved environmental solutions, but also making sure that such solutions are widely taken up by society in general and, more particularly, by the economy through an explicit market-oriented approach.

There are no specific requirements as to who the coordinating beneficiary should be, however the inclusion in the consortium of at least one company that can guarantee the implementation of a market approach is expected (although not formally required).

There are specific requirements for close-to-market projects indicated in the instructions contained in the Standard Application Forms (e.g.: target production capacity should be industrial/commercial scale already during the project), so pay particular attention to those specific requirements.

As for all SAPs projects also close-to-market project must include a compulsory work package called 'Sustainability, replication and exploitation of project results' in which typically all the activities aimed at reaching the market will be included as well as the mandatory deliverable Business plan including replication.

### 3. Strategic (Integrated/Nature) Projects (SIP/SNaP)

#### Q.1. Who can provide assistance and information on Strategic Integrated and Nature Projects (SIPs/SNaPs) in my country?

The [LIFE National Contact Points](#) can provide guidance to applicants. In order to enhance the chances of successful applications and in particular to avoid unintentional competition among projects having similar targets, potential applicants are encouraged to make use of this assistance.

Furthermore, the LIFE Units in DG Environment and CINEA may also be contacted to provide guidance on the potential project concepts. Please write to [CINEA-LIFE-ENQUIRIES@ec.europa.eu](mailto:CINEA-LIFE-ENQUIRIES@ec.europa.eu).

Furthermore, [technical assistance grant](#) can help finance the preparation of strategic projects proposals.

#### Q.2. I am an entity registered in a LIFE participating country that is not an EU Member State and I am planning to submit an application for the LIFE-2025-SNAP. To which degree should the EU Nature and/or Biodiversity policy or legislation be addressed by the plan or strategy that I aim to target with the SNaP: Does the plan need to explicitly make reference to the relevant policy/legislation?

The LIFE24 STRAT call document indicates that:

*“Under the sub-programme for Nature and Biodiversity:*

*SNaPs target the implementation of the following types of plans, strategies or action plans required by specific EU environmental legislation or policy:*

- *the Prioritised Action Frameworks (PAF) pursuant to Article 8 of the Habitats Directive 92/43 and*
- *other plans or strategies adopted at international, national, regional or multiregional level by nature and biodiversity authorities, that implement EU nature and/or biodiversity policy or legislation and include specific and measurable actions, or targets, with a clear timeline and budget.*

*SNaPs should aim at the full implementation of the targeted plan/strategy/action plan and, together with the complementary measures needed to achieve full implementation, remove all remaining administrative, financial, structural and other barriers for its implementation.*

*They should support the plan/strategy/action plan on a large territorial scale, meaning regional, multi-regional, national or transnational. They should typically be coordinated by the authority responsible for the implementation of the plan/strategy/action plan (see consortium composition requirements in section 6) and must involve the stakeholders that are instrumental for its successful implementation.”*

Acknowledging that the EU legislation, in particular the Habitats Directive is not in force in the LIFE participating country, the possible targeted plan/strategy must fit the second criterion. Such plans/strategies shall pursue the same or similar principles and objectives of EU nature and biodiversity policy and legislation. They might have in their focus the following options as long as such a project would meet all the other conditions concerning scale, consortia, complementarity, etc:

- **Emerald network:** In the absence of a Natura 2000 network in the 4 countries associated to the LIFE program, the Emerald network set up under the Bern Convention is an accepted alternative in general. Accordingly, certain plans linked to the Emerald network might be an acceptable target of SNaPs.

- **International Species Action Plans or Management Plans**, adopted by the Bern Convention as well as other international Conventions such as AEWA or CMS, which might also qualify.
- **Other plans/strategies that implement EU biodiversity policy** in the countries associated to LIFE (eg. in order to achieve same or similar objectives in those countries).

Note that the above is a non-exhaustive listing.

### 3.1. Stage 1 (concept note)

#### **Q.1. Are SNaP/SIP projects allowed to address more than one plan?**

Yes, they are allowed. A single SIP may target more than one plan. The requirement is that at least one of the plans or strategies targeted should be among those in the list of eligible plans and strategies as listed in Chapter 2 of the Call document, and the project should aim at its full implementation in coordination/mobilising other funds besides LIFE.

