

Multiannual work programme for the implementation of the LIFE Programme for the years 2021-2024

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| BEST | Action Grant Scheme for Biodiversity in the Outermost Regions and the Overseas Countries and Territories |
| CSA | Coordination and Support Actions |
| DEEP | De-risking Energy Efficiency Platform |
| EA..... | Executive Agency |
| EASIN | European Alien Species Information Network |
| EEFIG | Energy Efficiency Financial Institutions Group |
| EIB..... | European Investment Bank |
| ELENA facility..... | European Local ENergy Assistance facility |
| EIR..... | Environmental Implementation Review |
| EIT..... | European institute of Innovation & Technology |
| ETS | Emission Trading System |
| EMAS | Eco-Management and Audit Scheme |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization |
| FISE..... | Forest Information System for Europe |
| ICT | Information and Communication Technologies |
| IEA | International Energy Agency |
| IUCN | International Union for Conservation of Nature |
| KIC | Support to the Knowledge and Innovation Communities of the European Institute for Innovation and Technology |
| LUCAS | Land Use/Cover Area frame Survey |
| MAWP | Multiannual Work Programme |
| MRVA | Monitoring, Reporting, Verification and Accreditation |
| NAPCP | National Air Pollution Control Programmes |
| NECP..... | National Energy and Climate Plans |
| NEEAP | National Energy Efficiency Action Plans |
| NEC | National Emissions Ceiling |

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| PAF..... | Prioritized Action Framework |
| OA | Other Actions |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| OEF..... | Organizational Environmental Footprint |
| OEFSRs..... | Organizational Environmental Footprint Sector Rules |
| PEF | Project Environmental Footprint |
| PEFCRs | Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules |
| PLP | Projects for addressing ad hoc Legislative and Policy Priorities |
| RBMP | River Basin Management Plans |
| SAP..... | Standard Action Projects |
| SGA..... | Specific Grant Agreement |
| SIP | Strategic Integrated Projects |
| SMART | Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely |
| SNAP..... | Strategic Nature Projects |
| TA-CAP | Technical Assistance projects for Capacity building of MS authorities |
| TAIEX..... | Technical Assistance and Information EXchange |
| TA-PP..... | Technical Assistance projects for the preparation of SNAPs and SIPs |
| TA projects | Technical Assistance projects |
| TA-R..... | Technical Assistance projects for projects Replication of and up-scaling of results |
| TFEU | Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union |
| UNFCCC | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change |
| UNEP..... | United Nations Environment Programme |
| WHO..... | World Health Organization |
| WISE | Water Information System for Europe |
| WMP | Waste Management Plans |

1. INTRODUCTION

According to Article 3 of Regulation (EU) No 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 (EC) No 1293/2013 (hereinafter "LIFE Regulation"), 'The general objective of the LIFE Programme shall be to contribute to the shift towards a sustainable, circular, energy-efficient, renewable energy-based, climate-neutral and - resilient economy, in order to protect, restore and improve the quality of the environment, including the air, water and soil, and to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and to tackle the degradation of ecosystems, including by supporting the implementation and management of the Natura 2000 network, thereby contributing to sustainable development. The LIFE Programme shall also support the implementation of general action programmes adopted in accordance with Article 192(3) TFEU'.

In this regard, the LIFE programme as a whole constitutes fully to the objectives and targets of the European Green Deal¹, which aims to:

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

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

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

The present multiannual work programme (MAWP) for 2021-2024 takes into account the experience gained in the previous LIFE programmes and the results of the stakeholder consultations undertaken in the framework of its preparation.

It incorporates the novelties introduced by the LIFE Regulation including:

- Strengthened action on nature and biodiversity with an extended scope and a dedicated support to coordinated programmes of action in the Member States. This will contribute to the biodiversity ambition of providing 7,5 % in 2024 and 10 % in 2026 and in 2027 of annual spending under the multiannual financial framework to biodiversity objectives².

¹ COM(2019)640 final

² See "Interinstitutional Agreement of 16 December 2020 between the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management, as well as on new own resources, including a roadmap towards the introduction of new own resources" OJ L 433 I, 22.12.2020, p. 28.

- A 61% target for expenditures supporting climate objectives in line with the ambition of reaching climate neutrality by 2050.
- Strengthened action on energy efficiency and renewable energies.
- An extended opportunity for synergies with other funds and programmes, in particular through the Seal of Excellence and cumulative funding.
- An increased impact to meet societal challenges by combining efforts with Horizon Europe, in particular its Missions in support of the European Green Deal (Climate adaptation, Climate neutral cities, Oceans and Soils).
- An expanded geographical scope involving Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs).

This MAWP covers the period from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2024.

The structure of the MAWP follows the list of contents defined in Article 18(2) of the LIFE Regulation and only addresses the sub-programmes separately, where necessary.

It lays down a detailed framework for the exercise of the Commission implementing powers and provides a view of the activities of the LIFE Programme for 4 years, thus facilitating the participation of potential stakeholders.

The bulk of the activities of the LIFE programme will be implemented directly by the Commission services or by an Executive Agency (EA). The EA acts within the limits of the delegation defined by the Commission and under its supervision. The overall responsibility for the programme remains with the Commission.

2. STRUCTURE

According to Article 4 of the LIFE Regulation, the LIFE programme is structured into two fields – Environment and Climate Action – and four sub-programmes:

1. Under the Environment field:

- The sub-programme « Nature and Biodiversity »;
- The sub-programme « Circular Economy and Quality of Life ».

2. Under the Climate Action field:

- The sub-programme «Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation»;
- The sub-programme «Clean Energy Transition».

For the duration of the present MAWP, a budget of EUR 1.801 billion is allocated to the Environment field, a budget of EUR 1.032,5 billion is allocated to the Climate Action field³.

Each sub-programme is described below with the related objectives and areas of intervention.

In the implementation of each sub-programme, the Commission will seek to ensure that each action will live up to the green oath to ‘do no harm’⁴ and will not undermine any of the objectives of the other sub-programmes⁵, while looking for the development of synergies with a view to pursuing a holistic vision of the environment.

³ These amounts do not include the supporting expenditures, which amount to 106 EURO million, for the MAWP period.

⁴ See: https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/communication-european-green-deal_en

⁵ For example by taking into account the work of the European Commission on sustainable finance, including the EU Taxonomy (https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/banking-and-finance/sustainable-finance_en).

2.1. The sub-programme “Nature and Biodiversity” and related areas of intervention

In line with the specific objectives of the sub-programme as set out in Article 3(2) of the LIFE Regulation, the sub-programme “Nature and Biodiversity” will aim:

- to develop, demonstrate, promote and stimulate the scale up of innovative techniques, methods and approaches (including nature-based solutions and ecosystem approaches) for reaching the objectives set out under the Union legislation and policy on or related to nature and biodiversity, and to contribute to the knowledge base and to the application of best practices, including through the support of the Natura 2000 network;
- to support the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of the relevant Union legislation and policy on or related to nature and biodiversity, including by improving governance at all levels, in particular through enhancing the capacities of public and private actors and the involvement of civil society, also taking into due consideration the possible contributions provided by citizen science⁶;
- to catalyse the large-scale deployment of successful solutions/approaches for implementing relevant Union legislation and policy on nature and biodiversity, by replicating results, integrating related objectives into other policies and into public and private sector practices, mobilising investment and improving access to finance.

LIFE has been a key tool supporting the implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directives since 1992 and has been instrumental and, in some cases crucial, to ensure the establishment of the Natura 2000 network.

The Nature Directives' fitness check⁷, the Action plan for nature, people, and the economy⁸ as well as the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030⁹ underline the need to increase funding for nature and biodiversity.

The sub-programme Nature and Biodiversity will contribute to European Union objectives for the protection, maintenance and restoration of the Union's natural capital in its marine, freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems, as outlined in the Convention on Biological Diversity¹⁰, the Bern Convention¹¹ In particular, it will contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the

⁶ Scientific work undertaken by members of the general public, often in collaboration with or under the direction of professional scientists and scientific institutions.

⁷ Commission Staff Working Document SWD(2016) 472 final of 16 December 2016 ‘Fitness-check of the EU Nature Legislation (Birds and Habitats Directives) Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds and Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora’ (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Fitness-check of the Birds and Habitats Directives’).

⁸ Communication COM(2017) 198 final of 27 April 2017 from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions ‘An Action Plan for nature, people and the economy’.

⁹ COM(2019)640 final See: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/strategy/biodiversity-strategy-2030_en .

¹⁰ Approved by Council Decision 93/626/EEC of 25 October 1993 concerning the conclusion of the Convention on Biological Diversity (OJ L 309, 13.12.1993, p. 1).

¹¹ Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, approved by Council Decision 82/72/EEC of 3 December 1981 concerning the conclusion of the Convention on the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats (OJ L 38, 10.2.1982, p. 1).

EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030¹², the EU Birds¹³ and Habitats Directives¹⁴, the Regulation on Invasive Alien Species¹⁵ as well as relevant objectives under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive¹⁶, the Water Framework Directive¹⁷, and the European strategy for Outermost Regions¹⁸.

An indicative amount of 1.103,5 billion EUR is allocated to the sub-programme Nature and Biodiversity for the period 2021-2024.

The sub-programme for nature and biodiversity will mainly be implemented through the following types of actions:

1. a continuation of the traditional bottom-up approach, aimed at implementing practical and effective measures for the improvement of the conservation status of species and habitats, ecosystems' health and related services, through the co-funding of Standard Action Projects (SAPs, see section 4.1.1 below). All SAPs should be designed to achieve, as a direct outcome of their implementation, tangible improvements for species, habitats and ecosystems and related services, to be defined on the basis of specific and measurable (SMART) objectives. The overall focus of SAPs is on the following: (1) area-based conservation and restoration measures (“space for nature”) and (2) additional specific measures targeting species and ecosystems/habitats with measures other than area-based ones (“protecting/safeguarding our species and habitats”);
2. a continuation of the integrated approach for supporting the full implementation of national or regional Prioritized Action Frameworks (PAFs)¹⁹ and other EU biodiversity-policy-related planning instruments, through Strategic Nature Projects (SNAPs, see section 4.1.2. below). SNAPs encompass capacity building and mainstreaming actions, including by mobilising other funding sources for nature and biodiversity. SNAPs may also include specific conservation actions, in particular where these cannot be supported through the mobilisation of additional finance from other EU funding programmes (see section 4.1.2 on SNAPs below);
3. a structured approach to support the implementation of specific policy priorities, through dedicated calls under “Other Actions” (OAs - see section 4.1.4 below);
4. Technical Assistance projects (TA), as defined in section 4.1.3 below.

