



***LIFE***

**ORIENTATION DOCUMENT**

The European Union provides funding and grants for a broad range of projects and programmes covering areas such as education, health, consumer protection, environmental protection, rural and regional development, and humanitarian aid.

EU funding is complex, since there are many different types of programmes managed by different bodies. Over 76% of the EU budget is managed by the member countries. This includes the structural funds - which finance regional policy, social and training programmes, as well as agriculture (including support for farmers). LIFE, on the other hand, is managed directly by the European Commission and its Agency for SMEs (EASME).

LIFE has a well-defined focus on addressing the specific needs relating to the environment and climate action, as set out in Regulation 1293/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013<sup>1</sup>. Nevertheless, given the interrelationship between the environment, climate action and other policy areas, there is still a certain overlap in scope between LIFE and other EU financing programmes. In particular, applicants may hesitate between making a submission to LIFE or to the Horizon 2020 programme. Applicants may also find it difficult to distinguish between the various components of new LIFE 2014-2020 programme.

This document aims to highlight some of the key elements of LIFE, and of some of its components, in order to help applicants identify the most suitable potential source of funding for their project proposals. It remains the responsibility of the applicants to read the detailed guidance documents describing each of the individual components of the LIFE 2014 call and to identify the most suitable place to apply for funding.

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<sup>1</sup>Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013, published in the Official Journal L 347/185 of 20 December 2013

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:347:0185:0208:EN:PDF>

## 1. Key difference between LIFE and the Horizon 2020 programme

This table outlines the key characteristics of the LIFE and Horizon 2020 programmes.

|   | LIFE  | Horizon 2020  |
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| <b>Type of projects/actions supported</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For LIFE Environment and Resource Efficiency it is possible to support Demonstration and Pilot projects;</li> <li>• For Life Nature and Biodiversity, LIFE Climate Change Mitigation and LIFE Climate Change Adaptation it is possible to support not only Demonstration and Pilot projects, but also Best Practice projects;</li> <li>• For the Governance and Information priority area under both the Environment and the Climate Change sub-programmes it is possible to support Information, awareness and dissemination projects.</li> </ul> <p>In addition to the 'traditional' projects mentioned above, the LIFE programme supports capacity building for Member States, and under the Environment sub-programme in 2014 (and the climate action subprogramme as of 2015): integrated projects for implementation of certain specific types of legally required plans and strategies in the areas of water, waste, air and nature, (or for 2015, addressing climate change mitigation or climate change adaptation), technical assistance for preparation</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research and Innovation actions –a strong element of research must be a part of the project (former FP7 collaborative projects);</li> <li>• Innovation actions – which are more focused on pilot projects, prototypes, demonstration and market replication;</li> <li>• SME Instrument – involves a three phase process, where the first phase is a feasibility/viability study, the second phase a demonstration on a pilot level and the third phase commercialisation, where there would be indirect support to facilitate the access to risk finance.</li> </ul> |

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|                                  | <p>of integrated project applications, and preparatory projects in specific pre-identified topic areas which feed directly into policy developments. In addition LIFE supports operational grants to NGO/NPOs, although they are not the subject of the present call.</p> <p>One thing all these project types have in common is that research activities must be strictly limited.</p>   |  |
| <p><b>Scope of the calls</b></p> | <p>Under LIFE, most areas of environment or climate action policy are within the scope of the Priority Areas defined in the Regulation. However, under the environment sub-programme of LIFE, projects focusing on one of the "projects topics" listed in the LIFE multiannual work programme 2014-2017 will be given priority through the scoring system.</p> <p>The scope of the list of priority project topics for the Environment subprogramme in the LIFE Multi Annual Work Programme is broader than the scope of topics under H2020, although many of the individual priority project topics are very specific.</p> | <p>Under H2020, for the so-called 'programmable' parts of the programme, the applicants must apply under one of the topics of the call. Anything outside these topics is ineligible.</p> |

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|   | <p>Under the climate action sub-programme, in line with the general objective of the LIFE Regulation, applications are especially encouraged to address specific climate challenges in each of the three priority areas, as outlined in the guide for applicants in the form of 'EU policy priorities'</p>  |  |
| <p><b>Number and geographical distribution of beneficiaries</b></p> | <p>Under LIFE, there is no minimum number of beneficiaries set and transnationality is not a requirement. Transnational projects that bring an added value from the collaboration are encouraged and will receive extra points in their evaluation.</p> <p>Under the Environment sub-programme, there are indicative national allocations for the period 2014-2017, to facilitate an even distribution of projects among Member States</p>  | <p>For most of the relevant instruments under Horizon 2020, with the notable exception of the SME Instrument, applicants are required to set up consortia involving a minimum of three legal entities from three Member States.</p> <p>All grants are awarded on the basis of merit alone.</p> |
| <p><b>Participating Countries</b></p>                               | <p>Under LIFE, Member States can participate in the project and applications from entities in all MSs can be funded; certain non-EU countries may negotiate full participation in the LIFE programme. To date, no third country has chosen to fully participate because of the substantial costs involved without any guarantee that relevant projects in their country will be financed. It should be noted, however, that entities based in non-EU countries and OCTs may also participate, without any 'entry ticket' as associated beneficiaries in individual projects and in actions carried out in</p> | <p>Under H2020 Member states and associated third countries can participate in the Programme and projects from these countries can be funded; the participation of third countries is encouraged. Many Third Countries are funded, except industrialised and emerging economies.</p>           |

