

Guidelines for applicants 2018

LIFE Nature and Biodiversity

The current guidelines apply to the preparation of project proposals to be submitted to the Contracting Authority under the LIFE sub-programme for Environment. They are intended to help the applicant prepare the content of the project proposal.

This document only applies to this call for LIFE project proposals ("LIFE 2018"). Furthermore, these guidelines only concern applications for the following types of "traditional" projects in the priority area *Nature and Biodiversity*: "pilot projects", "demonstration projects", and "best practice projects". Separate guidance documents are available on the LIFE web page for other components of the LIFE 2018 call.

The document LIFE Orientation Document (also available on the LIFE web page) provides guidance to applicants on how to identify the most suitable LIFE sub-programme and priority area under which they could submit their proposal. This document also discusses the distinctions between LIFE and other EU direct funding programmes.

The current guidelines are part of the call for proposals application package 2018 which also includes the following documents that should be carefully read before submitting a LIFE proposal:
- Guide for the evaluation of LIFE project proposals
- Model LIFE Grant Agreement with Special and General Conditions

What's new in 2018

1. Two stage procedure for proposal submission

   In order to simplify the process for the submission of LIFE traditional projects, proposal submission procedure will be organised in two stages:

   • Stage 1: Concept note

   • Stage 2: Full proposal

   This two stage approach will first entail submission of an 11 page concept note. Only applicants with the best ranked concept notes will be invited to submit a full proposal.

2. New project topics deriving from second LIFE Multiannual Work Programme covering the period 2018-2020

3. Revised evaluation criteria (see Evaluation Guidelines 2018)

4. No more National allocation mechanism

5. Increased budget earmarking for the priority area of Nature and Biodiversity (from 55 to 60.5%, LIFE Regulation Article 9. Point 4)

6. Change in co-financing rates for Environment and Resource efficiency as well as Environmental Governance and information to 55% of the total eligible project costs (LIFE Regulation Article 20b).

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1. Introduction to LIFE

1.1 What is LIFE?

LIFE is the European Programme for the Environment and Climate Action, for the period from 1 January 2014 until 31 December 2020. The legal basis for LIFE is Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013[1] (hereinafter "the LIFE Regulation").

The LIFE Programme is structured in two sub-programmes: the sub-programme for environment and the sub-programme for climate action.

The **sub-programme for environment** covers three priority areas:

- ***LIFE Environment and Resource Efficiency***
- ***LIFE Nature and Biodiversity***
- ***LIFE Environmental Governance and Information***

The thematic priorities for each priority area are further described in Annex III to the LIFE Regulation.

The **sub-programme for climate action** covers three priority areas:

- ***LIFE Climate Change Mitigation***
- ***LIFE Climate Change Adaptation***
- ***LIFE Climate Governance and Information***

The overall financial envelope for the implementation of the LIFE Programme is EUR 3.457 Billion, 75% of which is allocated to the sub-programme for environment (EUR 2,592,491,250).

According to Article 17(4) of the LIFE Regulation, at least 81% of the total budget shall be allocated to projects supported by way of action grants or, where appropriate, financial instruments. The second LIFE Multiannual Work Programme covering the period 2018-2020 foresees a budget of EUR 1,243.81 Million for the sub-programme for environment[2].

During the period 2014-2020, the Contracting Authority will launch one call for LIFE project proposals per year.

1.2 "Traditional" Projects

Article 2 of the LIFE Regulation defines the various types of projects which may be supported by the LIFE 2014-2020 programme. While some of the project types (eg 'integrated projects'

[1] Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013, published in the Official Journal L 347/185 of 20 December 2013
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:347:0185:0208:EN:PDF

[2] Commission Implementing Decision (2018/210/EU) of 12 February 2018 on the adoption of the LIFE multiannual work programme for 2018-2020, OJ L39 of 13.02.2018, p.11-79;
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1518531793134&uri=CELEX:32018D0210

and 'capacity building projects') are new to LIFE, other project types are similar to those already supported by LIFE+ and previous LIFE programmes.

These "traditional" types of projects are:

- "pilot projects" means projects that apply a technique or method that has not been applied or tested before, or elsewhere, and that offer potential environmental or climate advantages compared to current best practice and that can subsequently be applied on a larger scale to similar situations;
- “demonstration projects” means projects that put into practice, test, evaluate and disseminate actions, methodologies or approaches that are new or unknown in the specific context of the project, such as the geographical, ecological, socio-economic context, and that could be applied elsewhere in similar circumstances;
- “best practice projects” means projects that apply appropriate, cost-effective, state-of-the-art techniques, methods and approaches taking into account the specific context of the project;
- "information, awareness and dissemination projects" means projects aimed at supporting communication, dissemination of information and awareness raising in the fields of the sub-programmes for Environment and Climate Action.

In order for a project to be considered pilot/demonstrative, the overall character of its core actions must be pilot/demonstrative. Although some best practice actions might be included in the project proposal, the overall approach must clearly have a pilot/demonstrative character and this should be justified in detail in the proposal.

The following table shows which type of project may be submitted to which priority area:

Sub-Programme	Priority Area	Types of Traditional Projects Eligible
Environment	Environment and Resource Efficiency	Demonstration and pilot projects
Environment	Nature and Biodiversity	Best practice, demonstration, and pilot projects
Environment	Environmental Governance and Information	Information, awareness and dissemination projects
Climate Action	Climate Change Mitigation	Best practice, demonstration, and pilot projects
Climate Action	Climate Change	Best practice, demonstration, and pilot

	Adaptation	projects
Climate Action	Climate Governance and Information	Information, awareness and dissemination projects

The amount available for co-financing action grants for all types of "traditional" projects under the Environment sub-programme is indicatively set at EUR 217 000 000

Projects financed by the LIFE Programme under one priority area shall avoid undermining environmental or climate objectives in another priority area and, where possible, promote synergies between different objectives as well as the use of green procurement.

1.3 Role of project topics

The LIFE multiannual work programme for 2018-2020 defines project topics implementing the thematic priorities for the sub-programme for environment listed in Annex III to the LIFE Regulation for pilot, demonstration, best practice and information, awareness and dissemination projects ("traditional" projects). They reflect the priorities on which projects should focus during the relevant period. Eligible proposals that reach or pass the minimum pass scores (see section 5.1.1 of the LIFE multiannual work programme for 2018-2020) and target a relevant project topic will be given priority over projects of comparable quality that do not fall under one of the project topics. See also the *Guide for the evaluation of LIFE project proposals 2018* for further details on scoring of proposals.

1.4 How, where and when to submit a proposal?

Project submission procedure will be organised in two stages:

- Stage 1: Concept note
- Stage 2: Full proposal

Stage 1: Concept Note

Concept notes should be submitted through the online tool eProposal, available via the LIFE web page. The application tool contains all administrative (A), technical (B) and financial (F) forms required to submit a Concept Note.

For complete details regarding the application forms relevant at Stage 1, please refer to section 3 of this document. For complete details regarding the use of the eProposal tool, please refer to Annex 3 of this document.

Applicants must submit their concept notes to the Contracting Authority via eProposal before **14/06/2018, 16:00 Brussels local time.**

The concept note can be modified, validated and (re)submitted as many times as needed until 14/06/2018, 16:00 Brussels local time. You are recommended to submit your draft(s) regularly during the entire submission period to avoid last minutes issues with your internet connection of other IT related failures. Each subsequent submission overwrites the previously submitted version (earlier versions are not archived and are therefore not available anymore).

Stage 2: Full proposal

The applicants with the best ranked concept notes will be invited (in 10/2018) to submit a full proposal using the web tool eProposal available via the LIFE web page.

The application tool contains all administrative (A), technical (B and C) and financial (F) forms required, and functionalities to attach relevant documents (maps, photos, diagrams, graphs, mandatory administrative and financial annexes). For complete details regarding the application forms, please refer to section 3 of this document. For complete details regarding the use of the eProposal tool, please refer to Annex 3 of this document.

Applicants invited to submit their full proposals to the Contracting Authority via eProposal will have to do it by January (submission deadline will be confirmed with Stage 2 invitation letter)**.**

The proposal can be modified, validated and (re)submitted as many times as needed until the Stage 2 submission deadline. You are recommended to submit your draft(s) regularly during the entire submission period to avoid last minutes issues with your internet connection of other IT related failures. Each subsequent submission overwrites the previously submitted version (earlier versions are not archived and are therefore not available anymore).

For the proposals covered by these guidelines the Contracting Authority is the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME).

When preparing the proposal, the applicants may wish to consult the relevant LIFE National Contact Point; the complete list of the names and contact addresses of the national/regional authorities for LIFE in the Member States can be found on the LIFE website at

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/contact/nationalcontact/index.htm

1.5 How will LIFE projects be selected?

The technical methodology for the project selection procedure and the selection and award criteria are described in section 5 of the LIFE multiannual work programme for 2018-2020. For a detailed description of how this procedure will be implemented, please refer to the *'Guide for the evaluation of LIFE project proposals 2018'*.

Very important: Please note that the e-mail address specified by the applicant as the contact person's e-mail address in form A2 will be used by the Contracting Authority as the single contact point for all correspondence with the applicant during the evaluation procedure. It should therefore correspond to an e-mail account which is valid, active and checked on a daily basis throughout the duration of the evaluation procedure.

The individual grant agreements are expected to be signed by the Contracting Authority starting from **July 2019** (for an indicative timetable, see **Annex 1**).

The earliest possible starting date for projects is **15 July 2019.**

1.6 General Guidance to Applicants

The current chapter replies to some frequently asked questions on how to conceive a LIFE project proposal. For specific guidelines, see section 2; for recommendation on how to fill in the technical and financial forms, please refer to section 3 of this document.

1.6.1 In which language may the concept note/full proposal be submitted?

The concept note must be submitted in English.

As for the full proposal, the Contracting Authority strongly recommends that applicants fill in the technical part and especially the financial part of the proposal in clear English only, although they may also be submitted in any of the official EU languages, except Irish or Maltese.

Note that the grant agreement, project management, formal reporting, key deliverables and all communication with the Contracting Authority will have to be in English.

The title of the proposal and form B1 ("Summary description of the project") must always be submitted in clear English. Form B1 may **in addition** also be submitted in the language of the proposal.

1.6.2 Who may submit a proposal?

A proposal may be submitted by any legal person registered in the European Union.

Entities participating in the proposal may fall into three types of beneficiaries: (1) *public bodies*, (2) *private commercial organisations* and (3) *private non-commercial organisations* (including NGOs).

The term "public bodies" is defined as referring to national public authorities, regardless of their form of organisation – central, regional or local structure – or the various bodies under their control, provided these operate on behalf of and under the responsibility of the national public authority concerned. In the case of entities registered as private law bodies wishing to be considered for the purpose of this call as equivalent to "public law bodies", they should provide evidence proving that they comply with all criteria applicable to bodies governed by public law and in the event the organisation stops its activities, its rights and obligations, liability and debts will be transferred to a public body. For a complete definition, please refer to the annex "Public body declaration", which must be completed by all beneficiaries which

wish to be considered and treated as a 'public body'. The only exception concerns those central (e.g.: Ministry) and local administrations (e.g.: Provinces, Municipalities, Regions etc.) whose nature of 'public body' is clear.

Please note that so called 'Sole traders' (i.e. entities owned and run by one individual and where there is no legal distinction between the owner and the business) are considered natural persons and are therefore not eligible to participate as beneficiary or affiliate in this call.

Please refer to the *'Guide for the evaluation of LIFE project proposals 2018 of Environment Sub-programme'* for full details regarding the compulsory administrative documents which are required with the proposal depending on the legal status of the coordinating beneficiary.

Once a proposal has been accepted for co-funding, the applicant will become the **coordinating beneficiary** who is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the project. The coordinating beneficiary will be the single point of contact for the Contracting Authority and will be the only beneficiary to report directly to the Contracting Authority on the project's technical and financial progress.

The coordinating beneficiary receives the EU financial contribution from the Contracting Authority and ensures its distribution as specified in the partnership agreements established with the associated beneficiaries (if there are any – see below). The coordinating beneficiary must be directly involved in the technical implementation of the project and in the dissemination of the project results.

The coordinating beneficiary must bear part of the project costs and must thus contribute financially to the project budget. It cannot therefore be reimbursed for 100% of the costs that it incurs.

The coordinating beneficiary must show its legal status (by completing application form A2) confirming legal registration in the EU.

In addition to the coordinating beneficiary, a LIFE proposal may also involve one or more associated beneficiaries and/or one or more project co-financiers.

The associated beneficiary must always contribute technically and financially to the proposal and hence be responsible for the implementation of one or several project actions. Furthermore, it must provide the coordinator beneficiary with all the necessary documents required for the fulfilment of its reporting obligations to the Contracting Authority.

There is no pre-defined number of associated beneficiaries to be involved in a LIFE proposal. A proposal that is submitted without any participant other than the coordinating beneficiary itself is eligible. On the other hand, a beneficiary should not hesitate to associate other beneficiaries, if this would bring an added value to the project, such as when the partnership strengthens the feasibility or the demonstration character of the proposal, its European added value, its impact and/or the transfer of its results and lessons learnt.

Public undertakings whose capital is publicly owned and which are considered an instrument or a technical service of a public administration, and which are subject to the public administration's control, but are in effect separate legal entities, must become beneficiaries if

a public administration intends to entrust the implementation of certain project actions to these undertakings[3].

Exceptionally an associated beneficiary may be legally registered outside the European Union if the actions outside the EU it is responsible for are (the coordinating beneficiary of the project in any case be based in the EU) necessary to achieve EU environmental objectives and to ensure the effectiveness of interventions carried out in the Member State territories to which the Treaties apply. In other words, the participation of an entity established outside the EU that will only contribute with the know-how or will collaborate to implement actions in the EU will not be considered as sufficient.

All associated beneficiaries must show their legal status (by completing application form A5), and provide full information on the Member State or third country in which they are registered. In addition all beneficiaries whether registered or not in the EU must declare that they are not in any of the situations foreseen under Article 106(1) and 107 of the EU Financial Regulation[4] (by signing the application form A3 or A4 – see instructions in section 3 of this document).

For private beneficiaries, the Contracting Authority may accept that **affiliated entities to a beneficiary** participate in a project as long as all conditions listed in the Model Grant Agreement and its Annex X (Financial and Administrative Guidelines) are fulfilled. However, the association of entities as affiliates may complicate the project structure and thus have a negative impact on the technical and financial coherence of the project. It is therefore entirely in the Contracting Authority's administrative discretion to accept affiliates, and in no case will affiliated entities be accepted for public beneficiaries or entities that do not comply with the description of affiliated entities hereafter.

Affiliated entities need to comply with the eligibility and non-exclusion criteria applying to applicants and should have a structural link with the beneficiary concerned (i.e. a legal or capital link) that is neither limited to the project nor established for the sole purpose of the project implementation (so the link would exist independently of the award of the grant; it should exist before the call for proposals and remain valid after the end of the project).

As affiliated entities could be accepted those directly controlled by the beneficiary (i.e. daughter companies or first-tier subsidiaries), entities controlling the beneficiary (mother company) OR in case of Memberships, the beneficiary has to be legally defined as a network, federation, association in which the proposed affiliated entities participate. However, if several beneficiaries want to work with the same 'affiliate', the 'affiliate' should be proposed as 'beneficiary' instead.

A **project co-financier** only contributes to the project with financial resources, has no technical responsibilities, and cannot benefit from the EU financial contribution. Furthermore, it cannot act, in the context of the project, as a sub-contractor to any of the project's beneficiaries.

[3] This is the case for example in Spain for "empresas públicas" such as TRAGSA, or EGMASA and in Greece for regional development agencies

[4] Regulation (EU, EURATOM) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002, OJ L 298 of 26/10/2012, p.1.

For specific tasks of a fixed duration, a proposal may foresee the use of **sub-contractors**. Sub-contractors provide external services to the project beneficiaries who fully pay for the services provided. Beneficiaries (including their affiliated entities) may not act as sub-contractors. Sub-contractors should normally not be identified by name in the proposal; if they are, the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement must still be respected.

For a more detailed description of the respective rules related to the coordinating beneficiary, associated beneficiaries, affiliates, co-financiers and sub-contractors, please refer to the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement.

1.6.3 What is the optimal budget for a LIFE project?

There is no fixed minimum size for project budgets. While large ambitious projects (i.e. over 5,000,000 Euro total costs) have been financed several times in the past, small projects (i.e. below 500,000 Euro total costs) have seldom succeeded due to the limited output and consequently the low added value.

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1.6.4 What is the maximum rate of EU co-financing under LIFE?

For the duration of the second LIFE multiannual work programme for 2018-2020, the maximum EU co-financing rate for "traditional" LIFE projects is 55% of the total eligible project costs. An exception is made for "traditional" LIFE projects in the priority area Nature and Biodiversity under the sub-programme Environment for which the EU co-funding rate can go up to 60%, or 75% in specific cases.[5]

The payment schedule foreseen is the following:

	1st pre-financing (might be subject to the receipt of a financial guarantee)	Further pre-financing(s)	Final payment
No Mid-term report	70%	0%	max. 30%
1 Mid-term report	30%	40%	max. 30%
2 Mid-term reports	30%	20%	max. 30%

1.6.5 How much should project beneficiaries contribute to the project budget?

The coordinating beneficiary and any associated beneficiaries are expected to provide a reasonable financial contribution to the project budget. A beneficiary's financial contribution is considered as a proof of its commitment to the implementation of the project objectives – a very low financial contribution may therefore be considered as an absence or lack of commitment.

A proposal cannot be submitted if the financial contribution of any of the beneficiaries to the proposal budget is EUR 0.

[5] This higher co-financing rate of 75% will only be applied to projects allocating 50% or more of the total estimated cost for concrete conservation actions to activities directly benefitting **priority** habitats or species of the Birds and Habitats Directives, when actions in the project are necessary to achieve the conservation objective.

Moreover, where public bodies are involved as coordinating and/or associated beneficiaries in a project, the sum of their financial contributions to the project budget must exceed (by at least 2%) the sum of the salary costs charged to the project for personnel who are not considered 'additional'. For details, please refer to section 3.4 of this document.

1.6.6 What is the optimal starting date and duration for a project?

When preparing the project's time planning, beneficiaries should be aware that the expected date of the signature of the grant agreements for the LIFE 2018 projects will be June-July 2019. The earliest possible starting date for these projects is **15 July 2019.** Any costs incurred before the project's starting date will not be considered eligible and cannot be included in the project budget. There is no pre-determined project duration for a LIFE project. Generally speaking, the project duration must correspond to what is necessary to complete all of the project's actions and to reach all its objectives. On average projects last for 3–5 years.

Only under exceptional circumstances, the Contracting Authority may decide to grant an extension of the project duration. The experience of the previous LIFE Programmes has shown that many projects had difficulties completing all actions within the proposed project duration, mostly due to unforeseen delays and difficulties encountered during the project. Beneficiaries are therefore strongly advised to build an appropriate safety margin (e.g. 6 months) into the timetable of their proposal.

Beneficiaries should also be aware that a project that has completed all of its actions prior to the expected end date can submit its final report ahead of schedule and receive its final payment before the official project end date mentioned in the grant agreement.

1.6.7 Where can a LIFE project take place?

LIFE projects shall take place in the territory of the European Union Member States. The LIFE Programme may also finance activities outside the EU and in overseas countries and territories (OCTs), provided that the coordinating beneficiary is based in the EU and strong evidence is provided that the activities to be carried out outside the EU are necessary to achieve EU environmental objectives and to ensure the effectiveness of interventions carried out in the Member State territories to which the Treaties apply (e.g. actions aimed at the conservation of migratory birds in wintering areas or actions implemented on a trans boundary river). Please note that this is clearly an exception as normally actions should be carried out in the EU. However, when the problem at stake cannot be addressed successfully or efficiently unless actions are carried out also in non-EU countries, this will be possible. Qualitative and quantitative evidence to justify the need for those actions outside the EU must be given in the description of each of these actions in the relevant forms.

The eligibility criteria formulated in European Commission notice Nr.2013/C-205/05 (OJEU C-205 of 19/07/2013, pp. 9-11), concerning the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards, shall apply for all actions under this call for proposals, including with respect to third parties referred to in Article 137 of the EU's Financial Regulation.

1.6.8 Who should manage a LIFE project?

It is expected that the project management is carried out by the staff of the coordinating beneficiary. However, on the basis of an appropriate justification it may be carried out by an associated beneficiary or by sub-contractor under the coordinating beneficiary's direct control. It is also strongly advised that each project has a full-time project manager.

The proposal should clearly describe who will be in charge of the project management, how much personnel and time will be devoted to this task and how and by whom decisions on the project will be made during the project period (i.e. how and by whom the project management will be controlled).

1.6.9 Outsourcing of project activities

The beneficiaries should have the technical and financial capacity and competency to carry out the proposed project activities. It is therefore expected that the share of the project budget allocated to external assistance should remain below 35%. Higher shares may only be accepted if an adequate justification for this is provided in the project proposal.

The General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement must be respected for any external assistance.

In line with Article 19 of the Regulation, beneficiaries (public and private) are strongly advised to use "green" procurement. The European Commission has established a toolkit for this purpose. More information can be found at http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/toolkit_en.htm

1.6.10 Under which conditions does LIFE favour transnational projects?

The LIFE Regulation indicates that, while selecting the projects to be co-funded, the Contracting Authority shall have special regard to transnational projects, when transnational cooperation is essential to guarantee environmental or nature protection. On the basis of award criterion 6, additional points will be given to a proposal if there is sufficient evidence for an added value of the transnational approach. If such evidence can be provided, the proposal will be considered for a higher scoring in the project selection process and will therefore have a higher chance of being selected for co-funding.

N.B. The meaning of "transnational" as foreseen in the LIFE Regulation only covers cooperation among Member States as well as cooperation among Member States and third countries participating in the LIFE Programme under article 5 of the LIFE Regulation. Activities outside the Union or in overseas countries and territories, while possible as foreseen under article 6 of the LIFE Regulation, will not entail additional points under award criterion 6.

1.6.11 How voluminous should a LIFE proposal be?

A proposal should be as concise and clear as possible. Applicants should avoid voluminous proposals and should not provide excessively detailed descriptions of project areas, environmental technologies, lists of species, etc.

Clear and detailed descriptions should, however, be provided for all project actions. Maps should be annexed wherever this would be useful to clarify the location of the proposed actions (note that they are obligatory in some cases).

Brochures, CVs and similar documents should not be submitted and will be ignored if provided.

1.6.12 Ongoing activities

Actions already ongoing before the start of the project are not eligible.

Where actions to be undertaken in the project are significantly different from previous or ongoing activities in terms of frequency or intensity they are not considered ongoing. The applicant must provide adequate information in the proposal that allows to assess this aspect.

Exceptionally, in case of actions that were undertaken and completed in the past and that are proposed to be repeated at a similar frequency or intensity during the project, the applicant must provide evidence that such actions would not have been carried out in the absence of the LIFE project.

1.6.13 Sustainability of the project and its actions

LIFE projects represent a considerable investment, and the European Union attaches great importance to the long term sustainability of these investments. The sustainability of the project results in the medium and long term is understood as the capacity to maintain them after project implementation, be it by continuation, by replication or by transfer. It is obligatory that throughout the duration of the project, the beneficiaries consider how these investments will be secured, maintained, developed and made use of or replicated/transferred during or after the end of the project. Successful continuation, replication and/or transfer require a strategy including tasks to multiply the impacts of the projects' solutions and mobilise a wider uptake, reaching a critical mass during the project and/or in a short and medium term perspective after the end of the LIFE project. This goes beyond transfer of knowledge and networking, and involves putting the solutions developed and/or applied in the project into practice beyond the project period, elsewhere or for a different purpose.