The above types of actions can cover:

¹² See: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/strategy/biodiversity-strategy-2030_en

¹³ Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (OJ L 20, 26.1.2010, p. 7).

¹⁴ Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7).

¹⁵ Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 of 22 October 2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species (OJ L 317, 4.11.2014, p.35)

¹⁶ Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive) (OJ L 164, 25.6.2008, p. 19).

¹⁷ Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1).

¹⁸ See Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank ‘A stronger and renewed strategic partnership with the EU’s outermost regions’ (COM(2017)0623).

¹⁹ Established pursuant to Article 8 of Directive 92/43

- (1) measures to promote and support area-based conservation and restoration (“space for nature”);
- (2) additional specific measures targeting species (“safeguarding our species”);
- (3) governance to facilitate behavioral change and/or change in practices, soil, land and water management, including in marine areas, as well as the conservation of natural resources, including by supporting the implementation of the European Biodiversity Strategy for 2030²⁰ and the up-coming European Forestry Strategy to mainstream biodiversity objectives in relevant sectors, to build up the capacity at all levels and to improve the knowledge basis on nature and biodiversity, including for monitoring, accounting and reporting, assessment and ex-post evaluation;
- (4) Environmental compliance assurance and access to justice.

The actions above will target, among others, the implementation of the EU Habitats and Birds Directive and the Invasive Alien Species Regulation, the reversing of the decline of pollinators, the restoration of degraded and carbon-rich ecosystems and the improvement of health and resilience of forests.

2.2. The sub-programme “Circular Economy and Quality of Life” and related areas of intervention

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

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

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

It will contribute to the relevant European Union priorities by:

- reducing resource consumption and facilitating the transition toward a sustainable, circular, toxic-free, energy-efficient and climate-resilient environment;
- developing circular systems, in line with the new Circular Economy Action Plan²¹ and reflecting its focus on sustainable products, material and energy intensive sectors and circular business models for value retention. Specific consideration will be given to projects from EU outermost regions and islands.

²⁰ COM(2019)640 final

²¹ COM(2020)98 final “an new Circular Economy Action Plan for a cleaner and more competitive Europe”

- bringing down waste generation in line with the Waste Framework Directive²² and the reduction of hazardous waste in view of the EU's commitment under the Basel Convention²³;
- improving waste management with respect to the collection and storage of waste, recovery options and end-of-life disposal, including in islands, remote coastal or terrestrial areas, and Outermost Regions where waste management faces specific challenges;
- reducing emissions of pollutants to air and seas, and ensuring clean air and seas for EU citizens in line with the EU acquis and the objectives of the zero pollution action plan;
- achieving and maintaining a good status of the Union's water bodies;
- ensuring clean surface water and ground-water, in sufficient quantities for human and other species, including by increasing efficiency of water use;
- reducing production, use and emissions of hazardous chemicals as well as reducing the exposure of humans and the environment to those chemicals;
- promoting the development, commercialisation and uptake of safe and sustainable-by-design substances, materials and products;
- diminishing exposure to harmful noise levels;
- protecting the quality of EU soil, preventing soil degradation and increasing resilience of soils to climate threats and combat desertification through sustainable practices of soil and land management, remediating from soil pollution and enhancing the capacity to improve water quality through reduced nitrate leakage and to reduce emissions through carbon storage and preventing and mitigating soil sealing.

An indicative amount of EUR 697,5 million is allocated to the sub-programme Circular Economy and Quality of Life for the period 2021-2024.

This amount will be used to finance mainly SAPs, Strategic Integrated Projects (SIPs) and OAs focusing on the following:

- Circular economy, including recovery of resources from waste, to accelerate the transition towards a circular, climate-neutral sustainable and toxic-free environment, where:
 - ✓ the value of products, materials and resources is maximised and maintained in the economy for as long as possible;
 - ✓ the manufacture and use of products is sustainable and;
 - ✓ the generation of waste and the presence of harmful substances is minimised.

This includes actions on products which are safe and sustainable by design, on circular and sustainable production and consumption as well as actions to increase repair, reuse, remanufacturing and recycling of materials and products. It includes sustainable technologies, tools and approaches that are developed within the Sustainable Blue Economy scope, such as the improved recyclability of offshore renewable energy infrastructures or repair/reuse of fishing nets and fisheries/aquaculture by-products (e.g. fish scales, shells, etc.).

²² Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste and repealing certain Directives

²³ <http://www.basel.int/TheConvention/Overview/TextoftheConvention/tabid/1275/Default.aspx>

It contains also actions to support the development of circular economy business models²⁴ and shorter and more diversified supply chain systems that minimise environmental impact and reduce external dependency. These should be based on comprehensive measures targeting the whole life-cycle of products and materials.

On recovery of resources from waste, it comprises actions in line with the waste hierarchy to prevent waste, to increase product repair and reuse, to improve sorting and decontamination of waste streams, and to increase safe and high-quality recycling of materials and products on the basis of robust and widespread separate collection systems.

In light of their high resource use and their circularity potential, key product value chains²⁵ such as textiles, chemicals (including plastics), construction and buildings, electronics and information and communication technologies (ICT), and batteries and vehicles, will receive specific attention with actions to be implemented in all stages of the relevant life cycles and involving all relevant stakeholders.

- Environment and health: sustainable management based on long term protection of natural resources and raw materials, environmental friendly production of goods and provision of services with a view to eliminating, preventing or minimising the adverse effects and negative impacts on the health and well-being of Union citizens, and improving the quality of their lives, as well as on the environment and its marine and terrestrial ecosystems, including:
 - Water and seas. The protection and improvement of groundwater and surface water quality and the prevention and elimination of water and marine pollutants in view of achieving and maintaining a good chemical and ecological status of all the Union's water bodies, including wetlands, the marine environment, and the active safeguard of water quantity as well as the reduction of all the related pressures;
 - Air & Noise. The protection of air and the improvement of air quality through the prevention and/or reduction of air pollutants and noise, especially in the urban environment;
 - Soil. The restoration, remediation, protection and improvement of soil health, within natural or managed ecosystem boundaries, to provide ecosystem services, in particular to sustain plant and animal productivity, maintain or enhance water and air quality, and support human health and habitats and to prevent soil loss;
 - Chemicals management. A more sustainable use of chemicals substances and mixtures, on their own and in articles and final products (including e.g. pesticides, fertilisers, antimicrobials and nanomaterials), better information on chemical content of final products, accidents prevention and related informed purchase, including fostering the interlink of chemicals risk management, circularity of materials and climate change.
- Environment governance projects to incentive behavioural change, which will support the implementation of the European Green Deal²⁶, capacity building at all levels, including for civil society, mainstreaming environmental objectives, circular and resource efficiency actions in relevant sectors, improvement of the knowledge base on the environment, including the greening of investments, environment monitoring, accounting and reporting and contributing to policy monitoring, assessment and ex-post evaluation.

²⁴ Business models conceived to keep products and materials in use, for as long as possible and intensify their use in order to get the maximum value from them.

²⁵ As defined in COM(2020) 98 final.

²⁶ COM(2019)640 final.

- The New European Bauhaus (NEB) overarching initiative. This will be an environmental, economic and cultural project to combine design, sustainability, accessibility and affordability in order to help deliver the European Green Deal. This initiative will consider as well nature and biodiversity elements.

2.3. The sub-programme “Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation” and related areas of intervention

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

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

The LIFE Programme will contribute to the transformation of the Union into a climate-neutral and resilient society, by supporting the implementation of the EU's climate policy as part of the European Green Deal²⁷ and preparing the EU for the climate challenges in the coming years and decades.

The indicative budget allocated to the sub-programme Climate Change Mitigation and Climate Change adaptation for the period 2021-2024 is EUR 505,5 million. The largest part will be spent on grants, especially, but not exclusively, on (SAPs) and (SIPs).

Its areas of intervention will be the following:

- Climate Change Mitigation
 - Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, including fluorinated greenhouse gases and ozone depleting substances, in line with the EU's climate neutrality target and the improvement of energy efficiency, including addressing the policy and market framework for the development and deployment of low-carbon or energy efficient products and services, as well as by promoting the transition of the transport sector.
 - Enhancing the functioning of the Emissions Trading System.
 - Support to sustainable land, forest, soil, sea and ocean management practices, which reduce emissions or remove CO₂ from the atmosphere.
 - Develop and promote solutions to remove/sequester CO₂ from the atmosphere. Carbon capture and carbon removals can be nature-based and coupled with restoration projects or rely on storage in specific long-term media or use of long-lasting products.
- Climate Change Adaptation

²⁷ COM(2019)640 final.

- Support adaptation related policy development, and improve adaptation strategies and plans at all levels and in all sectors, in line with the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change²⁸;
 - Improve, promote, and scale up the use of state-of-the-art tools and solutions for adaptation modelling, risk assessment, management and decision support; adaptation monitoring, reporting and evaluation; and ex-ante project assessment tools to better identify co-benefits and positive impacts on the economy of adaptation and prevention projects;
 - Support the rollout of viable nature-based solutions in the management of land, coastal and marine areas including through assessments, guidance, capacity building, and suitable financial approaches and products;
 - Approaches and solutions for adapting cities and regions to climate change, notably in support of the EU and Global Covenant of Mayors and of the European Climate Pact;
 - Approaches and solutions to ensure a stable and secure supply of high quality freshwater, prevent droughts, reduce water use, protect and restore wetlands, and prevent floods;
 - Solutions to climate-proof and enhance the resilience of infrastructure and buildings, including by using blue-green infrastructure and through cooperation with standardisation organisations;
 - Support preparedness for extreme weather events, notably at a local level and in the outermost regions;
 - Promote financial instruments and innovative solutions to deal with climate-induced risks, and public-private collaboration to reduce the share of uninsured climate-related economic losses, including by improving collection and access to climate-related economic loss data.
- Climate Change Governance and Information, which will include actions contributing to climate change mitigation or adaptation:
 - Incentivise changes in behaviour and practices, as well as improving citizens' knowledge and awareness, notably through the support of the implementation of the European Climate Pact²⁹, mainstreaming emission reduction and resource efficiency actions in relevant sectors;
 - Development and implementation of climate and energy strategies or mid-century strategies at local, regional and national level;
 - Improve greenhouse gas monitoring, accounting and reporting and contribute to policy monitoring, assessment and ex-post evaluation;
 - Information on best practices and awareness raising on climate change mitigation and adaptation, including on climate-proofing of infrastructure investment and policies;
 - Development of climate services and promotion of climate science;
 - Development and promotion of sustainable finance instruments and support for climate diplomacy.

