



LIFE operating grants for non profit organisations

Framework Partnership Agreements and Specific Grant
Agreements for funding in 2022, 2023 and 2024



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CINEA

Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency

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Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency

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Operating grants for non profit organisations – why?

“Operating grants shall support the functioning of non-profit making entities which are involved in the development, implementation and enforcement of Union legislation and policy and which are primarily active in the field of environment or climate action, including clean energy transition.”

LIFE Regulation 2021-2027 (Art. 10.5)



Which type of organisation?

- Non-profit entities
- Organisations independent from political parties and commercial interests
- Organisations representing European civil society
- Organisations with a network or structure that allows access to EU institutions
- Entities with an environmental and/or climate mission (including nature/biodiversity and clean energy transition)
- European added value

Tip: read carefully eligibility and award criteria



Twofold role:

1) Bottom-up

- Shaping EU policies:
 - Channelling members' views to the EU
 - Alert policy makers about new issues to be addressed
 - Participate in consultative groups or expert panels
 - Information input to policy formulation



Twofold role:

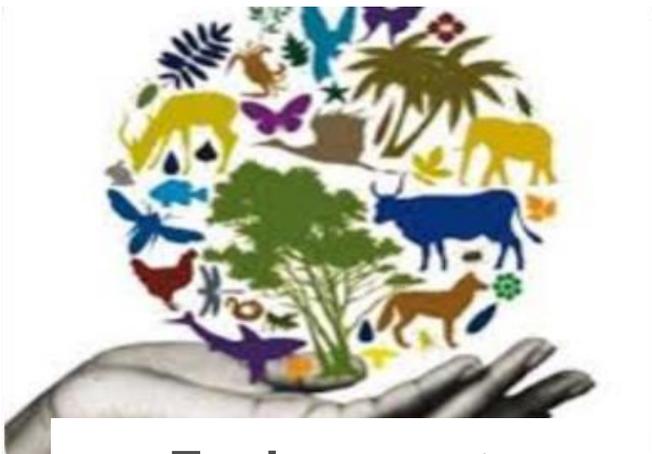
2) Top-down

- Supporting implementation of EU environmental & climate policy, including clean energy transition
 - Campaigns, exchange of best practice, awareness raising and citizen participation
 - Feedback to Commission on problems of implementation
 - Alarms or intervention in case of break of legislation/regulation in the Member States
 - Preparing the ground for policy acceptance



Fields of intervention

Operating grants beneficiaries are active in one or several of the following areas:



Environment

Nature and biodiversity

Circular economy and quality of life



Climate action

Climate change mitigation

Climate change adaptation



Clean energy transition

Renewable energy

Energy efficiency

Two-steps application



*Don't miss the
deadline!*

Calls for proposals opening on **13 July 2021 (tentative)**

1. Framework partnership agreement (FPA)

- Deadline for applications: **28 September 2021 (tentative)**
- Successful applicants will sign a long-term partnership agreement

2. Specific grant agreement (SGA)

- Deadline for applications: **28 September 2021 (tentative)**
- One-year grant agreement
- Only organisations that will sign an FPA will be evaluated for SGA



2021 operating grants Calls - novelties

- Additional thematic priority: clean energy transition
- Framework Partnership Agreements of **three years** instead of two, covering financial years 2022, 2023 and 2024
- FPA and SGA applications in parallel
- Maximum co-funding rate: **70%** of total eligible costs of the beneficiary organisation
- Financial simplification (see following slide)
- The **ceiling** (not possible to request more than the amount requested in previous year) is **lifted**, but the maximum amount per year remains **700 k €**
- New tools for online applications: eSubmission
<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>
- Applicants must register in the [Participant register \(europa.eu\)](#)
- New application forms



Flat-rate funding

- Grant amounts will be calculated using a flat-rate for all beneficiaries: personnel costs + **50%** of personnel costs
- The flat-rate will cover all other costs incurred by the beneficiaries:
 - Travel and subsistence
 - Equipment and depreciation
 - Subcontracting
 - Rental
 - Other direct costs
- This will simplify the application, implementation and reporting processes

- The flat-rate of 50% has been calculated on the basis of the statistical analysis of historical data (operating grants 2014-2019), which shows a strong correlation between the cost category “personnel” and total costs, and a stable proportion of personnel costs of approximately **two thirds** of the total costs over the past six years