1.6.14 Research activities and large infrastructure

Whereas EU funding for research activities is provided under Horizon 2020 – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014–2020)[6], limited research aimed to improve and enhance the knowledge data underpinning the project may be carried out within a LIFE project. Research must be strictly limited and intrinsically related to the project's objectives and the applicant shall explain in detail how the proper implementation of the project relies on these research activities, showing that the existing scientific basis is insufficient, and how the additional knowledge will be used to implement the project actions. In such a case, scientific publications are considered important deliverables of the project.

Projects dedicated to the construction of large infrastructure do not fall within the scope of the LIFE Programme and are therefore not eligible. A project is considered to be dedicated to the construction of large infrastructure if the actual cost[7] of a "single item of infrastructure" exceeds € 500,000. A "single item of infrastructure" means all elements as described in form F4a that are physically bound to ensure the functionality of the infrastructural investment

[6] Regulation (EU) No 1290/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 laying down the rules for participation and dissemination in "Horizon 2020 - the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020)" and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1906/2006 (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 81).

[7] Actual cost: Full cost of the infrastructure without applying any depreciation.

(e.g. for an eco-duct the bridge, barriers, signposting, etc.). Such amount may be exceptionally exceeded if full technical justification is provided in the proposal demonstrating the necessity of the infrastructure for ensuring an effective contribution to the objectives of Articles 10, 11 or 12 of the LIFE Regulation.

1.6.15 Complementarity with other EU funding programmes

According to Article 8 of the LIFE Regulation, activities supported from the LIFE Programme must ensure consistency and synergies, and avoid overlap with other funding programmes of the Union. In particular, the Contracting Authority and the Member States must ensure coordination with the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and Horizon 2020.

It is thus essential that, prior to submitting their proposal to the Contracting Authority, beneficiaries check thoroughly whether the actions proposed under their project **in practice could be, or are, funded** through other EU funds.

The beneficiaries must inform the Contracting Authority about any related funding they have received from the EU budget, as well as any related ongoing applications for funding from the EU budget. The beneficiaries must also check that they are not receiving on-going operating grants from LIFE (or other EU programmes) that could lead to double financing.

Failure to signal this in the appropriate form A7 might lead to rejection of the proposal.

Please note that this is an area of growing concern, evidence shows that an increasing number of similar or same proposals are submitted to various programmes. Increasingly severe checks and cross-checks are carried out by the contracting authorities. Failure to declare that the same or a similar proposal has been submitted to another programme (or worst, already even partly financed) may have serious consequences.

In addition, at the project revision stage, the national authority may also be required to indicate the steps taken to ensure the coordination and complementarity of LIFE funding with other EU funding programmes.

On the contrary, projects that show synergies with EU policies different than those covered by the LIFE programme and with other EU funding mechanisms, will receive bonus points in the evaluation phase (Award criterion 6) depending on the extent and quality of such synergies. An example of such synergies could be a project aimed at improving waste management that simultaneously increases social integration.

1.6.16 Proposals following or based on previous LIFE projects

If the applicant is proposing a continuation of a previous LIFE project, he should clearly describe in form A7 why a further project phase is needed and how this will complement the results achieved with the previous project. The applicant should also explain when discussing sustainability (form B6), how a further continuation would be ensured with resources other than the LIFE programme. Last, but not least, in the description of every key action (C-forms) the applicant should provide precise information on how this action builds upon and complements the similar action carried out in the previous project phase.

Applicants should also show that they have taken into consideration other LIFE projects financed that addressed a similar issue. They will need to explain how their proposal builds upon or differs from the others and how it will coordinate with them if those projects are still on-going.

During the evaluation process these aspects will be carefully checked. Failure to provide full details on these aspects will have a negative impact on the final score.

1.6.17 Quantification of environmental benefits

The improved performances/advantages introduced by the proposed solution must be quantified in terms of the expected environmental benefits. They must be concrete, realistic and quantified as far as possible and must be presented in a life-cycle reasoning where relevant. This must be done by clearly comparing them to the state-of-play estimated or measured at the outset of the project. In this regard as far as the full proposal is concerned, consistency shall be ensured between environmental benefits described in the relevant forms and values reported in the table on LIFE Key project level indicators .

1.6.18 Coordination requirements for multiple proposals aimed at the same/similar issue

Evidence shows that an increasing number of proposals aimed at the same or at a similar issue are submitted, often in the same Member State without a clear rational and coordination mechanism. This happens more frequently in the Nature and Biodiversity priority area.

To avoid such situations applicants are strongly encouraged to consult with National Contact Points (http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/contact/nationalcontact/) to check whether the topic they are addressing is being addressed also by other applicants. If this is the case, applicants are encouraged to seek cooperation to avoid possible overlaps and increase synergies.

1.7 Personal Data Protection Clause

The personal data supplied with your proposal, notably the name, address and other contact information of the beneficiaries and co-financiers, will be placed in a database named ESAP that will be made available to the EU Institutions and agencies, as well as to a team of external evaluators who are bound by a confidentiality agreement. ESAP is used exclusively to manage the evaluation of LIFE proposals.

The same personal data of successful projects will be transferred to another database called BUTLER, which will be made available to the EU Institutions and agencies and to an external monitoring team who are bound by a confidentiality agreement. BUTLER is used exclusively to manage LIFE projects.

A summary of each project, including the name and contact information of the coordinating beneficiary, will be placed on the LIFE website and made available to the general public. At a certain point the coordinating beneficiary will be invited to check the accuracy of this summary.

The list of successful beneficiaries and the relative amounts awarded to the projects selected will also be published in a public database called the Financial Transparency System[8].

The Contracting Authority, or its contractors, may also use the personal data of unsuccessful applicants for follow up actions in connection with future applications.

Throughout this process, Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data will be respected by the Contracting Authority and its sub-contractors. You will notably have the right to access data concerning you in our possession and to request corrections.

Submission of a proposal implies that you accept that the personal data contained in your proposal is made available as described above. It will not be used in any other way or for any other purposes than those described above.

[8] Financial Transparency System (FTS) - European Commission

2. LIFE Nature and Biodiversity

2.1 What is LIFE Nature and Biodiversity?

LIFE Nature & Biodiversity aims specifically at contributing to the development and implementation of EU policy and legislation in the area of nature and biodiversity. Projects financed must have a European added value and be complementary to those actions that can be financed under other EU funds during the period 2014–2020.

The priority area ***LIFE Nature & Biodiversity*** focuses on:

- contributing to the development and implementation of EU policy and legislation in the area of nature and biodiversity, in the Union Biodiversity Strategy to 2020[9], and the Birds and Habitats Directives[10];
- supporting the further development, implementation and management of the *Natura 2000* network; and
- improving the knowledge base for the development, implementation, assessment, monitoring and evaluation of EU nature and biodiversity policy and legislation, and for assessing and monitoring factors, pressures and responses that impact on nature and biodiversity.

There are two distinct sectors of projects which are intended to complement each other: ***LIFE Nature*** projects and ***LIFE Biodiversity*** projects. **A proposed project submitted under the priority area *LIFE Nature & Biodiversity* must either be a *LIFE Nature* or a *LIFE Biodiversity* project.**

Annex III of the LIFE Regulation describes the thematic priorities for each of these two sectors as follows:

Thematic priorities for LIFE Nature projects: activities for the **implementation of the Birds and/or Habitats Directives** in particular:

(i) Activities aimed at improving the conservation status of habitats and species, including marine habitat and species, and bird species, of Union interest;

(ii) Activities in support of the *Natura 2000* network bio-geographical seminars;

(iii) Integrated approaches for the implementation of prioritised action frameworks.

Thematic priorities for LIFE Biodiversity projects: activities for the **implementation of the Union Biodiversity Strategy to 2020,** in particular:

(i) Activities aimed at contributing to the achievement of Target 2[11];

(ii) Activities aimed at contributing to the achievement of Targets 3[12], 4[13] and 5[14].

[9] COM (2011) 244 Final – Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/2020.htm

[10] Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the conservation of wild birds http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:020:0007:0025:EN:PDF
Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/habitatsdirective/index_en.htm,

[11] Target 2: Maintain and restore ecosystems and their services

Thus *LIFE Nature* relates specifically to the objectives of the Birds and Habitats Directives, while *LIFE Biodiversity* is not restricted to the objectives of the Birds and Habitats Directives, but supports the broader implementation of the Union Biodiversity Strategy to 2020. A nature conservation project that targets **exclusively** species/habitats of the Birds / Habitats Directives should normally be submitted as a *LIFE Nature* project. Other projects are more likely to fit better within the requirements of *LIFE Biodiversity (N.B. Proposals submitted under NAT or BIO will be evaluated accordingly, no reclassification will be possible).*

Notwithstanding the above, it should be noted that the *Natura 2000* network of protected areas is still the EU's main contribution in our fight against the loss of biodiversity. Within the classic *LIFE Nature* projects most of the targets listed in the Union Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 may be effectively addressed in the context of the *Natura 2000* network: e.g. control of invasive alien species may be addressed through control and eradication in and around *Natura 2000* sites, developing green infrastructure through the connectivity dimension of the network and maintaining or enhancing ecosystem services (like flood protection, improving water quality etc.) through nature conservation activities resulting in the preservation or enhancement of these functions for a site or for the whole network in a region.

LIFE Biodiversity addresses targets 2 to 5 of the Union Biodiversity Strategy to 2020. The most appropriate *LIFE Biodiversity* projects use innovation, or explore sectors and processes that have not been the target of classic *LIFE Nature* projects. This does not exclude projects that are based on best practice approaches, but applicants should carefully read the project topics for *LIFE Biodiversity* to understand for which themes best practice might be considered a priority.

LIFE Nature and *LIFE Biodiversity* projects should be primarily focussed on nature conservation and/or on halting the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services. A project that may have a positive but *secondary* impact on nature and biodiversity and whose main objective is in relation to another environmental thematic priority (e.g. water) should not be submitted under *LIFE Nature and Biodiversity.* Please refer to the documents '*LIFE Environment and Resource Efficiency, Guidelines for applicants 2018*' and '*LIFE Orientation Document*'. A project on nature conservation and/or on halting the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services that essentially consists of targeting awareness raising campaigns should be submitted under *LIFE Environmental Governance and Information*.

Only **wild** flora and fauna and natural and semi-natural habitats may be targeted by *LIFE Nature & Biodiversity* projects. Projects, or actions within projects that target the conservation of domestic species or varieties of plants or animals are **not eligible**.

While the largest part of *Natura 2000* is composed by areas where human activities have heavily shaped nature and landscape, there are still some significant examples of wilderness or close to wilderness areas. The Commission published the Guidelines for management of wilderness in *Natura 2000*[15] showing that a special attention should be dedicated to these

[12] Target 3: Increase the contribution of agriculture and forestry to biodiversity
[13] Target 4: Ensure the sustainable use of fisheries resources
[14] Target 5: Combat Invasive Alien Species
[15] http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/wilderness/pdf/WildernessGuidelines.pdf

precious areas. In the European context, and the *Natura 2000* network in particular, it is important to notice that there is a spectrum of more or less wild areas according to the intensity of human intervention. In that sense, wilderness is a relative concept which can be measured along a 'continuum', with wilderness at one end and marginal used land at the other. Re-wilding is a process to move areas up towards a wilder state, where the final stage is wilderness. This process is based on using natural processes for establishing sustainable and cost-effective management systems of *Natura 2000* sites as a way to avoid recurring management activities. Applicants may consider this approach whenever the conditions would indicate this could be the most cost-effective approach to ensure the favourable conservation status of habitats and species. This would clearly not be a substitute to best practices currently used, but could be tested as a complementary way of biodiversity conservation for species and habitats identified in the Habitats and Birds Directives. Where relevant, applicants are invited to consider the guidelines mentioned above when preparing their proposals.

The Contracting Authority welcomes projects submitted by business stakeholders or in which business stakeholders are involved, aimed at integrating biodiversity concerns into their planning and functioning, in line with the requirements of *LIFE Nature and Biodiversity*.

2.2 LIFE Nature

2.2.1 General scope and objectives

LIFE Nature projects aim to support the further development, implementation and management of the *Natura 2000* network in particular by applying, developing, testing and demonstrating approaches, best practices and solutions.

Projects should be designed to provide EU added value in terms of coverage, conservation benefit, replicability, transferability and transnational scope.

With an area that is currently covering almost 18% of the terrestrial surface of the EU Member States, plus over 217,000 square kilometres of marine area, *Natura 2000* is the central backbone for biodiversity in the European Union. However, even within the *Natura 2000* network, a substantial part of flora, fauna and natural habitat types of Union interest, as defined by the EU Birds and Habitats Directives, is still in an unfavourable conservation status. *Natura 2000* is also at the heart of Europe's Green Infrastructure, providing benefits through multiple ecosystem services.

For the years to come, projects for improving the management and/or for restoring sites of the *Natura 2000* network will therefore remain the first priority for *LIFE Nature* funding. The species and habitats targeted in *LIFE Nature* projects must be listed in the annexes of the EU Birds (2009/147/EC) and Habitats Directives (92/43/EEC).

LIFE Nature projects are usually focussed on concrete conservation measures and are result-oriented, i.e. their implementation must lead to direct and sustainable improvements of the conservation status of species and habitats for which sites are proposed or designated.

The eligibility of project actions under the *LIFE Nature* strand depends on the species and/or habitats targeted and can be distinguished as follows:

Site-based actions:

- *Bird species* targeted by site-based actions must be listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive or be regularly occurring migratory bird species.
- Any *habitat types / species other than bird species* targeted must be listed in Annexes I or II of the Habitats Directive. Site-based actions for Annex IV species not listed in Annex II may be possible under certain conditions (see section 2.4.3).

Species-related (i.e. not site-based) actions:

- *Bird species* targeted must be listed in Annex I or II of the Birds Directive or be regularly occurring migratory bird species.
- Any *species other than bird species* targeted must be listed in Annexes II, IV and/or V of the Habitats Directive.

2.2.2 Geographic scope

LIFE Nature projects must take place on the terrestrial and/or marine territory of the EU Member States where the EU Birds and Habitats Directives apply[16]. However, specific actions outside the Union may be financed as long as the applicant provides full details on why such actions are necessary for the achievement of the EU environmental objectives and to ensure the effectiveness of interventions carried out in the Member State territories to which the Treaties apply. Transnational cooperation is encouraged where it improves the effectiveness of EU-added value of the project actions.

2.2.3 Project topics

According to the LIFE multiannual work programme for 2018–2020, the following project topics contributing to Target 1 of the Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 to fully implement the Birds and Habitats Directives are given priority:

1. Improvement of the conservation status of habitat types or species of Community Interest[17] under the EU Birds and Habitats directives, targeting **Natura 2000 sites** proposed or designated for these habitat types or species[18].

2. Projects aimed at improving the conservation status of habitat types or species of Community Interest, provided, their **status is not 'favourable/secure and not declining' or 'unknown'** according to the most recent overall assessments that Member States have provided at the relevant geographic level according to Article 17 of the Habitats Directive or to the most recent assessments according to Article 12 Birds Directive and EU-level bird assessments.

3. Implementing the **marine component** of the Habitats and Birds Directives and related provisions under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive descriptor 1, where such projects focus on one or several of the following actions:

[16] Note that these two Directives do not apply to the French Overseas Departments (DOMs), and therefore *LIFE Nature* projects in the DOMs are not eligible

[17] The reference to the term 'Community interest' used in this context is to be understood as 'Union interest'.

[18] The relevant Priority Action Framework, habitat and/or species action plans are implementation tools for this project topic.

— completing and finalising national inventories for setting up the offshore marine Natura 2000 network of sites,
— restoration and management of marine Natura 2000 sites, including the preparation and implementation of site management plans,
— actions addressing species-, habitat- or site-related conflicts between marine conservation and fishermen or other 'marine users', as well as actions which combine conservation measures with a sustainable use of Natura 2000 sites, and/or
— demonstrative or innovative approaches to assess or monitor the impact of human activities on critical marine habitats and species and their application as a tool to guide concrete conservation measures.

Applicants should clearly explain whether and why their proposal falls under maximum two of these project topics.

This list does not exclude the possibility of submitting proposals for topics that are not listed above, but fall under the general remit and objectives of *LIFE Nature*. Note however that proposals that do not fall under the above project topics cannot receive points under the award criterion 5 'Contribution to the project topics' and are therefore less likely to be retained and financed than other eligible projects of comparable quality that are covered by one of the project topics. Be aware that in order to be considered as complying with one of the project topics, a proposal has to comply with the full list of requirements of the respective topic. Note that the maximum score (10) under award criterion 5 'Contribution to the project topics' will be awarded **only** to proposals that **clearly and fully** comply with at least one of the project topics; the indication of two project topics does not translate into higher scores. It is not possible to choose more than two project topics. By not choosing a project topic, the applicant declares that the proposal does not fulfil any of the project topics and acknowledges that no points can be awarded to the project under award criterion 5. Moreover, only the topics the applicant indicates will be considered. Whether or not the project possibly fits under some other topic that has not been marked will not be examined. For further details see the "*Guide for the evaluation of LIFE project proposals 2018"*.

2.3 LIFE Biodiversity

2.3.1 General scope

LIFE Biodiversity projects must contribute to implementing the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 targets and actions, with a view to achieving the objectives of the 2020 headline target of *"halting the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020, and restoring them in so far as feasible, while stepping up the EU contribution to averting global biodiversity loss"*, other than those already covered by *LIFE Nature*.

LIFE Biodiversity projects must be compatible with national and/or regional strategies for biodiversity (where these exist).

Projects should be designed to provide EU added value in terms of coverage, conservation benefit, replicability, transferability and transnational scope.

If projects implementing Targets 2, 3, 4 and/or 5 of the Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 take place (even partly) in Natura 2000 sites, the measures proposed must be in line with the

site's conservation objectives, the site's management plan or equivalent instruments and/or the Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designation act.

2.3.2 Geographic scope

LIFE Biodiversity projects generally take place on the terrestrial and/or marine territory of the EU Member States. This includes the French Overseas Departments (DOMs). However, actions outside the Union (including OCTs) may be financed as long as the applicant provides full details on why such actions are necessary for the achievement of the EU environmental objectives (e.g. actions to support the EU Biodiversity Strategy) and to ensure the effectiveness of interventions carried out in the Member State territories to which the Treaties apply.

2.3.3 Project topics

According to the LIFE Multiannual Work Programme for 2018-2020, the following project topics focusing on the implementation of Targets 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 are given priority:

1. Development and implementation of Green Infrastructure[19] plans and actions improving the condition of ecosystems and the services they provide[20] and/or the connectivity between Natura 2000 sites and/or other protected areas; or

Development and application of Green Infrastructure-related widely replicable methods and/or techniques that effectively mitigate the negative impacts of energy or transport infrastructure on biodiversity by enhancing connectivity. These techniques and/or methods should be more cost-effective than qualitatively equivalent solutions already offered on the market, and, where relevant, lead to free shared solutions or the development of technical standards.

2. Development and application of tools aimed at **integrating biodiversity into financial and business decisions** so as to ensure, through the conservation and restoration of biodiversity carried out during the project, no net loss of biodiversity and/or enhanced income delivering ecosystem services[21].

3. Targeting **threatened species** or habitats that are not included in the annexes of the Habitats Directive but have a status of **'endangered' or worse** in the European species[22] or habitats[23] **Red Lists** or, for those species not covered by the European Red Lists, in the IUCN Red List[24].

[19] Green Infrastructure (GI) is a strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services. It incorporates green spaces (or blue if aquatic ecosystems are concerned) and other physical features in terrestrial (including coastal) and marine areas. On land, GI is present in rural and urban settings. See http://eur- lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52013DC0249

[20] http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/knowledge/ecosystem_assessment/index_en.htm

[21] For examples see, e.g. the Business and Biodiversity Platform http://ec.europa.eu/environment/biodiversity/business/resources/index_en. htm

[22] http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/redlist/index_en.htm

[23] http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/knowledge/redlist_en.htm

[24] http://www.iucnredlist.org/

4. Addressing **Invasive Alien Species**[25] by testing and implementing the following three steps on an appropriate spatial scale within a comprehensive framework:

— preventing the introduction of invasive alien species, in particular by tackling the priority pathways of their introduction,

— establishing an early detection and rapid eradication system, and

— eradicating, controlling or containing established invasive alien species. The projects should be set up to improve existing — or introduce new — technical, administrative and/or legal frameworks on the relevant level, in particular in relation to, but not limited to, the species included on the list of invasive alien species of Union concern pursuant to Article 4(1) of the Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council[26]. *Explanatory note:* where a step has already been addressed independently of the project or it is not possible to address it in the project context, the project actions shall at least be clearly situated in a broader framework that links all three steps.

LIFE projects targeting Invasive Alien Species are encouraged to share their results and data with the official information system supporting the implementation of the Regulation 1143/2014, i.e. the European Alien Species Information Network[27].

Applicants should clearly explain whether and why their proposal falls under maximum two of these project topics.

This list does not exclude the possibility of submitting proposals for topics that are not listed above, but falling under the general remit and objectives of *LIFE Biodiversity*. Note however that proposals that do not fall under these project topics will not receive points under the award criterion 5 'Contribution to the project topics' and are therefore unlikely to receive high overall scores. Be aware that in order to be considered as complying with one of the project topics, a proposal has to comply with the full list of requirements of the respective topic. Note that the maximum score (10) under award criterion 5 'Contribution to the project topics' will be awarded **only** to proposals that **clearly and fully** comply with the project topic chosen. It is not possible to choose more than two project topics. By not choosing a project topic, the applicant declares that the proposal does not fulfil any of the project topics and acknowledges that no points can be awarded to the project under award criterion 5. Moreover, only the topics the applicant indicates will be considered. Whether or not the project possibly fits under some other topic that has not been marked will not be examined. For details see the "*Guide for the evaluation of LIFE project proposals 2018*.

[25] Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council 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), and under Target 5 of the Biodiversity Strategy or in view of contributing to reaching the level of protection set out in descriptor 2 — Non-indigenous species, Annex I(2) Directive 2008/56/EC.

[26] The list is regularly updated, e.g. Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/1141 of 13 July 2016 adopting a list of invasive alien species of Union concern pursuant to Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council (OJ L 189, 14.7.2016, p. 4).

[27] EASIN: https://easin.jrc.ec.europa.eu/

2.4 How to conceive a LIFE Nature or LIFE Biodiversity project proposal?

Projects are expected to be set up in such a way to ensure that potentially the key project actions are replicable or transferable and to pave the way for the actual replication or transfer of the solutions proposed, at the latest after the end of the project. Note that the potential to replicate or transfer project solutions elsewhere go beyond dissemination, transfer of knowledge, and networking. Please refer to sections 2.4.3 and 3.2.4 for more details on the type and description of the project actions.

2.4.1 Volume of concrete conservation actions (the "25%-rule")

At least 25% of the total eligible budget of a *LIFE Nature* or *LIFE Biodiversity* project must concern "concrete conservation" actions.

It is strongly advised that *LIFE Nature* and *LIFE Biodiversity* projects include *significantly more* than 25% concrete conservation actions (CCAs). During the evaluation of the proposal, certain actions may be considered ineligible and removed from the project. Furthermore the applicant may consider certain actions to be concrete, whereas the selection team may not (e.g. actions related to inventories, management guides, monitoring, stakeholder communication, etc are not considered a concrete action). If the percentage of concrete actions falls under 25%, the whole project may be rejected for that reason.