²⁸ COM(2021)82 final

²⁹ COM(2019)640 final

The sub-programme Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation may cover activities related to energy efficiency and renewable energy, as far they are not covered by the Clean Energy Transition sub-programme calls in that same year.

2.4. The sub-programme “Clean Energy Transition” and related areas of intervention

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

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

This sub-programme will fund the activities responding to the specific topics defined in the annual calls for proposals which are based on the list of priority topics. Other activities related to energy efficiency and renewable energy, which do not address the specific requirements of the calls defined under this sub-programme can be submitted to the calls under the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation sub-programme.

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

The sub-programme will contribute to the implementation of the energy-related actions of the European Green Deal, including the ‘Renovation wave’ initiative for the building sector and will give due consideration to territories not connected to the European grids such as the EU outermost regions. It will contribute to the Just Transition objectives by accompanying the territories and the groups of citizens negatively affected by the transition from fossil fuels to clean energy, by building capacity of actors and fostering clean energy investments, mainly in energy efficiency and locally available, sustainable, renewable energy sources. Activities related to technology development will not be included³⁰.

An indicative amount of EUR 527 million is allocated to the sub-programme Clean Energy Transition for the period 2021-2024.

A significant part of this budget will be used to finance Coordination and Support Actions (CSA) under OAs grants for the four year period, whereas the possibility to finance SAPs is only foreseen as from 2023.

³⁰ Technology development, research and innovation for clean energy transition will be funded in Horizon Europe.

It will cover the following areas of intervention:

- **Building a national, regional and local policy framework supporting the clean energy transition:**

Increasing coherence of energy transition governance at different levels by enhancing multi-stakeholder dialogue and building the capacity of public authorities to deliver under the national energy and climate plans and/or other plans and strategies (e.g. just transition plans, long-term renovation strategies, strategies for the electrification of the transport system). Supporting the development and effective implementation of clean energy policies, including the relevant Union legislation on products and energy consumers, in the EU and third countries. Supporting actions that put into practice the enabling provisions included in the European legislation on clean energy.

- **Accelerating technology roll-out, digitalisation, new services and business models and enhancement of the related professional skills on the market for the clean energy transition:**

Providing support for the decarbonisation of the buildings, industry and tertiary sectors, by fostering market uptake of innovative solutions, including digitalization and circular design in line with the climate neutrality target. Accelerating the clean energy transition by enabling the development of new added-value services and innovative business models. The roll-out of technologies and innovative solutions needs to be accompanied by measures addressing market barriers including support to the development and deployment of new skills and frameworks (labels, certificates, technological and non-technological standards³¹, e.g. for interoperability, etc.).

- **Attracting private finance for sustainable energy:**

To upscale investments in sustainable energy, different capital flows need to be made available by addressing both supply and demand of finance, and by using public funds effectively. Supply side activities include: data collection, methodology and evidence-based risk management; harmonisation of definition and measuring of sustainable investments; development of innovative financing mechanisms, products, services and practices; standardisation and aggregation of projects and investments; simplification of the process for investors; capacity building and dialogue. Activities should contribute to EU policy and legislation in the field of sustainable finance³².

- **Supporting the development of local and regional investment projects:**

Build capacity of local public authorities and private investors, notably community collective investors. Facilitate dialogue with the financial sector to deliver sustainable energy investments, including tailored actions contributing to a fair society and to a just energy transition in EU regions most dependent on fossil fuels or carbon intensive processes. Promote public procurement of energy and resource efficient works, supplies and services. Support tailored approaches for local actors to develop investment concepts, implement organisational innovations and aggregate projects. Improve market conditions and develop new integrated services offers for sustainable energy in buildings, transport, ports, and SMEs.

- **Involving and empowering citizens in the clean energy transition:**

Support citizens in taking an active role in the clean energy transition, including targeted support for collective actions, community and citizen-led initiatives and development of new energy services and social innovations. Strengthen collaboration between local

³¹ Such as the SAREF ontology <https://saref.etsi.org/>

³² https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/banking-and-finance/sustainable-finance_en.

authorities and citizen-led initiatives. Support actions that contribute to alleviate energy poverty. Foster energy literacy and sustainable energy behaviour of citizens, in particular younger generations.

3. ALLOCATION OF FUNDS

The multiannual allocation of funds within each sub-programme between different types of funding (in million EUR) is shown in the below table for the period 2021-2024³³.

More details on the allocation of funds per type of grants, including the maximum amount for SNAPs and SIPs are presented under section 4.1.2 below.

| In million Euros | Amounts allocated to projects pursuant to Article 9.3 of the LIFE Regulation | | | Other activities (4) Activities financed through procurement and not covered under (3) | Total (1)+(2)+(3) +(4) |
|---|--|-------------------------|--|--|------------------------------|
| | (1) Projects financed through grants | (2) Blending operations | (3) Projects financed through other forms of funding | | |
| 1. Nature and biodiversity | 926,69 | 7,50 | 70,93 | 98,42 | 1.103,54 |
| 2. Circular economy and quality of life | 599,29 | 7,50 | 45,28 | 45,48 | 697,54 |
| 3. Climate mitigation and adaptation | 419,07 | 0,00 | 45,25 | 41,20 | 505,52 |
| 4. Clean Energy transition | 412,22 | 0,00 | 85,00 | 29,86 | 527,08 |
| TOTAL | 2.357,27 | 15,00 | 246,46 | 214,96 | 2.833,68 |

Note: These amounts do not include the support expenditures, which amount to 106 EUR million.

The allocation between the different types of funding are of an indicative nature. Modifications are possible within the following boundaries:

- in line with Article 5.4 of the LIFE regulation, at least 60% of the budgetary resources allocated to projects supported by way of action grants under the field Environment shall be dedicated to grants for projects supporting the sub-programme Nature and Biodiversity;
- in line with Article 9.3 of the LIFE Regulation, at least 85% of the budget for the LIFE Programme shall be allocated to grants, to financial instruments in the form of blending operations and to projects financed through other forms of funding to the extent specified under the section 5.5;

The actions allocated to projects pursuant to Article 9.3 of the LIFE Regulation amounts to 2.372,27 EUR million, which represent 83,7% of the budget of the LIFE programme (support expenditures included).

³³ For the Clean energy Transition CET sub-programme OAs grants will include CSA and Grants to identified beneficiary pursuant to art 195 (f) of the Financial Regulation

- according to Article 18.4 of the LIFE Regulation, the Commission shall ensure that unused funds in a given call for proposals are reallocated between the different types of actions referred to in Article 11.2 of the LIFE Regulation within the same field.

The above funds can be managed under a direct or an indirect management mode within the limits of the Financial Regulation and the LIFE Regulation.

4. GRANTS

The overall indicative amount devoted to grants for the period 2021-2024 is EUR 2.357,27 billion, out of which 97.65% is indicatively assigned to action grants and 2.35% to operating grants.

Figures per type of actions and, where relevant, areas of intervention are provided below. In line with Article 18.4 of the LIFE Regulation, unused funds from a call for proposals could be reallocated between the different types of actions within the same field.

In line with Article 12 of the LIFE Regulation, the actions financed by the LIFE Programme should be exceptionally open to participation of the legal entities of all third countries not associated to the LIFE Programme providing that:

- their participation is necessary for the achievement of the objectives of the action to ensure the effectiveness of interventions carried out in the Union and/o in overseas countries and territories linked to it and;
- they bear, in principle, the cost of their participation to the action.

| Type of action | Allocation in million Euros | | | | | Co-financing rate ³⁴ | Maximum eligibility period |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---|---------------------------------------|----------|--|----------------------------|
| | Sub-programme Nature and Biodiversity | Sub-programme Circular Economy and Quality of LIFE | Sub-programme Climate Mitigation and Adaptation | Sub-programme Clean Energy Transition | Total | | |
| Standard Action Projects | 547,77 | 350,30 | 280,44 | 20,50 | 1.199,01 | Max 60% Max 67% or max 75% under specific conditions | 10 years |
| Strategic Nature Projects | 280,00 | | | | 280,00 | Max 60% | 14 years |
| Strategic Integrated Projects | | 210,70 | 125,00 | 0,00 | 335,70 | Max 60% | 14 years |
| Technical Assistance | 15,42 | 13,28 | 2,85 | 1,60 | 33,16 | Max 60% Max 95% under specific conditions | 5 years |
| Other Actions | 55,50 | 19,00 | 0,30 | 379,12 | 453,92 | Max 95% Max 100% for the continuation of the BEST programme | 10 years |

³⁴ The cofinancing rate is calculated out of the project eligible expenditures.

| | | | | | | | |
|------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|---------|---------|
| Operating grants | 28,00 | 6,00 | 10,48 | 11,00 | 55,48 | Max 70% | 3 years |
| Total | 926,69 | 599,29 | 419,07 | 412,22 | 2.357,27 | | |

According with the provisions of the LIFE Regulation and the Financial Regulation, some of the activities listed below could be implemented under an indirect management mode where appropriate taking into account the specific conditions of their implementation.

4.1. Action Grants

In line with Article 11(2) of the LIFE Regulation, the LIFE programme may provide different types of action grants:

- (1) Standard Action Projects (SAPs);
- (2) Strategic Nature Projects (SNAPs);
- (3) Strategic Integrated Projects (SIPs);
- (4) Technical Assistance Projects (TAPs);
- (5) Other Actions (OAs).

4.1.1. Standard Action Projects (SAPs)

These projects represent the traditional LIFE projects aimed to:

- develop, demonstrate and promote innovative techniques, methods and approaches;
- contribute to the knowledge base and to the application of best practices;
- support the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of the relevant Union legislation and policy, including by improving governance at all levels, in particular through enhancing capacities of public and private actors and the involvement of civil society;
- catalyse the large-scale deployment of successful technical and policy related solutions for implementing the relevant Union legislation and policy by replicating results, integrating related objectives into other policies and into public and private sector practices, mobilising investment and improving access to finance³⁵.

The indicative amount allocated to SAPs for the period 2021-2024 is EUR 1.999 billion, of which EUR 13 million will be pre-allocated to the New European Bauhaus projects. In line with Article 18.4 of the LIFE Regulation, unused funds from a call for proposals could be reallocated between the different types of actions within the same field.