#### **Q.2. We are working on a proposal that is aimed at implementing more than one eligible plan/strategy, but the online proposal allows the upload of only 1 pdf file. How can we upload or make available all the targeted plan/strategies?**

Indeed there is an IT limitation whereby only 1 pdf file can be uploaded as targeted plan(s), so we propose 2 solutions:

- Either you make an index and merge that index plus the targeted plans/strategies into 1 pdf, and submit that,
- Or you upload a pdf that includes a download link for all the targeted plans/strategies.

The first option would be preferred, so we have already the plans/strategies uploaded in eGrants, but the second would be acceptable too.

#### **Q.3. Is it mandatory to have several beneficiaries in a SIP/SNaP consortium? Can we include additional beneficiaries/affiliates/associated partners in Stage 2 that were not foreseen yet in Stage 1? Is it possible to modify the role (coordinator/beneficiary/affiliate/associated partner) of a stakeholder between Stage 1 and Stage 2?**

The minimum number of beneficiaries is two, and one of them should be the authority responsible for the implementation of the targeted plan/strategy/action plan. See also the question below.

You can include additional beneficiaries/affiliates/associated partners in Stage 2, and also modify the role of a stakeholder between stages 1 and 2. But those changes should be well justified in your application in stage 2.

#### **Q.4. In the section 3.2 "Stakeholder input", the instructions mention "Annex Letters of support to demonstrate the type and level of commitment already secured (if any)", but in page 44 of the Call for Proposals document, the Letters of Support are only applicable in Stage 2. Do we have to include the ones we have in Stage 1?**

Do not include letters of support in stage 1.



**Q.5. Budget breakdown: in former LIFE Integrated Projects calls, the Stage 1 proposal (former Concept Note) indicated a total project budget without making any difference between Cost Categories or Beneficiaries. Does it still apply in the same way or is it necessary to provide a breakdown?**

In stage 1 you will have to complete the table "3 - Budget" in Form A, providing, per beneficiary, an estimate of the total budget per cost category. See the table in page 9 of [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/life/temp-form/af/af\\_life-sip-snap\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/life/temp-form/af/af_life-sip-snap_en.pdf).

**Q.6. Can Part B of the Concept Note application template exceed the 45-page limit?**

No. When uploading your Part B of the concept note application form, any pages beyond that limit will not be visible to the evaluators (so they are lost).

**Q.7. According to the call document "the national authority responsible for the plan/strategy/action plan should be in principle participating in the consortium as coordinator. In well justified cases it may participate not as coordinator, but it should in any case be part of the consortium". However, in my Member State there are different authorities that are responsible for the elaboration of the Plan/Strategy, and several actors that are responsible for its implementation. How should we approach it?**

Please note that the call document emphasizes the implementation of the plan as the objective (not the elaboration). Therefore, the project should be designed with this long-term objective in mind and both the concept note / full proposal should clearly explain which authority or authorities are responsible for the full implementation and what are the roles of other authorities and stakeholders in the implementation of the plan. That share of responsibilities should be also adequately reflected in the project partnership. While there can be only one coordinator, other actors responsible for the implementation of parts of a Plan should ideally be involved as beneficiaries.

On the related note, please pay attention to the following eligibility criterion listed in section 9 of the Call document: *involvement of key stakeholders*. When preparing a project application and the intervention logic, it is important to make sure that all the stakeholders that are instrumental for the implementation of the plan(s) are involved in the project.

**Q.8. In the Call for Proposals document, you mention the "Financial and operational capacity" assessment of applicants. Are Financial and Operational Capacity assessed in Stage 1 proposals? In case yes, how is it done?**

In terms of financial capacity, no check is done at stage 1. In terms of operational capacity, the only checks done at stage 1 is a "rough" assessment of the consortium, to see first if the competent authority to implement the targeted plan/strategy is included, and to see if the entities most relevant for the implementation of the work packages are as well included.

**Q.9. What does the 'large territorial coverage' foreseen for SIP/SNaPs mean in practice in the case of waste management plans? Could the SIP/SNaP be implemented in some separate provinces, or should it be a geographically uniform/continuous area?**

It is up to the applicant to decide upon their choice of regions or provinces to be covered by the SIP/SNaP but they should fall within the area covered by the plan(s) targeted by the project.