Project actions for concrete conservation must be clearly identifiable as such. They must be 100% concrete conservation and not a mix of concrete conservation with other activities, unless the budget allocated to the sub-actions is clearly identifiable.

What are concrete conservation actions?

In this context, *"concrete conservation"* actions are those that *directly improve* (or slow/halt/reverse the decline of) *the conservation status* / *ecological condition* of the species, habitats, ecosystems or ecosystem services targeted.

Preparatory actions (e.g. planning and preparation of the concrete conservation actions) and land purchase / lease / compensation payments count towards this 25% *insofar as they are directly necessary for the execution of concrete actions during the project's lifetime*.

Monitoring of reintroduced species will only be considered as concrete conservation if the monitoring can re-direct the course of the reintroduction action.

In exceptional circumstances, *preventive measures* (including monitoring) that are necessary to detect and prevent major threats that could severely affect the habitat or species targeted by the project, may be considered as concrete measures even if they do not improve the conservation status of the natural or semi-natural habitat, ecosystem or wild species targeted during the project lifetime. These exceptional circumstances will be considered to be fulfilled if:

- the proposal provides clear evidence (e.g. records of previous events, statistics, etc.) that the *likelihood of the event to be prevented* and the *severity of its adverse effect* on the natural or semi-natural habitat, ecosystem or wild species targeted are *high*;

- all necessary measures are put in place in the course of the project to ensure that the countermeasure against the adverse event are operational in the case it materialises and thoroughly tested at an appropriate scale;

- the beneficiary identifies and explains any negative impact of the preventive measures likely to affect the natural or semi-natural habitats, ecosystem or wild species;

- the beneficiaries commit themselves to continue maintaining and applying the mechanisms and measures developed for a period of at least 3 years after the project end.

Legal protection will only be considered as concrete conservation if it is fully achieved within the project duration.

Actions that aim to influence the behaviour of key stakeholders (e.g. farmers, hunters, fishermen, visitors) so as to indirectly benefit the site/species/habitats targeted, may only be considered as concrete conservation actions if all of the following conditions are met:

a) the inappropriate behaviour of the stakeholders in question is an important threat to the site/species/habitat targeted;
b) the action has as its main objective changing the behaviour of specified stakeholder groups in a specified way that will clearly benefit the habitat/species in a specified way;
c) the behaviour in question is foreseen to change during the project duration;
d) this action is sufficiently quantified (no of persons reached by the action, % whose behaviour will be favourably changed during the project, estimation if possible of favourable impact on the species/habitat targeted, …);
e) this change is explicitly monitored by the project to check the results.

Visitor management actions (e.g. fences, trails) will only be considered as concrete conservation actions if the proposal can show that the visitors already directly have a negative impact on the conservation status of the habitats/species targeted.

Exceptions to the concrete conservation actions requirement

Proposals allocating less than 25% of their budget to concrete conservation actions will generally be considered ineligible. There are, however, two exceptions to this rule for *LIFE Nature* projects:

- **Marine site designation projects:** Projects for inventories and planning for the designation of new marine offshore *Natura 2000* sites (either offshore or in territorial waters) or their extension do not need to include concrete conservation actions (for a definition of the term "offshore" within the context of *Natura 2000* marine sites please refer to page 7 and to section 2.6 of the document "Guidelines for the establishment of the *Natura 2000* network in the marine environment" - http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/marine/docs/marine_guidelines.pdf). Any such proposal must, however, include a **commitment from the Competent Ministry/Authority** to designate the site(s) concerned as *Natura 2000* sites before the end of the project and **the Competent Authority must be a beneficiary of the project** (coordinating or associated beneficiary). The designation of the site must be the subject of a specific action in the project, with the Competent Authority responsible for its implementation.

- **Article 11 projects**: *LIFE Nature* projects for the **support and/or the further development of the surveillance of the conservation status** of natural habitats and species covered by the Birds and Habitats Directives (in the sense of Article 11 of the Habitats Directive) do not have to include concrete conservation actions. In any such cases, **the Competent Authority in charge of the Article 11 monitoring must be a beneficiary of the project** (coordinating or associated beneficiary). Proposals for routine monitoring or for merely local improvement in monitoring will not be considered as qualifying for this exception.

2.4.2 Recurring activities for site or species management

A recurrent management action is an action that needs to be carried out periodically (at least annually) in order to maintain the conservation status of a species, habitat, or ecosystem.

In line with the general rule about ongoing actions (see section 1.6.12), ongoing recurrent actions are generally ineligible. For example, any site surveillance, periodic mowing or long-term monitoring actions, which were ongoing already before the start of the project, is generally ineligible.

New recurrent actions are, in principle, eligible for funding in *LIFE Nature* and *LIFE Biodiversity* projects. In particular recurring actions with a clear pilot demonstration value may be considered as eligible for funding.

However, projects foreseeing recurring actions must sufficiently demonstrate the long term sustainability and European added value of the proposed action. The applicant must therefore explicitly undertake that the project beneficiaries will continue after the project's end any recurrent actions started and carried out during the project, and explain how this continuation will be financed. The implementation of this commitment will be checked at the time of the final payment, when the Contracting Authority will verify that the recurring actions are still being undertaken at the required periodicity, or that all administrative and budgetary conditions are fulfilled to ensure their continuation at the appropriate time. If there is no such assurance that the recurrent action will be continued after the end of the project, all related costs will be ineligible.

2.4.3 Types of actions

When preparing your proposal, the following main types of eligible actions must be clearly distinguished:

- Preparatory actions (A Actions),
- Land purchase/lease of land and/or compensation payment for land use rights
- (B Actions),
- Conservation actions (C Actions),
- Monitoring and impact assessment of the project actions (D Actions),
- Communication and dissemination actions (E Actions),
- Project management and progress (F Actions).

To be taken eligible for funding, all actions must meet each of the following conditions:

- the need of the action has to be well justified in view of the objectives of the project; and
- the long-term sustainability of the investments must be guaranteed.

Preparatory actions (A Actions)

As a general principle, all preparatory actions must produce practical recommendations and/or information that can be implemented and be used without requiring further preparatory work. Furthermore, where exceptionally preparatory actions do not lead to direct implementation during the project, the proposal must provide a sufficient set of explanations, commitments and guarantees to show that their full implementation after the project is effectively ensured. Most projects include preparatory actions.

Preparatory actions should:

- be clearly related to the objective(s) of the project;
- be significantly shorter than the project duration and end well before the end of the project;
- not be research actions, unless they fall under the exception described in point 1.6.14 of this Guide,
- not be inventories of new or existing *Natura 2000* sites (except for new offshore marine sites).

Preparatory actions may for example include:

- Actions preparatory to the conservation actions of the project (technical planning, permit procedures, stakeholder consultations, etc.);
- Drafting *Natura 2000* site management plans;
- Drafting, monitoring and reviewing strategic initiatives related to targets or actions of the Biodiversity Strategy (at trans-national, national, regional or local level) not focused on the *Natura 2000* network;
- Developing conservation action plans for species/habitat types of the Birds and Habitats Directives;
- Developing action plans on Invasive Alien Species, in particular on pathways of introduction and spread, or development of surveillance and early warning plans;
- Preliminary studies required to improve the integrity and connectivity of the *Natura 2000* network.

Where management plans, action plans, strategies or other similar plans are drafted or modified in the framework of a *LIFE Nature or LIFE Biodiversity* project, they must become legally operational before the end of the project. Therefore, in those Member States where a procedure for their legal adoption and/or approval exists, this procedure must be completed before the end of the project, otherwise, the related expenses will be ineligible. Applicants are therefore advised not to include actions to develop such plans unless they are **certain** that they will be legally operational before the end of the project. The applicant should include a timetable showing how and when the plans developed will become legally operational.

Land purchase/lease of land and/or compensation payment for use rights (B Actions)

This includes:

- the purchase of land and associated costs (e.g. notary expenses, taxes, etc.);
- the long-term lease of land and associated costs;
- one-off land use compensation payments and associated costs.

Note: Short term lease and/or compensation payments can only be eligible for funding if they serve for demonstration of pilot actions – see below.

Any land purchase payments, compensation payments or lease payments to public bodies are not eligible, with the exception of compensation or short-term lease payments to local authorities (i.e. municipalities or similar).

For the exception to be valid, it must be explicitly foreseen in the project and beneficiaries must demonstrate that it is the only cost-effective solution to reach the objectives of the project. Moreover, it is recommended that local authorities re-invest the income from such payments into conservation or public awareness-raising measures for *Natura 2000* network or the Biodiversity Strategy. *Those proposals which include a commitment from the local authorities in question to do so will be considered for a higher scoring on EU added value in the project evaluation process and may therefore have a higher chance of being selected for co-funding.*

a) Land purchase

The eligibility of any costs for land purchase is subject to the conditions listed below. The **applicant must address each of these conditions in his proposa**l, explaining how <u>each</u> condition is met or will be met during the project.

(i) The land purchase must be clearly related to the objectives of the project.

(ii) The land purchased must contribute to improving, maintaining or restoring the integrity of the *Natura 2000* network.

(iii) The purchase is the only or most cost-effective way of achieving the desired conservation outcome.

(iv) The land purchased is reserved in the long-term for uses consistent with the objectives set out in Article 11 of the LIFE Regulation, through the most appropriate form of legal protection.

(v) The beneficiaries must ensure that the sales contract / notary act and/or entry in the land register includes a guarantee that the land is assigned definitively (without time limitation) to nature conservation purposes. Where both possibilities exist (sales contract and land registry entry), the beneficiaries must use the option that offers the strongest long-term protection. Note that at the latest with the final report, the beneficiaries will have to submit a copy of the sales contract and/or entry in the land register including the above mentioned guarantee. Should they fail to provide such documents, the corresponding land purchase costs and associated costs will be considered ineligible. For countries where it would be illegal to include such a guarantee in both the land register and in the sale contract, the Contracting Authority may accept an equivalent guarantee, provided it offers the same legal level of protection in the long term.

(vi) The land must be purchased by one of the project beneficiaries who is either a well-established private organisation (e.g. nature conservation NGO or other) or a public body with nature conservation responsibility, and must remain in its ownership after the end of the project.

(vii) The proposal must demonstrate that each beneficiary that will carry out land purchase has the necessary competence and experience in land purchase for nature conservation, and that the planned target is realistic within the time framework of the project.

(viii) If the purchasing body is a private organisation, its statutes must include a provision that, in case of dissolution, the land will be transferred to another legal body primarily active in the field of nature conservation (e.g. another conservation NGO or appropriate public body).

(ix) Evidence must be provided in the proposal that the purchase price is consistent with the current market prices for the type of land and the region concerned.

(x) Evidence must be provided that the land purchased was not owned by a public authority in the 24 months prior to the project application date.

(xi) Land purchased must be the subject, during the project, of specific restoration and/or active management or restrictions of use that go beyond legal obligations and existing restrictions that could not be imposed without purchasing the land. The purchase of land that is in excellent conservation status (i.e. that requires no restoration or specific management or restrictions of use) is only eligible if strategic to the objectives of the project.

b) Long-term land lease, purchase of rights and one-off compensation payments

The same conditions listed above apply, as and where appropriate, to these types of payments. The applicant must address each of these conditions in the proposal, explaining how each condition is met or will be met during the project. The duration of a lease must be sufficient to guarantee the durability of the conservation investment (e.g. 20 years or longer). See also the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement.

c) Short term land lease or temporary compensation payments

Land lease or compensation payments with a limited duration, within the project period, will **only** be eligible **insofar as** they are **necessary for the demonstration of pilot actions favourable to the conservation status of the species, habitats or ecosystem targeted**. Note that appropriate justification for the cost-effectiveness of short term lease payments (consistency with current market prices for the type of land and the region concerned) will have to be provided with the project's final report.

Conservation actions (C Actions)

Conservation actions must aim to directly improve (or slow/halt/reverse the decline of) the conservation status / ecological condition of the species, habitats, ecosystems or ecosystem services targeted. Their impact must be measurable and must be monitored and evaluated during the project.

The maintenance of the investments made through these actions must be ensured in the long-term after the end of the project. Amongst others, where actions take place on land that does not belong to any of the beneficiaries, they must establish a convention with the owner in which he/she commits not to take any action that would compromise the investments/restoration made by the project. This convention must be for a suitably long period (ideally 20 years or longer). The establishment of these conventions must appear explicitly in the description of the relevant action(s) and in the "expected results" section.

For the purpose of these guidelines site-based conservation actions are distinguished from species (non-site) related actions. Site-based actions are land-based actions carried out on a specific site, while non-site related actions are independent of a specific site.

Nevertheless, some species-oriented conservation actions like reintroduction and translocation (see point d below) also have site-based elements.

a) Site-based conservation actions inside Natura 2000 sites:

For *LIFE Nature* projects, actions targeting bird species must take place within SPAs, actions targeting habitats or species of the Habitat Directives must take place within pSCIs/SCIs/SACs.

In *LIFE Nature* projects, actions targeting species and habitats not listed in a site's official *Natura 2000* Standard Data Form (SDF) are ineligible. Applicants are advised to check this carefully. These SDFs can be viewed at http://natura2000.eea.europa.eu/ (note: this public site is updated generally within a couple of months of the Commission receiving data from the Member States, however in some cases it may take up to six months for the very latest information to be added). Where the species/habitats are in fact present but are not in the SDF, actions targeting them in that site **can only be accepted** if the proposal contains a letter of commitment from the competent authority to update the data sheet before the end of the project

For *LIFE Nature* projects, site-based conservation actions generally take place within existing designated *Natura 2000* sites. *LIFE Biodiversity* projects may also include actions inside *Natura 2000* sites.

For each *Natura 2000* site targeted, the applicant should provide a general description and (in annex) a map of the site, indicating where each action is planned to take place. The project area will be the whole of the *Natura 2000* site(s) targeted by the project (it is thus unnecessary to further delimit a project area within the *Natura 2000* site, unless there are specific reasons for doing so).

Applicants are advised to check that the perimeters on their maps correspond to those on the EU *Natura 2000* viewer available to the public (http://natura2000.eea.europa.eu).

b) Site related actions outside of Natura 2000 sites, for improving the ecological coherence / connectivity of the Natura 2000 network:

These may be included in projects if each of the following conditions is met:

(i) Evidence is provided that the investments foreseen **contribute to an "improvement of the ecological coherence of the *Natura 2000* network"**;

(ii) A guarantee is provided for the long-term continuation of these investments, in the form of a commitment for giving these sites **the most appropriate legal or contractual protection status** before the end of the project, i.e. in the proposal the applicant must provide detailed information on the proposed protection status and explain why it is considered as being sufficient for securing the long-term sustainability of the investments;

(iii) The national *Natura 2000* network of sites is considered as sufficient for the species/habitats targeted by the project.

Exceptionally, **protected area status is not required** for sites where an **infrastructure** will be located that act as animal migration corridors (e.g. eco-ducts, fish passes) that would

enhance the possibilities for the migration of animals, if each of the following conditions is fulfilled:

(i) In the proposal the applicant explains how the species population targeted already benefits from an appropriate *Natura 2000* site designation of their main breeding, feeding and/or resting areas;
(ii) In the proposal the applicant provides evidence that the future use and maintenance of the infrastructure is backed by an appropriate land use planning at the most relevant administrative level.

c) Other site-based conservation actions outside Natura 2000

LIFE Biodiversity projects may include site-based conservation actions not connected to the *Natura 2000* network.

Exceptionally, *LIFE Nature* projects may include actions for improving the conservation status of species listed **in Annex IV, but not in Annex II of the Habitats Directive.** Costs for site-based conservation actions for the conservation of Annex IV species not listed in Annex II is not conditional upon a *Natura 2000* site status of the lands targeted. However, a guarantee must be provided for the sustainability of any such investments, in the form of a commitment for giving these sites **the most appropriate legal protection status** before the end of the project. When submitting the proposal, the applicant must provide detailed information on the proposed protection status and explain why it is considered as being sufficient for securing the long-term sustainability of the investments. Land purchase is not possible in this context.

d) Species re-introduction and other conservation introductions/translocations

Concrete conservation actions to reintroduce or translocate species can only be considered eligible for funding, when the project proposals meet all conditions listed below.

The applicant must address each of these conditions in his proposal, explaining how each condition is met.

In the case of re-introduction and other conservation translocation projects and actions the proposal has to demonstrate that each of the following conditions is met:

(i) the actions are justified, expected to yield quantitative conservation benefit based on a cost/benefit analysis, and have a high chance of success based on a thorough risk and feasibility analysis;
(ii) the reintroduced/translocated organisms are likely to be able to cope with new pathogen and stresses encountered at the destination site and the risk of reintroducing new pathogens in the destination area are minimised;
(iii) alternatives to reintroduction/translocation have been assessed as less effective or infeasible as a means to reach the specific and clearly defined conservation objectives of the reintroduction/translocation;
(iv) the actions target areas where the causes of extinction of the species have been eliminated;
(v) the removal of individuals from their present habitat for re-introduction is only considered if it does not endanger the captive or wild source populations;

(vi) the actions target areas whose habitats and climate meet, the foreseeable future, the conditions necessary for the survival of a viable population of the species;

(vii) a prior agreement between all parties involved (e.g. between the competent authority for the donor population and the manager of the area of reintroduction) has been concluded and documented;

(viii) the actions target only areas where the attitude of the local population towards the planned reintroduction is favourable or where there is a reasonable expectation that local acceptance can be achieved during the project;

(ix) either

- organisms are only reintroduced *in areas where they previously occurred*

or

- organisms are deliberately introduced/translocated *outside their indigenous ranges* in order to
  - prevent the extinction of populations of the focal species where protection from current or likely future threats in its current range is deemed less feasible than at alternative sites or
  - re-establish an ecological function lost through extinction through introduction of organisms which are a close relative of the extinct species, within the same genus, and which belong to the closest and most similar population available (in terms of genetics, ecology, etc.).

    In case of such a conservation introduction/translocation, it must be possible to reliably assess that they present low risks.

(x) the proposal must include a preparatory phase, a re-introduction phase and a follow-up phase, as well as of an exit strategy, in case the translocation/reintroduction does not proceed according to plan.

In *LIFE Nature* projects, re-introduction and other conservation introductions/translocation projects and actions **outside existing *Natura 2000* sites** are only eligible, if the proposal meets each of the following additional conditions:

(xi) it includes a commitment from the competent authority for *Natura 2000* site designation to designate the core reproductive and feeding areas of the (re)introduced/translocated population as *Natura 2000* sites before the end of the project (provided the (re)introduction/translocation has been successful);

(xii) it ensures that the competent authority for *Natura 2000* site designation is a beneficiary of the project (coordinating or associated beneficiary). A specific action, implemented by the competent authority for the designation must be included in the proposal.

Further guidelines on re-introduction and conservation translocation and can be found in the following document:

http://www.issg.org/pdf/publications/RSG_ISSG-Reintroduction-Guidelines-2013.pdf

e) Species-related actions (that are not necessarily site-based)

i. *Species-related conservation actions that target species of the Birds / Habitat Directives*

This concerns any actions other than site-based actions that are necessary to improve the conservation status of species covered by the Birds Directive (Annex I or II or regularly occurring migratory species) or Habitats Directive (Annex II, IV or V). Such actions should

be clearly distinct from those that concern site protection and must address significant conservation issues. In the proposal, the **applicants must explain in detail the planned conservation actions and the necessity to take these actions regarding the targeted specie(s) and provide guarantees and commitments that the investments made will be sustained in the long-term.** Such projects may include, amongst others:

- Actions related to the direct protection of animal species against unintentional or incidental disturbance, collection, capture, poisoning or killing. These may in particular concern wide-ranging or mobile species for which the designation of *Natura 2000* sites and the associated conservation and management of sites are not sufficient to ensure a favourable conservation status. For example, this may concern actions to remove or modify technical devices or infrastructures such as electric power lines, fishing gear, etc.;
- Actions for combating invasive alien species or mitigating the negative impact of climate change, insofar as they directly benefit the species targeted by the project.

ii. *Ex situ conservation actions*

These concern actions such as captive breeding, seed banks, etc., and may include sustainable investments in infrastructure / equipment. **In order to be eligible as well as to be considered as a concrete conservation action, ex situ conservation must be linked to a reintroduction during the project.** Exceptionally these investments will be considered eligible in the absence of a planned reintroduction if clear justification is given to prove that ex situ conservation is the only possible/useful type of conservation action at present for that/those species.

iii. *Other species-related conservation actions that target species not covered by the Birds / Habitat Directives*

Such actions are allowed for *LIFE Biodiversity* projects (see section 2.3.3 above on project topics).

Monitoring of the impact of project actions (D Actions - obligatory)

Each project will have to report on the outputs and impact of the project. The project proposal will therefore have to foresee monitoring actions that will facilitate this reporting, establishing baselines and monitoring the progress and results of all actions contributing to halting and reversing biodiversity loss, including the support of the *Natura 2000* network and tackling the degradation of ecosystems.

In particular, the conservation actions (C actions) must lead to a measurable improvement of the conservation status of the species/habitats or the biodiversity problem targeted by the project. Monitoring these effects should take place throughout the project and its results should be evaluated on a regular basis. In this view, every project proposal including conservation actions must contain an appropriate amount of monitoring activities in order to measure their **impact on the species/habitats/biodiversity problem targeted**.

Furthermore *pilot/demonstration* projects must have a clear set of actions for evaluating the main project findings and outcomes, including the cost-efficient replicability or transferability of the actions and results and the measures taken to ensure the actual replication or transfer

of successful pilot/demonstration actions. Proposals that are insufficient in these respects will not be considered pilot/demonstration.

The monitoring of the project impact should allow the project management team either to confirm the adequacy of the developed means to address the specific problems and threats, or to question these means and develop new ones for implementation during the project duration if possible. At the end of the project, the beneficiaries should be able to quantify the progress achieved, in terms of impact on the targeted species/habitats or on the targeted biodiversity issue.

Each project will have to report on the outputs and impact of the project taking into account the **LIFE Key project level Indicators** (see further instructions under section 3.2.4). These indicators will contribute to evaluating the impact of the LIFE project.

All the indicators measured should be coherent with the conservation or biodiversity problem addressed and the type of activities during the project. The initial situation from which the project starts should be assessed and progress should be regularly evaluated against it.

Projects dealing with Green Infrastructures in support of Target 2 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy are requested to include, either as part of the monitoring of the project impact on the species/habitats/biodiversity problem targeted or as a separate action, monitoring of the project impact on **ecosystem conditions and ecosystem services**. For all the other projects this action is voluntary. The assessment of ecosystem conditions and their services should be made according to the analytical framework developed under the EU Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services (MAES) initiative agreed at European level within action 5 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/knowledge/ecosystem_assessment/index_en.htm

For further information, applicants can refer to the guide for beneficiaries on 'Assessing ecosystems and their services in LIFE projects ' available on the LIFE programme Toolkit http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/toolkit/pmtools/index.htm

Communication and replication actions (E actions - obligatory)

Note that certain communication deliverables are obligatory for best-practice as well as for demonstration and for pilot projects (project web site, notice boards, use of LIFE / *Natura 2000* logos, etc.) and should therefore be explicitly foreseen in the proposal as outputs of E actions. In addition, projects must include actions - other than communication/dissemination and networking - targeting the **replication and the transfer** of the methods/techniques/solutions applied in the project to other regions, countries or contexts.

a) Communication and dissemination

A **best practice** project must contain an appropriate amount of communication and dissemination actions. These typically include:

- information activities to the general public and stakeholders aimed at facilitating the implementation of the project;

- public awareness and dissemination actions aimed at publicising the project and its results both to the general public and to other stakeholders that could usefully benefit from the project's experience;
- activities to raise the awareness of *Natura 2000* network (obligatory for projects taking place in *Natura 2000* sites).

