

Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)

Short general description

The LIFE Programme is the specific financial instrument for the Environment and Climate Action. Launched in 1992, it has financed over 3,950 projects, with a total budget of €7.2 billion for the protection of the environment. The new Programme has a budget of 3,456.7 million (a 43% increase compared to the budget available for the period 2007-2013) 75% of which is for the Environment sub-programme and 25% for the Climate Action sub-programme.

Objectives:

The programme aims to contribute to environmental and climate action in particular by (1) improving the **development, implementation and enforcement** of Union environmental and climate policy and legislation, (2) acting as a **catalyst** for, and promoting, the **integration** and mainstreaming of environmental and climate objectives into other Union policies and public and private sector practice, including by increasing the public and private sector's capacity; and (3) by supporting better environmental and climate **governance** at all levels, including better involvement of civil society, NGOs and local actors. The more specific **project topics** for funding activities and **types of funding instruments** are defined in the **multiannual work programme**. The first one covers the period 2014-2017 and the second the period 2018-2020.

Supported activities:

The programme can finance three types of activities:

- Projects (mainly supported by action grants but also financial instruments). The Regulation foresees various types of projects:
 - *Traditional projects*: these are similar to what is now being financed under LIFE+ which includes best practice, innovation and demonstration projects (these are technology projects in most cases), as well as dissemination/information projects (e.g., information campaigns) and governance projects (aiming at better enforcement, better implementation and so on).
 - *Integrated projects*: This is a new type of project which aims at implementing on a large territorial scale plans and strategies required by EU legislation in the areas of nature, water, waste, air;
 - *Preparatory projects*: projects identified by the Commission to support specific needs for the implementation and development of EU environmental or climate policy and legislation.

- *Capacity building projects*: financial support to the activities required to build the capacity of a selected number of Member States (pre-defined in the Regulation) with a view to enabling their more effective participation in LIFE.
- Operating grants: these support the functioning of NGOs and specific networks such as IMPEL (the network of environmental enforcement authorities).
- Other activities: mainly studies, conferences, service contracts, technical assistance for the monitoring of LIFE, etc.

Eligibility (in the context of the ENP): any private or public body is eligible for LIFE funding. LIFE beneficiaries range from public authorities (at local, regional or national level), to universities, industry associations, NGOs, SMES or even large corporations). However, if the ENP participates under the conditions of Article 6, only legal persons (both public and private) can be beneficiaries.

Modalities of participation:

LIFE used to have a “Third-country” component which was cancelled in 2007 and which made it almost impossible for any cooperation with third countries. The new Regulation opens up for two types of possibilities for participation of third countries.

- Full participation as any other EU Member State (Article 5 conditions)

Participation is in accordance with the conditions laid down in the respective bilateral or multilateral agreements establishing the general principles for those third countries' participation in Union programmes, i.e., a Memorandum of Understanding and an “Entry ticket”. The methodology to calculate the entry ticket is not established in the Regulation as such but the system for the Environment sub-programme is based on national allocations, which are defined according to the following criteria:

- (i) *Population*
 - a. 50% - total population:
 - b. 5% - population density (up to twice the EU's average population density)
- (ii) *Nature and Biodiversity*
 - a. 25% - nature value - the total area of Natura 2000 for the MS, expressed as a proportion of the total area of Natura 2000.
 - b. 20% - nature protection - the proportion of the country's territory covered by Natura 2000

From 2018 onwards, there will be no national allocations for the Environment sub-programme. Conditions for the entry ticket for the Climate Action Sub-programme not defined.

- Participation as Associated Beneficiary (Article 6 conditions)

A legal person based in an ENP country can participate as associate beneficiary in a LIFE project provided the following conditions are met:

- The activity outside the EU is necessary to achieve EU environmental/climate objectives; **and**
- To ensure the effectiveness of interventions carried out in the MS; **and**
- The coordinating beneficiary is based in the EU.

Contact point: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/contact/lifeunit.htm>

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- For Climate Action: Peter Wehrheim (CLIMA A2)

Website: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/index.htm>

Examples of activities where ENP countries can be involved in both cases under the conditions of Article 6 and mainly for traditional and integrated projects:

- Possible opportunities for ENV sub-programme under Article 6
 - *Nature & Biodiversity:* projects dealing with migratory species (e.g. birds, the artic fox), marine issues (Mediterranean, Black Sea), transboundary habitats (pannonian).
 - *Environment:* projects dealing with transboundary pollution aspects (e.g., air, chemicals), transboundary water courses, marine issues not covered by nature and biodiversity, technology projects when the criteria of Article 6 are met
 - *Governance:* projects linked to aspects where transboundary cooperation is needed, including those linked to international conventions or initiatives (e.g., transboundary movements of waste, wildlife and timber trade, or chemicals)
- Possible opportunities for CLIMA sub-programme

- *Climate change adaptation*: transboundary adaptation issues (e.g. linked with floods, mountainous areas, drought-prone areas)
- *Climate change mitigation*: transboundary mitigation efforts (e.g. industrial or agricultural sectors, multi-city or multiregional)
- *Governance*: projects linked to aspects where transboundary cooperation is needed, including those linked to international conventions or initiatives on climate change, such as the Montreal Protocol or the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.