**Q.10. If the partners of the SIP/SNaP are preparing also LIFE standard action project (SAP) applications as well as Horizon Europe projects, parallel to the SIP/SNaP one, will this synergy contribute to a positive evaluation of the SIP/SNaP? Is mentioning the complementarity between a SIP/SNaP and a SAP application necessary or not? Where and how should it be reported in stage 1 (concept note)?**

Synergy with other EU funds is encouraged for SIP/SNaP proposals. While of course it is good to ensure complementarity between a LIFE SIP/SNaP and a running/future LIFE SAP project, it is primarily the complementarity with actions financed by other EU funds (including Horizon Europe funds, regional development funds, etc.) that would be positively evaluated.

In stage 1 the information should be indicated in Part B of the concept note, under '5. Complementary Funding'.

**Q.11. For national-scale plans: what would be considered as complementary measures for such a large scale?**

In general, a complementary measure is any measure not included within the SNaP/SIP that contributes to the plan(s) implementation. The definition is the same regardless of whether or not the scope of the plan is national.

For example, for a SIP targeting air quality plan at national scale, a complementary measure could be the replacement at national scale, making use of national or EU Funds other than LIFE, of old boilers by new, less polluting ones. Or for a SIP targeting river basin management plans covering a whole country, complementary measures may include, for example, the removal of all hydro morphological barriers or the creation and restoration of wetlands.

To see more examples please check the websites of ongoing integrated projects, you can find them in the LIFE project database, <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/life/publicWebsite/search>.

**Q.12. Can the concept note refer to an environmental or climate plan or strategy or roadmap that has not yet been agreed with the EC or not yet adopted?**

As indicated in the Call document, if the formal adoption has not taken place at the time of the submission of the Concept Note, the applicant should explain the status of the adoption and demonstrate that this adoption will take place before deadline for submission of the full SIP/SNaP proposal.

**Q.13. According to the call document, the SIP/SNaP should aim towards the full implementation of the targeted plan or strategy. However, given the broad scope of the Strategy that we intend to target, it is more realistic to focus only on part of the Strategy. Is it allowed?**

Indeed, the long-term objective for any SIP/SNaP should be the full implementation of a targeted Strategy / Plan. This is why Integrated Projects have been introduced - to catalyse full implementation of plans and strategies and to help Member States to achieve this ambitious task.

With the limited budget of the SIP/SNaP it is not possible to fully implement most of the strategies with the LIFE budget only. That is why the complementary actions are very important and that is why many of the SIPs/SNaPs funded so far focus on removing obstacles for the implementation of the full strategy (by capacity building, preparation of management plans, stakeholder engagement etc.) rather than focusing on one theme of the strategy.

However, it is also possible to conceive a SIP/SNaP that focuses on one element of the strategy and uses it as a vehicle to achieve the remaining objectives of that strategy. When that is the case, the

concept note should clearly justify such an approach and convince the evaluators that, even with this narrower focus, the full plan will be eventually implemented.

**Q.14. We have a wide-ranging Plan/Strategy in our Member State, covering different sectors. Would it be appropriate to have a SIP/SNaP with one or two concrete actions relating to each of those areas? And then, complementary actions relating to each area? Or might that be considered insufficiently coherent for a SIP/SNaP?**

The key objective of a SIP/SNaP is the full implementation of an eligible Strategy/Plan. So, if your strategy covers several sectors, we would like to see in your application how the strategy will be implemented for each sector, either through actions included in the SIP/SNaP or through complementary actions. This does not mean that the SIP/SNaP itself will cover all actions foreseen in the plan and we understand that most of the actions will be implemented through complementary funding.

You could also consider the availability of funding for complementary activities. For activities in some sectors, it might be easier to mobilise complementary funding, while for others this might be more difficult, and you may even choose to cover more actions from these sectors from the SIP/SNaP per se (LIFE funded) if needed. So, in that sense, the weight in the SIP/SNaP might be, but does not have to be, equally distributed among all the sectors covered in the strategy depending on the specific context of your Member State.

**Q.15. We wish to apply for a Climate Change Mitigation SIP. While preparing to address Climate Mitigation aspects as per Call document, however we are noticing that for the project to be more successful, a small number of actions related to climate adaptation should also feature. Would such actions be eligible for LIFE SIP funding?**

If the adaptation actions are in the plan or strategy your SIP would be addressing, then it is alright to have these actions in the project (or possibly covered by complementary measures).

Also, if those actions are related to the project, i.e., for example they would improve the project or without them the project would be less effective, then it is all right to have those actions proposed. However, a clear justification would need to be provided, so evaluators can understand what the added value is of having those actions included and how they support project objectives.