4.1.1.1. Co-financing rate

The co-financing rate for SAP, as a rule, shall not exceed 60% of total eligible costs of the project with the exception of the projects for Nature and Biodiversity that concern:

- any priority habitat or species for the implementation of Directive 92/43/EEC (EU Habitats Directive), as listed in the relevant annexes of this Directive;
- any bird species considered as “priority for funding” by the Committee for Adaptation to Technical and Scientific Progress set up pursuant to Article 16 of Directive 2009/147/EC (EU Birds Directive);

³⁵ Article 2 (4) and Article 3 (2) of the LIFE Regulation

- any habitat type or species listed in the annexes of the Habitats Directive, the conservation status of which has been assessed as unfavorable-bad and with a declining trend (U2-) in the most recent available EU- and national-level biogeographical region assessments;
- any habitat type or species (other than bird species) the EU-level threat status of which has been assessed as “endangered” or worse in the most up-to-date published version of a European species or habitats Red Lists (https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/redlist/index_en.htm; and https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/knowledge/redlist_en.htm), including in territories not covered by these lists;
- any other habitat or species in territories not covered by the European species and habitats Red Lists, the threat status of which has been assessed as “endangered” or worse in the most up-to date published version of global IUCN Red Lists of species or habitats.

For these nature and biodiversity projects the co-financing rate could reach 75% of total eligible costs provided that the project targets exclusively priority habitats and/or species as described above. Applicants will need to argue in their proposal that all actions are clearly tailored towards benefiting habitats or species that qualify for 75% co-funding.

Otherwise a project targeting both priority and non-priority habitats and/or species can receive up to 67% co-financing rate, provided that those priority species or habitats do represent a clear focus of the project and most of its actions are designed to explicitly target the priority species or habitats in a direct way, bringing them concrete direct benefits. Proposals listing priority species or habitats that will benefit only in an indirect way from the actions foreseen or where those species or habitats represent only a minor target will not be eligible for the 67% co-financing rate.

4.1.1.2. Eligibility period

The maximum eligibility period for SAPs shall be 10 years. This is justified taking into account the complexity of certain projects and the fact that prolongations may be required for unforeseen events (e.g. extreme weather conditions).

4.1.2. *Strategic Projects (SP)*

The SP includes:

- (1) Strategic Nature Projects;
- (2) Strategic Integrated Projects.

4.1.2.1. Strategic Nature Projects (SNAPs)

According to Article 2 (1) of the LIFE Regulation, the SNAPs support the achievement of Union nature and biodiversity objectives by implementing coherent programmes of action in the Member States in order to mainstream these objectives and priorities into other policies and financing instruments, including through coordinated implementation of the Prioritized Action Frameworks (PAF) established pursuant to Directive 92/43/EEC.

The SNAPs will target the following strategies and plans:

- The PAF pursuant to Article 8 of Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the Habitats Directive) 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.

The SNAPs largely build on the experience with integrated projects for nature under the LIFE programme 2014-2020. However, while nature integrated projects exclusively focused on the implementation of the Prioritized Action Frameworks (PAFs), SNAPs have a wider scope in line with the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, and focus more on mainstreaming.

Depending on the needs of the given Members States (or regions) as identified in their PAFs or in other nature and biodiversity plans (which must be available by the time a full SNAP proposal is submitted), the set of measures to be included in a SNAP programme of actions shall include the following:

- institutional support and capacity building actions;
- mobilisation and coordination of additional finance for complementary actions, in particular from other EU funding instruments and programmes.

In addition, SNAPs may also include concrete conservation measures, in particular where these cannot be supported through other EU funding programmes.

The authorities competent for nature and biodiversity and responsible for PAF implementation, shall participate in the SNAP proposals, either as applicant or, in duly justified cases, as associated beneficiaries.

The indicative distribution of the SNAPs, in the period from 2021-2027, should be as follows:

| Reference : Eurostat data | Countries | Coefficient |
|---|---|--------------------|
| Smaller-sized Member States (less than 30.000 km ²) | Cyprus, Luxembourg, Malta, Slovenia | 1 |
| Average-sized Member States (between 30.000 and 100.000 km ²) | Austria, Belgium, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia | 2 |
| Larger-sized Member States (more than 100.000 km ²): | Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Spain, Finland, France, Italy, Poland, Romania, Sweden | 3 |

The coefficient attributed to each group of countries designates the indicative size of the support provided per country through the SNAPs in the period 2021-2027.

The coefficient in the above table provides an indication for the share of EU co-funding that is available for SNAPs in 2021-27, taking into account that the coefficient 1 indicatively corresponds to EUR 10 million of EU cofinancing, the coefficient 2 to EUR 20 million of EU cofinancing and EUR 30 million for the coefficient 3. Whereas all Member States are encouraged to submit one single large SNAP proposal the financial volume of which should be based on the above table, LIFE support may be divided into two or more SNAPs in Member States where this is duly justified. To ensure the highest possible geographical coverage of EU Member States by SNAPs by 2027, the regional authorities considering to submit a SNAP are strongly encouraged to team up with other regions when preparing their proposal.

While trying to ensure a geographical balance, the award of grants will remain competitive. No grant will be awarded for proposals that, following the evaluation, have not reached the minimum pass score. The financing of a proposal from a Member State, which has not been awarded with a grant for a SNAPs yet, will be considered a priority in comparison with other

proposals from Member States which have already one or more SNAPs, only if it exceeds the minimum pass score.

The coordinated implementation of SNAPs between Member States is strongly encouraged, making also use of the transnational coordination and cooperation platforms provided by the EU macro-regional strategies, when the Member States participate in such Strategies³⁶..

Overlaps in time between Integrated Projects for Nature and SNAPs in a given Member State/region are not a priori excluded, if there is clarity about the added-value and thematic complementarity of the SNAP as compared to the integrated projects.

4.1.2.2. Strategic Integrated Projects (SIPs)

According to Article 2 (2) of the LIFE Regulation, these projects support the implementation on a regional, multi-regional, national or transnational scale, of environmental or climate strategies or action plans developed by Member States' authorities and required by specific environmental, climate or relevant energy Union legislation or policy of the Union, while ensuring that stakeholders are involved and promoting coordination with and mobilisation of at least one other Union, national or private funding source.

The strategies and plans targeted by the SIPs will be the following:

- Under the sub-programme Circular Economy and Quality of Life:
 - Circular Economy: National or Regional Circular Economy Action Plans, Strategies, Roadmaps or similar³⁷, which
 - are officially approved;
 - include specific and measurable actions, or targets, with a clear timeline and;
 - are in line with or complement the objectives of the EU Circular Economy Action Plan.
 - Waste: National and regional Waste Management Plans (WMPs) pursuant to Article 28 of the Waste Framework Directive and/or Waste Prevention Programmes as requested by article 29 of the Waste Framework Directive;
 - Water: River basin management plans (RBMPs) pursuant to Annex VII to the Water Framework Directive, Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs) pursuant to the Floods Directive, Marine Strategies pursuant to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive;

³⁶ The EU macro-regional strategies are cooperation frameworks for better coordination of actions and funds in a specific transnational geographical area (macro-region) and they have environment (including nature protection) and climate as common priority. Key features of the Strategies are cross-sectoral approach, multi-level governance and stakeholders' involvement. For info: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/cooperation/macro-regional-strategies/

³⁷ A Circular Economy Action Plan, Strategy, Road Map or similar is an official document, adopted through the relevant legislative procedure at national or regional level, introducing a vision and propose course of actions / policies to accelerate the transition towards a circular economy at national or regional level, in line with the objectives of the EU Circular Economy Action Plan. The document should have a comprehensive approach, targeting – among other - the life cycle of products and/or materials. To be considered eligible, the plan must have specific and measurable targets, actions or measures – with clear timelines - that enable tracking the IP's contribution to its implementation. Denomination can vary e.g. circular economy strategies, circular economy road maps, circular economy frameworks, etc. Plans should preferably bridge policy boundaries, and involve cross-ministerial coordination. The Commission considers such framework strategies as one of the most effective ways to progress circular economy in Member States and strongly encourage Member States to adopt and implement them.

- Air: Air quality plans pursuant to the Ambient Air Quality Directive or National Air Pollution Control Programmes (NAPCP) pursuant to the National Emission Ceilings Directive.
- Under the sub-programme for Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation:
 - National Energy and Climate Plans (NECP, Regulation on the governance of the energy union and climate action (EU)2018/1999);
 - National Energy Efficiency Action Plans' (NEEAP);
 - National or regional adaptation strategies or action plans;
 - Urban or community-based action plans pioneering the transition to a climate neutral and/or climate resilient society;
 - National, regional or industry-/sector-specific greenhouse gas mitigation strategies or economy roadmaps contributing to climate neutrality.

The Commission will try to ensure the maximum geographical coverage for SIPs by indicatively allocating at least one SIP per Member State under each sub-programme.

For SIPs at transnational scale, the use of the transnational coordination and cooperation platforms provided by the EU macro-regional strategies, when the Member States participate in such Strategies, is encouraged.

4.1.2.3. Maximum amounts

Following the positive experience acquired with the integrated projects under LIFE 2014-2020, the maximum total amount allocated to SNAPs will be EUR 280 million, which represents 30% of the overall budget allocated for grants to the sub-programme for Nature and Biodiversity. The maximum total amount allocated to SIP under the sub-programmes Circular Economy and Quality of Life and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation will be EUR 336 million EUR and 33% of the overall budget allocated for grants to these sub-programmes. The overall amount allocated to SNAPs and the SIPs will be about 26% of the overall LIFE budget allocated to grants.

4.1.2.4. Co-financing rate

For the SNAPs and SIPs the cofinancing rate shall not exceed 60% of total eligible costs of the project.

4.1.2.5. Eligibility period

Taking into account that the strategic plans cover the implementation of plan of actions, the maximum eligibility period shall be 14 years.

4.1.3. *The Technical Assistance Projects (TA projects)*

According to Article 2 (3) of the LIFE Regulation, TA projects may include the following activities:

- The participation to standard action projects and preparation of SNAPs and SIPs (TA-PP);
- The preparation for facilitating the up-scaling and replication of results from other projects funded by the LIFE Programme, its predecessor programmes or other Union programmes and for accessing other Union financial instruments (TA-R);
- The capacity building of Member States authorities with low effective participation to the LIFE programme with a view to improving the National Contact Points services across the EU and to increasing the overall quality of proposals submitted (TA-CAP).