66.66% +

33.33% =

99.99%

Good approximation of the total costs



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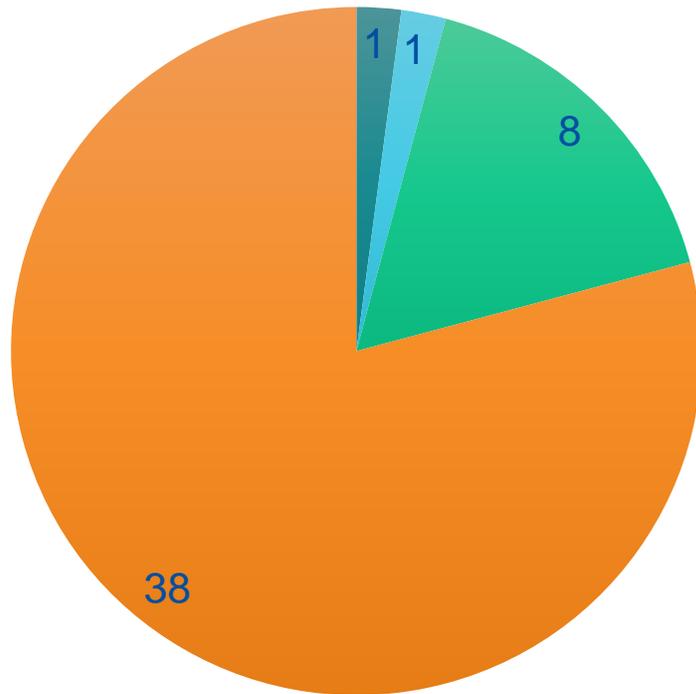
Previous operating grants Call (2019)

- Indicative budget: 24M€ for 2 years
- 48 applications received
- Average shares:
 - Environment policy ~ 61%
 - Climate action policy ~ 39%
- Total requested EU contribution:
~ 29M€
- 38 organisations were selected to be funded in 2020 and 2021
- Average grant: ~632,000€ EU funding for two years (~316,000 € per year)
- Average EU funding: 42% of eligible costs