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|   | third countries, in certain cases described in the application guides.  |   |
| <b>Co-financing rates under this call</b> | For LIFE, for the period 2014-2017, the co-financing rate is 60%, except in cases where a project focuses on concrete conservation actions for priority species or habitat, where co-financing can, under certain conditions, increase to 75%.<br>(Capacity building projects for Member States are co-financed at 100% of eligible costs.) | The EU co-financing rate for Horizon 2020 is 70% for "Innovation actions", except where the beneficiary is an NGO, in which case the rate can be 100%. For "Research and Innovation actions" the co-financing rate is also 100% |

## 2. Relationship between LIFE and the EU Structural and Cohesion Funds

Under the EU's 2014-2020 budget, the Cohesion Policy will invest over EUR 350 billion (current prices) in Europe's Member States, their regions and cities to deliver the EU-wide goals of growth and jobs, as well as tackling climate change, energy dependence and social exclusion.

The Cohesion Policy is also an important source of financial support for environmental protection investments, in particular for direct support to water supply and treatment, waste management, nature protection, air quality and eco-innovation. In addition, significant funding will be made available to support climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, as well as additional investments, such as resource efficiency, etc.

Partnership agreements between the European Commission and individual EU countries set out the national authorities' plans on how to use funding from the European Structural and Investment Funds<sup>2</sup> between 2014 and 2020. They outline each country's strategic goals and investment priorities, linking them to the overall aims of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

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<sup>2</sup> European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF), Cohesion Fund (CF), European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)

The principles and priorities of cohesion policy are distilled through a process of consultation between the Commission and the EU countries. Each Member State produces a Partnership Agreement, which outlines the country's strategy and proposes a list of programmes. In addition to this Member States also present operational programmes which cover entire Member States and/or regions.

The operational programmes present the priorities of the country and/or regions or the cooperation area concerned. In accordance with the principles of shared management, Member States and the Commission should be responsible for the management and control of operational programmes. Member States should have the primary responsibility, through their management and control systems, for the implementation and control of the operations in programmes.

This means that, in practice, programmes are implemented by the Member States and their regions, who select, monitor and evaluate hundreds of thousands of projects. This work is organised by 'managing authorities' in each country and/or region.

Thus, while certain specific actions might be financed under either the LIFE programme or the Cohesion Policy funding, in practice the application process is very different. It is important to note that a specific action may not be co-financed at the same time by both sources of EU finance. However, complementary use of different sources of EU finance is encouraged, particularly if it leads to future mainstreaming of environment.

The general information on the Cohesion Policy is available at INFOREGIO: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/what/future/index\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/what/future/index_en.cfm)

More specific information, of key relevance for prospective beneficiaries, is available at the websites of national 'managing authorities' accessible via INFOREGIO:

[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/manage/authority/authority\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/manage/authority/authority_en.cfm)

### **3. Key differences between priority areas in the LIFE Sub-programme for Environment and the LIFE Sub-programme for Climate Action**

A LIFE application must be submitted under a "priority area" in either the Sub-programme for Environment or the Sub-programme for Climate Action

The table below lists the key differences between the two LIFE sub-programmes and between the two priority areas in the Environment sub-programme:

