



Applying successfully for LIFE and avoiding common mistakes

Online GR & CY LIFE Info Day, 19 June 2023



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Key Challenges



- There is **significant competition** for LIFE funds
- New **IT environment** and **applications forms**
- Proposals that **fail are either poorly prepared** or simply with limited ambition or risk taking
- But: Key to success is always the same!



Read the relevant information

- LIFE Web site https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/life_en – LIFE project database
- Call document ([Funding & tender opportunities portal](#))
 - Themes and priorities, list of countries, eligibility and admissibility conditions, evaluation criteria and procedure, scoring, etc.
- LIFE Regulation and Multi-annual work-programme
- FAQ under the LIFE CINEA Webpage - Support to Applicants
- Guidelines designed by your **National Contact Point**
- **Portal Online Manual** (for processes)
- **Portal FAQ** (for general questions)



Funding & Tenders Portal



How does Funding & Tenders Portal work?

The screenshot displays the 'Funding & tender opportunities' portal. The top navigation bar includes the European Commission logo, the text 'Funding & tender opportunities Single Electronic Data Interchange Area (SEDIA)', and language options (English) with 'Register' and 'Login' buttons. A secondary navigation bar contains 'SEARCH FUNDING & TENDERS', 'HOW TO PARTICIPATE', 'PROJECTS & RESULTS', 'WORK AS AN EXPERT', and 'SUPPORT'. The main content area features a search bar with 'life' entered, a 'Need help?' button, and a 'Sort by: Submission status' dropdown. A list of funding opportunities is shown, with the first entry circled in red: 'Nature & Biodiversity and Circular Economy & Quality of Life' (LIFE-2023-PLP-NAT-ENV). This entry is for 'LIFE Project Grants' under the 'Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)', with an opening date of 18 April 2023 and a deadline of 07 September 2023. Other entries include 'Technical Assistance - Replication - Nature & Biodiversity and Circular Economy & Quality of Life' and 'Energy Performance of Buildings - Creating the conditions to make renovation faster, deeper, smarter, service- and data-driven'. On the left, filters for 'Submission status' (Open for submission (31)), 'Programming period' (Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)), and 'Filter by call' are visible. The footer contains copyright information for 2018 and links to 'About', 'Free text search', 'IT Helpdesk', 'Cookies', 'Legal Notice', and 'APIs'.



How does Funding & Tenders Portal work?

The screenshot displays the European Commission Funding & Tenders Portal interface. The top navigation bar includes the European Commission logo, the text 'Funding & tender opportunities Single Electronic Data Interchange Area (SEDIA)', and language options (English) with 'Register' and 'Login' buttons. A secondary navigation bar contains menu items: 'SEARCH FUNDING & TENDERS', 'HOW TO PARTICIPATE', 'PROJECTS & RESULTS', 'WORK AS AN EXPERT', and 'SUPPORT', along with a 'Get started' button.

The main content area is divided into several sections:

- General information:** This section provides details about the call. It includes:
 - Programme: **Programme for Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)**
 - Call: **Nature & Biodiversity - Standard Action Projects (SAP) (LIFE-2023-SAP-NAT)** with a 'See budget overview' button.
 - Type of action: **LIFE-PJG LIFE Project Grants**
 - Type of MGA: **LIFE Action Grant Budget-Based [LIFE-AG]** with an 'Open for submission' button.
 - Deadline model: **single-stage**
 - Opening date: **18 April 2023**
 - Deadline date: **06 September 2023 17:00:00 Brussels time**
- Topic description:** This section outlines the objective and scope of the call. The objective is to contribute to European Union objectives for the protection, maintenance and restoration of the Union's natural capital. The scope targets **Standard Action Projects (SAP)** aimed at achieving the objectives of the **LIFE Nature and Biodiversity sub-programme**. A 'show more...' button is present at the bottom of this section.
- Topic conditions and documents:** This section lists the conditions for participation:
 - 1. Admissibility conditions:** described in section 5 of the call document. This line is circled in red.
 - Proposal page limits and layout:** described in Part B of the Application Form available in the Submission System.
 - 2. Eligible countries:** described in section 6 of the call document.A 'show more...' button is also present at the bottom of this section.