The indicative amount for the TA projects is EUR 33.16 million. This could be increased by the amount foreseen for blending below (see section 5.3.1), in case, taking into account the related investment development stage, it would be suitable to award grants not accompanied by financial instruments.

The following indicative pre-allocation of funds is envisaged in 2021-2024, taking into account that unused funds could be reallocated between different types of projects under the same field in line with Art. 18.4 of the LIFE Regulation:

- for TA-PP indicatively EUR 3.16 million;
- for TA-CAP, EUR 9 million;
- for TA-R around EUR 21 million.

4.1.3.1 Cofinancing rate

The maximum cofinancing rate for TA Projects will be 60% of eligible costs, with the exception of the projects to improve the effective participation in the LIFE programme (TA-CAP). These projects related to the activities of Member States' authorities as defined in Article 11.4 of the LIFE Regulation, will have a maximum cofinancing rate of 95% of the eligible costs according to Article 9.4 of the LIFE Regulation.

4.1.3.2 Projects for the preparation of SNAPs or SIPs (TA-PP)

These projects are aimed at providing financial support to help applicants to prepare a SNAP or a SIP for a maximum LIFE contribution of EUR 70 000.

They represent the continuation of the technical assistance projects financed under the LIFE programme 2014-2020.

4.1.3.3. Projects to facilitate the upscaling or replication of results (TA-R)

These projects are aimed facilitate the upscaling or replication of results funded under the LIFE programme or, where relevant to fulfill the objectives of the LIFE programme, under other EU funds, including by preparing the access to other Union financial instruments.

These projects could co-finance the activities necessary:

- (1) to prepare the up-scaling and/or replication of the results of previous LIFE projects or of other Union programmes;
- (2) to facilitate the access of an operation contributing to the LIFE objectives to InvestEU or to other financial instruments.

This support for investment and replication appears strategic in view to supporting the materialization of green investments on the ground.

Financial resources will be made available to finance green investments – for example the creation of a new natural capital and circular economy initiative under InvestEU that will mobilise at least EUR 10 billion over the next 10 years, out of which, EUR 3 billion is foreseen for the period of 2021-2024. Nevertheless, the demand for investments in environmental projects often faces major barriers, such as limited administrative capacity of national, regional and local authorities, lack of awareness and sustainability expertise of public and private promoters, perception of a high risk, need to have a long-term perspective for the financial return of the investments and concerns about the bankability of projects.

This implies the need for a dedicated financial support aiming to help the establishment a pipeline of innovative and sustainable projects.

This financial support could take the form of grants for undertaking some preliminary studies or blending in case the grants are accompanied by repayable resources, such as loans, equity financing or budgetary support (see section 5.3.1).

4.1.3.4. Projects for the capacity building of Member States authorities with low effective participation (TA-CAP)

These TA projects aim at building up the capacity of Member States' authorities to improve the effective participation in the LIFE programme.

Low effective participation: definition

The concept of “low effective participation” encompasses the notions of low participation and ineffective participation.

These two elements will be weighted, as indicated in recital 32 of the LIFE regulation by: the population and population density, the total area of Natura 2000 sites for each Member State expressed as a proportion of the total area of Natura 2000, and the proportion of a Member State's territory covered by Natura 2000 sites.

Member State factor, MSf, will consider:

- A = population (% of the EU population)
- B = population density (% compared to the highest population density)
- C = area of Natura 2000 (% of the total of EU Natura 2000 area)
- D = area of Natura 2000 (% of the total of Member State area)

As the Nature and Biodiversity sub-programme represents about 40% of the total budget, C and D will be considered up to 40%.

$$MSf = (A+B) *40\% (C+D)$$

For the definition of “low effective participation, the Commission intends to take into account two criteria:

1. low participation: a country registers a low participation when the rate of proposals submitted divided by the above factor for that country is among the two lowest thirds;
2. ineffective participation: a country experiences a non-effective participation when the success rate (number of project awarded out of the proposals submitted) divided by the above factor for that country is among the two lowest thirds.

Any country which falls into one of the two above mentioned categories will be considered eligible for these projects.

Each country could be awarded with only one TA-CAP for low effective participation in the period covered by this Multiannual Work Programme.

The calculation to determine the list of eligible countries will be done by the Commission taking into account the last three years for which data are available. The results will be presented to the Member States before the launching of each call for proposals.

Eligible activities

The Commission expects that each proposal will be based on a needs analysis identifying the most effective activities addressing the low participation and/or the ineffective participation rate of the different types of applicants (public organisations, private entities and civil society organisations).

Eligible activities are the following:

- Implementation actions such as training activities, targeted information campaigns;
- Monitoring and evaluation actions to assess the actual impact of the implementation actions;
- Communication and dissemination actions;
- Actions for project management and quality control.

The Commission expects that the budget will be proportionate to the activities that will be implemented under each project to address the low and/or ineffective participation rate of the different types of applicants.

4.1.3.5. The maximum eligibility period for the implementation of the TA projects

Taking into account the different subjects covered by the TA projects, the maximum eligibility period shall be 5 years.

4.1.4. *Other Actions (OA)*

The Commission has identified some specific needs to be addressed through “Other Actions”.

In line with point (e) of Article 11 (2) of the LIFE Regulation, “Other Actions” will include:

- Coordination and Support Actions (CSA) for the transition to renewable energy and increased energy efficiency. They are aimed at breaking market barriers that hamper the socio-economic transition to renewable energy and increased energy efficiency, including capacity building, dissemination of information and knowledge, and awareness raising;
- A Small Grant Facility on Biodiversity (BEST);
Drawing on the experience of the small grants schemes in the frame of the EU’s BEST initiative, calls for proposals will be launched for awarding small grants (max EUR 100 000 of EU cofinancing) in the Outermost Regions and the Overseas Countries and Territories on biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and sustainable use of ecosystem services, including ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and mitigation;
- Projects developed in the framework of the cooperation with the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KIC) of the European Institute for Innovation and Technology³⁸ (EIT) , in particular projects contributing to the objectives and implementation of the EU Circular Economy Action Plan implemented by universities, research organizations, businesses and/or SMEs participating in a KIC;
- Action grants benefitting the organisations mentioned in Annex I of the LIFE Regulation (see also point 2 of section 4.3 below);
- Additional projects responding to the Union legislative and policy priorities could also be determined on annual basis, following a consultation with Member States (PLP).
- Other specific projects financed according to Article 195 of the Financial Regulation to support EU policies related to environment and climate action fields to be identified during the implementation of this work programme.

The indicative amount for the OAs is EUR 454 million.

³⁸ The European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT) is an independent body of the European Union set up in 2008 to deliver innovation across Europe. The EIT brings together leading business, education and research organizations to find solutions to global challenges.

The Commission will be more prescriptive in the definition of the calls for proposals for these actions than in the case of bottom up call for proposals, where the identification of needs and related possible solutions is in the remit of the applicants.

4.1.4.1. Co-financing rate

The maximum co-financing rate for “Other Actions” is 95% of eligible costs, except for the small grants for biodiversity in ORs and OCTs that constitute the continuation of the BEST programme, where the EU co-financing is maximum 100% of eligible costs.

4.1.4.2. Eligibility period for the implementation of the “Other Actions”

Taking into account the different subjects covered by the “Other Actions”, the maximum eligibility period shall be 10 years.

4.2. Submission and selection procedure for action grants

Different procedures are foreseen for the award of action grants. The choice of the procedure will depend on the time available to announce the call and evaluate proposals and / or the expected volume of the proposals under each sub-programme:

- A one-stage procedure that will be used for:
 1. standard action projects
 2. TA projects and
 3. “Other Actions”.
- A two-stage procedure that will be used for:
 - SNAPs and SIPs

The two stage procedure may also be used for the standard action projects.

4.2.1. One-stage procedure for SAPs, TA projects and ‘Other Actions’

The one-stage procedure shall be organised as follows:

1. Following a call for proposals, full proposals are submitted;
2. Proposals are checked for their compliance with the admissibility, eligibility, selection and exclusion criteria. The sequence of the checks can be adapted in line with the Financial Regulation to ensure the maximum efficiency of the evaluation process;
3. Full proposal evaluation on the basis of the award criteria listed below:

1. Relevance (0-20)

- Relevance of the contribution to one or several of the specific objectives of the LIFE programme and the targeted sub-programme;
- Extent to which the project is in line with the description included in the call for proposals, including, where relevant, its specific priorities;
- Soundness of the overall intervention logic;
- Extent to which the project offers co-benefits and promotes synergies with other policy areas relevant for achieving environment and climate policy objectives.

2. Quality (0-20)

- Clarity, relevance and feasibility of the work plan;
- Appropriate geographic focus of the activities;
- Quality of the plan to monitor and report impacts;

- Identification and mobilisation of the relevant stakeholders;
- Appropriateness and quality of the proposed measures to communicate and disseminate the project and its results to different target groups.

3. Impact (0-20)

- Ambition and credibility of impacts expected during and/or after the project due to the proposed activities, including potential negative impacts on the other specific objectives of the LIFE programme, including ensuring that no substantial harm is done to those objectives.
- Sustainability of the project results after the end of the project.
- Potential for the project results to be replicated in the same or other sectors or places, or to be up-scaled by public or private actors or through mobilising larger investments or financial resources (catalytic potential).
- Quality of the measures for the exploitation of project results.

4. Resources (0-20)

- Composition of the project team - of a consortium or of a sole beneficiary - in terms of expertise, skills and responsibilities and appropriateness of the management structure.
- Appropriateness of the budget and resources and their consistency with the proposed work plan.
- Transparency of the budget, i.e. the cost items should be sufficiently described.
- Extent to which the project environmental impact is considered and mitigated, including through the use of green procurement. The use of recognised methods for the calculation of the project environmental footprint (e.g. PEF or OEF methods or similar ones³⁹) or environmental management systems (e.g. EMAS) would be an asset.
- Value-for-money of the proposed project.

4. Scoring of the proposals

Each criterion will be scored on a range of 0 to 20 points. The minimum pass score for each criterion is 10 points.

The score of criterion ‘Impact’ will be given a weight of 1,5: the points received by each proposal for the “impact” criterion will be multiplied by 1,5.

The overall pass threshold, applying to the sum of the weighted individual scores is 55 points.