Previous operating grants Call: evaluation results

FPA 2019 - evaluation results

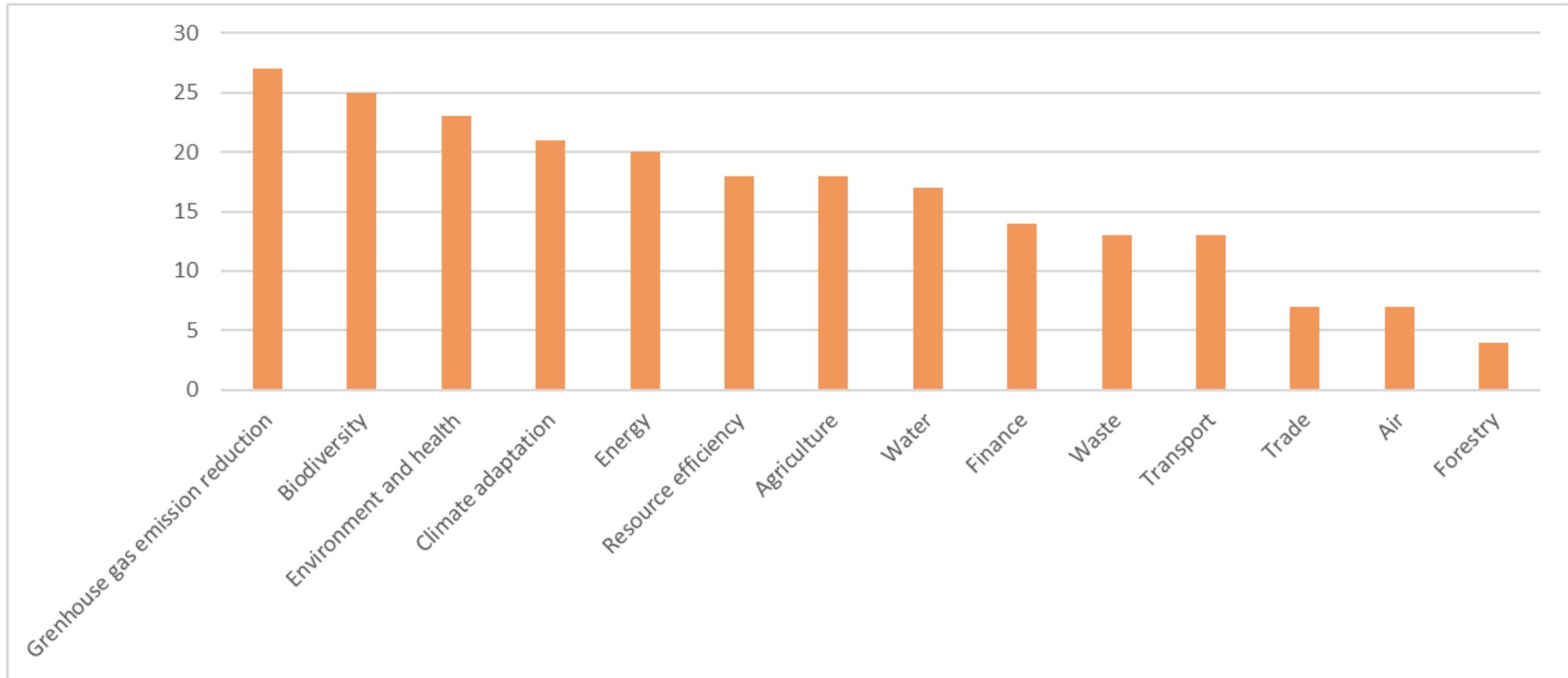


48 applications:

 Ineligible	1
 Failed award	1
 Reserve	8
 Funded	38



2019 selected applicants – thematic priorities



Currently funded organisations (2020-2021)

Agroecology Europe	ClientEarth	Europarc Federation	Institute for European Environmental Policies	Seas at Risk	Wetlands International
BirdLife Europe	Climate Action Network Europe	Eurosite	IFOAM EU Group	Shipbreaking Platform	WWF -European Policy Office
Carbon Disclosure Project Europe	Coalition Clean Baltic	FACE	Justice & Environment	Slow Food	WWF - CEE
Carbon Market Watch	ECOLISE	Fern	Oceana	Surfrider Foundation Europe	Zero Waste Europe
CEE Bankwatch	EAZA	FoEE	MIO-ECSDE	Third Generation Environmentalism	2 Degrees Investing Initiative
CEEweb for biodiversity	European Cyclists' Federation	Health Care Without Harm	Pesticide Action Network Europe	Transport & Environment	
	European Environmental Bureau	Health and Environment Alliance	Safe Food Advocacy		



FPA application

Call for proposals opening on **13 July 2021** – closing on **28 September**
(tentative dates)

- Three-year framework partnership agreement (2022-2024)
 - Focus on three-year strategy, including an outline of activities:
 - already known or based on experience from previous years
 - distinguish between the first, second and third year
 - Financial details will be requested at SGA stage. Total costs and requested EU funding needed for:
 - financial viability
 - budget cut-off
 - in case of proposals with equal score – value for money
 - No revisions for the FPA



SGA application

Call for proposals opening on **13 July 2021** – closing on **28 September**

- Specific grant agreements – call and contract for the first financial year (2022)
- Following years (2023 and 2024): invitation for proposals
- Annual work plan (based on FPA)
- Budget: staff costs + 50% flat rate
- Limited award criteria
- Revision phase (not for all applicants)