Should the proposal include the development of general guidelines for setting up management plans for *Natura 2000* sites / habitat types / species or guidelines for their practical management, it must demonstrate the need for such guidelines and that equivalent guidelines do not already exist elsewhere, and must identify the target "public" and how the guidelines will be distributed to them.

Should the proposal include the creation of **small-scale** visitor infrastructures, these may not exceed 10% of the budget allocated to concrete conservation actions in the proposal budget, and must be well-justified and cost effective or else they will be deleted from the proposal during the revision phase.

Pilot and demonstrative projects must include active networking with, and active dissemination to, other stakeholders that could apply the results. They should therefore typically include 2 distinct types of actions:

- information and awareness raising activities regarding the project to the general public and stakeholders. These actions should in general begin early on in the project.
- more technical dissemination actions aimed at communicating the results and lessons learnt to those stakeholders that could usefully benefit from the project's experience. These actions should in general begin only once the method/technique being tested has been evaluated. They should continue for a sufficiently long period so that the results and lessons learnt are extensively disseminated before the end of the project.

The range of possible dissemination actions for best practice, demonstration and pilot projects is large (media work, organisation of events for the local community, didactic work with local schools, seminars, workshops, brochures, leaflets, newsletters, DVDs, technical publications, …), and those proposed should form a coherent package.

Each action must clearly define and justify its target audience, and should be expected to have a significant impact. To be effective, these actions should in general begin early on in the project.

The organisation of large and costly scientific meetings or the financing of large-scale visitor infrastructures is not eligible.

Each proposal must include an action entitled "Networking with other LIFE and/or non-LIFE projects". This must include visits, meetings, exchange of information, and/or other such networking activities with an appropriate number of other relevant LIFE projects (ongoing or completed). It may also include similar exchanges with other non-LIFE projects and/or participation in information platforms related to the project objectives (including at international level where justified).

See General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement for full details of communication and dissemination requirements. The LIFE website http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/toolkit/comtools/index.htm also contains detailed advice on communication and dissemination actions, in particular *LIFE Nature*: Communicating with

stakeholders and the general public – Best practices examples for *Natura 2000* and the guidelines on how to design a LIFE web-site.

b) Replication and transfer

A strategy to ensure replication and transfer of project results to other contexts shall be included. This means going further than simply committing to project continuation, but entails a clear and sound plan supported by project activities that would allow replication and transfer of the implemented solution to other entities, regions or countries.

A replication strategy includes tasks to multiply the impacts of the project and mobilise a wider uptake during or after the project. This goes beyond dissemination and networking, and involves preparing the ground for putting the techniques, methods or strategies developed or applied in the project into practice elsewhere. The following activities can be considered as examples of how to ensure the replicability or and transferability of the project's actions:

1. Elaborating an analysis of how the proposed solution or method might be applied in other geographic areas, in other habitats, or to other species, and directly involving the concerned stakeholders.
2. Preparing business cases so that the proposed solution can be more easily taken up elsewhere.
3. Studies/activities regarding the access to financing sources as well as the physical identification of sites and actors for replicability and transferability.
4. Negotiating and planning for transfer of the proposed solution into other contexts: development of a credible replicability and transferability plan.

In particular, **Pilot or demonstrative** proposals **must include a significant set of actions to evaluate and replicate the results of the project** so that the results achieved are actively transferred to those stakeholders that may apply the methods/solutions/lessons of the project. Proposals that are insufficient in this respect will not be considered pilot/demonstrative.

Project management (F actions - obligatory)

Every project proposal must contain an appropriate amount of both project management and project quality control actions. This typically involves at least all of the following actions and associated costs:

- Project management activities undertaken by the beneficiaries for the management of the project (administrative, technical and financial aspects), monitoring its progress and meeting the LIFE reporting obligations. The technical project management may be partially outsourced, provided the coordinating beneficiary retains full and day to day control of the project. The proposal should clearly describe how this control will be guaranteed. The project management structure must be clearly presented (including an organigram and details of the responsibilities of each person and organisation involved). It is strongly recommended that the project management staff has previous experience in project management. It is **strongly recommended** that the project manager be full-time. If a coordinator or project manager also directly contributes to the implementation of certain actions, an appropriate part of his/her salary costs should be attributed to the estimated costs of those actions.
- Training, workshops and meetings for the project beneficiaries' staff, where these are required for the achievement of the project objectives.

3. How to apply

3.1 Stage 1 Concept note

3.1.1 Structure Stage 1

- **Administrative forms (A forms)**
  - Form A1 – General project information
  - Form A2 – Coordinating beneficiary
- **Project outline (B forms)**
  - Form B1 – Summary description of the project
  - Form B3 – General character of the project and EU added value
- **Financial application forms**
  - Form R1 – Project budget

All the forms in the Concept Note need to be completed in English. You are advised to focus on key elements of your project. Please note no attachments can be uploaded in eProposal during this stage.

National authorities access: In those cases where the applicants grant access, all National authorities of Member States participating in the project will be able to:
1. Access the concept note before and after the closing date of the call
2. Access also the communication between the Commission and each applicant who has submitted a proposal through the Mailbox module in eProposal.

This authorisation can be granted by marking the radio button to YES. If the coordinating applicant does not want to grant the authorization, the NO button must be marked.

You may remove access authorisation at any point in time.

Please note that after the submission deadline has passed, this option is no longer accessible.

3.1.2 Administrative Forms (A forms)

A1 – General project information

Project title (max 120 characters): It should include the key elements and objective of the project, such as the name of the site and / or the name of the main species / habitat type or biodiversity issue targeted.. Note that the Contracting Authority may ask you to change the title in order to make it clearer. The title of the project must be in English, even if the subsequent proposal itself would be submitted in a different language, should you be invited to participate in Stage 2.

Project acronym (max 25 characters): The acronym must begin with the word 'LIFE', e.g. 'LIFE RIVER'. Once the concept note is created in the eProposal system, all technical, financial and reporting forms will bear this acronym (e.g. 'Proposals / **LIFE RIVER** / Technical Forms /

LIFE Programme priority area: Select the sector from the drop-down menu.
Applicants must indicate whether the project is being submitted to the sector Nature or to the sector Biodiversity.

Expected start date: Type in the date in the format DD/MM/YYYY or use the calendar function. The earliest possible start date is the 15/07/19. The start date should be realistic. Please note that if you choose a late date the costs of participation in the kick-off meeting for all new projects may not be eligible.

Expected end date: Type in the date in the format DD/MM/YYYY or use the calendar function.

Language of the proposal: while the concept note needs to be submitted in English, should you be admitted to Stage 2, you will be able to submit full proposal in any of the official EU languages, except Irish or Maltese. Please indicate language in which you plan to submit full proposal should you be admitted to Stage 2.

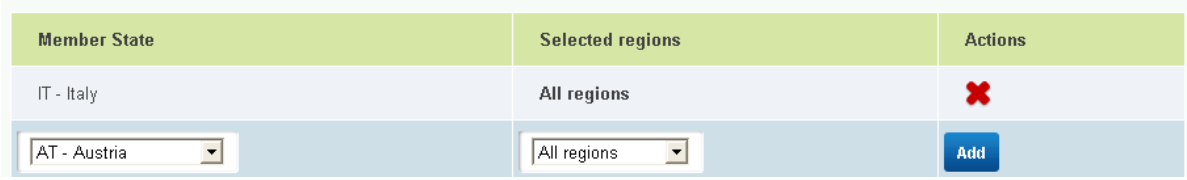
Click on the 'Next' button and fill in form A2 (see below).

Please note that after the creation of the concept note (see below, form A2), you will be required to enter the following information in form A1:

The project will be implemented in the following Member State(s) / Region(s) or other countries:

- by default the eProposal tool selects the Member State where the coordinating beneficiary is legally registered (as per form A2). You may change it by using the 'Delete' and 'Add' buttons;
- to add a region, select the Member State, then the Region, and click on the Add button; at least one region must be selected.

If project actions will be implemented outside the EU, select the country from the drop-down list.



Form A2 – Coordinating beneficiary

Short Name (max 10 characters)**:** The beneficiary will be identified throughout the technical forms, the financial forms and the reports by its short name.

E-mail: This e-mail address will be used by the Contracting Authority as the single contact point for all notifications of correspondence with the applicant during the evaluation procedure (see Annex 3 "eProposal Tool", Step 3 "Post-submission Communication").

Legal name (max 200 characters): Provide the full name under which the beneficiary is officially registered.

Legal Status: Select one of the following 3 choices: *Public body*, *Private commercial* or *Private non-commercial* (including NGOs). Tick the appropriate box. Further guidance on how to distinguish private entities from public bodies can be found in section 1.6.2 of this document. Tick the box "Is your company a SME?" if your company is considered a Small or Medium-Sized Enterprise (SME). Fill in the box "Number of employees" if you are an SME.

Value Added Tax (VAT) number: If applicable, provide the entity's VAT registration number.

VAT Reimbursement: please note that non-deductible VAT is an eligible cost, save for those activities matching the concept of sovereign powers exercised by Member States. If your organisation is unable to recover VAT paid (for public entities it can only concern VAT related to activities that do not match the concept of sovereign powers) you can opt to include the reimbursement of VAT in your costs submitted under this proposal, in that case then please tick the box 'YES', otherwise tick the box 'NO'.

Legal Registration Number: If applicable, provide the entity's legal national registration number or code from the appropriate trade register (e.g. the Chamber of Commerce register), business register or other.

Registration date: Type in the date in the format DD/MM/YYYY or use the calendar functionality.

PIC Number (not compulsory): The PIC (Participant Identification Code) is a unique 9-digit code used for the identification of legal entities of projects funded under a number of EU programmes (e.g. FP7, H2020…). In case your organisation is already registered, please include your PIC number.

Legal address: Enter Street name and no., PO Box, Town / City, Post code.

Member State: Select the relevant Member State from the drop-down menu

Legal Representative information: Enter Name, Surname, Street name and no., PO Box, Town / City, Post code (if they are identical to the legal address, you may copy them directly).

Contact person information: Enter Name, Surname, Street name and no., PO Box, Town / City, Post code (if they are identical to the legal address, you may copy them directly).

Telephone/Fax: Provide information for the contact person.

Title: Title commonly used in correspondence with the person in charge of proposal co-ordination.

Function: Provide the function of the person in charge of coordinating the proposal. Example: Managing Director, Project Manager, etc.

Department / Service Name: Name of the department and / or service in the entity co-ordinating the proposal and for which the contact person is working. The address details given in the fields which follow must be for the department/service and not the legal address of the entity.

Website (max 250 characters): Provide the beneficiary's official website.

Brief description of the activities of the beneficiary (max 2000 characters): Please describe the entity, its legal status, its activities and its competence in nature / biodiversity conservation, particularly in relation to the proposed actions. The description given should enable the Contracting Authority to evaluate the technical reliability of the coordinating beneficiary, i.e. whether it has the necessary experience and expertise for a successful implementation of the proposed project. In case you propose to include affiliated entities in your proposal, list them here clearly indicating their legal name, pic number (if available) as well as legal status and address. Please also explain in a separate document to be uploaded under the attachments in eProposal ('Affiliates_ACRONYM beneficiary) how the affiliated entities comply with the conditions described above in section 1.6.2.

For private non-commercial entities please provide the key elements that prove that the entity is recognised as such.

Click on the 'Save' button available at the bottom of the form.

Your concept note has been now created in the eProposal system and the project acronym is automatically displayed on all screens and forms throughout the entire proposal.

3.1.3 Project outline (B forms)

Form B1 – Summary description of the project

Please provide a Summary Description of your project. The description should be structured, concise and clear. It should include:

- **Description of Species / Habitats / Biodiversity Issues Targeted By The Project (max 3500 characters*):** Please provide a clear description of the environmental/conservation problem targeted by your proposal, including description of the causes, preoperational context and figures defining the baseline.

- **Project objectives (max 2500 characters*)**: Please provide a detailed description of main project objectives, listing them by decreasing order of importance. These objectives must be realistic (be achievable within the timeframe of the project with the proposed budget and means) and clear (without ambiguity). They should concern mainly the species / habitats issue(s) targeted by the project.
- **Actions and means involved (max 5000 characters*)**:

  Is at least 25% of the eligible project costs dedicated to concrete conservation actions? tick box Yes / No – Please note that NAT projects are required to dedicate at least 25% of eligible project costs to concrete conservation actions. At the concept note stage you are requested to confirm that the project budget has been constructed in a way that allows this requirement to be met. Should your application be admitted to stage 2, this requirement will be verified again in the full proposal. Please note that if you click "No", your application will be rejected when concept note eligibility criteria will be verified.

  Please list the main project actions and explain what, how and where will be done during the project in order to reach project objectives. If the project success depends on the involvement of stakeholders, please identify them in this section and clarify how they will be involved.

- **Expected results (max 3000 characters*)**: Please list the main results and impacts (environmental/conservation benefits) expected at the end of the project. These must directly relate to the species / habitats / biodiversity issue(s) targeted by the project

* Please note that this is the number of characters available when the text is typed directly in the relevant text box in the eProposal. You are strongly advised to fill in the forms by simply typing in the provided boxes.

and to the project's objectives. The expected results must be concrete, realistic and quantified as far as possible.

- **Sustainability of the Project Results (max 3000 characters*):** Please describe how the continuation of necessary project actions will be ensured after the end of the project. Please also clarify how will you maintain and further build on the achieved project results, including transfer and replication and the necessary financing.

- **Project topics**: applicants are required to indicate whether the proposal addresses the project topics **(maximum two)** listed in section 2 of this document, by ticking the appropriate checkbox(es). If the proposal does not address any project topic, no checkbox should be ticked. Applicants will be able to describe the reasons why their proposal falls under the selected topic(s) only if they have chosen at least one topic.

- **Reasons why the proposal falls under the selected project topic(s) (max 1250 characters*)**: The applicant has to briefly explain why the proposal is considered to fall under the selected project topic(s).

- **Project partnership (max 3000 characters*):** Please describe in this form project partnership structure. If your project will be implemented with associated beneficiaries, please list key partners; explain their role in the project and expertise as well as actions that will be implemented by them.

  You should also clarify in this section how your project will be co-financed, whether it will be financed by beneficiaries' own contributions or co-financed by other entities. Please note that financial contribution breakdown is to be provided in Form R1 (please refer to the paragraph on Financial application forms below). Please also clarify the status of co-financing (whether it is confirmed or to be confirmed). No written commitments from the associated beneficiaries or co-financers should be provided at this stage.

- **Expected risks and constraints related to project implementation and mitigation strategy (max 1500 characters*):** Please list here main constraints and risks that can occur during the project implementation. Please clarify what strategy will be put in place in order to mitigate those risks.

Form B3 – General character of the project and EU added value

- **Project's best practice/pilot/demonstration character (max 3000 characters*)**

  In order to be eligible for financing, your project needs to be best practice, pilot or demonstrative.

* Please note that this is the number of characters available when the text is typed directly in the box. You are strongly advised to fill in the forms by simply typing in the provided boxes. If you paste text, tables, pictures, use bullets or edit the font the number of actual characters might be lower than the one indicated.

Taking into account the definitions in section 1.2, please indicate whether your project has a best practice, pilot or demonstration character **and justify**.

- **EU added value of the project and its actions (max 3000 characters*):** Please clarify how the project contributes to one or several of the specific objectives of the priority areas of the LIFE sub-programme for Environment. These are set out in Articles 10, 11 and 12 of the LIFE Regulation. Please also clarify how the project will contribute to the implementation, updating and development of European Union environmental policy and legislation.

3.1.4 Financial application forms

Form R1 – Project budget

The form summarises the financial structure of the project, by providing a budget breakdown for the project and an overview of the financing plan. While in Stage 2 it will be generated automatically (based on the data entered in the technical and financial forms), at concept note stage the applicants are required to fill in most of the relevant data themselves. Please note that only fields corresponding to the sums as well as values expressed in percentages will be completed automatically.

Applicants must provide indicative project budget per following cost category:

1. Direct personnel costs
2. Travel and subsistence costs
3. External assistance
4. Durable goods
    a. Infrastructure
    b. Equipment
    c. Prototype
5. Land
6. Consumables
7. Other costs
8. Overheads

* Please note that this is the number of characters available when the text is typed directly in the box. You are strongly advised to fill in the forms by simply typing in the provided boxes. If you paste text, tables, pictures, use bullets or edit the font the number of actual characters might be lower than the one indicated.

You are required to provide total costs in € and eligible costs in € per each cost category.

At concept note stage you are requested to provide only indicative budget per each cost category.

When establishing eligible costs at concept note stage you are strongly advised to take into account the rules and eligibility requirements indicated in section 3.2.5.

Please also describe in form R1 the funding of the project indicating contributions requested by the beneficiary(ies) and / or co-financier(s), as well as the total EU contribution requested.

Please note that should your application be admitted to stage 2, you will be allowed to introduce changes to the total requested EU contribution within margin of 10%. There is no limit to other changes in the budget (including total project cost) as long as the total EU contribution does not increase by more than 10%).

3.2 Stage 2 Full proposal

3.2.1 Structure Stage 2

Proposals are structured in the system[28] as follows:

- ***Administrative forms (A forms)***
  - Form A1 – General project information
  - Form A2 – Coordinating beneficiary
  - Form A3 – Coordinating beneficiary declaration
  - Form A4 – Associated beneficiary declaration and Mandate
  - Form A5 – Associated beneficiary
  - Form A6 – Co-financiers
  - Form A7 – Other proposals submitted for European Union funding
  - Form A8 – Declaration of support

- ***Project outline (B forms)***
  - Form B1 – Summary description of the project
  - Form B2a - General description of the area(s) / site(s) targeted by the project
  - Form B2b – Map of the general location of the project area
  - Form B2c – Description of species / habitats / biodiversity issue targeted by the project
  - Form B2d – Conservation / biodiversity problems and threats & previous conservation efforts
  - Form B3
  - Form B4 – Stakeholders involved and target audience of the project
  - Form B5 – Expected constraints and risks related to the project implementation and mitigation strategy
  - Form B6 – Continuation/valorisation and long term sustainability of the project's results after the end of the project

- ***Detailed actions (C forms)***

[28] Refer to Annex 3 on how to create a proposal on-line by using the eProposal Tool

- Form C0 – List of all proposed actions

- Form C1

  A. Preparatory actions, elaboration of management plans and / or of action plans
  B. Purchase / lease of land and / or compensation payments for use rights
  C. Conservation actions
  D. Monitoring the impact of the project actions (obligatory)
  E. Public awareness and dissemination of results (obligatory)
  F. Project management (obligatory).

- Form C2 Reporting schedule

- ***Financial application forms***

  - Form F1 – Direct personnel costs

  - Form F2 – Travel and subsistence costs

  - Form F3 – External assistance costs

  - Form F4.a – Infrastructure costs

  - Form F4.b – Equipment costs

  - Form F4.c – Prototype costs

  - Form F5.a – Land purchase

  - Form F5.b – Land lease

  - Form F5.c – One-off compensation payments

  - Form F6 – Costs for consumables

  - Form F7 – Other costs

  - Form F8 – Overheads

  - Form FC – Financial contributions

Major changes introduced to the full proposal following the concept note stage **are not admitted, See form A7 for more details and consult the Evaluation Guide as this might be a reason of failure linked to Eligibility criteria.**

Please note should your application be admitted to stage 2, the text that you provide in form A1, A2 and B1, B2 and B3 of concept note will be automatically transferred into corresponding forms/fields of full proposal. You will be able to edit previously provided information when preparing full proposal.

3.2.2 Administrative Forms (A forms)

Form A1 – General project information

Please refer to the instructions provided for the concept note stage on how to fill in this form.

Form A2 – Coordinating beneficiary

Please refer to the instructions provided for the concept note stage on how to fill in this form.

Form A3 – Coordinating beneficiary declaration

This form is available at the end of form A2 under the heading 'A3 – Coordinating Beneficiary declaration'.

Some of the information contained in this form (name of the beneficiary, contribution, actions in which the beneficiary is involved and total cost) will be automatically retrieved from the data entered in other forms of the proposal.

Click on the 'Generate declaration' button and fill in manually the following fields:

- 'At….on….': Indicate the place and the date of the signature.
- 'Signature': This form must be signed.
- 'Name(s) and status of signatory': The **name** and **status** of the person signing the form must be clearly indicated.

Important:

Before completing this form, please check that the beneficiary does not fall into any of the situations listed in art. 106(1) and 107 of the Financial Regulation n° 966/2012 of 25 October 2012 (JO L 298 of 26/10/2012), reference:

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2012:298:0001:0096:EN:PDF

and that the beneficiary complies with all relevant eligibility criteria, as defined in the LIFE multiannual work programme for 2018-2020 and the LIFE Call for Proposals, including this Guidelines for applicants.

For accuracy purposes, make sure that this form is **generated**, signed and dated **after** having entered all the technical and financial data into your application.

When the form is completed, scan it as an image file (not as a .pdf file, see accepted formats under the 'General rules' included in Annex 3), then upload it by using the 'Upload declaration' button.

Form A4 – Associated beneficiary declaration and Mandate

This form is available at the end of form A5 (see below) under the heading 'A4 – Associated Beneficiary declaration and Mandate'; click on 'Generate declaration'.

For completing this form, please also **see instructions for form A3.**

The following fields will be automatically filled:

- The forename and surname of the legal representative of the future associated beneficiary signing the form.
- The forename and surname of the legal representative of the future coordinating beneficiary of the project.

You need to manually fill in the following fields:

- 'At….on….': Indicate the place and the date of the signature.
- 'Signature': This form must be signed.
- 'Name(s) and status of signatory': The **name** and **status** of the person signing the form must be clearly indicated.

Form A5 – Associated beneficiary

Click on the 'Create Associated Beneficiary' button: fill-in all necessary information and click on 'Save' button. The Associated Beneficiary then appears in the list of Associated Beneficiaries.

For completing this form, please **see instructions for form A2.**

If the associated beneficiary is not legally registered in the EU, select the country from the drop-down list.

Form A6 – Co-financiers

If a co-financier will contribute to the project, click on the 'Add Co-financier' button: fill-in all necessary information and click on 'Save' button. The Co-financier then appears in the list of Co-financiers.

For completing this form, please **see also the instructions for form A3 above.**

Note that the co-financier contribution will have to be entered in form FC (see below).

Status of the financial commitment: please indicate either "*Confirmed"* or "*To be confirmed"*. If the status is "to be confirmed", this must be explained. Note that at a later stage in the selection process you will be required to provide the A6 form with status "confirmed".

When the form is completed, scan it as an image file (not as a .pdf file, see accepted formats under the 'General rules' included in Annex 3), then upload it by using the 'Upload declaration' button.

Important note: A coordinating / associated beneficiary should only appear in the proposal with that single role of coordinating / associated beneficiary and not also as a co-financier. In case a coordinating / associated beneficiary wishes to be a net financial contributor to the

project, they should still only submit forms A2/A3 or A4/A5 in which their financial contribution may be higher that their foreseen costs.

Form A7 – Other proposals submitted for European Union funding

Please check the box "Has this proposal been submitted before?" if you are resubmitting this proposal. Please provide the references and acronym of the previous proposal. For example: "LIFE11 BIO/country/001040 "ACRONYM".

Applicants should not underestimate the importance of this form: Clear and complete answers must be provided to each question (max 5000 characters for each question). The beneficiaries must inform the Contracting Authority about any related funding they have received from the EU budget, as well as any related ongoing applications for funding from the EU budget. The beneficiaries must also check that they are not receiving on-going operating grants from LIFE (or other EU programmes) that would lead to double financing.