The following bonus points will be applied to standard action projects, and, where relevant and as defined in the call for proposals, to the TA projects and to ‘other actions’:

- **BONUS 1:** The proposed project offers exceptional synergies and promotes significant cobenefits between LIFE sub-programmes. (2 points).
- **BONUS 2:** The project is primarily implemented in the Outermost Regions. Where specific regional features are relevant to the needs addressed in the call for proposals, e.g. islands for waste, coal-intensive regions for clean energy, etc.. the bonus could be extended to other geographical areas with specific needs and vulnerabilities (2 points).
- **BONUS 3:** The project substantially builds on or up-scales the results of other European Union funded projects. (2 points).

³⁹ E.g. PEFCRs/ OEFSRs. See list on https://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/PEFCR_OEFSR_en.htm.

- BONUS 4: The project offers an exceptional catalytic potential. (2 points).
- BONUS 5: The project envisages a transnational cooperation⁴⁰ among Member States essential to guarantee the achievement of the project objectives. (2 points).

The bonuses are based on yes/no criteria. They do not foresee a graduation: either 0 or 2 points are assigned to each proposal.

This means the maximum number of possible points for proposals for standard action projects is 100, while for other proposals (i.e. for the TA projects and “Other actions” is 90, plus any possible bonus).

5. Ranking and preparation of the final list of projects to be funded.

The project proposals will be ranked, taking into account the weighted score of each award criterion and the bonus points, if any. There will be separate lists for each sub-programme and, within each sub-programme, where relevant for the projects related to governance topics and the New European Bauhaus.

The list of projects proposed for funding will be made taking into account the proposals which have reached the minimum threshold and for which there is available budget. In case of equal scores, proposals with the highest score under criterion 3, impact, will be financed.

6. Reserve list and Seal of Excellence.

The reserve list will encompass all projects that meet the minimum quality requirements (i.e. that get all the minimum pass scores) but cannot be funded in view of the available budget. In case additional funds could be made available, the projects in the reserve lists will be financed in the ranking order.

In the case of the standard action projects, the projects in the reserve list will be awarded a Seal of Excellence in line with Article 15 of the LIFE Regulation.

The list of Seal of Excellence projects, together with a short description of each project, will be transmitted to the competent Commission services, to the National Contact Points and to the members of the LIFE Committee for further distribution to the authorities responsible for the management of the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund+ and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

These projects could have the possibility to be financed under the same conditions (co-financing rate, amount and eligible costs) to which they would have been financed under the LIFE programme.

4.2.2. Two-stage procedure for SAP

A two-stage selection procedure will be applied for the award of SAPs. The award procedure is organised in two stages: the first stage foresees the submission of a concept note. The second stage foresees, for the concept notes that have a reasonable possibility to be awarded with a grant, the submission of a full proposal. This procedure should not be implemented in 2021 and 2022.

4.2.2.1. Stage 1: concept note

The applicants are asked to present a concept note indicating the main elements of their proposal. They have to indicate the financial support requested.

1. Following a call for proposals, the concept notes are submitted.

⁴⁰ “Transnational cooperation” to be understood as including cooperation between adjacent countries/regions on both sides of a national border and also cooperation at larger transnational/macro-regional level.

2. The concept notes are checked for their compliance with the admissibility and eligibility, criteria.
3. The concept notes are evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

1. Relevance and impact (0-20)

- Relevance of the contribution to one or several of the specific objectives of the LIFE programme and the targeted sub-programme.
- Extent to which the project is in line with the topic description of the call for proposal.
- Soundness of the overall intervention logic of the proposals.
- Ambition and credibility of impacts expected during and/or after the project due to the proposed activities including potential negative impacts on the other specific objectives of the LIFE programme. The analysis of the impact will take into account the specificities of the project and its geographic scope, including, where relevant, the particular needs of geographical areas with specific vulnerabilities environmental challenges and/or natural constraints.

2. Quality and resources (0-20)

- Clarity, relevance and feasibility of the work plan.
- Sustainability of the project results after the end of the project.
- Value for money of the project.

3. The concept notes are scored.

Each criterion will be scored on a range of 0 to 20 points. The overall pass threshold, applying to the sum of the individual scores, is 12 points out of 40 points. Concept notes that did not reach the minimum threshold will be excluded.

4. Preparation of the list of concept notes to be retained and invitation to submit a full proposal

The long list of applicants invited to submit a full proposal will include the best ranked concept notes by sub-programme for which the sum of the EU contributions requested represents 2 to 3 times the available budget. The specific ratio between the EU contribution requested and the available budget will be defined taking into account the size of requested contributions as well as the success rate of the full proposals under the specific sub-programme in previous calls. There will be separate lists for each sub-programme and, within each sub-programme, for the projects related to governance topics.

4.2.2.2. Stage 2: full proposal

1. The full proposals are submitted.
2. Proposals are checked for their compliance with the admissibility, eligibility, selection and exclusion criteria. The sequence of the checks can be adapted in line with the Financial Regulation to ensure the maximum efficiency of the evaluation process.
3. The full proposals are evaluated on the basis of the award criteria defined for the one-stage procedure, including the various bonuses.
4. The proposal ranking and the Seal of Excellence will apply like in the one stage procedure described in section 4.2.1.

4.2.3. Two-stage procedure for SP

The submission and selection process of SNAPs and the SIPs is based on a two-stage procedure and will apply across all the sub-programmes. It should facilitate the work of potential applicants and ensure that they receive the best possible guidance during the process. The

workflow is structured in a way to accompany the progressive development and fine-tuning of each proposal. The principle of equal treatment of all proposals is applied throughout all phases of the evaluation process.

A two-stage procedure is based on the submission of a concept note followed by a full proposal. It is organised as follows:

Stage 1: concept note

1. Following a call for proposals, the concept notes are submitted.
2. The concept notes are checked for their compliance with admissibility and eligibility criteria.

The concept notes are evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

| |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Implementation of plans or strategies<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The project aims at implementing the plans or strategies mentioned under par 4.1.2.2. Territorial coverage<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Implementation of the targeted Union plan or strategy will cover a large and representative territorial area, in particular, regional, multiregional, national, trans-national. A multi-city approach or smaller territorial scale may also be acceptable for SIPs dealing with air quality management as long as the project delivers substantial impact.3. Coordination of complementary funds<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The activities will mobilise complementary funding from at least one Union, national or private funding source and take into consideration other relevant European Union, national or private funding.- The funding is complementary to the SNAPs and the SIPs and used to support and implement complementary activities necessary for the implementation of the targeted plan or strategy.- Mechanisms for the coordination of the complementary funding are clearly defined.4. Involvement of key stakeholders<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Key stakeholders will be actively involved in the implementation of the targeted plan or strategy. |
|--|

Each criterion will be assessed as to whether it is fulfilled or not.

3. List of projects retained

All the applicants submitting the proposals that fulfil the above mentioned criteria will be invited to submit full proposal.

Those applicants will be also invited to participate in a written question and answer phase, during which they can submit questions related to the preparation of a full proposal. At the end of this phase, the questions and answers will be made publicly available in an anonymized manner to equally assist all applicants in preparing their full proposals. Where appropriate, the questions and answers will be supplemented with guidance regarding typical difficulties that applicants might have encountered and that became apparent in the concept notes.

Stage 2: full proposal

1. The full proposals are submitted.

2. Proposals are checked for their compliance with the admissibility, eligibility, selection and exclusion criteria. The sequence of the checks can be adapted in line with the Financial Regulation to ensure the maximum efficiency of the evaluation process.
3. Full proposal evaluation on the basis of the award criteria shown in the table below:

1. Relevance (0-20)

- Relevance of the contribution to one or several of the specific objectives of the LIFE programme and the targeted sub-programme.
- Extent to which the project is in line with the topic description of the call for proposal.
- The soundness of the overall intervention logic.
- Extent to which the project offers co-benefits and promotes synergies with other policy areas relevant for achieving environment and climate policy objectives.

2. Quality (0-20)

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

3. Complementary funding (0-20)

- Level of mobilisation of other funds complementary to the LIFE project foreseen (beyond the minimum necessary for eligibility) as well as the likelihood of their actual mobilisation and their functional link to the plan or strategy to be implemented
- Quality of the coordination mechanism for the optimal use of other funds, in particular Union funds, necessary to implement targeted strategy / plan
- Identification, relevance and feasibility of the necessary complementary actions

4. Impact (0-20)

- Ambition and credibility of impacts expected during and/or after the project due to the proposed activities, including potential negative impacts on the other specific objectives of the LIFE programme, to ensure that no substantial harm is done to those objectives.
- Sustainability of the project results after the end of the project.
- Potential for the project results to be replicated in the same or other sectors or places, or to be up-scaled by public or private actors or through mobilising larger investments or financial resources (catalytic potential).
- Quality of the measures for the exploitation of project results.

5. Resources (0-20)

- Composition of the project team - of a consortium or of a sole beneficiary - in terms of expertise, skills and responsibilities and appropriateness of the management structure.
- Appropriateness of the budget and resources and their consistency with the work plan.
- Transparency of the budget, i.e. the cost items should be sufficiently described.
- Extent to which the project environmental impact is considered and mitigated, including through the use of green procurement. The use of recognised methods for the calculation of the project environmental footprint (e.g. PEF or OEF methods or similar ones⁴¹) or environmental management systems (e.g. EMAS) would be an asset.

⁴¹ E.g. PEFCRs/ OEFSRs. See list on https://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/PEFCR_OEFSR_en.htm.

- Value-for-money of the project.

4. Scoring of the proposals

Each criterion will be scored on a range of 0 to 20 points. The minimum pass score for each criterion is 10 points. The overall pass threshold, applying to the sum of the weighted individual scores is 55 points. No bonus points are included except where the proposed project primarily covers the Outermost Regions..

This means the maximum number of possible points is 100.

5. Ranking and preparation of the final list of projects to be funded.

The project proposals will be ranked, taking into account the weighted score of each award criterion.

The list of projects proposed for funding will be made taking into account the proposals which have reached the minimum threshold and for which there is available budget.

In case of equal scores, proposals with the highest score under criterion 3, impact, will be financed.

In case of lack of budget to finance all the proposals that reached the minimum threshold, priority will be given to the proposals from Member States which do not have - yet - a SIPs financed under the specific sub-programme or, under the nature and biodiversity sub-programme, a specific SNAP.

6. Reserve list and Seal of Excellence.

The reserve list and the Seal of Excellence will apply as for the one stage procedure described in section 4.2.1.