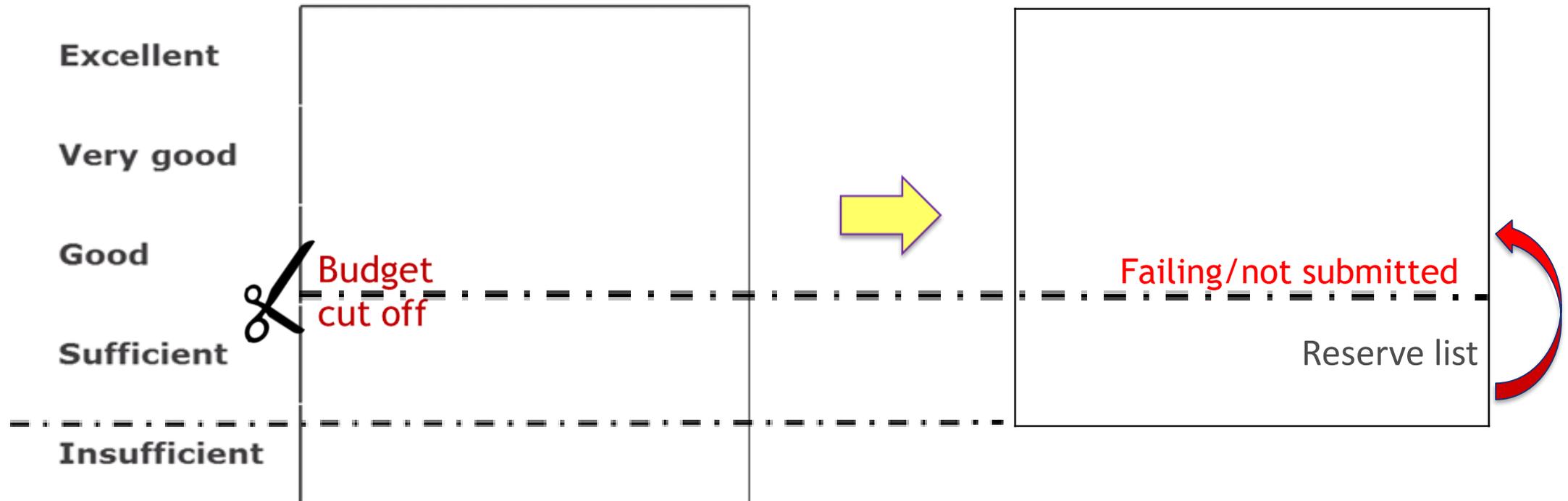


From FPA to SGA

~ 60? - 70? proposals

Framework partnership Agreement Call

Specific grant agreement Call



Calls FPA and SGA – indicative timeline

FPA and SGA Call Publication	13 July 2021
DL for FPA and SGA proposals	28 September 2021
Evaluation	October-December 2021
Notification of proposers	January 2022
FPA signature and SGA revision	January-March 2022
SGA signature	March-April 2022



Calls FPA and SGA - budget

- Indicative budget for this call: 3 x 12.370 million €
- ~ 35 NGOs are funded every year
- Maximum EU funding: **70%** of total eligible costs
- 700.000 € EU funding maximum per grant



Evaluation

- Pre-assessment by external experts (independent evaluators)
- Final assessment by an Evaluation Committee (CINEA, DG Environment, DG Climate Action and DG Energy)
- List of selected organisations established in consensus



Admissibility and exclusion criteria

- A proposal is not accepted if it is late, incomplete, or if the applicant is in an exclusion situation (bankruptcy, fraud, corruption, etc.)
- Most important:
 - Don't miss the deadline
 - Apply for both FPA and SGA
 - Use the application forms
 - The proposal must be complete
 - It must include all annexes detailed in the Calls
- Tip: – read the Calls!



Eligibility criteria - who can apply?

Applicants must be:

- Non-profit legal entities
- Independent from government/authorities, political parties and commercial interests
- Primarily active in field of environment and/or climate action (including clean energy transition) with an environmental/climate objective (proof: statutes)
- Aiming at the public good / sustainable development / implementation and enforcement of EU environmental and/or climate policy and legislation (including clean energy transition)
- Active at EU level with a structure and activities covering at least three EU Member States



Selection criteria

- Operational capacity

Assessment of professional competencies and qualifications based on key staff description (Participant information form) and recent activity report

- Financial capacity

Assessment of the financial viability of the organisation based on auditor's certified accounts and annual statement to demonstrate stable and sufficient sources of co-funding throughout the three years



FPA award criteria

Award criteria	Maximum score	Weighting	Weighted score
1) Relevance	20	1	20
2) EU policy shaping	20	1	20
3) EU policy implementation	20	1	20
4) Sensor function	20	0,25	5
5) Organisational development	20	0,75	15
Maximum total score	100	N/A	80
Overall pass threshold	N/A	N/A	45



Award criterion 1 - Relevance

- Relevance of the contribution to one or several of the specific objectives of the LIFE Programme
- Extent to which the work plan is in line with the relevant policies covered by the call for proposals
- Extent to which the proposal demonstrates EU added value