**Q.16. What is the difference between strategies and roadmaps in the case of Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation SIPs targeting national, regional or industry-/sector-specific greenhouse gas mitigation strategies or economy roadmaps?**

The Communication on the 2050 Roadmap for a competitive low-carbon economy encourages industrial sectors to develop low carbon roadmaps, analysing how particular industries can contribute to reaching EU's 2050 climate change mitigation and adaptation targets. These are the roadmaps to implement with SIPs. Examples of sectoral roadmaps, which exist under the 2050 Roadmap that could be implemented under LIFE Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation SIPs, include:

- a. ceramic industry roadmap
- b. chemical industry roadmap
- c. steel industry roadmap.

Contrary to plans or strategies such as an adaptation strategy or a river basin management plan that are led and will be adopted by public authorities, industrial low-carbon Roadmaps will be adopted by

industry itself. Moreover SIPs implementing such roadmaps are encouraged pursuant to the Union act “Communication on the 2050 Roadmap” whereas for example a SIP implementing a river basin management plan under the Environment sub-programme is a plan required by specific Union environmental legislation.

**Q.17. What is the distribution of EU payments during the life of the project of a SNaP/SIP?**

The first pre-financing is for 20% (after grant agreement signature), then there is an interim payment of actual costs incurred 3 months after the end of each phase, with the limitation that the sum of all payments before final report stage cannot surpass 80% of the maximum LIFE grant. Finally, a payment of the balance is made at project end.

**Q.18. Can cascading grants (financial support to third parties) be included in the SIP/SNaP? Can you please clarify the following sentence from the guidelines: "costs for financial support to third parties: allowed for grants and prizes; maximum total amount for financial support to third parties EUR 200 000; maximum amount per third party EUR 60 000, unless a higher amount is required because the objective of the action would otherwise be impossible or overly difficult to achieve and this is duly justified in the Application Form".**

Cascading grants are possible eligible costs under LIFE in the following format: EUR 60 000 per third party up to the ceiling of a total of EUR 200 000 for all the grants. This means that 6 such grants for EUR 30 000 could be considered as eligible costs or possibly 10 grants for EUR 20 000 or any other configuration that will allow you to respect the limit of EUR 60 000 per grant without exceeding the total cost of EUR 200 000 for the sum of all of them.

In exceptional cases an amount higher than EUR 60 000 for a given third party might be accepted, upon proof that the objective of the action (project) would otherwise be impossible or overly difficult to achieve.

If the cascading grants that are envisaged do not meet the above-mentioned criteria, they cannot be considered as eligible project costs. In such case, the applicant could perhaps consider if they could be covered under SIP-SNaP complementary measures.

**Q.19. Is there a maximum budget difference allowed between the budget at the concept note stage and the final proposal for a SIP/SNaP project?**

There is no fixed amount or % difference, but as an orientation, if the difference in the total budget surpasses 10%, then a deeper scrutiny will be made during the evaluation of these changes. Situations to avoid can for example be:

- i. Budget substantially reduced due to a substantial reduction in the project ambition, you can expect that this will be flagged by evaluators and penalised in award criterion 2 (Impact).
- ii. Budget substantially increased but project ambition remains similar to concept note stage, thus reducing its value for money.

In general, in case of budget changes, the value for money will be assessed, comparing it to the one at concept note stage.

For SNaPs, please see estimates of the budget allocated for SNaPs per Member State, in the Multiannual Work Programme (MAWP), pages 21-22. For SIPs, an indicative EU funding of 12 million EUR per project is mentioned on page 24 of the MAWP. Usually we also indicate the average (expected) budget in the evaluation results notification letter sent to applicants that pass the concept note stage.

**Q.20. In the concept note, is there a limit to the numbers of deliverables for the entire project?**

No, there is no such limit. In particular:

- At concept note stage, in section 3 (Implementation) of the application form (Part B), you should only complete sections 3.1 (work plan) and 3.2 (stakeholder input), providing a broad picture of the work plan and its work packages, listing only key deliverables/outcomes of each work package (applicants could face page limit issues otherwise).
- At full proposal stage (stage 2), you will have to complete as well the rest of subsections of section 3, in particular the detailed description of each work package, which includes, regarding milestones and deliverables, the instruction that, for a given work package, you should limit the number of deliverables to maximum 10 - 15 for the entire project.