The left-hand sidebar contains a menu with the following items: 'General information', 'Topic description' (highlighted with a red circle), 'Conditions and documents', 'Partner search announcements', 'Submission service', 'Topic related FAQ', 'Get support', and 'Call updates'. A 'Go back' button is located at the bottom of the sidebar.

The footer of the page includes the copyright notice '© 2018 European Commission' and links for 'About', 'Free text search', 'IT Helpdesk', 'Cookies', 'Legal Notice', and 'APIs'. The European Commission logo is also present in the bottom right corner.

How does Funding & Tenders Portal work?

The screenshot displays the 'Funding: Submission Service' portal. At the top, the European Commission logo is on the left, and a user profile for 'Theoharis TZIOVARAS' is on the right. A progress bar shows six steps: 'Login' (checked), 'Topic selection' (checked), 'Create proposal' (active), 'Participants', 'Proposal forms', and 'Submit'. The main content area is titled 'Create proposal'. It includes a 'Deadline' section with a warning icon and text: 'Please submit your proposal at the latest 48 hours before the deadline (to avoid system congestion or system incompatibility issues). Late proposals will not be accepted. Don't wait until the end because you are worried about confidentiality – we will not open the proposals before the deadline. You can submit the proposal as many times as you wish up until the deadline. Each new submitted version will replace the previous one.' Below this is a 'Find your organisation' section with two input fields: 'PIC' (with a red circle around it) and 'Short name', both with character counts (9 and 250 respectively) and a 'Search' button. The 'Your role' section has radio buttons for 'Main contact' (selected) and 'Contact person'. The 'Your proposal' section has an 'Acronym' field with a character count of 20. On the left sidebar, there is a 'Download Part B templates' section with a red circle around the 'Download part B templates' button. At the bottom left, there are logos for 'Life' and 'ELMEN'. At the bottom right, there is the European Commission logo.

European Commission | Funding: Submission Service

Welcome Theoharis TZIOVARAS

Login Topic selection **Create proposal** Participants Proposal forms Submit

Create proposal

Deadline
07 September 2023 17:00:00 Brussels Local Time
85 days left until closure

Call data
Call: LIFE-2023-PLP
Topic: LIFE-2023-PLP-NAT-ENV
Type of action: LIFE-PJG
Type of MGA: LIFE-AG

Topic and type of action can only be changed by creating a new proposal.

Download Part B templates
Download part B templates

Support & Helpdesk

Find your organisation
PIC * [9] Short name * [250] Search

Your role
Please indicate your role in this proposal *
 Main contact
 Contact person

Your proposal
It will appear also in the "General Information" section of the Application Form Part A and can also be updated there.
Acronym * [20] Enter value



How does Funding & Tenders Portal work?

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What is the structure of the proposal?

- **Administrative Forms (PART A)** – generated from information you provide in the Portal
 - Includes the abstract (project summary)
- **Technical Description (PART B)** – download, fill in, and upload as PDF (+ annexes)
 - Relevance
 - Impact
 - Implementation
 - Resources
- **Part C – additional project data i.e. Key Performance Indicators** – fill in directly online

Fonts no smaller than Arial 10

Page limit (varies, 120 for SAPs)

Do not remove the instructions!



How does Funding & Tenders Portal work?

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the European Commission Funding & Tenders Portal. The 'SUPPORT' menu is highlighted with a red circle and contains the following items: Support overview, Guidance & Manuals, FAQ, Helpdesk & Support Services, and Support videos. Below the navigation bar, the page is titled 'Helpdesk & Support Services'. On the left, there are filters for 'GRANTS' (checked) and 'TENDERS' (unchecked), a 'Programming period' dropdown set to '2021-2027', and a selected programme 'Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)'. A vertical sidebar on the left lists support services: Support overview, Guidance & Manuals, FAQs, and Helpdesk & Support Services. The main content area features three service cards: 'IT Helpdesk' (answering questions about portal tools and processes), 'Europe Direct' (answering questions about the EU), and 'Research Enquiry Service' (dealing with enquiries about the validation process of legal entities).