Award criterion 2 – EU policy shaping

- 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
- Appropriateness of means and structures aimed at voicing the concerns of EU citizens and at ensuring their democratic representation vis-à-vis the relevant institutions



Award criterion 3 – EU policy implementation

- Extent to which the 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 measures to communicate and disseminate in order to create leverage
- Extent to which the strategy helps to secure investment for environment, climate and/or energy policy, addressing environmental externalities



Award criterion 4 – 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



Award criterion 5 – organisational development

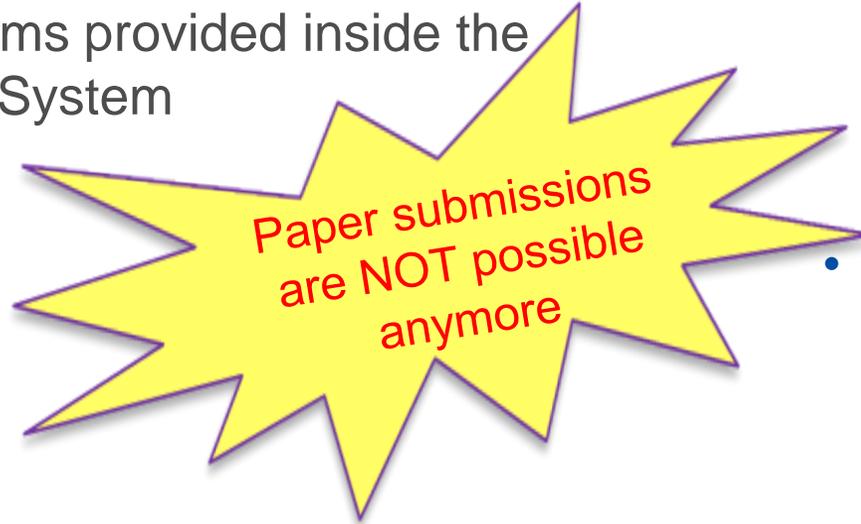
- Quality of the strategy to address the identified organisational development needs and areas for improvement
- Extent to which the applicant represents relevant stakeholders and endeavours to develop its membership (grassroots or members base)
- Extent to which the fundraising strategy of the applicant ensures the diversification and sustainability of the organisation
- Analysis of the applicant's dependence on the LIFE operating grant and strategies addressing this dependence
- Value for money of the proposed work



Preparation of the proposal



- Proposals must be submitted electronically via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System
- Proposals (including annexes and supporting documents) must be submitted using the forms provided inside the Submission System
- Application forms:
 - Application Form **Part A** — contains administrative information about the applicant and the summarised budget for the work plan (to be filled in directly online)
 - Application Form **Part B** — contains the technical description of the work plan (to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed and then re-uploaded)
 - **Part C** (to be filled in directly online) containing additional data on performance



FPA application form - Part B

- Maximum number of pages: 90
- Please use English
- Carefully follow all instructions contained in the template
- Be clear – avoid jargon and acronyms (include a glossary if needed)
- Your project's name and acronym are the name and acronym of your organisation
- Provide proper background and context



FPA Part B (1) Relevance, Impact

- Profile of the organisation: brief description of the nature, structure and activities of the applicant and members
- Mission, vision and objectives
- Contribution to EU policies
- Policy priorities (tick boxes) and % environmental / climate / energy policies
- Problem(s), evidence base
- Target groups
- Outreach
- Expected impact of the organization's activities



FPA Part B (2) Implementation

- Multi-annual action plan
 - List of work packages or chart (graphic presentation)
- Work packages: activities are separated by thematic areas
- Tip: divide activities by year of implementation (2022 / 2023 / 2024)
- WP1 should cover only organisational development.
- WP2 and further WPs should be used for other activities, corresponding to different policy areas. You can create as many work packages as needed by copying the template of WP2.