|                        | Sub-programme for Environment  |   | Sub-programme for Climate Action  |
|------------------------|--|---|---|
|                        | LIFE Nature and Biodiversity Priority area   | LIFE Environment and Resource Efficiency Priority area  | LIFE Climate Change Mitigation and LIFE Climate Change Adaptation Priority areas  |
| <b>Policy link</b>     | Linked to the objectives of the Birds and Habitats Directives, or to the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020   | Linked to a range of environmental policy and legislation, including with respect to the link between the environment and health, and in support of the Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe  | Work towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy in the EU, underpinning the implementation of the 2020 climate and energy package and the EU strategy on adaptation to climate change   |
| <b>Areas of focus</b>  | Within the priority area, specific thematic priorities are set out in the LIFE Regulation; proposals must fall within these thematic priorities. In addition, project topics related to Nature and Biodiversity are set out in the multiannual workprogramme; applications addressing these project topics are given extra points in the evaluation process. | Within the priority area, specific thematic priorities are set out in the LIFE Regulation; proposals must fall within these thematic priorities. In addition, project topics related to a range of environmental sectors are set out in the multiannual workprogramme; applications addressing these project topics are given extra points in the evaluation process. | Three priority areas: climate change mitigation, climate change adaptation and climate governance and information — as well as objectives specified in Articles 14, 15 and 16 of the LIFE Regulation.<br><br>No project topics defined in the LIFE Regulation. However, the annual calls for proposals encourage applications targeting specific climate policy related priorities. |
| <b>Typical project</b> | Implementing a Natura 2000 site management plan or actions; testing and demonstrating approaches supporting the various targets of the EU Biodiversity Strategy  | Implementing a pilot or demonstrative project tackling one of project topics in the MAWP, including development of innovative technologies suitable for replication, transfer or mainstreaming  | Demonstration or piloting of innovative climate technologies, systems, methods or instruments related to climate change mitigation or adaptation strategy, as well as best practice projects  |

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| <b>Typical actions</b> | Most actions geared towards nature conservation, such as restoration and conservation of endangered habitats and/or species, but also other types of actions related to Biodiversity. NB – at least 25% of the budget should be allocated to concrete conservation actions | Actions linked to solving the environmental problem tackled | Most actions linked to greenhouse gas emissions reductions or to addressing the current or projected impacts of climate change |
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#### 4. Comparative Table – LIFE Integrated projects / LIFE "traditional" projects

The following table provides a summary comparison highlighting the major differences between LIFE traditional projects and LIFE Integrated Projects under the LIFE Environment sub-programme, in the context of the LIFE 2014 call:

|              | <b>Traditional projects (ie projects pursuant to article 18(a), (b), (c) and (h) of the LIFE Regulations)</b>   | <b>Integrated Projects (IPs)</b>   |
|--------------|---|--|
| <b>Scope</b> | Target one or several thematic priorities for the sub-programme Environment indicated in Annex III of the LIFE Regulation and possibly target one or several project topics implementing the thematic priorities, as laid down in the MAWP. | <p>Are limited to four specific areas of intervention related to certain strategic plans in nature, air, water and waste as follows:</p> <p>Nature IPs implement the PAFs</p> <p>Water IPs implement the River Basin Management Plans.</p> <p>Waste IPs implement Waste Management Plans or Waste Prevention Programs;</p> <p>Air IPs implement Air Quality Plans.</p> |

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| <b>Co-financing rates (%) and indicative EU contribution</b>                             | Up to 60% (or up to 75% for priority species and habitats)<br><br>Average of EUR 1-2 million EU finance | Up to 60%<br><br>Average of EUR 10 million of EU finance  |
| <b>Application</b>   | One stage submission:<br><br>1. Full proposal   | Two stage submission:<br><br>1. Concept note.<br><br>2. Full proposal.  |
| <b>Geographical scale</b>  | Shall be implemented on a local, regional, multi-regional, national or trans-national scale.            | Shall be implemented on a regional, multi-regional, national or trans-national scale.<br><br>For Integrated Projects in the air sector, a scale of minimum 5 cities is required.  |
| <b>Required link to a plan or strategy developed pursuant to EU/national legislation</b> | No.<br><br>Link to plans/strategies is optional (may get extra scores)                                  | Yes.<br><br>Must contribute to and catalyse the <u>full</u> implementation of plans or strategies developed pursuant to EU/national legislation.  |
| <b>Mobilisation of complementarity funds outside of the project itself</b>               | No.<br><br>Not required.<br><br>No double funding or overlaps with other EU funds.                      | Yes.<br><br>Compulsory mobilisation of at least one other relevant Union, national or private funding source for the implementation of other activities within the same plan or strategy.<br><br>No double funding or overlaps with other EU funds for the LIFE project per se.<br><br>Implementation of IPs may result in better access to other EU funding. |
| <b>Beneficiaries</b>   | Public or private bodies.   | Public or private bodies.<br><br>The competent authority in   |

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|                                 |   | charge of the implementation of the relevant plan or strategy is in general expected to submit and lead the Integrated Project  |
| <b>Stakeholder involvement</b>  | Expected  | Compulsory  |
| <b>Project period (average)</b> | 1 to 5 years  | 6 years or more   |
| <b>Type of projects</b>         | Pilot, demonstration, best practice or information, awareness and dissemination projects.     | IPs are a combination of elements of traditional project types: they should include mainly best practice elements that can be combined with pilot, demonstration and information, awareness raising and dissemination elements. A capacity building element is mandatory. |
| <b>Eligible costs</b>           | As per the standard LIFE Model Grant Agreement, including its Special and General Conditions. | As per the LIFE Model Grant Agreement for Integrated Projects, including its Special and General Conditions.  |
| <b>Sustainability</b>           | Required for most projects.   | Required for all Integrated Projects, including long term commitment and capacity building.   |