**Q.21. Indicators reporting: do we need to include complementary measures in SIPs/SNaPs?**

During project lifetime the SIP/SNaP beneficiaries will need to report 3 times (shortly after the start, at mid-term and at final report stage) in the LIFE Project Indicators (LPI) Webtool. Beneficiaries will need to report on impacts coming not only from LIFE funding but also from complementary funding, distinguishing between them whenever possible.

**3.2. Stage 2 (full proposal)**

**Please read carefully the Q&A of stage 1 (concept note), as many are also relevant for stage 2 (full proposal).**

**General topics**

**Q.1. Do I understand well that, under the award criterion "Impact", only the direct impact of the LIFE SIP/SNaP will be considered during the assessment of the full project proposal?**

No. The impact will be measured by evaluating several factors. For each type of SIP/SNaP, these factors include the expected level of implementation of the targeted plan/strategy/roadmap as a direct consequence of the actions foreseen in the SIP/SNaP or through the complementary actions financed by other means mobilized in parallel to the SIP/SNaP. However, both the direct impact of the SIP/SNaP itself and the indirect impact resulting from actions catalysed by the SIP/SNaP project will be considered. For instance, for SNaP applications targeting PAFs, the evaluation will take into account the overall expected improvement of the conservation status of species and habitats, or for water SIPs, the overall impact in terms of addressing significant unaddressed pressures or improvements towards WFD good status/potential.

**Q.2. Can we submit a SIP/SNaP full proposal application if the targeted plan/strategy/action plan has not yet been approved?**

At full proposal stage (latest by the time of submission of the full proposal), the targeted plan/strategy/action plan should be approved by the relevant authorities in your country. Moreover, if the targeted plan/strategy/action plan has a legal obligation to be submitted to the European Commission, it should have been reviewed by the European Commission and considered at least of acceptable quality.

Exception: if the new plan targeted is not yet adopted but there is a previous version of it in force (e.g. a plan which came into force in 2015 and is still applicable until the new one replaces it), please provide both the current plan in force and the latest draft of the new one. In this case, please explain

the situation with the plans in Part B of your application form so it can be considered and assessed properly.

**Q.3. Related the starting date of the project, we're considering December 2026 according to the guidelines. Is this correct or is preferable to indicate any other starting date?**

The proposed starting date, notably December 2026, is reasonable. As stated in section 10 of the Call document, the project starting date and duration will be fixed in the Grant Agreement and normally the starting date will be after grant signature, which is indeed expected in November-December 2026.

Thus, ideally, we would suggest to set a starting date within January 2027.

Nevertheless, a retroactive starting date can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons — but never earlier than the proposal submission date.

**Q.4. Is there at this stage a possibility to increase the scope of a SIP/SNaP project to enable the fullest possible implementation of the targeted plan, which consequently lead to increasing the requested amount of EU funding from about EUR 20 million to the maximum amount allocated to our country, i.e., EUR 30 million?**

You can increase scope and budget, but please take into account the following:

- The additional activities have to clearly target the implementation of the targeted plan.
- The value for money should be well justified.
- In general, you have to justify well these substantial changes. The changes made should not be such that, if the concept note would have been presented with these changes, it would have failed.
- In the past, LIFE proposals (traditional projects) were allowed to increase max 10% the budget from the concept note to the full proposal stage, and if such threshold was surpassed and the proposal was selected, the grant would be reduced to that threshold. Even if there might be a little bit more flexibility for the SIPs/SNaPs depending on the available budget, number and quality of proposals received, your proposal, if successful, might need a reduction of the grant requested in the grant agreement preparation phase if you increase the budget as you propose. Please take that into account while submitting your proposal.
- In any case before submitting your proposal it is highly recommended to discuss with all the concerned potential SNaP applicants (other authorities responsible for the implementation of the targeted plan, relevant line Ministries etc) the most effective use of your country's national allocation for 2021-2027. LIFE National Contact Points could play a key role in facilitating such discussions.

**Q.5. Is it allowed to add partners in stage 2 of the application process?**

Yes, the consortium may be strengthened with additional beneficiaries, if well-justified and considered necessary for the achievement of the project's objectives.

**Financial topics**

**Q.6. Can the consortium or a single partner's budget either increase or decrease in stage 2 of the application process?**

For the overall project budget please see Q.19 in section 3.1. Reasonable and well-justified changes in

the beneficiaries' budgets may be accepted.