FPA Part B (3) Timetable, visibility, resources

- Use the second timetable for FPA (projects of more than 2 years)
- Communication, dissemination and visibility of funding
- Resources:
 - Management of the work programme
 - Measures planned to ensure good quality, monitoring, planning and control of WP implementation
 - Budget and financial management
 - Multi-annual budget estimate
 - Risk management



FPA application - Annexes

- Mandatory annexes and supporting documents (to be uploaded):
 - Applicant's activity report of previous year
 - Participant's information (description of main staff)
 - A list of the members of the executive board or administrative / steering body (names and title/function within the applicant organisation)



SGA application forms - Part B (1)

- Maximum number of pages: 45
- Please use English
- Be clear – avoid jargon and acronyms (include a glossary if needed)
- NB: funding for third parties and volunteers costs are not allowed for OGs
- Relevance: contribution to the Framework Partnership
- Implementation: work plan for the year (2022 for the first SGA) list of WPs or graphic presentation
- Work packages
 - WP 1: organisational development
 - WP 2 and following: activities by thematic areas



SGA application forms - Part B (2)

- Communication, dissemination and visibility of funding
- Project management
- Risk management
- Declaration on other EU operating grants (no double funding)
- Timetable: for SGA use the first timetable (projects up to 2 years)
- Resources: estimated budget
 - Personnel costs for work programme activities
 - Flat rate (50%) on staff costs
 - Total
 - Requested EU contribution



CINEA

Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency

Anne Vermaelen

Head of Sector Finance - LIFE Environment



Establishing your project budget (1)

Reference Material

- EU Funding and Tenders Portal :
 - (<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/funding-tenders-opportunities/display/IT/How+to+participate>) incl. Online Manual on submission of a proposal
 - <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/reference-documents;programCode=LIFE2027> – Reference documents LIFE (incl. **grant agreement Operating Grants Flat Rate MGA V1.0, Framework Partnership Agreement FPA v1.0 & call documents**)
 - https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/rules-lev-lear-fca_en.pdf (Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment)
- LIFE Call document
- LIFE Grant Agreement & Annotated Grant Agreement (https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/aga_en.pdf) -> details on the provisions in the grant agreement
- LIFE Regulation and Multi Annual Work Programme



Establishing your Project Budget (2)

- **Part A** – summarised budget table to be filled online (FPA & SGA)
 - Overall budget for the beneficiary per cost category (i.e. personnel & flat rate for all other costs)
- **Annex** - Detailed budget table to be uploaded (SGA)
 - Detailed budget per staff/function
- Be realistic !



Establishing your Project Budget (2) – Part A (FPA)

Multi-annual budget estimate								
<p>Give a rough estimate of your overall costs and income for the duration of the EU framework partnership.</p> <p>Divide your global yearly budget into general costs and costs of specific activities. For the specific activities, distinguish between activities that are eligible under the framework partnership and those that are not.</p> <p>Specify regular income from other sources and estimated income generated by the activities. (No need for a balance of costs and income, since these are only rough estimates as they don't include the beneficiary's own contribution)</p>								
	Costs			Income				EU contribution
Year	Personnel costs for work programme activities	Flat rate on personnel costs (50%)	Total estimated costs	Membership contributions & subscriptions	Financial contributions by third parties (including funding other than EU operating grant)	Income generated by the activities (eligible and non eligible)	Total estimated income	Requested grant amount
YYYY								
YYYY								
YYYY								
YYYY								
YYYY								
Total								



Establishing your Project Budget (2) – Part A (SGA)

Estimated budget – Resources				
	Costs			EU contribution
Year	Personnel costs for work programme activities	Flat rate on personnel costs (50%)	Total	Requested grant amount
YYYY				



Establishing your Project Budget (2) – Annex

Detailed Budget Table

(add here your proposal's acronym)

Summary of staff effort

Please indicate name or function in the work programme and monthly rate. Please indicate the number of person months over the whole duration of the planned work, for each work package, for each person. Please use the same names/functions as in section 2.1 of the application form.