4.3. Operating grants

In line with the LIFE Regulation, operating grants can be awarded in different cases:

1. Article 11(6) of the LIFE Regulation provides for support for certain operational and administrative costs for non-profit-making entities which are involved in the development, implementation and enforcement of Union legislation and policy and which primarily active in the field of environment or climate action, including energy transition.
2. Article 13 of the LIFE Regulation states that grants may be awarded to the organisations mentioned in Annex I of the LIFE Regulation. The amount of operating and action grants to these organizations in the years 2021-2024 will not exceed EUR 6 million.
3. Operating grants outside the point 1 and 2 above may be awarded in duly justified cases as defined in Article 195 of the Financial Regulation.

The indicative amount for operating grants in the period 2021-2024 is EUR 55,5 million.

The maximum co-financing rate for all the different types of operating grants is 70% of eligible costs.

4.4. Submission and selection procedure for operating grants

The award of operating grants will be based on the following:

- (1) Framework partnership agreements with non-profit entities and, where possible following a risk analysis, also with the organisations mentioned in Annex 1 of the LIFE Regulation. The duration of the framework partnership agreements will be set in order to keep the balance between the need for certainty and stability of the beneficiaries, the need to ensure an evolution of the partnership and, in the case of operating grants to non-profit entities, the possibility for different organisations to have access to them.

Specific grants agreements will be awarded on an annual basis following a call for proposals addressed to the framework partners.

- (2) Single annual operating grants, when partnership agreements are not possible or not appropriate.

The award procedure will be organised as follows:

1. Following a call for proposals, proposals are submitted.
2. The proposal are checked for their compliance with the admissibility, eligibility, selection and exclusion criteria. The sequence of the checks can be adapted in line with the Financial Regulation to ensure the maximum efficiency of the evaluation process.
3. Proposal evaluation. The proposal for framework partnership agreement will be evaluated on the basis of the award criteria listed below:

| |
|---|
| <p>a) Relevance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Relevance of the contribution to one or several of the specific objectives of the LIFE programme.- Extent to which the proposed work plan is in line with the relevant policies covered by the call for proposals.- Extent to which the proposal demonstrates EU added value. <p>b) EU policy shaping.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Extent to which the proposal shows an in-depth understanding of the EU policy process.- Extent to which the applicant improves the knowledge and evidence base, thus supporting the Union's environment, climate and energy policies.- Extent to which the applicant fosters the integration of environmental, climate and/or energy policies and coherence with other policies, e.g. agriculture, transport, cohesion policy.- Extent to which the applicant will act as a channel between the EU level and civil society, providing coordinated policy input.- The appropriateness of means and structures aimed at voicing the concerns of EU citizens and at ensuring their democratic representation vis a vis the relevant institutions. <p>c) EU policy implementation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Extent to which the proposed strategy improves implementation and enforcement of EU environmental, climate and/or energy legislation on local, Member State and/or European level.- Extent to which the applicant will act as a channel between the EU level and civil society, promoting and ensuring acceptance of policy implementation.- Extent to which the applicant uses its network to identify obstacles to policy implementation at national/regional level, for policy feedback. |
|---|

- Appropriateness and quality of the proposed measures to communicate and disseminate in order to create leverage.
 - Extent to which the proposed strategy helps to secure investment for environment, climate and/or energy policy, addressing environmental externalities.
- d) Sensor function.**
- Extent to which the proposal helps to detect new or emerging issues in the area of environment, climate change and/or energy and is able to analyse the causes of such issues and their possible effects.
 - Capacity of the applicant to propose appropriate solutions and to provide feedback or improve policy making on the identified new or emerging issues.
- e) Organizational development.**
- Quality of the proposed strategy to address the identified organisational development needs and areas for improvement.
 - Extent to which the applicant represents relevant stakeholders and endeavours to develop its membership (grassroots or members base).
 - Extent to which the fundraising strategy of the applicant ensures the diversification and sustainability of the organisation.
 - Analysis of the applicant's dependence on the LIFE operating grant and strategies addressing this dependence are convincing.
 - The value-for-money of the proposed work..

Scoring of the proposals

Each criterion will be scored on a range of 0 to 20 points. There is no minimum pass score for individual criteria.

The score of criterion 4) "Sensor function" will be given a weight of 0,25.

The score of criterion 5) "Organisational development" will be given a weight of 0,75.

The overall pass threshold, applying to the sum of the weighted individual scores, is 45 points.

In case of equal scores, the priority order will be established on the basis of the following principles:

1. proposals focusing on a topic that is not well covered by higher ranked proposals will be considered to have the highest priority;
2. thereafter, applications according to their estimated value for money.

Ranking and preparation of the final list of operating grants to be awarded.

The project proposals will be ranked, taking into account the score of each award criterion.

The list of operating grants proposed for awarded will be made taking into account the proposals which have reached the minimum threshold and for which there is available budget.

This ranking of proposals by score and priority order after the FPA evaluation will also constitute the order in which the applicants will be ranked once their Specific Grant Agreement (SGA) proposals have been evaluated, i.e. no new ranking will be established after the SGA evaluation.

For the award of single operating grants, the following criteria will apply:

a) Relevance

- Extent to which the proposed work programme is in line with the NGO applicant's framework partnership agreement. Any deviations are justified.

b). Quality of the proposal

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

c). Resources

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

Each criterion will be scored on a range of 0 to 20 points. There is no minimum pass score for individual criteria. The overall pass threshold, applying to the sum of the individual scores, is 35 points.

4.5. Indicative timetables for the calls for proposals

| | 2021 | | | 2022 | | | 2023 | | | 2024 | | |
|-------------------|-------|-------------------------------------|-------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------|
| months | 01-04 | 05-08 | 09-12 | 01-04 | 05-08 | 09-12 | 01-04 | 05-08 | 09-12 | 01-04 | 05-08 | 09-12 |
| SAP | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |
| SNAP | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |
| SIP | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |
| TA-CAP | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | | |
| Other TA projects | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |
| Operating grants | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| OA | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |

Calls for proposals for SAP, SIP, TA-PP for the preparation of SNAP and SIP, CSA will be launched every year and/or will envisage annual deadline for the submission of projects.

For the SNAP, a call for proposal will be launched in 2021, in 2022 and in 2024.

Calls for proposals for TA-CAP will be launched in 2021 and 2022

Calls for proposals for TA-R will be launched on biennial basis starting from 2022.

Calls for proposals for OA are expected to be launched on annual or biennial basis. Calls for proposals for operating grants are expected to be launched annually. Framework partnership agreements for OA and/or operating grants will be concluded, where appropriate, on multiannual basis.

5. OTHER FORMS OF FUNDING

For the purpose of achieving the objectives set out in Article 3 of the Regulation, in addition to the projects financed through grants identified in section 4, the LIFE Programme may also finance through other forms of funding:

- projects as defined under section 5.4,
- activities implemented by the Commission in support of the preparation, implementation and mainstreaming of EU legislation related to Environment, Climate and Clean Energy Transition,

- administrative and technical assistance to the Commission in the development, implementation and monitoring activities of the programme.

Other forms of funding may include:

- Procurement contracts.
- Prizes.
- Indirect management activities, including blending.

The indicative amount for project financed through other forms of funding and financial instruments under blending operations under the four sub-programmes for the years 2021-2024 is EUR 476 million.

The indicative amount for technical and administrative assistance activities under the four sub-programmes for the years 2021-2024 is EUR 106 million.

5.1. Procurement Contracts

According with Art. 5 of the LIFE Regulation, the LIFE Programme may finance activities implemented by the Commission in support of the preparation, implementation and mainstreaming of Union environmental, climate or relevant energy legislation.

Such activities implemented through public procurement may include:

- Information and communication, including e.g. awareness raising campaigns, media relations, publications, information materials, translations, stakeholder consultation/involvement, workshops, conferences and support to participatory schemes/activities, networking and best-practice platforms.
- Support to the design, development, implementation and enforcement of policies and legislation e.g. scientific, legal and technical support, inspections, capacity building, peer-reviews, audits, evaluations, impact assessments, information technology system, studies, advisory services, modelling and scenario building.

5.2. Prizes

Prizes are financial contribution given as a reward following a contest.

Through prizes the Commission promotes the achievement of policy objectives of the Union.

Prizes will be awarded in accordance with the principles of transparency and equal treatment.

The conditions for participation, the arrangements for paying the prize to the winners after its award, and the appropriate means of publication are defined in relation to the specific prize organised.

The organisation and management of prizes shall be included in the calculation of the minimum threshold of 85% pursuant to Article 9.3 of the LIFE Regulation.

Examples of prizes financed by the LIFE programme are the Green Leaf and the Green Capital Awards, the European Business Award, the Natura 2000 Award, the Climate Pact's incentives, etc...

5.3. Activities in support to investments, including blending

5.3.1. Support to the financing of technical assistance for environment and climate investments

The European Green Deal Investment Plan acknowledges that greening investments and the economy generally requires a significant strengthening of the technical assistance to proactively

develop high-impact investment pipeline. Furthermore, it stresses the importance of technical assistance for promoting natural capital, climate action and nature-based solutions.

The high-impact investment pipeline should focus on projects that conserve, restore, manage and enhance natural capital or lead to carbon removals – in support of the EU Biodiversity Strategy, the Circular Economy Action Plan, the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change and other relevant policies.

The technical assistance under the InvestEU Advisory Hub will aim to support projects which have climate mitigation, climate adaptation and/or the protection and enhancement of natural capital resources as well as development of circular economy as primary project purposes. It will focus on projects that contribute to climate resilience and/or to ensure sustainability in the management of natural resources.

In order to develop this pipeline of projects and to implement them on the ground, two additional and complementary actions will be set up:

- (1) Contribution of financial resources to the Advisory hub under the InvestEU programme. The advisory services will identify, develop and prepare the project for the InvestEU programme. The aim is to promote and support green investments and green project replication /up-scaling, where climate adaptation and/or the protection and enhancement of natural capital resources are primary project purposes. It will also include, upon request, advisory services to make greener other investment projects.
- (2) An ad hoc financial support in the form of grants (see before section 4.1.3.3) or blending (in case grants are accompanied by repayable sources of funding, such as loans, equity financing or budgetary support financed by other sources than LIFE).

5.3.1.1. The green component of the advisory hub

The InvestEU advisory hub will aim at making available state of the art proactive technical assistance as an essential enabling action supporting the greening of the economy and of the expected investments.