**Q.7. How should the transfer of a part of the LIFE contribution from a beneficiary to another be inserted within the budget table? For example, the private beneficiary X realizes activities for € 100,000. It takes € 60,000 of EC contribution and invests € 10,000 of his own co-financing. The coordinating beneficiary Y, a public body, intends to transfer € 30,000 of its EC contribution, to which it is entitled for the implementation of the activities under its responsibility, to beneficiary X, in order to cover the cost of the actions carried out by beneficiary X (€ 100,000).**

The allocation of costs, financial contributions, own resources, etc. between the beneficiaries, should be inserted in the Application Form under the Administrative Forms, Part A, Section 3 – Budget (as well as under the mandatory annex “detailed budget table”). How the latter will be allocated between the beneficiaries is subject to a decision taken by the partnership itself, considering the type of tasks that each partner will be responsible for, their capacity (technical and financial), etc. Nevertheless, the funding rate for costs will be a percentage (max 60%) of the action's eligible costs. Please also note that if required by the granting authority, any arrangements between the partners must be set out in a written consortium agreement between the beneficiaries (Article 7, Model Grant Agreement, page 32).

Please see also “Section 13 – Important” in the Call Document and specifically the parts “Consortium Agreement” and “Balanced Project Budget”.

### **Complementary actions and funding topics**

**Q.8. The definition of the “Associated Partners” provided in the Call Document is “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”. Is complementary funding “mobilised” by “Associated Partners” eligible to demonstrate “Complementary Funding” for the SIP/SNaP?**

Complementary funding mobilised by associated partners is eligible to demonstrate mobilisation of complementary funding, as long as the said funds are not allocated to cover the 40% of project costs not covered by the LIFE grant.

**Q.9. What is the earliest acceptable starting date for a complementary project?**

Complementary actions are by definition outside of your strategic project, that is, they are not funded by the project budget, although they contribute to the implementation of the same plan/strategy targeted by the strategic project.

There is no “earliest starting date” threshold for them.

However, please note that to ensure the eligibility of your proposal, and specifically complementary funds mobilisation, at full proposal stage at least one of the following conditions must be met:

- one letter of intent (Annex “Complementary Funding Declaration”) clearly confirming the availability or the actual commitment of the complementary funding to be mobilised, signed by the competent body representing the funding source, is submitted with the full proposal;
- proof is provided of the granting of complementary funds after the launch of the previous Call (see exact date in the Call document, chapter 2, section “additional conditions”, in the part where complementary funds mobilisation/coordination is mentioned).

**Q.10. In our country, the Competent Body of some Funds that are expected to be mobilized as complementary funds (e.g., EAFRD) have not yet been identified. How can we fill in the "Complementary Funding Declaration" form? Who can we entrust to fill in and sign the form?**

There are specific conditions for complementary funding to be considered mobilised and specific conditions – related to complementary funding – for the proposal to be eligible (see previous questions, and section 2 of the Call document).

Please note that the Authorities that are currently in charge of these funds should fill in and sign the respective forms, otherwise these funds cannot be regarded as formally “mobilised”.

Also note that in any case the minimum eligibility requirements set out in the Call document must be respected (i.e., identify a Complementary Fund with a Management Body in place that can sign the Complementary Funding Declaration).

### **Implementation, monitoring and Indicators**

**Q.11. Since the project will be implemented in two phases (Phase 1 lasting 3 years and Phase 2 lasting 4 years), how precisely do we need to plan the activities of Phase 2 at the application stage? Will there be a possibility to perform an amendment later on during the implementation of the project? If not, how detailed should the plan for Phase 2 be? Can deliverables and/or milestones be specified later on by the end of Phase 1?**

Due to the extended time horizon and the related uncertainty when planning tasks and outputs well ahead, the details provided for the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase can be lower (e.g., an indicative plan of tasks and budget). However, overall, phase 2 should provide a consistent picture of what, how, when and by whom is intended to be done in this respect, including deliverables, milestones, and measurable results and impact that would allow for the assessment of the quality of the overall strategy and the respective tasks.

As mentioned in the application template, you should provide detailed information for the first phase of the project, while for subsequent ones the level of detail can be lower: *“For the first phase of the project tasks should be described in detail. Tasks in later phases of your project may include fewer details, but overall you still need to demonstrate how the WP objectives will be achieved through the implementation of all phases.”*

When the end of a phase arrives, an assessment will be done of the work plan, to see if an amendment is required to either provide a more detailed work plan for the following phase(s), and/or adjust it.