Name and/or function of staff	Monthly rate of staff (EUR)	WP1 Organisational Development	WP2	WP3	WP4	WP5	WP+	Total work months per staff	Total cost per staff
								0,0	€0
								0,0	€0
								0,0	€0
								0,0	€0
								0,0	€0
								0,0	€0
								0,0	€0
								0,0	€0
								0,0	€0
								0,0	€0
								0,0	€0
Total personnel cost per WP		0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	€0

50% flat-rate	€0
Total eligible costs	€0



Establishing your Project Budget (3)

- Check Art. 6 MGA : **Eligible and ineligible costs**
- Only amounts in **EUR**
- Applicants may receive only **one operating grant per financial year** from the budget of the European Union.
- Under no circumstances shall the same costs be financed twice by the Union budget.
- Earliest start of expenditure is 01/01/2022 (it should be the start of the applicant's budgetary year)



Eligible Costs – Art 6 MGA – Actual Costs

- **Actually incurred** during **duration of the project** (Art 4) - except final reporting (Art 21)
- Belong to **budget categories of the call**
- **Directly** related to the action and necessary for the implementation (costs indirectly related via cost drivers are not to be included under the direct actual costs)
- **Identifiable and verifiable**, in the **accounts of the beneficiary**
- Compliant with applicable **national law on taxes, labour and social security**
- **reasonable, justified** and must comply with the principle of **sound financial management**



Eligible Costs – Art 6 MGA – Flat Rate

- Declared under the **correct budget category**
- Costs to which the flat rate is applied need to be eligible
- Related to the **period of the action** (Art 4) except for final reporting (Art 21)



EU Funding of Eligible Costs

- The system will calculate the **theoretical max. amount of EU Funding** that can be requested based on the 70% funding rate
- Each beneficiary will have to **enter manually the EU Funding requested** → can be lower than the maximum in case of funding from other co-financers, income of the project, higher own funding...
- The 'maximum grant amount' is the **maximum grant amount decided by the EU**. It normally corresponds to the requested EU Funding, but may be lower.
- The amount at final payment stage shall not be higher than the amount of EU funding fixed in the Grant agreement.
- 1st pre-financing = 60%, final payment = max 40%



Direct Eligible Costs – A. Personnel

- **A1 Costs for employees or equivalent** limited to salaries, social security contributions, taxes and other costs linked to the remuneration, if they arise from national law or the employment contract (or equivalent appointing act)
- **A2 Natural persons** working under a direct contract other than employment contract & **A3 Seconded persons** by a third party against payment IF
 - a) work under conditions similar to those of an employee (i.e. the way the work is organised, the tasks that are performed and the premises where they are performed)
 - b) result of the work belongs to the beneficiary (unless agreed otherwise)



Direct Eligible Costs – A. Personnel

- **A1 Costs for employees or equivalent** – Calculation is as follows :
 - Daily rate x nr of day equivalents worked on the action (rounded to nearest half)
 - Daily rate = annual salary cost of the person / 215 days
 - Nr of day equivalents to be declared per year **cannot be higher than 215** otherwise the total cost declared will be higher than the actual annual salary cost !
- **A2 & A3 Costs for natural persons/seconded personnel**
 - calculated on the basis of a **rate which corresponds to the costs actually incurred for the direct contract or secondment** and must not be significantly different from those for personnel performing similar tasks under an employment contract with the beneficiary



Ineligible costs

- Costs not complying with the definition of an eligible cost, e.g. :
 - excessive or reckless expenditure
 - deductible or refundable VAT (including VAT paid by public bodies acting as public authority)
 - in-kind contributions by third parties
- Costs or contributions declared under other EU grants (or grants awarded by an EU Member State, non-EU country or other body implementing the EU budget unless exception as stated in the MGA)



NEEMO monitoring team

Follow-up of grant activities by external monitors together with CINEA

NEEMO: consortium that monitors all LIFE beneficiaries - not auditors

Provide advisory service to EC/CINEA

Help beneficiaries/grantees implement their activities



Monitoring by NEEMO TMOs & FMOs



Assessment of
NGOs' annual
reports



Monitoring visits
to selected NGOs



Propose
highlights for LIFE
brochure

Operating grants - monitoring team



NGOs



Ivona MALBASIC
NGO Coordinator



Robert ATKINSON



Georgia VALAORAS



Claudia
PFIRRMANN



Jean-Luc RAMIN



Christy
DUIJVELAAR



Inga RACINSKA



Laurence MENET



Keep in touch with us



https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/life/clean-energy-transition_en/



[@CleanEnergy_EU](#), [@LIFEprogramme](#)



[European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency](#)



[CINEATube](#)



Website & functional mailbox

LIFE website:

<https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/life>

**For any questions please
send an email to:**

CINEA-LIFE-NGO@ec.europa.eu



Thank you



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