## 5 Illustrative Examples:

### 1. River restoration

- If the main objective of the project is to restore a river habitat or species of EU concern, then a Nature project under the LIFE Nature and Biodiversity priority area is most appropriate. Actions may include, for example, maintaining and restoring characteristic habitats and species populations; removal of invasive alien species; fish passes; visitor regulation measures, etc.
- If the main objective is testing and applying innovative management schemes addressing water related ecosystem services as potential funding mechanisms to achieve the Biodiversity Strategy targets while also contributing to aims of the Water Framework

Directive and the Floods Directive, then a Biodiversity project under the LIFE Nature and Biodiversity priority area is most appropriate.

- If the main objective of the project is to address current or projected impacts of climate change, and most of the project actions aim at that, then LIFE Climate Change Adaptation is the most appropriate priority area. Such actions may include promoting water retention measures to cope with flood events; reconnecting the river with floodplains or creating floodplains with the main aim of addressing floods; reducing water temperature, for example by increasing shading through vegetation.
- If the main objective of the project is to contribute to the implementation of the Water Framework Directive and related legislation, then LIFE Environment and Resource Efficiency is the most appropriate priority area. Such actions may include measures to prevent or manage flooding, to achieve good ecological status, to develop tools and techniques for river basin management...

## **2. Peatland (bogs, mires, fens) restoration**

- If the main objective of the project is to restore a valued peatland (bogs, mires, fens) habitat or species or the ecosystem services it provides, then LIFE Nature and Biodiversity is the most appropriate priority area. Actions may include, for example, water table restoration through blocking drainage ditches; tree felling and mulching; introduction of mosses; protection measures for peatland fauna (e.g. bird) species; monitoring of fauna and flora; interpretation panels, etc.
- If the main objective of the project aim is to preserve emission stocks, then LIFE Climate Change Mitigation is the most appropriate priority area. If the main objective of the project is to address current or projected impacts of climate change, then LIFE Climate Change Adaptation is the most appropriate priority area. Such actions may include promoting water retention / flow alleviation measures; water table restoration through blocking drainage ditches; improving carbon and greenhouse gas fluxes, including monitoring of CO<sub>2</sub>, methane and other climate factors; fire prevention.

## **3. Soil Carbon management**

- A project with primary objective of improving management to reduce soil sealing, and better managing runoff and general nutrient protection, would fall under LIFE Environment and Resource Efficiency. Actions may include, for example, reducing land take; advisory services or working with stakeholders; erosion protection measures; tillage practices; monitoring of land cover/use;
- If the project's primary goal is to conserve, enhance, or restore the carbon content of soils through improved management, then LIFE Climate Change Mitigation (if conserving or restoring) and/or LIFE Climate Change Adaptation (if enhancing carbon content) are the most appropriate priority areas. Actions may include: advisory services or working with

stakeholders; sowing of specific herbaceous ground cover mixes; erosion protection measures; tillage practices; monitoring of carbon content and/or land cover/use;

#### **4. Biomass management**

- If the project aims primarily to ensure the improved efficiency of biomass use – whether from forests or from annual crops – and approaches the accounting of value from a carbon cycle perspective, then LIFE Climate Change Mitigation is the most appropriate priority area. Actions might include, for example: establishment of monitoring and modelling of circular economy carbon indicators in value chains; advice and stakeholder information on cascade use; establishment of innovative collection systems; biomass material information labelling based on life cycle analysis data.
- If the project aims primarily to ensure the improved efficiency of biomass use – whether from forests or from annual crops - and approaches the accounting of value from an economic, design or cost-efficiency perspective, then LIFE Environment and Resource Efficiency is the most appropriate priority area. Actions might include: establishment of monitoring and modelling of circular economy value chain indicators; advice and stakeholder information on recycling, re-use and repair; establishment of innovative collection systems; establishment of best practice models for SMEs.

#### **5. Air emissions**

- If a project targets non-greenhouse gas air emissions, or mixed emissions where the emphasis is primarily on the non-greenhouse gas air emissions or where the non-greenhouse gas air emissions constitute the most significant part/element/focus of the project, then the project proposal should be submitted under LIFE Environment and Resource Efficiency.
- Project proposals targeting solely or primarily greenhouse gas air emissions should be submitted under LIFE Climate Change Mitigation.

**Good luck!**