**Q.12. As part of the invitation letter, our SNaP concept note received the following feedback: “it is not clear how these [activities in the project] will translate into concrete actions on the ground that will improve environment-related concerns”, “the proposal fails to detail concrete conservation-related impacts - instead of e.g., governance, etc.” as well as “it is not clear if the project would go concretely beyond methodology development, awareness building, and improved understanding, etc.”. The consortium has struggled with how to interpret this input, as it seems to refer more to the scope of SAP project than to the scope of SNaP projects and to interchange results and impacts. The scope of a SNaP states that the project should support implementation of the chosen strategy in particular via the:**

- development, testing, demonstration and application of relevant methods and practices,
- developing long term capacity for species monitoring,



- improving knowledge base,
- raising awareness and
- improving administrative capacity of the beneficiaries and management authorities.

The project covers all of the above. While it is clear that the impact of a SNaP project should include significant reduction in pressures and contribution to favourable status of species and habitats, the scope indicates that these impacts are in many cases indirect, i.e., they represent effects activities, actions and results of the project have on the environment and on society, as opposed to representing direct results of the project itself.

**Does the project need to focus on concrete conservation action on the ground (as implied by the feedback), or can it focus on securing the prerequisites for effective conservation actions?**

The SNaP should aim at the **full implementation of the targeted PAF** and, together with the complementary measures needed to achieve full implementation, remove all remaining administrative, financial, structural and other barriers for its implementation. Further to these general objectives of SNaPs, the proposal should present information on:

- the expected level of implementation of the PAF as a direct consequence of the actions foreseen in the SNaP or through the complementary actions financed by other means mobilised in parallel to the SNaP;
- the area covered by measures, the number of sites, the relevance of these sites in terms of species and habitat types within their bio-geographical regions;
- the expected improvement of the conservation status of species and habitats with particular attention to those habitats and species that are considered as priority and/or those that have been reported as being in unfavourable conservation status; and
- the expected improvement in the long-term capacity to monitor and assess the status of species and habitats of EU importance (art 11 and 17 of the Habitats Directive).

To this end, the proposal should ensure that all measures, including any concrete conservation-related measures listed in the targeted PAF, will be either implemented / financed by the project itself or through complementary actions, during or after the project duration. For those measures that will be implemented post-project, it should be clear how (a mechanism should be in place during the project duration, or a convincing and detailed strategy should be provided) they will be achieved. Although mainly referring to the Concept Note phase, please see also Q.15. in section 3.1.

**Q.13. For the mandatory work package for Sustainability, replication and exploitation of project results, how precise should this WP be, considering that tasks will be implemented 10 or more years to come, and all costs and engaged funds will be planned with high uncertainty?**

The scope of your strategy for sustaining and exploiting the project's results shall be discussed in sections 2.2 "Sustainability and exploitation of project results", and 2.3 "Catalytic potential: Replication and upscaling" of the application form. The guidance provided in the application form outlines the matters which should be considered and addressed by the strategy.

The mandatory work package "Sustainability, replication, and exploitation of project results" within section 3.2 "Work packages and activities" shall reflect the translation of the strategy into concrete actions. Due to the extended time horizon and the related uncertainty, this can only be an indicative plan and budget. However, it should provide a consistent picture of what, how, when and by whom is intended to be done in this respect, including clear deliverables, milestones, and measurable results and impact that would allow for the assessment of the quality of the overall strategy and the respective tasks.

As mentioned in the application template, you should provide detailed information for the first phase of the project, while for subsequent ones the level of detail can be lower: *"For the first phase of the*

*project tasks should be described in detail. Tasks in later phases of your project may include fewer details, but overall you still need to demonstrate how the WP objectives will be achieved through the implementation of all phases.”.*

**Q.14. What are the monitoring requirements during the implementation of the project? Will they be performed annually?**

One monitoring visit per phase will take place throughout the project duration, except for the first phase, during which 2 monitoring visits will take place, to facilitate a smooth start. Some visits may be virtual.

**Q.15. The SNaP project we are proposing expects to have impacts on countless habitats and species in 5 different regions. How can we fill in the part of the indicators relating to the impacts on biodiversity-species and biodiversity-habitat?**

It is understood that reporting in detail the project’s results and impacts for all targeted habitats and species is not a feasible option both during the preparation of the proposal and for its project management and monitoring purposes. There are several acceptable options, e.g., merging and presenting the information per region, presenting a summary of the impacts per region, etc. Whereas, these options should be acceptable, please note that the proposal should in any case demonstrate how and to what extent the targeted plans will be implemented (using quantified approaches (e.g., for the targeted habitats and species, where possible and relevant) linked with measures / targets already identified in these plans. In other words, the applicants should ensure that the necessary data that would allow for the evaluation of its impact will be available / provided with the submission of the proposal.