Failure to signal this in the appropriate form might lead to rejection of the proposal.

If the applicant is proposing a continuation of a previous LIFE project, he should clearly describe in this form why a further project phase is needed and, how this will complement the results achieved with the previous project ensuring that no double financing will occur.

LIFE projects should not finance actions that are better financed by other EU funding programmes (see, section 1.6.15). **Applicants must therefore verify this aspect carefully** and provide the fullest possible information in their answers. Supporting documents (e.g. extracts from the texts of the relevant programmes) should be provided (as far as possible and appropriate). Please also note point 1 of the declaration in form A3 that you have to sign; national authorities may be asked to review this declaration.

Major changes introduced to the full proposal following the concept note stage: you are requested to list and justify any major changes to your project introduced during stage 2 Major changes are those that refer to the actions, partnership and budget. The requested EU contribution may increase by a maximum of 10% of the amount originally requested in the concept note. Please note that changes cannot lead to the change of the project nature and that this might lead to failing the Eligibility phase.

Form A8 – Declarations of support

Project proposals frequently include actions for which the coordinating and associated beneficiaries are not empowered to take the necessary decisions to ensure their successful completion. Typical examples are actions like management plan approval, *Natura 2000* site designation or modification or simply working on land falling partly or completely under the authority of a third party. For these proposals it is essential that the competent authority formally expresses its support and commitment to the proposal. The choice of the authority that should complete and sign the A8 form depends on the national / local administrative context. Applicants are advised to carefully evaluate the necessity of such a support. Proposals including actions requiring this type of support for which the corresponding A8

form has not been completed and signed are likely to receive a low score during the award phase of the selection procedure.

For projects carried out in more than one country, this form (if considered necessary, see paragraph above), must be completed by the relevant competent nature conservation / biodiversity authority of **all participating countries**. In this case, one form needs to be completed by each authority.

The **name and legal status**, **full address**, **telephone** number, **fax** number, **e-mail** and **contact person** (name and function) of each authority should be indicated on the form.

The authority in question should indicate **whether, why and how** it will support this project. The authority's support or non-support for the project should be without ambiguity. The authority should indicate, in particular, if the proposed actions constitute part of a programme drawn up / approved by the competent authority. The reasons why the authority grants support should be described. If the competent authority is to play an active role in some aspects of project implementation (such as through the provision of a permit, the approval of a prepared management plan, etc.), this should also be detailed.

Competent authorities that are directly involved as project beneficiaries do not need to complete an A8 form.

- Should the proposal include actions that require a commitment from the Member State to **designate new *Natura 2000* sites before the end of the project**, this commitment should be given in full detail here.
- It is also preferable, where possible, to include in this form a commitment from the Competent Authority to support or ensure the implementation of preparatory actions (e.g. draft management plans) after the end of the project (where this is not ensured during the project) and / or to disseminate and make use of the innovative techniques demonstrated by the project.

Signature: The form **must be signed** and the signature **must** be **dated**. The **name** and **status** of the person signing the form must be clearly indicated.

Click on the 'New declaration' button: fill-in all necessary information and click on 'Add' button. The Declaration then appears in the list of A8 forms. Click on the 'Print' icon to generate the declaration, print, sign and scan it as an image file (not as a .pdf file, see accepted format under the 'General rules' in Annex 3). Then, in the list of A8 forms, click on the 'Edit' button corresponding to the declaration, go to 'Declaration scanned image' at the bottom of the screen and upload it; click on the 'Save' button. You may delete it by clicking on the 'Remove' button.

Alternatively, you may ask the competent authorities to use the editable Word template document included in the Application package and upload it afterwards as a separate document in the 'Attachments' section of eProposal.

This form may also be used to indicate any other support to the project by **important stakeholder bodies, administrative bodies or individuals** that may be concerned by the project. The submission of such form(s) is encouraged in all cases where the feasibility or the success of the project implementation is dependent on agreements from any third parties.

3.2.3 Project outline (B forms)

Form B1 – Summary description of the project (to be completed in English)

Please refer to the instructions provided for the concept note stage on how to fill in this form

Form B2a – General description of the area(s) / site(s) targeted by the project

- ***For projects with actions targeting a well-defined area / site:***

  Please provide a general description of the area(s) / site(s) targeted by the project. If your project involves several distinct **sub-areas / sub-sites**, please fill in **one form for each**; use the 'Create new project site' button for this.

  Note that for projects with site-based actions inside *Natura 2000* sites or intended to improve the integrity of the *Natura 2000* network, the project area is considered to include the entire area of all the *Natura 2000* sites covered by the project, i.e. the applicant should not define a project perimeter within a *Natura 2000* site. The form should include:

  - **Name of the project area (max 200 characters)**: Please indicate the name of the area. The name indicated should be short and must be used consistently on all maps and technical forms of the proposal.
  - **Surface area (ha):** Please indicate the total surface of the project area in hectares, rounded to two decimals.
  - **EU protection status:** Please tick SPA and / or SAC / SCI / pSCI / none as relevant and indicate the corresponding *Natura 2000* site code, if relevant. In case the site is protected both under the Birds and Habitats Directive, both *Natura 2000* codes should be provided.
  - **Other protection statuses according to national or regional legislation (max 500 characters)**: Please indicate, if relevant, any other international, national and / or local protection status.
  - **Main land uses and ownership of the project area (max 1,000 characters):** Please indicate what are, at the project application date, the main uses made of the project site. Examples of uses are farming, tourism, urban, nature conservation etc. Please indicate the approximate percentages (in %) of the various uses, ensuring that the total reaches 100%. Please also indicate the ownership status / types of the area at the project application date (e.g. private, state, etc.) Please indicate the approximate percentages (in %) of the different ownership status / types, ensuring that the total reaches 100%.
  - **Scientific description of the project area (max 10,000 characters):** Please provide a global description of the scientific value of the project area (botanical, zoological, geological, hydrological etc.). Whenever possible, please indicate the main sources of your information for this description.
  - **Importance of the project area for the conservation of the species / habitat types or biodiversity issue targeted at regional, national and EU level (max 10,000 characters):** You must justify why you have selected this particular area for your project. You must explain why your choice is the most appropriate to reach the project's objectives. Indicate what actions are planned in this area and at what locations (where feasible provide a map in A4 or A3 format of the area / site summarising where each action will take place). As far as possible, provide quantitative information and indicate your main sources of information.

Maps are **mandatory for projects with site-based actions**. At least one map per project site (sub-area) should be presented. Each map should include where appropriate:

- A title **(max 250 characters)**,
- If relevant, indication if the area is a SPA and or SCI / pSCI /SAC, the name and code of the *Natura 2000* area,
- The location of the main habitats / species targeted by the project,
- The location of the different site-based actions, as planned in the proposal (these actions must be specified in the legend),
- The scale and legend of the map. The legend should include all project actions that have been located on the map, indicating its number and title (e.g. B1-Land purchase). The legend should also include the explanation of the habitats located on the map. Please indicate the official names and codes of these habitats,
- The boundary(ies) of the *Natura 2000* sites, if relevant. If the proposal includes actions targeting species / habitats of the Habitats Directive, pSCI / SCI / SAC boundaries must be indicated. If the proposal includes actions targeting bird species of the Birds Directive, SPA boundaries must be indicated.
- The boundary(ies) of the project area(s), only if they are different from the *Natura 2000* site boundaries.

  For information, and only if useful, the boundaries referring to other protection status either at regional or national level.

Applicants shall make sure that maps are of **very good quality** and contain all the requisite information. Maps should be presented in **A4 or A3 formats only**.

Note: A site-based *LIFE Nature* proposal may be rejected if the maps are of insufficient detail or quality. In particular, where relevant, the map must allow the evaluators to determine if the key actions will be implemented inside *Natura 2000* sites or in sites that will affect the integrity of the *Natura 2000* network.

➢ ***For projects without actions targeting a well-defined area:***

In case the project does not include actions targeting a well-defined area, you should describe as precisely as possible where the project will be implemented (city, area, region, etc.). Please use only one form, which should include:

- **Name of the project area(s) (max 200 characters)**: Please indicate the name of the city, area, region, etc. The name indicated should be short and must be used consistently on all maps and technical forms of the proposal.
- **Surface area (ha), EU protection status**, **Other protected statuses according to national or regional legislation, Main land uses and ownership of the project area, Scientific description of the project area:** Please indicate relevant information (see the notes for projects targeting a well-defined area or site above) or else 'NOT APPLICABLE'
- **Importance of the project area for the conservation of the species / habitat types targeted at regional, national and EU level (max 10,000 characters):** You must explain where the project will be implemented. Justify why you have selected this particular area for your project. You must explain why your choice is the most appropriate to reach the project's objectives.

Form B2b – Map of the general location of the project area

This map should locate **the project area(s) described in form(s) B2a**. It should locate the project area(s) within the country and, if necessary, within the region(s) concerned. In case the project does not include actions targeting a defined area, you should locate as clearly as possible where the project is implemented (city, area, region etc.).

The **title and scale of the map** must be indicated. The map should be of **high quality** and **high resolution**, preferably in colour. The map should be easy to read. It should include, as a minimum, a clear legend and the background (main cities, main administrative delimitations, main rivers, lakes and sea(s) with the corresponding names, and the main roads). In addition, topography and vegetal coverage may be indicated on the map, if appropriate.

Form B2c – Description of species / habitats / biodiversity issue targeted by the project

- ***For LIFE Nature projects and for LIFE Biodiversity projects targeting defined species/habitats:***

List and provide a brief description of the **main species** and / or **main habitats** directly targeted by the project (**max 10,000 characters**). Please note that only the species and / or habitats directly targeted should be described.

For each of the main species targeted, please indicate:

- **Scientific name** (in Latin), as indicated in the EU Birds or Habitats Directive. Please note that the regularly occurring migratory bird species not listed in the EU Birds Directive which are targeted by the project should be listed here. If the species is a priority species (according to Annex II of the Habitats Directive or is on the list of priority bird species referred to in "75% co-financing" in the general principles section), please mark with an asterisk.
- The **Annex(es) of the EU Birds or Habitats Directive** where the species is listed.
- **Population size** within the project area. In case the project does not include actions targeting a well-defined area, please indicate the population size at regional, national or multinational level, as relevant.
- The **conservation status** within the project area. Please provide full and quantitative details. In case the project does not include actions targeting a well-defined area, please indicate the conservation status at regional, national or multinational level, as relevant.
- For bird species, please indicate whether the project area (if relevant) is used for **breeding, wintering and / or staging.**

For each of the main habitats targeted, please indicate:

- **Name and *Natura 2000* code**, as indicated in the EU Habitats Directive. If the habitat is a priority habitat (according to the Annex I of the Habitats Directive), please mark with an asterisk.
- The **% of the cover of the habitat type** over the whole project area and for each sub-area
- The **conservation status** within the project area (if relevant). Please provide full and quantitative details.

- ***For all other LIFE Biodiversity projects:*** Please describe the biodiversity issue(s) targeted by your project and the biodiversity / conservation status / ecological condition within the project area. In case the project does not include actions targeting a defined area, you should describe the biodiversity / conservation status / ecological condition at the scale of the city, area, region etc.

Form B2d – Conservation / biodiversity problems and threats & previous conservation efforts

Conservation / biodiversity problems and threats (max 10,000 characters): Identifying the threats in the project area(s) to the species / habitats or biodiversity issue(s) targeted is essential for determining which actions need to be undertaken. This section should describe these threats (in decreasing order of importance) and their importance for the conservation of the habitats/species targeted (both within the project area(s) and in general) or for biodiversity in general. Whenever possible, problems/threats should be located and quantified. The description should include: **the name of the threat**, its **description**, its **location** (if relevant), its **impact on biodiversity or on the habitats/species targeted** (quantify if possible) and an indication as to **how these problems and threats will be dealt with during the project**.

Previous conservation efforts in the project area or for the habitats/species targeted by the project (max 10,000 characters): Please describe whether any actions have been undertaken previously on the area or for the species/habitat type or biodiversity issue(s) targeted (e.g. any management plan drawn up, surveys conducted, land purchased etc.). Please indicate the year and results of these efforts. Please also indicate who was/is responsible for these efforts. If the project fits into a regional/national/EU conservation / biodiversity strategy, this should be clearly mentioned and explained here.

Form B3

Best Practice character of the project (max 10,000 characters): Please explain the best practice character of your project, if relevant. For details, see section 1.2.

Demonstration character of the project (max 10,000 characters): Please explain the demonstration character of your project, if relevant. For details, see section 1.2.

Pilot aspects of the project (max 10,000 characters): Please explain the pilot aspects of your project, if relevant. For details, see section 1.2.

If the applicant is proposing a **Pilot project** according to the definition in section 1.2, applicant has to justify that the technique or method employed in the proposal **has not been applied or tested before, or elsewhere worldwide**.

If the applicant is proposing a **Demonstration project** according to the definition in section 1.2, applicant has to justify that the actions, methodologies or approaches proposed **are new or unknown in the specific context of the project**, such as the geographical, ecological or economic context.

In general, **for both pilot and demonstration projects**, applicant must elaborate on the **technical description** of the processes or methods proposed, on the **new elements** and on **improvements**.

The applicant is also requested **to compare** the proposed solution with existing best practices describing advantages and environmental improvements.

EU added value of the project and its actions (max 10,000 characters):

The information provided in this field will be used inter alia for the evaluation of the proposal under the following award criteria (for details see the *Guide for the evaluation of LIFE project proposals 2018*):

- **Award criterion 3** - Extent and quality of the contribution to the specific objectives of the priority areas of the LIFE Sub-programme for Environment

  Please indicate whether and how your project contributes to the updating, the development as well as to the implementation of one or several of the specific objectives of the priority areas of the LIFE sub-programme for Environment as set out in Articles 10, 11 and 12 of the LIFE Regulation. **Environmental/conservation benefits will be assessed under this criterion and considered as an indicator of the extent and quality of such contribution; they shall be clear, substantial, ambitious, as well as credible.**

Quantification of environmental/conservation benefits: the improved performances/advantages introduced by the proposed solution must be quantified in terms of the expected environmental benefits during the project duration and 5 years after the end of the project. This must be done by clearly indicating what the chosen baseline is. Furthermore, consistency with expected results (Form B1) and values reported in the table on LIFE Key project level indicators shall be ensured.

- **Award criterion 6** - EU added value: synergies and transnationality

Please indicate whether and how your project addresses: Synergies, Green Public Procurement, Ecolabel, uptake of EU-research results and Transnationality.

With regard to the bonus for uptake of results from EU financed research projects, this will be awarded only if a brief but comprehensive description of such results and of how they will be used for the implementation of the LIFE project is included in this form.

For further guidance on how these aspects will be assessed please refer to the relevant Evaluation guidelines.

Replication and transfer (max 10,000 characters):

Please describe your replication and transfer strategy (assessed under Award criterion 4) during and after project implementation (see section 1.6.13 for further details). As explained below, specific project activities will have to be envisaged to support statements made here (see section 3.2.4.on 'Detailed technical description of the proposed actions C forms').

In the context of this priority area a strategy to ensure replication and transfer of project results to other contexts means going further than simply committing to project continuation, but entails a clear and sound plan supported by project activities that would allow

replication/transfer to other sectors, entities, regions or countries. Please be aware that replication and transfer are different from continuation which is addressed in Form B6. Replication and transfer are part of the overall sustainability strategy.

Socio-economic and ecosystem services effects of the project (max 10,000 characters)

Please indicate the probable impact of the project actions on the local economy and population, as well as on the ecosystem functions protection and restoration.

Form B4 – Stakeholders involved and main target audience of the project (max 12,000 characters)

Indicate the stakeholders the proposal intends to involve and how. Please indicate what kind of input you expect from them and how their involvement will be used in the project and useful and/or needed for the project.

Describe target groups and methods for dissemination of knowledge. Comment on activities for general publicity and / or marketing of the concept during and after implementation.

Form B5 – Expected constraints and risks related to the project implementation and mitigation strategy (max 12,000 characters)

It is important that applicants identify all possible **internal or external events** ("constraints and risks") that could have **major negative impacts** on the successful implementation of the project. Please list such constraints and risks, in the decreasing order of importance. Please also indicate any possible constraints and risks due to the **socio-economic environment**. For each constraint and risk identified, please indicate how you envisage overcoming it.

You are also strongly advised to include in this section any details on licences, permits, EIA, etc., and to indicate what support you have from the competent bodies responsible for issuing such authorisations. The experience of the LIFE programme has shown that some projects have difficulties completing all actions within the proposed project duration, due to unforeseen delays and difficulties encountered during the project. It is important that applicants identify all possible external events ("constraints and risks") that could cause such delays. One possible reason for such difficulties is the obligation to perform assessments that were not foreseen during the preparation of the LIFE project, in particular:

- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), according to the Directive 85/337/EEC (the EIA Directive), codified by Directive 2011/92/EU of 13 December 2011[29];
- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), according to the Directive 2001/42/WE (the SEA Directive)[30];
- Assessment required under Article 6 of Directive 92/43/EEC (the Habitats Directive; Article 6 assessment)[31].

[29] Codified version of the EIA Directive:
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2012:026:0001:0021:EN:PDF
[30] SEA Directive:
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2001:197:0030:0037:EN:PDF
[31] Consolidated version of the Habitats Directive:
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:1992L0043:20070101:EN:PDF

LIFE Nature and Biodiversity co-finances projects in the field of nature conservation. Nevertheless, sometimes LIFE projects could include "*projects"* (within the meaning of the EIA Directive) for which due to the EIA Directive itself or to the national transposition, an EIA must be preceded. Although unlikely, it is also possible that LIFE project actions may require changes of existing plans or programs (e.g. spatial planning documents), which may in turn require an SEA.

These assessments may involve long administrative procedures and data collection analysis. This is normally not a problem if the time and funds necessary are foreseen in the project.

Therefore, before submitting a LIFE proposal, applicants should find out whether one or more of the assessments mentioned above will be required under EU or national law.

Applicants should describe in Form B5 how these issues are taken into account and how they envisage overcoming potential problems. To pre-empt unforeseen problems good communication and consultation with the competent authorities in charge of these procedures is essential. This should already be done at the beginning of the LIFE proposal preparation. Form B5 is the correct place to indicate whether the competent authorities in charge of assessments procedures have been consulted and the results of these consultations.

Another risk applicants should consider is the possible negative impact of ongoing or planned development projects (infrastructure or industrial projects) on the LIFE proposal's actions or sites. Direct or indirect impacts of development projects may lead to difficulties in the implementation of the LIFE project. Therefore, before submitting a proposal, applicants should check the spatial planning documents for the areas selected for the LIFE proposal and check ongoing EIA procedures for development projects planned on or near the LIFE proposal sites. Applicants need to be aware that compensatory measures resulting from implementing a development project (within the meaning of the EIA or Article 6.4 of the Habitats Directive) cannot overlap with the LIFE proposal actions. There are four elements that determine whether an overlap exists:

- geographic – whether compensatory measures are applied in exactly the same *Natura 2000* site as LIFE measures;
- substantive – whether the LIFE measures are technically different from the compensatory measures;
- temporal – whether the LIFE actions and compensatory measures are applied at different moments;
- financial – whether it is possible to clearly distinguish the funds used for the implementation of the compensatory measures and the LIFE funds (for example, through two different accounts).

According to the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement any costs related to any action that can be considered as a compensatory measure, that are the responsibility of the Member State and that are decided in relation to the Birds and Habitats Directives are ineligible.

Finally, please detail how you have taken into account the risks identified into the planning of the project (time planning, budget, etc.) and the definition of the actions.

Form B6 – Continuation/valorisation and long term sustainability of the project's results after the end of the project

Describe how the project will be continued after the end of the LIFE funding, and what actions are required to consolidate the results in order to ensure the favourable conservation status of the targeted species and / or habitats and / or biodiversity aspects. Please describe a clear strategy or mechanism to ensure that the results of the project will continue after the funding period. This goes beyond dissemination and After-LIFE plan.

Project activities should show such commitment and already prepare for project continuation during the project timeframe.

Information included in this form as well as the project activities linked to the continuation strategy will be considered under Award criterion 4 (EU added value: sustainability, point linked to continuation). Please be aware that continuation is different from replication and transfer that is addressed in Form B3. However, continuation is part of the overall sustainability strategy assessed under Award criterion 4.

Please note that information provided in this section may be updated during the project life based on the project's results. In particular, please reply to the following questions:

- **Which actions will have to be carried out or continued after the end of the project? (max 5,000 characters)** Please list such project actions indicating their reference (e.g. A1, A2,…) and title.
- **How will this be achieved? What resources will be necessary to carry out these actions? (max 5,000 characters)** Please indicate how the above actions will be continued after the project, by whom, within what timeframe and with what financing. Discuss here the technical, financial and human resources.
- **Protection status under national / local law of sites / species / habitats targeted (if relevant) (max 5,000 characters):** Please indicate what protection status is expected to be acquired by or after the end of the project, and when.
- **How, when and by whom will the equipment acquired be used after the project end (max 5,000 characters)**: Please list the main pieces of equipment to be purchased under the project and provide details on their utilisation after the end of the project. Please bear in mind that, according to the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement the purchase costs incurred for durable goods by public authorities or non-profit organisations in LIFE Nature and Biodiversity projects, the eligibility of durable goods purchased under the project shall be subject to the beneficiaries undertaking to continue to assign these goods **definitively to nature conservation activities** beyond the end of the project.
- **To what extent will the results and lessons of the project be actively disseminated after the end of the project to those persons and / or organisations that could best make use of them? (Please identify these persons/organisations) (max 5,000 characters):** Please indicate how dissemination activities will continue after the end of the project. Please list the persons / organisations that have been so far identified as targets for these dissemination activities.
- **How will the long-term sustainability of the project's concrete actions be assured? (max 5,000 characters):** Please provide details.

3.2.4 Detailed technical description of the proposed actions (C forms)

The applicant must list **all the actions that will be implemented under the project**. There are 6 types of actions:

A. Preparatory actions, elaboration of management plans and / or of action plans
B. Purchase / lease of land and / or compensation payments for use rights
C. Conservation actions
D. Monitoring the impact of the project actions (obligatory)
E. Public awareness and dissemination of results (obligatory)
F. Project management (obligatory).

To be considered eligible for funding, all actions must meet each of the following conditions:

- the need of the action has to be well justified in view of the objectives of the project; and
- the long-term sustainability of the investments must be guaranteed.

Under each type of action (A, B, C…), the applicant must list the different actions: A1, A2 … B1, B2 … C1, C2 … etc. Sequential numbers under the same category of actions are generated automatically and their order may be changed using the 'Up↑' and 'Down↓' arrows.

Under each action (A1, A2, …., B1, B2,….etc.) specific sub-actions (A1.1, A1.2, ...) may be included by the applicant (manually) in the section "***Description (what, how, where, when and why)*** ". When structuring a proposal, it is strongly recommended to limit the number of actions as much as possible grouping them into homogenous activities and clarifying the logical flow through sub-actions. **Please be reminded that the number of actions and sub-actions should be limited to those strictly necessary to clarify the logical flow of the project.** See example below on what is recommended and what is not:

Recommended:

E – Public awareness and dissemination of results

Action E1 – Dissemination planning and execution

- *Description (what, how, where, when, why)*

  Sub-action E1.1 – Dissemination plan and Networking with other projects (including LIFE)

  Sub-action E1.2 – Development of the Dissemination Pack (including website, brochures, Layman's Report, project video, events)

Not recommended:

E – Public awareness and dissemination of results

Action E1 – Dissemination planning and execution

- *Description (what, how, where, when, why)*

Action E2 – Website

- *Description (what, how, where, when, why)*

Action E3 – Brochures

- *Description (what, how, where, when, why)*

Action E4 – Workshops

- *Description (what, how, where, when, why)*

Action E5 – Layman's Report

- *Description (what, how, where, when, why)*

Action E6 – Networking with other projects

- *Description (what, how, where, when, why)*

It is recommended that only actions that are expected to have an important output for the project are presented as a **separate action**.