Award criteria (SAPs) and proposal design



Standard Action Projects (SAPs)

Award Criteria

There are 4 Award Criteria:

- 1) Relevance
- 2) Impact
- 3) Quality
- 4) Resources

Possible bonus points:

- Synergies between LIFE sub-programmes
- Outermost Regions and areas with specific needs and vulnerabilities
- Up-scaling results of other European Union funded projects
- Exceptional catalytic potential
- Transnational cooperation among Member States

- The award criteria are scored 0-20 and the score of criterion 'Impact' will be given a weight of 1,5.
- Minimum of 10 score needed on each
- The bonuses are based on yes/no criteria. They do not foresee a graduation: either 0 or 2 points are assigned to each proposal



Award criteria

1. Relevance (0-20 points)

- 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.



Award criteria

2. Quality (0-20 points)

- 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.



Award criteria

3. Impact (0-20 points)

- 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.



Award criteria

4. Resources (0-20 points)

- 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 ones) or environmental management systems (e.g. EMAS) would be an asset.
- Value-for-money of the proposed project.



Project Design - I

- **Baseline description should be clear** enough as it is essential for evaluating the potential of the project (AW1)
- The **sequence of actions should be logical** and clearly linked to project description (AW1 - AW2)
- Expected results and quantitative **estimations of projects impacts** (during and after project end) (AW3)



Project Design - II

- **Activities/plans to ensure sustainability** of the project results are absolutely crucial! (AW3)
- **Uptake and Replication** needs to be taken into account and **related project actions** need to be well conceived (AW3)
- Clear **description of beneficiary involved** in specific actions (AW2 - AW4)



Project Design - III

- Limit the number of **actions to the ones essential to achieve the project objectives**
- Coherence in **description and output in Part B and in the Work Packages**
- **Partnership** structure: look for complementarity and avoid redundancy of expertise (key stakeholders should be involved)
- Project duration should take into account:
 - Sufficient time to **gather information** about the impact of project activities
 - Delays in **obtaining permits and authorisations**
 - **Buffer** to allow for unexpected events
- Make sure you meet the **communication requirements**
 - Think about **platform meetings** and **networking events**



Project Design Full Proposal

Good design

Solid analysis of the problem, state of play and solution proposed (baseline)

Key stakeholders involved (incl. users)

Robust assessment of impacts over the life cycle of the solution proposed

Clear strategy on how to sustain and multiply the impacts

Common problems

Insufficient background information (why, who and how)

Rationale for projects is defined during the project

Objectives too broad, too many

Poor partnership (partners don't fit regarding know-how or insufficient budget)

Over-optimistic / unrealistic or lack of quantification of impacts

Replication confused with networking and dissemination

Vague plans to sustain the project/results after project end



A few tips



Build a good consortium

- Be **consistent** – remain relevant to your objective & target group
- **Choose well your partners** – with relevant competences – use Partner search
- **Involve the consortium members** in the preparation – avoid surprises after submission
- **Keep consortium motivated** - agree a working method for the proposal phase, make a plan for their input



How to pass the eligibility check?

Admissibility (section 5 of call document)

- Submitted before deadline & electronically
- Complete & using the forms/templates provided
- Readable (no smaller than Arial 10) printable (A4)
- Maximum 120 pages (including the instructions)

Eligibility (Section 6 of call document)

- Eligible participants
- Eligible activities
- Geographic location



Start early ... start now!

Call opening:
18 April 2023

First submission deadline:
5 September 2023



Final tip!

I'd like to encourage you when completing and submitting your application form to pro-actively give access and request support from your [LIFE National Contact Point](#)



Keep in touch with LIFE



30 years of bringing green ideas to LIFE



https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/life_en



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Thank you