The InvestEU advisory hub targets those investments that are necessary to fully implement EU environmental and climate policy and legislation and tackle broader environmental challenges relating to protecting and restoring our natural capital underpinning the economy and its circularity as set out in the European Green Deal.

The objective of the LIFE contribution to the InvestEU Advisory Hub is to assist public and private investment promoters and related actors in the identification and development of investment projects, which contribute to conserve, restore, manage and enhance natural capital, also contributing to carbon removals and climate resilience, in support of e.g. the EU Biodiversity Strategy, the Circular Economy Plan and the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change.

Specialised expertise will be identified - (1) directly on the market and (2) through advisory partners - to provide technical assistance and capacity building to help the identification and development of public and private green investments. Upon request, it could be involved in supporting the greening of other investments. Where relevant, the experts will be involved in activities of mutual training and sharing of experience to enhance the capacity to identify, promote and structure green investments projects across the EU.

After the time necessary to build up the nucleus of expertise and to conclude the agreements with the advisory partners, the mobilisation of the expertise is expected to be extremely gradual. Since the beginning, actions aimed at allowing the proactive identification of possible investments and the capacity building of relevant stakeholders will be carried out.

The amount devoted to these advisory services will be led by the development of the demand. It is expected that the amount allocated to advisory services in the period 2021-2024 under the

sub-programmes Nature and Biodiversity, Circular Economy and Quality of Life and Climate Mitigation and Adaptation, will not exceed EUR 35 million. This amount will be complementary to the repayable forms of support provided under Invest EU and will focus on technical assistance services and could be funded, as appropriate, in a direct or indirect management mode.

Unused funds will be reallocated to grants.

5.3.1.2. Blending support

Where suitable, the support to be provided to the green investments will take the form of blending operations.

A blending operation can be defined as the combination of different form of support:

- **at least one repayable form of support** (budgetary guarantee and/or financial instrument) financed by InvestEU or other sources of financing and
- **a non-repayable form of support** financed by LIFE that will comply with its policy objectives and eligibility criteria..

The LIFE grant element will be used in a strategic way to attract additional financing for important investments. By pooling together resources, blending multiplies the possibility to have investments materialise by allowing each financier to gain some leverage over their funds and ensures a better coordination of public support by the Commission and other financiers to pursue EU policy objectives.

Blending could be used to facilitate project replication or to support the identification and promotion of possible green investments.

Under the InvestEU programme blending could open possibilities to get natural capital protection/enhancement, including climate mitigation and adaptation aspects, embedded and scaled up within the projects. The grant element of a blending operation can incentivise further the higher impact of policy objectives supporting the non-bankable part of projects or providing higher guarantee to investors.

In case a blending operation will not materialise, these funds will be used to finance grants. Unused funds will be also reallocated to grants.

The maximum amount allocated for the grant element of blending operations will be EUR 15 million for the years 2021-2024.

The Commission will report annually to the LIFE Committee on the preliminary studies and the possible development of the blending operation.

5.3.2. *Support to financing energy efficiency and renewable energy investments*

Unused funds for financial support will be reallocated to grants under the sub-programme Clean Energy Transition.

5.3.2.1. Financial support for technical assistance to energy efficiency and renewable energy investments

Indirect management of financial support for technical assistance to energy efficiency and renewable energy investments targeting buildings and that save energy and reduce emissions, such as the ELENA⁴² facility.

This facility, managed by the EIB under the Horizon 2020 programme 2014-2020, the predecessor of the Clean Energy Transition sub-programme. ELENA provides grants for

⁴² <https://www.eib.org/en/products/advising/elena/>

technical assistance to energy efficiency and renewable energy investments targeting buildings and innovative urban transport and mobility projects that save energy and reduce emissions.

Under such facility, financial support to project development services is provided in relation to all the activities necessary to develop and mobilise finance for an investment programme including for instance: feasibility studies, design studies, structuring of programmes, business plans, energy audits, bundling of smaller projects to form bankable packages. Costs related to the investment programme itself such as hardware costs are not eligible.

The implementation of this type of facility is subject to dedicated contribution agreements between the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Commission. The facility is providing financial support to final beneficiary according to the modalities defined in the contribution agreements.

The support for the financing of technical assistance to energy efficiency and renewable energy investments shall not exceed EUR 45 million for the period 2021-2024

5.4. Support to the financing of other actions under indirect management

According to Article 62.1(c) of the Financial Regulation, the Commission may delegate budget execution tasks to several types of partners, such as international organisations, decentralised agencies and public law bodies, including Member State organisations.

The selection of the persons and entities to be entrusted with the implementation of Union funds shall be transparent, justified by the nature of the action and shall not give rise to a conflict of interests.

According to Article 154.3 FR of the Financial Regulation, the Commission shall ensure that the entities to which budget implementation tasks are delegated demonstrate a level of financial management and protection of the EU's financial interest equivalent to that of the Commission.

The Commission remains ultimately responsible for the EU budget and informs the European Parliament and the Council of the operations carried out by the entities and persons in charge.

5.4.1. Financial support for other indirect management activities in the fields of environment and climate

Ad hoc contribution agreement may be signed with international organisations, decentralised agencies and public law bodies, including Member State organisations for providing limited support to ad hoc activities of common interest.

Examples of indirect management activities financed by the LIFE programme in the past are a survey run by OECD to provide reliable willingness-to-pay values to avoid adverse health effects related to the exposure to chemicals or the update of guideline recommendations and information on health risks of air pollution in Europe, implemented by the WHO.

A non-exhaustive list of actions planned for the period 2021-2024 include the following projects:

- International information exchange on the use of Best Available Techniques (BAT) to control industrial emissions – Phase III – to be implemented by OECD
- The Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons – to be implemented by the Secretariat of the Bern Convention (Council of Europe).
- Update of guidance on heat health action plans - to be implemented by the World Health Organisation - European Centre for Environment and Health (ECEH)

The indicative amount allocated to this type of actions implemented under indirect management by DG Environment and DG Climate Action is EUR 3 million for the period 2021-2024.

5.4.2. Financial support for activating private sector investments to energy efficiency

Contribution agreement with UNEP for activating private sector investments to energy efficiency through the Energy Efficiency Financial Institutions Group (EEFIG) in the framework of Chapter 2. “Enhancing climate neutrality and clean energy” of the annex to the Memorandum of Understanding between the European Commission and the United Nations Environment Programme for cooperation period 2020-2024 agreed between the European Commission and UNEP.

EEFIG work is providing a significant contribution in accelerating private finance to energy efficiency currently focusing on the European Green Deal and within the EU Recovery Plan frameworks.

The United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative (UNEP FI) shall be entrusted with the implementation of part EEFIG activities in accordance with the modalities defined in the contribution agreements.

Financial support to UNEP shall not exceed EUR 0.6 million for the period 2021-2024.

5.5. Projects financed through other forms of funding to be included in the 85% pursuant to Article 9.3

According to Article 9.3, at least 85% of the budget for the LIFE Programme shall be allocated to grants, to projects financed through other forms of funding to the extent specified within the multiannual work programme and to financial instruments in the form of blending operations.

The activities that can be considered in the calculation of the minimum threshold of 85% pursuant to Article 8(2a) are:

- Prizes and official awards, including all the related expenditures (i.e. Green Leaf and Green Capital Awards; European Business Award; Natura 2000 Award).
- Support, exchange of expertise and networking to improve the participation of different stakeholders to the design, implementation and enforcement of EU environmental and climate policies (e.g. Platform for Coal Regions in Energy Transition, the Climate Pact, Covenant of Majors for Climate and Energy, Green Cities Accord, Energy Efficiency Finance Market Place, EU Sustainable Energy Weeks, Sustainable Energy Investment Forums, Clean Energy Industrial Forum on Renewables, network activities in support of the LIFE National Contact Points, including training, mutual learning activities and experience-sharing events).
- Capacity building and training and other types of support for Member States and other actors charged with the implementation of EU legislation and policies, including technical assistance for the identification and the promotion of green investments, the peer reviews, the development of guidance and exchange of best practices (TAIEX-EIR Peer to Peer, co-operation with national judges, Capacity building for Member States on the development of national emission inventories, De-risking Energy Efficiency Platform (DEEP), etc.).
- Support to data collection, IT systems, databases surveys and specialised bodies enabling stakeholders to the access and/or use environment and climate data (e.g. LUCAS survey, the Forest Information System for Europe (FISE), the Water Information System for Europe (WISE), the Industrial Emissions Innovation Observatory, the European Alien Species Information Network (EASIN), the EU Energy Poverty Observatory, the LIFE project results database),
- Adequate functioning and security of the EU ETS (Union registry) and derivative applications (MRVA, NEC, Market stability reserve) including the auctioning platform,

- Indirect management with international organizations (such as WHO, OECD, UNFCCC, UNEP, FAO, IEA, EIB) for the purpose of achieving the objectives set out in Article 3 of the LIFE Regulation (e.g. indirect management for technical assistance to energy efficiency and renewable energy investments targeting buildings that save energy and reduce emissions).

The Commission will report to the Committee on annual basis on the amount allocated to these projects in the previous year.

6. CUMULATIVE FUNDING

In some cases, LIFE funds may be used to add, complement or combine funds from other EU programmes. This could happen, for example, to promote, add or steer some specific work on key environmental or climate issues under other programmes.

These types of funding will aim at developing concerted efforts, optimising synergies and/or pursuing specific objectives of the LIFE Programme. They are aimed at ensuring more efficiency in leveraging and at enabling better coordination of support to final beneficiaries/recipients.

Cumulative funding could be used to finance the LIFE contribution to e.g. calls for proposals, specific grants, calls for tenders or blending support financed jointly with other EU programmes and financial instruments.

6.1. Management mode

The activity will be managed directly by the Commission or by one Executive Agency. An indirect management mode will be used if justified by the type of activity.

6.2 Implementing body

If more than one organisations could be charged with the management of these activities, the organisation managing the most similar activities will be selected, taking into account the purpose and the contents of the activities.

6.3. Rules of implementation

The activity will be managed taking into account, as far as possible, the respect of the rules in force under the programmes concerned.

In case of diverting rules and/or in order to avoid overburdening the applicants, the rules to be applied will be selected to ensure effectiveness in the implementation, the widest possible participation and the maximum simplification for potential applicants.

Any calls for proposals or calls for tenders shall be adequately promoted in the webpage of the programme.