The actions must be described as precisely as possible. The descriptions may be accompanied by maps locating the actions, explanatory graphs, tables or pictures, which may be included in the forms by using the "Pictures" functionality. **Actions must not be confused with deliverables**.

The description of each action should clearly indicate the links with other actions (e.g. action C2 follows the purchase of land in action B1 which follows the preparation in action A2) and should clearly (and in quantitative terms) indicate how it contributes to the project's overall objectives. There should be a **clear coherence between the technical description of the action and the financial resources allocated.**

For each action, the applicant should provide the following information:

- **Name of the action (max 200 characters)**: Please ensure that the name is short (maximum 200 characters) and that it clearly reflects the objective of the action.
- **Beneficiary responsible for implementation:** Please indicate by selecting from the drop-down menu which of the project's beneficiaries will be in charge of the coordination of the implementation of this action. Should more than one beneficiary be implicated, please give full details of which beneficiary is responsible for what in the text field (max 500 characters) available under the drop down list.
- **Description (what, how, where,when and why) (max 7,000 characters)**: Please describe the content of the action indicating what will be done, using what means, on

which location / site, with what duration and within what deadline. If applicable, indicate whether this action counts towards the 25% concrete conservation actions requirement, and why. Specify the links with other actions. Please indicate **why** the action is necessary and how it will contribute to reaching the project's objectives. For actions implemented outside the EU, full details should be provided on why such actions are necessary to achieve EU environmental objectives and to ensure the effectiveness of interventions carried out during the LIFE project in the Member State territories to which the Treaties apply. Specific sub-actions (A1.1, A1.2, ...) may be included by the applicant manually in this section (see example for Action E above)

- **Assumptions related to major costs of the action (max 2,000 characters)**: Please summarise the methodology used for estimating the costs of the main expenditures in this action (e.g. no. of ha * cost / ha, no. days * average cost / day,…). Please note that the total cost of the action as inserted in financial forms is displayed automatically (sum of the cost lines created in the F forms for that Action); when creating a new action, this value is by default 0 €. You must give details of the different calculations and estimations on which this total cost is based.
- **Deliverables:** Please list all deliverable products associated with each action and the corresponding completion deadline (day/month/year) by using the 'Add' button. Deliverable products are all those tangible products that can be shipped (e.g. management plans, studies and other documents, software, videos, etc). For each deliverable, please include the deadline for its completion (day/month/year). Please note that any deliverable product will have to be submitted as a separate document (bearing the LIFE logo) to the Contracting Authority together with an activity report. **Milestones:** Please list all project milestones associated with each action and the corresponding delivery / achievement deadline (day/month/year). ***Project milestones*** are defined as **key moments** during the implementation of the project e.g. ”Nomination of the Project Manager”, "Initial operation of prototype", “Final conference”, etc. The corresponding documents do not need to be submitted to the Contracting Authority. You will need to inform the Contracting Authority whether the milestone has been completed or not in the technical reports you will send to the Contracting Authority.
- **Timetable:** For each project action, please tick the corresponding implementation period. When planning the implementation period of your project, please bear in mind that a LIFE 2018 project cannot start before 15 July 2019. Also, please add an appropriate safety margin at the end of the project to allow for the inevitable unforeseen delays.

Please find below indication on the additional information to be provided for specific actions.

Form C0 – List of all actions

This form allows the applicant to create all the actions foreseen in the project, per type of action (A, B, C, …), by using the 'Add project action' button. Once an action has been created, you may use the 'Save and next' button to directly create another action.

Very important: **project actions have to be created before you are able to introduce any costs in the financial F forms**.

Form C1

A. Preparatory actions, elaboration of management plans and / or of action plans

The preparatory actions should cover all that has to be completed to allow the start or proper implementation of other project actions indicated in categories B, C, D, E or F. This includes the preparation of technical documents (blueprints, preparation of inventories, …) and any administrative or legal procedure needed to be carried out (consultation, call for tender, deliberations, training etc.).

If the elaboration of a management plan and / or action plans is foreseen, the description of the corresponding preparatory action should specify what will be done to ensure that these plans will be implemented (e.g. competent authorities adopt the plan before the end of the project).

Where preparatory actions do not lead to direct implementation during the project, their description should include a sufficient set of explanations, commitments and guarantees to show that their full implementation after the project is effectively ensured. Otherwise, such actions may be deleted from the project during the revision phase.

B. Purchase / lease of land and / or compensation payment for use rights

It is particularly important that the description of each action clearly indicates how **each** of the eligibility conditions described in section 2.4.3 on land purchase is met.

For each action, please indicate the state of discussions with the landowners. Have they been consulted and do they agree in principle? Specify clearly what kind of habitats will be bought / leased and where they are located. Specify how much land will be bought / leased of each habitat types and justify the proposed cost/ha in relation to current land prices. If the land is to be bought through **land swaps**, specify this clearly (to be eligible the swap must be completed before the end of the project). If land is to be bought or leased in order to undertake other actions within the project, **indicate which actions** are dependent on the land purchase being achieved. If appropriate, please indicate **'alternative' land** that can be bought should difficulties arise with the prime target.

C. Conservation actions

In case any of the actions depend on preparatory actions or land purchase / leasing, please indicate this clearly.

For *LIFE Nature* and *LIFE Biodiversity* projects targeting specific habitats/species, for each conservation action proposed, please specify **which habitat types and / or species** are affected (and if possible provide their surfaces and numbers), and how they relate to the project's objectives. For all other *LIFE Biodiversity* projects please specify **which biodiversity aspects** are tackled, and how they relate to the project's objectives. Provide clear information on the location and expected impact of each of these actions. Specify who will take care of the maintenance, if needed, after the end of the project.

If the beneficiaries need to build **infrastructure or purchase equipment or animals** (e.g. grazing cattle) for conservation management, these items should be listed, described and justified in detail.

If appropriate, explain how, by whom and through which financing source the action will **be continued** after the project period. Note also that any anticipated payments for

management actions that take place after the end of the project are not eligible for LIFE funding.

The output of all C actions should be **concrete, measurable and with a clear benefit** for the habitats / species / biodiversity issue targeted by the project. This benefit should be **measurable** and should be measured and evaluated under **D-category monitoring action(s)**. The output of each action should be quantified when possible.

Note: concrete conservation actions should be listed as C actions. Many applicants incorrectly list as C actions, actions that are not concrete conservation actions (e.g. actions related to inventories, management plans, monitoring, management guides, stakeholder communication, etc.).

D. Monitoring of the impact of the project actions (obligatory)

All projects shall include separate impact monitoring action(s) to measure and document the effectiveness of the project actions as compared to the initial situation, objectives and expected results. Regular reporting on monitoring should be foreseen. A distinct "monitoring" action with an individual budget should therefore be proposed.

Each project will have to report on the outputs and impact of the project taking into account the **Key project level indicators** (see the excel table: LIFE Key project level indicators Call 2018). These indicators will contribute to evaluating the impact of the LIFE project. Please review project indicators and complete them with the impact of the solution proposed during or at the end of the project (include clear quantification in absolute and relative terms). Please do the same for 5 years after the project ends.

The excel table of LIFE Key project level indicators has to be submitted through eProposal as an attachment.

A dynamic indicators database is available to successful applicants. The database preview can be accessed for information at the following webpage: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/files/kpi/kpi_demo.htm. In case the webpage is not working (this can happen, for example, if the applicant does not have the Flash Plugin installed in the browser), it is possible to download an .mp4 movie from the following link: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/files/kpi/kpi_demo.mp4

At the application stage the applicants need to fill in the provided Excel table. The dynamic online database cannot be completed at this time and is presented only to show the applicants the type of information they will be asked to complete if and after their grant agreement is signed.

A specific action to monitor and measure the impact of the project (that will feed the online dynamic indicator database), **should be part of the proposal** with a defined budget. Information on project impacts has to be submitted at the time of the first report (either Progress or Mid-term) and Final report.

An assessment of the socio-economic impact of the project actions on the local economy and population shall be included as part of the LIFE Key project level indicators both at the submission stage and later as part of the monitoring in case the project is successful.

Where relevant the results of the assessment of ecosystem conditions and ecosystem services should be also reported in the dynamic indicators database.

For projects that have a demonstration or innovation character, this action should also clearly include the evaluation of the technique or method demonstrated.

E. Public awareness and dissemination of results (obligatory)

Projects must include a significant set of activities, synthetically and homogeneously grouped in a few sub-actions (see example in section 3.3.3), to disseminate the results of the project.

Projects should typically include the following types of communication activities:

- information and awareness raising activities regarding the project to the general public and stakeholders. These activities should in general begin early on in the project;
- more technical dissemination activities aimed at transferring the results and lessons learnt **to those stakeholders that could usefully benefit from the project's experience**;
- networking.

LIFE Nature and LIFE Biodiversity projects **must also include substantial activities to ensure replication or transfer**. These activities shall provide the basis for cost-efficient replication or transfer of the solutions proposed and results obtained either during or after the end of the project. This goes **beyond transfer of knowledge and networking**, and involves putting the techniques, methods or strategies developed or applied in the project into practice elsewhere.

Successful replication and transferability require a strategy including tasks to multiply the impacts of the projects' solutions and mobilise a wider uptake, reaching a critical mass during the project and/or in the short and medium term after the end of the project. See section 2.4.3 for examples.

For each action, please specify and justify the target audience. If an action involves meetings (e.g. with local stakeholders), you should estimate the number of meetings specify the targeted stakeholders, and explain how this will help the project. If an action concerns brochures, leaflets, publications, films ..., specify the target audience. Should an action concern visitor access, specify what will be done, where, how many visitors are expected, how this will help the project, etc. Should beneficiaries plan to present the project results in national / international events (conferences, congresses), the relevance and added value for the project should be clearly explained.

All actions should specify the expected results in qualitative and quantitative terms (e.g. improved support from the local community, 2500 persons informed, 3000 newsletters circulated, …), indicating how this serves the project's objectives.

The following dissemination activities are considered **obligatory** and shall be grouped in **one sub-action** which includes the following list of deliverables:

- **Notice boards (deliverable)** describing the project shall be displayed at strategic places accessible to the public. The LIFE logo should always appear on them. For actions taking place in *Natura 2000* sites or with the objective of improving the integrity of the Natura 2000 network, the *Natura 2000* logo should also appear.
- A newly-created or existing **website (deliverable)** (with the LIFE logo, and the *Natura 2000* logo if relevant),. The web site shall be put on line within 6 months after the project start and regularly updated during the project period and shall be maintained on-line during at least 5 years after the project's end.
- A **layman's report (deliverable)**.

Networking with other projects (including LIFE III, LIFE+ and/or LIFE projects), information exchange activities etc. should be presented as one distinct **obligatory sub-action**.

Media work, organisation of and participation to events, production of brochures and films, technical publications are not considered obligatory, but are foreseen in many projects and are welcome as evidence of good dissemination.

See the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement for full details of communication and dissemination requirements. The LIFE website http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/toolkit/comtools/index.htm also contains detailed advice on communication and dissemination actions and the guidelines on how to design a LIFE web-site.

F. Project management (obligatory)

The applicant should list the different activities (synthetically and homogeneously grouped in a few sub-actions) aiming at managing / operating the project and ensuring quality control and risk management, including contingency planning. This typically involves the following activities and associated costs:

Overall project management:

Each project must include a sub-action named "Project management by (name of the beneficiary in charge)". This sub-action should include a description of the project **management staff** and describe management and reporting duties of the project beneficiaries even if no costs will be charged for this to the project

Please include a **management chart** of the technical and administrative staff involved. This chart must provide evidence that the coordinating beneficiary (Project Manager) has a clear authority and an efficient control of the project management staff, even if part of the project management would be outsourced. Explain if the management staff has **previous project management experience**.

It is **strongly recommended** that the project manager be full-time. If a coordinator or project manager also directly contributes to the implementation of certain actions, an appropriate part of his/her salary costs should be attributed to the estimated costs of those actions.

It is expected that the project management is carried out by the staff of the coordinating beneficiary. However, outsourcing of project management is possible on the basis of an appropriate justification, provided the coordinating beneficiary retains full and day to day

control of the project. The proposal should clearly describe how this control will be guaranteed.

Please also include a **rationale of the project consortium** by indicating, for each beneficiary, the country and the role in the project. Please include the table below as an attachment in "Project management":

	Country	Role in the project
[Beneficiary 1]		
[Affiliate to Beneficiary 1]		
[Beneficiary 2]		
[Beneficiary 3]		

In case you propose to include affiliated entities in your proposal, they shall also be reported in the table.

Audit report (deliverable):

Where required (see General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement), this audit should not only verify the respect of national legislation and accounting rules but should also certify that all costs incurred respect the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement. In the financial forms, the costs for the audit should be under the budget item "Other costs". Audit report must be added to the list of deliverables. No specific sub-action is required.

After-LIFE Plan:

The coordinating beneficiary must produce an "**After-LIFE Plan**" and submit it with the final report. It shall be presented in the beneficiary's language and optionally in English, in paper and electronic format. The After-LIFE Plan shall set out how the actions initiated in the LIFE project will be continued and developed in the years that follow the end of the project, how the longer term management of the site(s) / habitats / species will be assured, and how replication elsewhere will be fostered. The After-LIFE Plan shall in addition set out how the dissemination and communication of the results will continue after the end of the project. It should give details regarding what actions will be carried out, when, by whom, with which sources of finance. A separate sub-action for this plan should be added to the proposal and the plan must be added to the list of deliverables.

Form C2 Reporting schedule

Activity reports foreseen:

The coordinating beneficiary shall report to the Contracting Authority about the technical and financial progress of the project. The project's achieved results and possible problems should be highlighted in these reports.

Note that the grant agreement, project management, formal reporting (excluding annexes or deliverables) and all communication with the Contracting Authority must be in English, even if

the language of the project proposal is different. The costs for translation of reports (excluding annexes or deliverables) are therefore eligible.

For projects with a duration exceeding 24 months or requesting an EU contribution of more than € 300,000, a Mid-term report with a request for a second pre-financing payment has to be provided. For projects with a duration exceeding 48 months and an EU contribution of more than € 4,000,000, if the coordinating beneficiary wishes to request a third pre-financing payment, a second Mid-term Report has to be provided. The Mid-term report(s) are to be delivered, together with the requests for mid-term pre-financing, in line with the thresholds defined in the Special Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement. One "Final Report with payment request" shall be submitted, not later than 3 months after the project end date. "Progress reports" should also be foreseen in order to ensure that at least one report is received every 18 months (the reporting schedule may be modified during the revision phase). Please consult General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement for full details on reporting obligations of LIFE projects.

3.2.5 Financial application forms

Important: The project's budget must only include costs which are in accordance with Article II.19 of the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement. The EU contribution will be calculated on the basis of eligible costs.

General remarks:

Please make sure that all costs are rounded down to the next integer. Decimals cannot be entered in the forms.

The coordinating beneficiary and associated beneficiaries, entities identified as 'affiliated entities' as well as other companies that are part of the same groups or holdings, cannot act as sub-contractors.

Internal invoicing (i.e. costs that result from transactions between departments of a beneficiary) is to be avoided and will only be allowed if it excludes all elements of profit, VAT and overheads. Please note that costs incurred by the same legal entity should in principle be declared under the correct cost categories (personnel costs, consumables, other costs etc).

All contracts attributed under any of the cost categories should respect the principle of absence of conflict of interest, regardless of the amount involved.

Value added tax paid by the beneficiaries is eligible except for:

a) **taxed activities or exempt activities with right of deduction;**
b) **activities engaged in as a public authority by the beneficiary where it is a State, regional or local government authority or another body governed by public law.**

For each cost line, select from the drop-down menus the short name of the beneficiary that will incur the respective cost and the number of the action to which the respective cost is related.

To add a cost line use the 'Add' button, to delete a cost line use the 'Delete' button.

All financial forms are tab activated: in order to create cost lines quickly, you may use the Tab key on your keyboard to move from one field to the next one, and then to the 'Add' button (then press the 'Enter' key: the cost line is added).

If project beneficiaries wish to be involved in project actions at € 0 cost (and have this piece of information reflected in the declarations A3/A4), they have to enter in the financial forms F1-F7 the respective action with the corresponding € 0 cost.

If project beneficiaries (private organisations) wish to include their 'affiliates' in the project, then they should indicate in the description of the cost items concerned that the cost will be incurred by their 'affiliate + name'. Please note that the use of affiliates would need to be introduced in Art. I.7 of the future grant agreement.

Form F1 – Direct personnel costs

Public body personnel: The salary costs of public body personnel may be funded only to the extent that they relate to the cost of project implementation activities that the relevant public body would not have carried out had the project concerned not been undertaken. The personnel in question, irrespective of whether they are working full or part time for the project, must be specifically seconded/assigned to a project; the individual assignment shall either take the format of a contractual document or that of a letter of assignment signed by the responsible service or authority of the relevant beneficiary.

Moreover, the sum of the public bodies' contributions (as coordinating beneficiary and / or associated beneficiary) to the project budget must exceed (by at least 2%) the sum of the salary costs charged to the project for personnel who are not considered 'additional' (please see *Article II.19.2, (a)(iii) of the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement)*. This will be automatically checked under Report R4 – Compliance with 2% rule when your proposal is validated by eProposal prior to submission, and also both during the selection phase and when calculating the final EU contribution at the end of the project.

The definition of 'additional' personnel costs includes the costs of all personnel – permanent or temporary – of public bodies whose contracts or contract renewals:

- start on or after the start date of the project or on or after the date of signature of the grant agreement in case this signature takes place before the project start date, and
- specifically seconded/assigned to the LIFE project.

Further guidance on the above can be found in Annex X of the model grant agreement.

Type of contract: Select from the drop-down menu Additional or Non-Additional Staff (in line with the definition above).

Note that service contracts with individuals (i.e. natural persons) may be charged to this category on condition that Art. II.19.2 (a) of the model LIFE grant agreement is respected i.e. the person works under conditions similar to those of an employee (in particular regarding the way the work is organised, the tasks that are performed and the premises where they are performed); the result of the work belongs to the beneficiary (unless exceptionally agreed

otherwise); and the costs are not significantly different from the costs of staff performing similar tasks under an employment contract with the beneficiary..

Important: The time each employee spends working on the project shall be recorded and certified on a timely basis (i.e. every day, every week) using time sheets or an equivalent time registration system unless the employee is specifically assigned to the project full time or for a fixed percentage of his/her time or if he/she works less than 2 days per month on average for the LIFE project within a calendar year.

Category / Role in the project: You should identify each professional category in a clear and unambiguous manner to enable the Contracting Authority to monitor the labour resources allocated to the project. The description shall be brief and clear (e.g.: Senior researcher). *Examples of staff categories / roles in the project are: senior engineer / project manager, technician / data analysis, administrative / financial management, etc.* In case the professional category is not explanatory of the role that the person will play in the project, you should include the additional information not here but in the section "Assumptions related to major costs of the action" of the related action (C-forms). For example if the role is Senior researcher in the field of Agricultural Economics, you shall only include here 'Senior researcher', the additional information shall be included in the related action.

Daily rate: The daily rate charged for each member of personnel is calculated on the basis of gross salary or wages plus obligatory social charges and other statutory costs (provided that these costs are in line with the beneficiary's usual policy on remuneration), excluding any other costs (see Annex X of the model LIFE grant agreement for further guidance on this). For the purpose of establishing the budget proposal only, the daily rate may be calculated based on indicative average salary costs which are reasonable for the concerned category of personnel, sector, country, type of organisation, etc. Please take predictable salary increases into account when estimating the average daily rates for the project duration.

The total number of productive time per year per person should be calculated on the basis of the total working hours/days according to national legislation, collective agreements, employment contracts, etc. An example for determining the total productive time per year could be as follows (provided what is established in the appropriate legislation):

Days/year	365 days
Less 52 weekends	104 days
Less annual holidays	21 days
Less statutory holidays	15 days
Less illness / other (when relevant)	10 days
= Total productive time	215 days

Please note that the daily rates indicated in the budget proposal must not be used when reporting the costs of the project; only actual costs, i.e. actual rates and actual hours/days worked on the project may be charged. Any significant deviation from budgeted costs will have to be justified. Personnel costs shall be charged on the basis of hourly/daily rates obtained by dividing the actual annual gross salary or wages plus obligatory social charges and other statutory costs included in the remuneration of an employee by the actual total productive hours/days for that employee. In case the actual total productive hours/days for the employee are not to be recorded in a reliable time registration system (e.g. when working

less than 2 days per month on average for the LIFE project within a calendar year or when working full time or on the basis of a fixed percentage of time as indicated in the employment contract) a default value of 1720 productive hours shall be used.

Number of person-days: The number of person-days needed to carry out the project.

Direct personnel costs: Calculated automatically by multiplying the total number of person-days for a given category by the daily rate for that category.

Form F2 – Travel and subsistence costs

Note: Under this budget category applicants should foresee the travel costs for 2 persons from the project to attend a kick-off meeting with the Contracting Authority representatives.

Beneficiary and Action number: Please select the Beneficiary and the action number to which the travel and subsistence costs are referred to.

Destination. Please select the corresponding type of destination: national, inside EU, outside EU

Explanation of assumptions: Provide a brief and clear explanation about the assumption used to calculate the travel and subsistance rate.

The purpose of travel must be clearly described (including the number of days and persons traveling for the same purpose), in order to allow an assessment of the costs in relation to the objectives of the project.

(examples for completing the field 'explanation of assumptions': ‘2 persons x 1 dissemination event 'xxx' for 2 days’, ‘1 person x 1 technical co-ordination meeting x 1 day’, ‘3 persons x 3 project area visit x 2 days’).

Only costs for travel and subsistence must be included here. Costs related to the attendance of conferences, such as conference fees, should be reported under "Other costs" (form F7). The cost of participation in a conference is only considered eligible if the project is presented at the conference. The number of participants in conferences is limited to those for whose attendance there is a valid technical justification.

Travel costs shall be charged in accordance with the internal rules of the beneficiary. Beneficiaries shall endeavour to travel in the most economical and environmentally friendly way – video conferencing must be considered as an alternative.

In absence of internal rules governing the reimbursement of the use of an organisation's own cars (in opposition to private cars) costs related to the use of these are to be estimated at 0.25 € / km. If only costs for fuel are foreseen, they should also be listed here.

Subsistence costs shall be charged in accordance with the internal rules of the beneficiary (daily allowances or direct payment of meals, hotel costs, local transportation etc.). Make sure that meals related to travel / meetings of the beneficiaries are not included if subsistence costs are already budgeted as per diem allowances.

Travel and subsistence rate and number of travels: Please insert the travel and substance rate and the number of travels. The field 'travel and subsistence costs' should contain the unit cost for one person, the field 'number of travels' should contain the number of travels per person (i.e. if two persons are traveling 3 times to a coordination meeting, then the number of travels is '6').

Form F3 – External assistance costs

General: External assistance costs refer to sub-contracting costs: i.e. services / works carried out by external companies or persons (other than those for which costs can be included under Form 1), as well as to renting of equipment or infrastructure. They are limited to 35% of the total budget unless a higher level is justified in the proposal.

For example, the creation of a logo, establishment of a dissemination plan, design of dissemination products, publication of a book or renting of material should be included in external assistance.