**Annexes / Attachments**

**Q.16. Is there a template for letters of support?**

No. Letters of support can refer to any kind of commitment or support by a third party/stakeholder and can have any format.

## 4. Projects addressing ad hoc Legislative and Policy priorities (PLP)

### **Q.1. What is the difference between PLP and SAP projects?**

PLP projects follow a top-down approach in consideration of their potential to address current policy challenges in 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.

### **Q.2. Why do some topic/specific priorities have consortium requirements and others not?**

Due to the specific nature of the PLP, PLP calls are typically more prescriptive than bottom-up calls (such as for SAPs), where the identification of needs and possible solutions is in the remit of the applicants. This might also cover the type and composition of the consortium. Note that such requirement will be assessed at the eligibility stage.

### **Q.3. I have a question regarding the LIFE-2025-PLP call, specifically Topic 2 - LIFE-2025-PLP-NAT-ENV - Participation of consumer organisations and environmental NGOs in the implementation of the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR). The call refers to NGOs and non-profit organisations/Civil Society organisations. Could you please elaborate on what you consider eligible as “non-profit organisations/Civil Society organisations”?**

The guidance provided by the Commission on the Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment at [rules-lev-lear-fca\\_en.pdf](#) provide the definitions used by the Central Validation Services. The guidance gives also indication on the documentation they may be requested by the Services (only if the proposal is selected for funding).

### **Q4. I have a question regarding the LIFE-2025-PLP call, specifically Topic 2 - LIFE-2025-PLP-NAT-ENV - Strengthening foresters' skills in biodiversity friendly forest management. Does organisation and execution of trainings including through field trips and courses (online or in-person) are expected to be achieved during the project?**

Yes, organising and delivering training are part of the minimum expected results.

## 5. Technical Assistance for Replication (TA-R)

**Q.1. We would like to build our TA-R proposal on an EU-funded project that is still running. Is this possible?**

You can submit your TA-R proposal while the preceding EU-funded project is still running. However, the preceding project should have finished including having submitted their final report before the starting date of the new TA-R project.

**Q.2. Can replication projects (TA-R) be applied to "close to market" projects, seeking greater market penetration? Or are they more focused on policy issues?**

The objectives of LIFE Technical Assistance – Replication (TA-R) projects are to facilitate the upscaling or replication of results funded under the LIFE programme or, where relevant to fulfil the objectives of the LIFE programme, under another EU-funded programme.

Therefore, TA-R call can also be suitable for close-to-market projects. A TA-R proposal could address the additional steps needed to effectively market the product/service developed through a previous project in line with the LIFE objectives (e.g. developing business strategy, business canvas, advisory activities, follow-up activities, market / feasibility study).

In addition, only proposals in the field of 'Environment' (i.e., under the 'Nature and Biodiversity' and 'Circular Economy and Quality of Life' subprogrammes) will be eligible for this call.

**Q.3 Why does section 3.2 of the Application Form list '*dissemination and communication, including networking with other LIFE projects*' as not applicable in TA-R projects, but section 3.5 of the same form requires applicants to '*describe communication and dissemination activities*'?**

Proposals, submitted without the description of communication and dissemination activities will not be penalised in the evaluation phase, if these activities are not needed for achieving the objectives and the scope of the TA-R project.

## 6. Operating Grant to Non-Governmental Organisations

**Q.1. Can I apply for a LIFE Operating Grant for NGOs in 2025?**

The LIFE-2025 Operating for NGOs calls for proposals is invitation-based only and will not be published on the funding and tenders Portal. Only signatories of a two-year Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) concluded under the LIFE-FPA-2024 call for proposals will be invited to apply. FAQ for this specific invite-based only call can be consulted on the [LIFE website – Support for Applicants](#).

**Q.2. When will the next FPA call be launched? How many financial year will the next FPA cover?**

The next FPA call for proposal is foreseen to be published in April 2026. It will be a multi-annual call launched in view of concluding two-year FPA covering the 2027 and 2028 financial years of the organisations that will be selected.