Please note that any services supplied under subcontract, but which are **related to prototype** development should be budgeted under prototype and not under external assistance. Costs related to the **purchase or leasing** (as opposed to renting) **of equipment and infrastructure** supplied under subcontract (e.g. installation services) should be budgeted under those cost categories and not under external assistance if they are also depreciated in accordance with the accounting rules.

Costs for the **lease of land use rights** must be charged under "external assistance" only if it concerns a **short-term** lease that expires prior to the project end date. Longer-term leases must be declared under long-term lease of land.

Procedure: Specify the procedure foreseen to sub-contract the work by using for public bodies 'public procurement' and for private entities 'direct treaty', 'open tendering procedure', 'multiple offers', 'framework contract'. Subcontracts must be awarded in accordance with Articles II.10 and II.11 of the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement and the beneficiary's internal rules (for as far as they comply with the aforementioned Articles).

Description: Provide a clear description of the subject of the service that will be subcontracted, e.g. 'carrying out impact assessment', 'maintenance of …', 'renting of …', 'consultancy on …', 'web page development', 'intra-muros assistance', 'organisation of dissemination event', etc. You may use maximum 200 characters for the description of the subcontract if necessary.

General comments on Forms F4.a, F4.b and F4.c – Durable goods

Please put in this category only those goods that the accounting rules of the beneficiary in question classify as durable goods (including goods obtained through financial leasing, i.e. with option to buy). Conversely, do not put anything in this category that the accounting rules of the beneficiary in question do not classify as durable goods.

In the sub-categories equipment and infrastructure, you need to indicate the actual cost as well as the value of depreciation, in accordance with Article I.13 of the Special Conditions and Article II.19.2 (c) of the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement. Only the depreciation is an eligible cost for the project and the EU co-financing will be calculated on the basis of this amount.

Important: Depreciation of durable goods already owned by beneficiaries at the start of the project is not eligible for LIFE funding.

Actual cost: Full cost of the infrastructure or equipment without applying any depreciation.

Depreciation: Total value of the depreciation in the accounts of the beneficiaries at the end of the project. For the purpose of establishing the budget proposal, the beneficiaries should estimate as precisely as possible the amount of depreciation for each item, from the date of

entry into the accounts (if relevant) until the end of the project. This estimation is based on their internal accounting rules and / or in accordance with national accounting rules.

The amount of depreciation to be included as eligible costs in the budget, is limited to a maximum of 25% of the actual cost for infrastructure and a maximum of 50% of the actual cost for equipment (i.e. per cost item). Blocking error messages will be displayed when validating the proposal if these rules are not being observed. **You should be aware of the fact that, although these are the maximum percentages in the LIFE programme, it does not mean they will be automatically accepted because depreciation must firstly be in line with your internal accounting rules/national accounting rules as mentioned above.** Please note the exceptions listed under Annex X to the model grant agreement.

Exception 1: For prototypes, the eligible costs are equal to real costs under the conditions set up in Article I.13 of the Special Conditions and Article II.19.2 (c) of the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement.

Exception 2: for *LIFE Nature and Biodiversity* projects, the cost of durable goods purchased by beneficiaries that are public bodies or private non-commercial organisations shall be considered eligible at 100%, if the organisation complies with all conditions set under Article I.13 of the Special Conditions and Article II.19.2 (c) of the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement. In this case, the depreciation amount indicated should be the same as the actual cost.

Form F4.a – Infrastructure costs

Procedure: Specify the procedure foreseen to contract the work by using for public bodies 'public procurement' and for private entities 'direct treaty', 'open tendering procedure', 'multiple offers' 'framework contract'. Contracts must be awarded in accordance with Articles II.10 and II.11 of the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement and the beneficiary's internal rules (as far as they comply with the aforementioned Articles).

Description: Give a clear description and breakdown of the infrastructure per cost item, e.g. 'supporting steel construction', 'foundation of installation', 'fencing' etc.

Important: *All the costs related to infrastructure, even if the work is carried out under sub-contract with an external entity, should be reported under this heading. In addition, the entity who directly owns or will own the infrastructure assets should be part of the project partnership.*

Please also note that costs for the creation of **small-scale** visitor infrastructures may not exceed 10% of the budget allocated to concrete actions in the proposal budget, and must be well-justified and cost effective or else they will be deleted from the proposal during the revision phase.

NB: *Projects dedicated to the construction of large infrastructure do not fall within the scope of the LIFE Programme and are therefore not eligible. A project is considered to be dedicated to the construction of large infrastructure if the actual cost (as defined above) of a "single item of infrastructure" exceeds € 500,000. A "single item of infrastructure" means all elements as described in form F4a that are physically bound to ensure the functionality of the infrastructural investment (e.g. for an eco-duct the bridge, barriers, signposting, etc.) Such amount may be exceptionally exceeded if full technical justification is provided in the proposal demonstrating the necessity of the infrastructure for ensuring an effective contribution to the objectives of Articles 10, 11 or 12 of the LIFE Regulation.*

Form F4.b – Equipment costs

Procedure: Specify the procedure foreseen to contract by using for public bodies 'public procurement' and for private entities 'direct treaty', 'open tendering procedure', 'multiple offers' 'framework contract'. Contracts must be awarded in accordance with Articles II.10 and II.11 of the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement and the beneficiary's internal rules (as far as they comply with the aforementioned Articles)

Description: Provide a clear description of each item, e.g. 'laptop computer', 'database software (off-the-shelf or developed under sub-contract)', 'measurement equipment', 'mowing machine', etc.

Form F4.c – Prototype costs

A prototype is an infrastructure and/or equipment specifically created for the implementation of the project and that has never been commercialised and is not available as a serial product. It may not be used for commercial purposes during the life of the project. (See Article I.13 of the Special Conditions and Article II.19.2 (c) of the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement for definition of prototype.) Durable goods acquired under the project can only be accepted in this cost category when they are essential to the pilot or demonstration aspects of the project.

Procedure: Specify the procedure foreseen to contract by using for public bodies 'public procurement' and for private entities 'direct treaty', 'open tendering procedure', 'multiple offers' 'framework contract'. Contracts must be awarded in accordance with Articles II.10 and II.11 of the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement and the beneficiary's internal rules (as far as they comply with the aforementioned Articles)

Description: Give a clear description of the prototype.

Important: *All the costs related to the prototype, even if the work is carried out under sub-contract with an external entity, should be reported under this heading.*

Form F5.a – Costs for land purchase, Form F5.b – Costs for long-term lease of land / use rights and Form F5.c – One-off compensation payments costs

General: Please consult the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement, for the rules concerning land purchase. If short-term lease would be appropriate for achieving the project objectives, those costs should be presented under external assistance.

Description of land purchase / long term lease / one-off compensation: Give a clear description of each item, e.g. "purchase of acidic grasslands on sub-site X", "one-off compensation for peat exploitation rights on sub-site Y", etc. Use different rows for different land uses / habitat types / sub-sites, if their prices diverge significantly.

Estimated cost per hectare: Estimated cost, excluding taxes and other charges, rounded to the nearest €.

Your proposal has to include a letter from the competent authority or from a registered notary confirming that the price per hectare is not above the average for the types of land and locations concerned.

Form F6 – Costs for consumables

General: Consumables declared on this form must relate to the purchase, manufacture, repair or use of items which are not placed in the inventory of durable goods of the beneficiaries (such as materials for experiments, animal feeding stocks, materials for dissemination, repair of durable goods given that this is not capitalised and that they are purchased for the project or used 100% for the project, etc.). Should the project include a significant dissemination activity in which substantial mailing or other communication forms are used, the corresponding costs may also be declared here.

Costs for consumables must be specifically related to the implementation of project actions.

General consumables / supplies (as opposed to direct costs), such as telephone, communication costs, photocopies, office material, water, gas, etc. are deemed to be covered by the overheads category.

Procedure: Specify the procedure foreseen to contract by using for public bodies 'public procurement' and for private entities 'direct treaty', 'open tendering procedure', 'multiple offers' 'framework contract'. Contracts must be awarded in accordance with Articles II.10 and II.11 of the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement and the beneficiary's internal rules (as far as they comply with the aforementioned Articles).

Description: Provide a clear description of the type of consumable materials, linking it to the technical implementation of the project, e.g. 'raw materials for experiments action 2', 'stationery for dissemination products (deliverable 5) ', etc.

Form F7 – Other costs

General: Direct costs which do not fall in any other cost category should be placed here, i.e. costs for bank charges borne by the Coordinating Beneficiary, conference fees, insurance costs when these costs originate solely from the project implementation, etc. Please note that financial support to third parties (including prizes) are not eligible.

Auditor costs (ONLY for those beneficiaries requesting a Union Contribution of at least € 750,000) related to the auditing of the beneficiaries' financial reports should always be placed under this budget category.

Costs for translation, if needed, must always be reported in this category.

Dissemination materials: costs related to dissemination of information and reproduction (e.g. purchase or printing dissemination materials/products…)

The cost of a **bank guarantee, if required by the Contracting Authority, must always be reported in this category.** Please refer to Articles I.4.2 and I.4.9 of the Special Conditions and Article II.19.2 (e) of the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement and to the *Guide for the evaluation of LIFE project proposals 2018* for more information.

Procedure: Specify the procedure foreseen to contract by using for public bodies 'public procurement' and for private entities 'direct treaty', 'open tendering procedure', 'multiple offers' 'framework contract'.. Contracts must be awarded in accordance with Articles II.10 and II.11 of the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement and the beneficiary's internal rules (as far as they comply with the aforementioned Articles)..

Description: Give a clear description of each item, linking it to the technical implementation of the project.

Form F8 – Overheads

Overhead amount: Indicate the general indirect costs (overheads) for each beneficiary. Where an operating grant covers the entire usual activity of the beneficiary, the latter is not entitled to declare any eligible indirect costs under an action grant. Indeed, in that case the operating grant covers the entire overheads needed for the functioning of the beneficiary. Paying indirect costs under the action grant would therefore lead to double financing. Where the operating grant covers only part of the usual activity of the beneficiary, indirect costs under the LIFE action grant may be considered eligible if the beneficiary is able to demonstrate clearly that the operating grant does not cover any costs (including overheads) that may be claimed under the action grant.

To demonstrate this the beneficiary must:

a. use analytical cost accounting that allows to separate all costs (including overheads) attributable to the operating grant and the action grant. For that purpose the beneficiary must use reliable accounting codes and allocation keys ensuring that the allocation of the costs is done in a fair, objective and realistic way.

b. record separately: all costs incurred for the operating grants (i.e. personnel, general running costs and other operating costs linked to the part of its usual annual activities), and all costs incurred for the action grants (including the actual indirect costs linked to the action)

In case a beneficiary would receive in future an operating grant (covering the indirect costs of the LIFE action grant) for (a part of) the duration of the project, the beneficiary is obliged to report this and introduce an amendment/correction of the budget tables (Forms F) before the end of the project, excluding the 'overheads' budgeted

Overheads (also referred to as "indirect costs") are eligible at a flat rate, which will be fixed in the grant agreement as a percentage of the total eligible direct costs of each beneficiary, excluding long-term lease of land/one-off compensations for land use rights (and excluding the overheads themselves, since they are indirect costs). In accordance with Article II 19.3 of the General Conditions for the Model LIFE Grant Agreement this percentage may not exceed 7% for each of the beneficiaries. A blocking error message will be displayed in Report R1 and when validating the proposal if this rule is not observed.

Note that the column 'Total eligible direct costs excluding land related costs' is automatically filled in by the tool based on the costs entered in forms F1 to F7.

Form FC – Financial contributions

This form describes the funding of the project by the beneficiary(ies) and / or co-financier(s), as well as the EU contribution requested per beneficiary.

Goods or services which are to be provided **"in kind"**, i.e. for which there is no cash-flow foreseen, are ineligible for EU co-financing and should not be included in the project's budget.

Important: The column 'Total costs of the actions in €' is automatically filled in by the application, based on the costs entered in forms F1-F8.

Coordinating beneficiary contribution: Specify the amount of financial contribution provided by the coordinating beneficiary. This amount cannot include any funding obtained from other public or private sources specifically earmarked for the project or for a part of it (which should be declared as other co-financing).

Associated beneficiary contribution: Indicate the financial contribution from each associated beneficiary**.** These amounts cannot include any funding obtained from other public or private sources specifically earmarked for the project or for a part of it (which should be declared as other co-financing).

Amount of EU contribution requested: Specify the amount of financial EU contribution requested by the coordinating beneficiary and each of the associated beneficiaries. This amount must be in accordance with Articles II.19 and II.25 of the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement.

Amount of co-financing in €: Indicate the financial contribution of each co-financier.

The amounts corresponding to the own contributions and the total costs are transferred automatically to forms A3 and A4. The amounts corresponding to co-financiers contributions are transferred automatically to form A6.

3.3 Reports

eProposal reports contain detailed financial calculations and they are generated automatically, based on the data entered in the technical and financial forms.

Only reports R1 – Budget and R2 – Costs per Action will be included in the .pdf version of the proposal generated by the eProposal tool. The other reports provide, however, practical financial information.

Report R1 – Budget
The form summarises the financial structure of the project, by providing a budget breakdown for the project and an overview of the financing plan.

Reports R2 – Costs per Action, R2a – Costs per Beneficiary, R2b – Costs per Action per Beneficiary, R2c – Costs per Beneficiary per Action
These forms are very useful in order to link technical outputs and costs.

Report R3 – Profit rule per beneficiary
This report verifies that none of the beneficiaries receives a share of the EU contribution exceeding the costs it will incur. (see the no-profit rule in Article II.25.3 of the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement)

Report R4 – Compliance with 2% rule
This report shows whether the sum of the public bodies' contributions (as coordinating beneficiary and / or associated beneficiary) to the project budget exceeds (by at least 2%) the sum of the salary costs of their permanent staff charged to the project. If this is not the case, an error message will be displayed when validating the proposal.

3.4 Attachments

Attachment type: Select from the drop-down menu.

Attachment name: Please ensure that the name is short (maximum 200 characters).

Important: the maximum size of each document attached is 2Mb

Attach in this section the appropriate mandatory financial annexes, as explained in the document *'Guide for the evaluation of LIFE project proposals 2018'*. The templates of the 'Public body declaration', 'Simplified Financial Statement', and the LIFE Key project level Indicators table are provided in the application package available on the LIFE web page.

Maps are **mandatory for *LIFE Nature* and *LIFE Biodiversity* projects including site-based actions**. See requirements for form B2a.

4. Checklist

4.1 Stage 1 Checklist

1. Is the applicant legally registered in the EU?
2. Have you checked whether your project fits with the requirements of a LIFE Nature or Biodiversity project?
3. Do all actions take place in the European territory of the EU (or are covered by the exceptions foreseen)?
4. Is your concept note completed in English?

4.2 Stage 2 Checklist

The questions below aim to help you check that your application is as well prepared as possible. Your answers should in all cases be "yes". However, the list of questions is not exhaustive and the questions do not provide all the detailed information necessary; please refer to the detailed information included in other sections of this document.

1. Have you checked whether your project is a *LIFE Nature* project or a *LIFE Biodiversity* project?
2. Are forms A3, A4 and A6 signed and dated?
3. Where relevant, are forms A8 signed and dated?
4. Is form B1 at least in English?
5. Have you included a safety margin at the end of the project to allow for unforeseen delays?
6. Is the applicant legally registered in the EU?
7. Have you included the mandatory annexes? **A)** ***For coordinating beneficiaries that are not public bodies*** : (1) annual balance sheet and profit and loss account, (2) audit report or auditor-certified balance sheet and profit and loss account if the amount of the grant exceeds € 750,000 (even if according to your national legislation you are not required to have your accounts audited), (3) simplified financial statement. **B)** public body declaration for coordinating beneficiaries that are public bodies.
8. Is more than 25% of the budget devoted to concrete conservation actions (or does your proposal fall under the possible exceptions)? Have you allowed a safety margin?
9. Have you included substantial activities - beyond the transfer of knowledge and networking - to ensure the replicability and transferability of your solution? For each action, have you detailed the expected results as far as possible in quantitative terms?
10. Have you excluded ongoing activities (only allowed in certain specific cases) and ensured that the relevant conditions are met for any recurrent actions ?

11. Have you excluded preparatory actions that do not produce practical recommendations?
12. Have you included a coherent package of communication and dissemination actions?
13. Have you included actions to monitor the impact of the project, and the impact of its actions on the species / habitats targeted?
14. Have you included indicators of your project impact during and 5 years after the project ends?
15. Is the project management team sufficient? Is an organigramme provided? Is there a full time project coordinator (not obligatory but strongly recommended)?
16. Have you excluded all actions that can be better financed by other EU funding programmes? In case of doubt, have you foreseen complementary actions or objectives?
17. Have you detailed your efforts towards green procurement?
18. Have you and your associated beneficiaries read the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement in full?
19. For land purchase / compensation payments have you clearly explained how you meet all of the eligibility conditions?
20. For re-introduction / translocation of species have you clearly explained how the proposal meets all required conditions?

Nature projects only:

1. Do all concrete conservation actions take place within officially designated *Natura 2000* sites or for the purposes of improving the integrity of the *Natura 2000* network? Are the actions clearly located with respect to the *Natura 2000* sites on the maps provided?
2. Do these actions target exclusively *Natura 2000* species and habitats (for site based actions: Annex I of the Birds Directive and / or Annexes I or II of the Habitats Directive; for species-related actions: Annex I or II of the Birds Directive and / or Annexes II, IV or V of the Habitats Directive)?
3. Do the actions all take place in the European territory of the EU where the Birds and Habitats Directives apply (or are covered by the exceptions foreseen)?
4. Have you included detailed maps (size A3 or A4)? Do they include a readable scale, title and background details (e.g. village names, rivers, etc.)?

Biodiversity projects only:

1. For projects taking place in a Natura 2000 site, are the proposed measures in line with the site's conservation objective, the site's management plans or equivalent instruments and/or the Special Areas of Conservation designation act?
2. For Green Infrastructure-related proposals, has the delivery of a wide range of ecosystem services been taken into account and is it embedded in the proposal in terms of aims, actions, monitoring and results?
3. For Green Infrastructure proposals aiming to improve the condition of ecosystems and/or the connectivity of the Natura 2000 network, has the strategy underpinning the

proposed actions been sufficiently demonstrated (i.e. are the proposed actions included in a GI strategic network and management plan)?

4. For proposals aiming to develop widely replicable methods and/or techniques that mitigate the negative impacts of energy or transport infrastructure, has a replicability and transferability plan been included in the proposal and have the cost-efficiency aspects of the proposed solutions been clearly taken into account and demonstrated?

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: Calendar of the LIFE 2018 evaluation and selection procedure

Indicative date or period	Activity
14 June 2018	Deadline for applicants to submit concept notes to the Contracting Authority
October 2018	Notification to the applicants, shortlisted applicants invited to submit full proposal
January 2019	Deadline to submit full proposals
January 2018 to June 2019	Evaluation and revision of the proposals
July 2019	Signature of individual grant agreements
15 July 2019	Earliest possible starting date for the 2018 projects

ANNEX 2: Important links

a) *General documents for all applicants:*

- **Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013**
- **LIFE Multiannual Work Programme 2018-2020**
-
- **Link to the LIFE Communication toolbox**
- **Financial Regulation**

b) *LIFE Nature and Biodiversity:*

- **Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna**
- **Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds**

- **List of priority bird species of Directive 2009/147/EC considered as priority for funding under LIFE**
- **Website providing a geographical view of the *Natura 2000* ecological network http://natura2000.eea.europa.eu**
- **Commission Communication COM (2011) 244 final Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/2020.htm**
- **Biodiversity Information System for Europe http://biodiversity.europa.eu/**
- **Biodiversity baseline http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/eu-2010-biodiversity-baseline/**
- **IUCN Guidelines for reintroduction and other conservation translocations**

ANNEX 3: eProposal Tool

The eProposal tool allows applicants for LIFE "traditional" projects to create and submit proposal(s)/concept note(s) online. Only proposals/concepts notes submitted through eProposal are eligible to be evaluated.

Please post exclusively IT questions/problems about eProposal to

eProposal Help Desk: env-clima-life-helpdesk@ec.europa.eu

Please note that this Help Desk is **only for IT questions** related to the use of eProposal.

All other questions about LIFE should be addressed by reading the documents included in the application package and, in case of need, by contacting the LIFE National Contact Point or writing to easme-life@ec.europa.eu.

Please note that if you registered on eProposal for the 2012-2017 LIFE Calls for proposals, you may continue to use the same user credentials to register, and may skip steps 1 and 2. You may however be requested to change the password.

3.1 Step 1: Create your EU Login user ID and password (for all users)

Access to eProposal Welcome Page is provided via the LIFE web page.

Please, connect to https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/eproposalWeb.



Please note that the eProposal tool can only be accessed through EU Login (the European Commission Authentication Service). Therefore you have to register in EU Login first and obtain a user ID and a password.

Once you have authenticated your identification, you do not have to re-enter your credentials (username and password) within the same browser session.

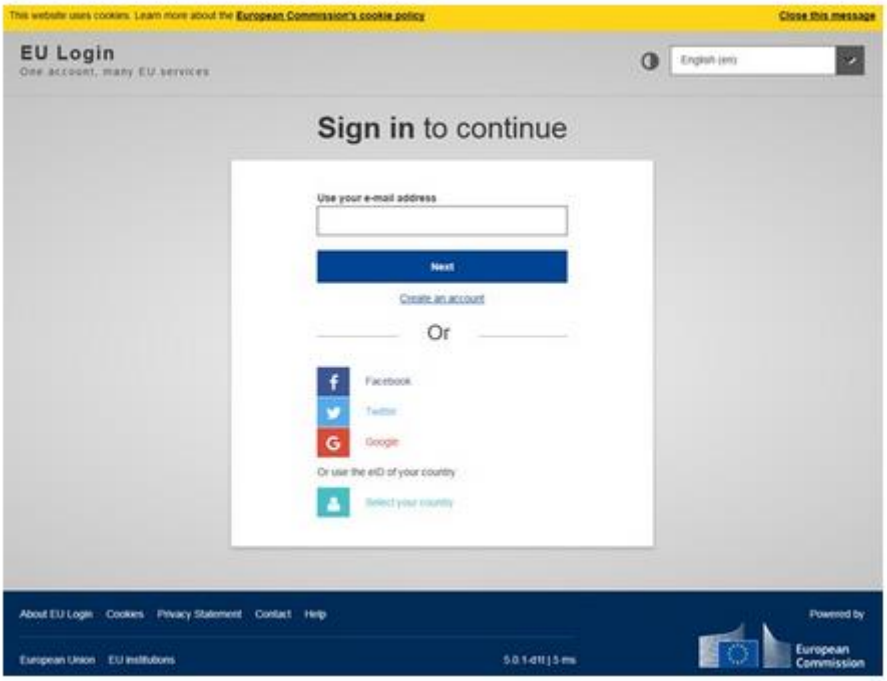
In the 'New user?' menu click 'Register':

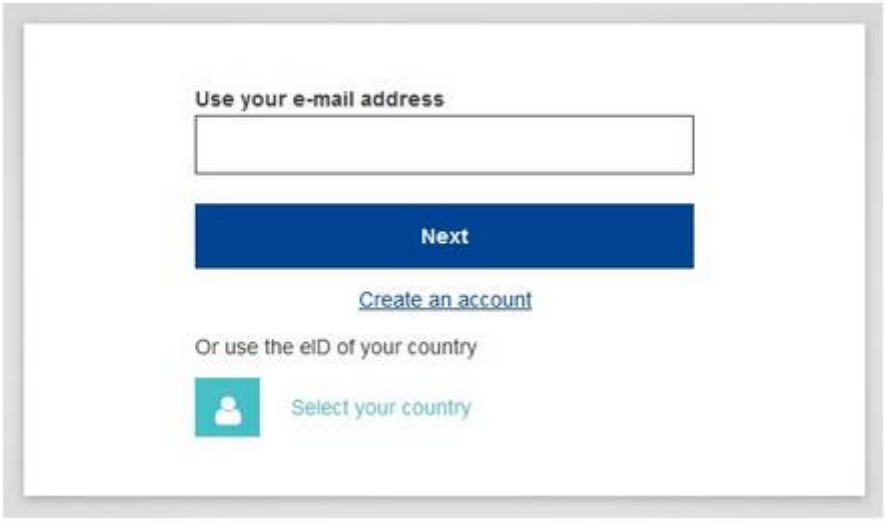


3.1.1 EU Login create an account

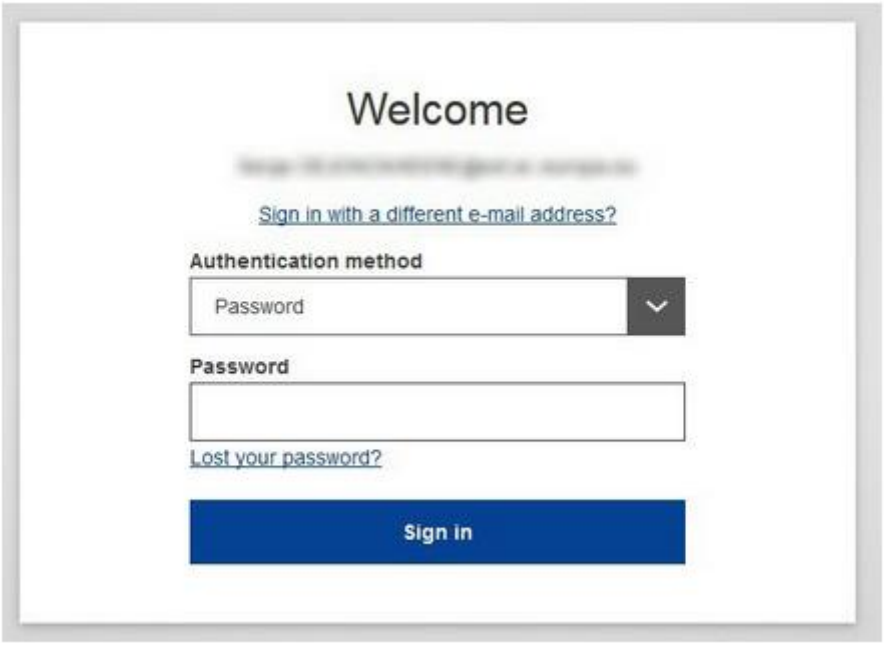
Please provide the information required:

Note that your domain of connexion must be EXTERNAL





Once you have submitted this information, click on the 'Create an account' button. You should then get the confirmation message


Welcome
Sign in with a different e-mail address?
Authentication method
Password
Password
Lost your password?
Sign in

3.1.2 EU Login Create your password

You will receive a confirmation message at the provided e-mail account from EU Login.

Note: it can take up to half an hour for the confirmation e-mail to arrive. If you do not receive this e-mail at all, please first check your SPAM folder before contacting the eProposal Help Desk.

From the moment the e-mail was sent to you, you have 90 minutes

to generate your EU Login password!

In the confirmation e-mail received, click on 'this link'.

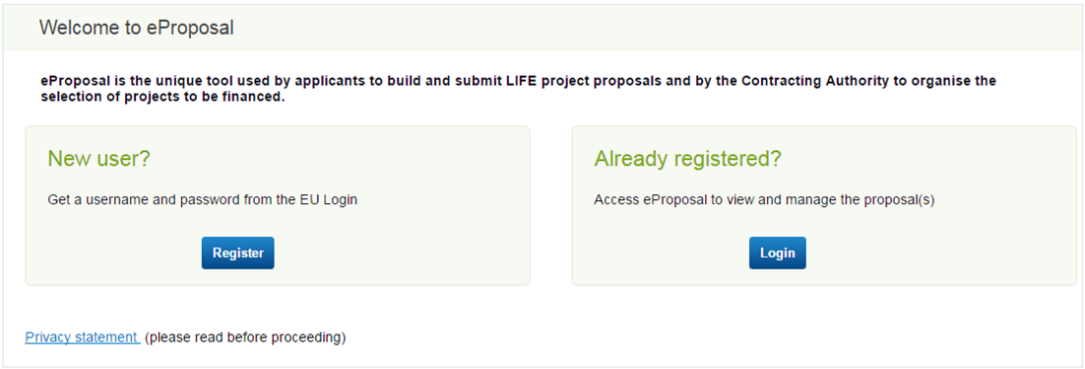
Define your password (minimum 10 characters, containing at least 1 capital letter and 1 digit or special character) and submit.

Once submitted, a confirmation message should appear:

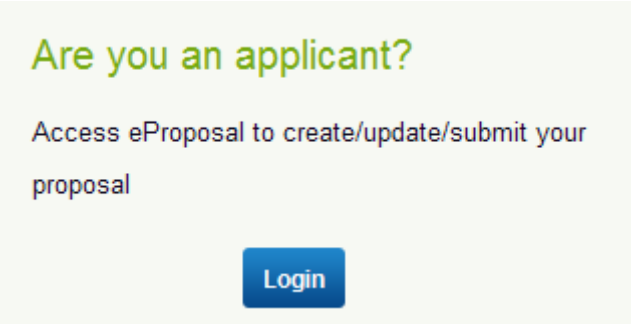
You may change your password or ask for it to be reset in case you forget it. We recommend you keep safely the user ID / e-mail address and password you used to register for registration and login to eProposal (Step 2).

3.2 Step 2: Register as a user on eProposal (for all users)

Go to the LIFE eProposal Welcome Page

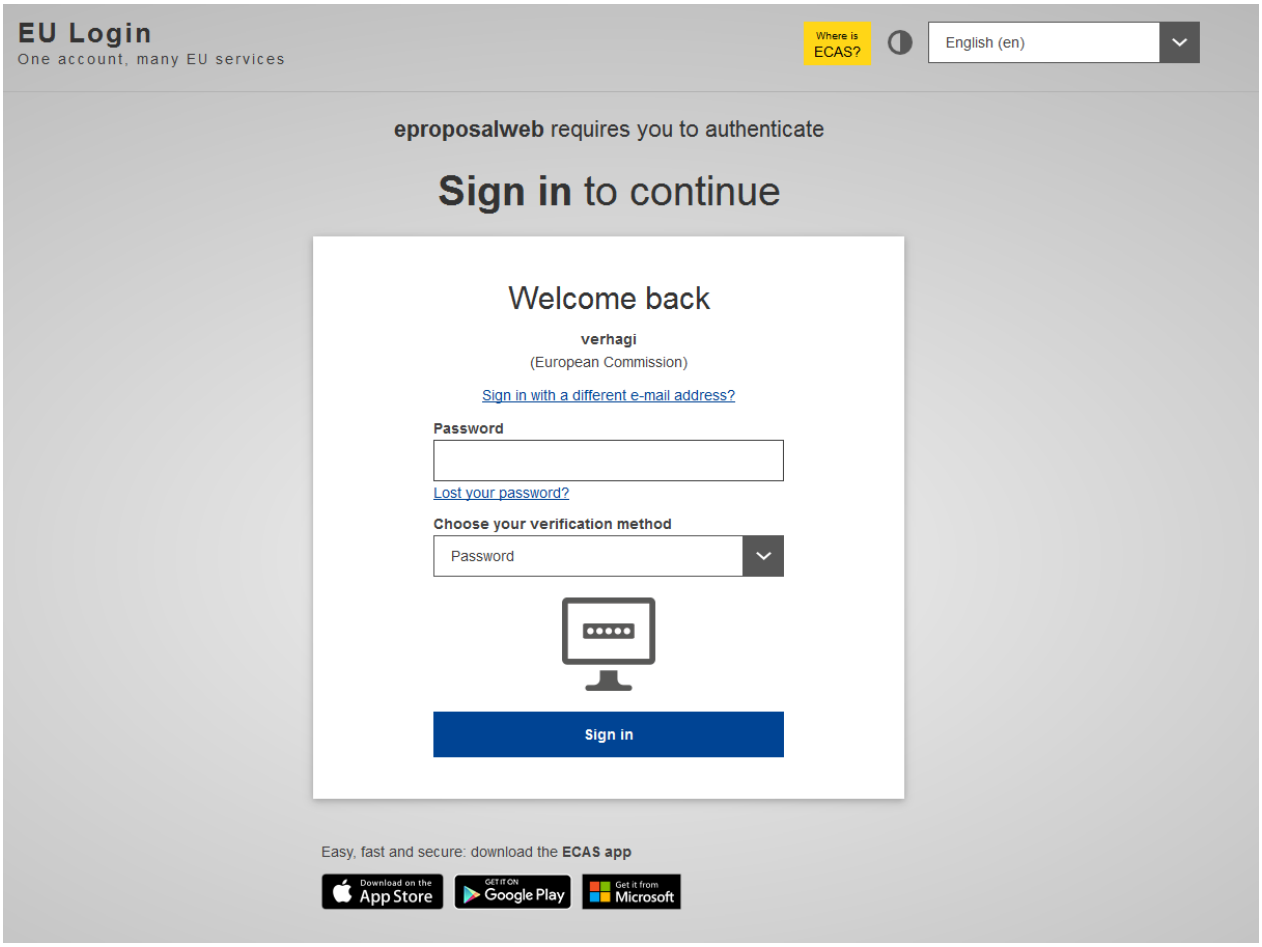


Click on the option 'Are you an applicant?'



In the "Are you an applicant?' menu click 'Login'.

You will be redirected to this page:



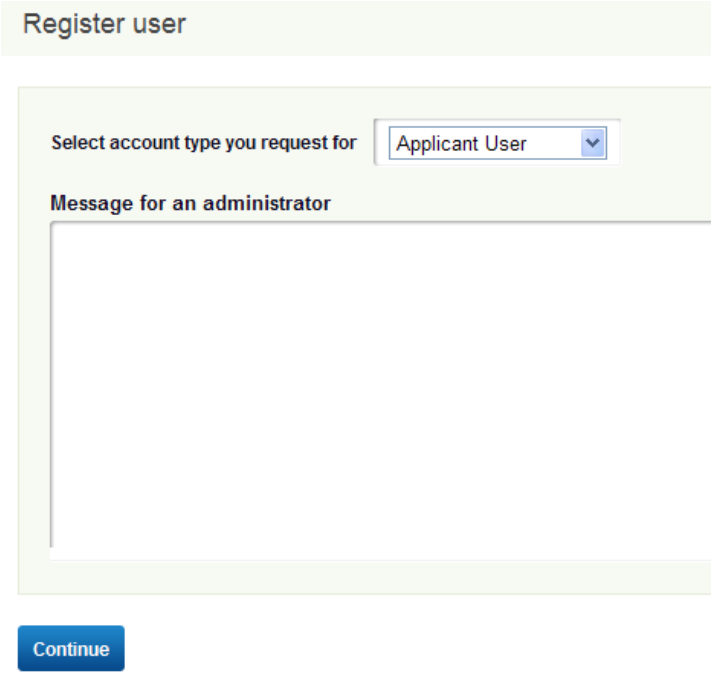
(1) Check that the domain selected is 'External' (if not, please change it to 'External' by using the 'Change it' link and when asked 'Where are you from?', please specify 'Neither an institution nor a European body' + click on 'Select').

(2) Enter your e-mail address and password (the one you created in Step 1).

(3) Click on 'Login' button.

You are now in the LIFE eProposal tool.

Please select the **Applicant User** account type:



Then fill in the required information (compulsory fields are marked by a red asterisk *), and click on the 'Save' button available at the bottom of the screen.

You will get the following confirmation message: 'Your user account has been created'.

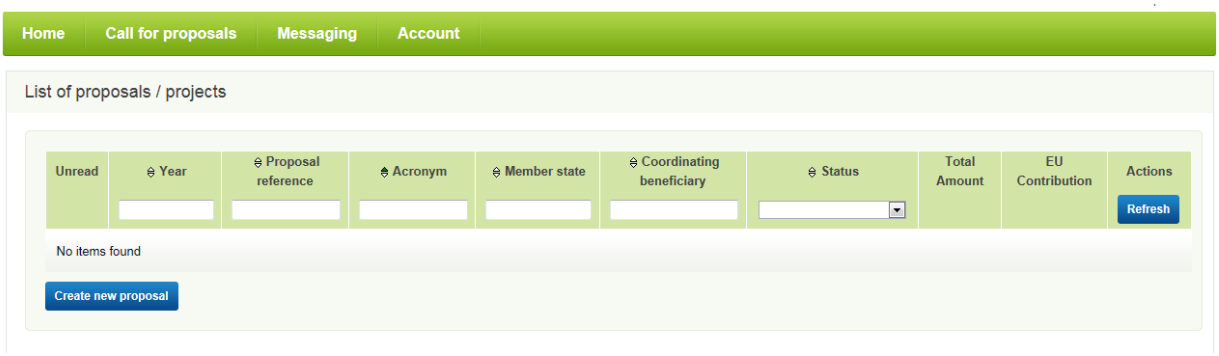
Once you are registered as a user, you will also see in the list of proposals any proposal you created (or were invited to see) during this LIFE Call or the 2012-2017, LIFE calls.

3.3 Step 3: Create a proposal/concept note (to be done by coordinating applicant)

Proposals/Concept Notes may only be created in eProposal by registered users acting as "coordinating applicant", i.e. "the owner" of the proposal/concept note.

The 'coordinating applicant' will become the 'coordinating beneficiary' should the proposal be selected for LIFE co-financing.

You may now create a LIFE project proposal/concept note by clicking the 'Create new proposal' button available at the bottom of the screen:



You will be requested to input basic information concerning your proposal/concept note, based on the selected LIFE priority area. This information remains editable once the proposal has been created.

For this purpose, you will be automatically redirected to technical form A1 (see below). Please note that you have to fill in both form A1 AND form A2 in order to create a new project proposal in the eProposal tool. The proposal will be then identifiable with the project acronym entered in technical form A1. The information already entered while registering as an applicant will be available under forms A1 and A2 for the proposal you have created.

Please note that for technical reasons it will not be possible to digitally 'recycle' proposals from the LIFE programme. You cannot generate a new 2018 proposal based on a LIFE proposal; you would need to download the old proposal and cut and paste the contents into the 2018 application forms.

3.3.1 Manage access rights (optional)

A LIFE proposal/concept note created in eProposal is linked by default to its owner: the user who created it.

The owner of the proposal/concept note may:

-view and / or edit the proposal/concept note;

-invite other users and grant them edit rights;

-submit the proposal/concept note.

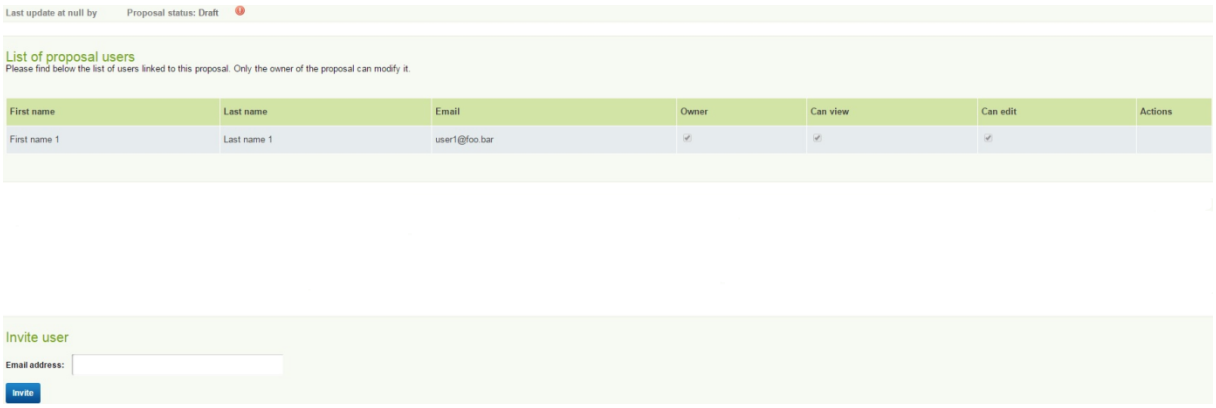
Management of access rights

In order for the owner to manage access rights and for other users linked to the proposal/concept note to view access rights, you have to perform the following operations:

(a) Select the proposal/concept note for which you want to give access rights to another user or invite an associated beneficiary;

(b) Go to Proposal/concept note menu / Access rights part.

If only the owner is linked to the proposal, the screen will look like this

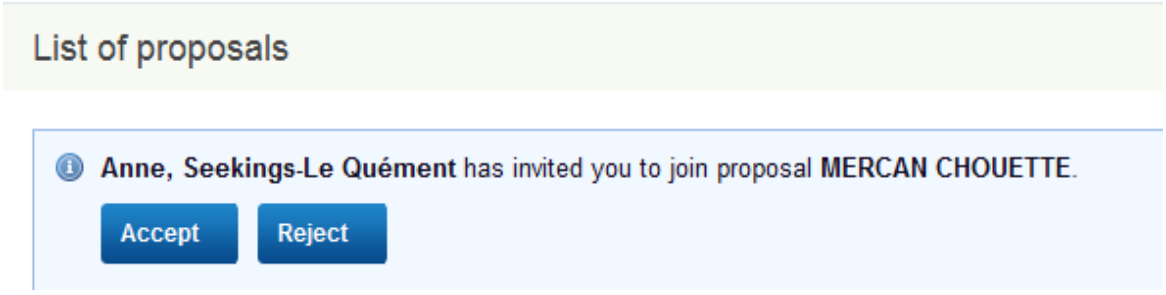


Inviting another user (optional)

(c) In order to **invite** another user, the owner of the proposal/concept note (the coordinating applicant) must specify the e-mail address of the person to be invited in the bottom field of the screen 'List of proposal users'.The person invited MUST have an account registered in eProposal.

(d) If the invited user is already registered on eProposal:

- The first and last names of this user will appear as '(Pending)' in the Access rights list of users.
- An invitation message is received at the e-mail address entered by the invited user (when they registered to eProposal).
- The user logs on to eProposal: on the top of the first screen, the invitation is visible. The user may accept or reject it.



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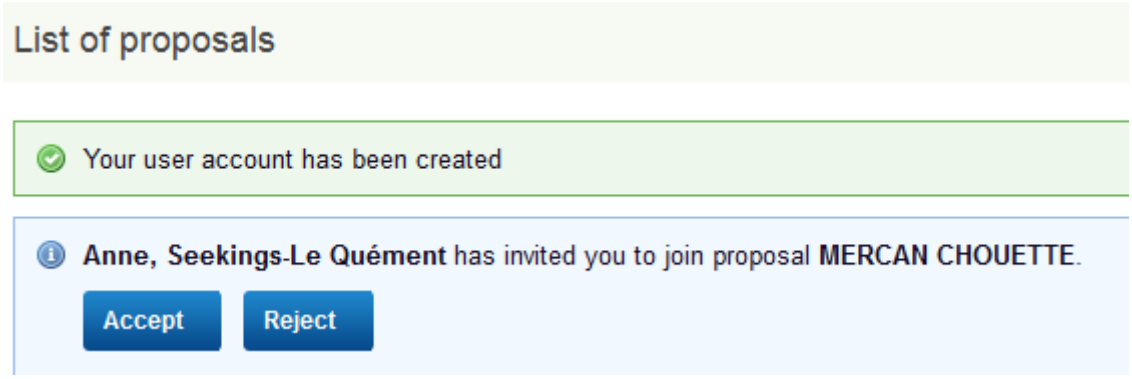
- If the invited user accepts the invitation, the proposal/concept note will appear in this user's list of proposals/concept notes, and the user will be able to view it straight away. The owner of the proposal/concept note may then grant this user editing rights

(e) If the invited user is NOT yet registered on eProposal:

- The first and last names of this user will appear as '(Pending)' in the Access rights list of users.

- An invitation message is received at the e-mail address of the invited user specified by the owner of the proposal. This message contains a link to register on EU Login (if needed, see Step 1) and another one to register on eProposal (see Step 2).

- The user logs on to eProposal: on the top of the first screen, both confirmation or registration and the invitation are visible. The user may accept or reject the invitation.



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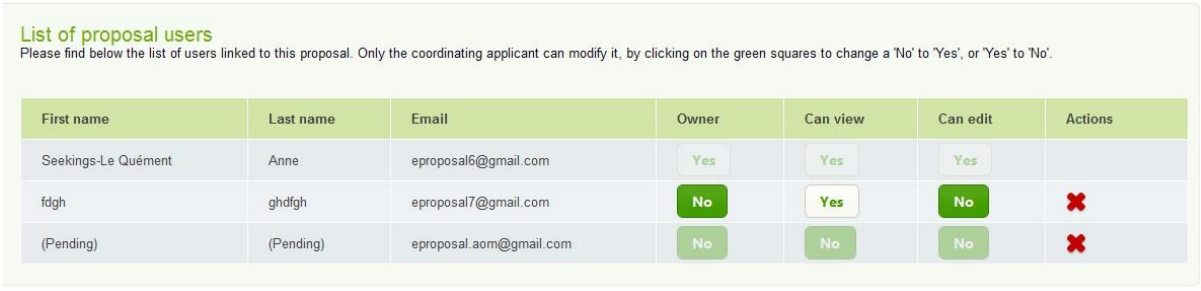
- If the invited user accepts it, the proposal will appear in this user's list of proposals, and the user will be able to view it straight away. The owner of the proposal may then grant to this user editing rights.

(f) The owner of the proposal/concept note may invite as many users as wished, following the same steps.

(g) If several users are linked to a proposal, the Access rights screen will look like this (for the owner of the proposal, for the other users linked to it, all squares will be greyed out):



(h) The owner of the proposal/concept note is always greyed out (at least one user must be owner of a proposal at all times).

User(s) who have accepted the invitation are listed and the squares in the columns 'Owner', 'Can view' and 'Can edit' are activated.

If the first and last names are still '(Pending)', it means that this (these) user(s) have not yet accepted the invitation.

The owner of the proposal may decide to **grant editing rights to other user(s) linked to that proposal/concept note**. The only condition is for the user to have accepted the invitation sent by the owner. This enables several users to work in parallel on the same project proposal.

To grant editing rights to a user, the owner must click on the 'No' square in the 'Can edit' column: it will then turn to **yes**. When that user next logs on to eProposal, s/he will be able to edit that proposal/concept note.

Important: If a user has been granted editing rights, s/he will be able to perform exactly the same actions as the coordinating beneficiary, i.e. modify, delete, add technical and financial data, etc. but will not be able to submit the proposal/concept note and invite other users. The switch between edit and view modes for an associated applicant can be performed as many times as needed / wished by the coordinating beneficiary.

Changing owner

The user that has to become the owner must have already been invited to the proposal/concept note To change owner, the (original) owner must click on the 'No' square in the 'Owner' column corresponding to the user that is to become the new owner: after a confirmation message, it will then turn to Yes. From that moment on the 'former' owner does not have the possibility to manage user rights anymore. When the 'new' owner next logs on to eProposal, s/he will be able to manage user rights for that proposal.

Any data that was already entered in the technical and/or financial forms for the coordinating applicant (e.g. in relation to actions for which the coordinating applicant is responsible, or for costs incurred by this applicant), will have to be manually edited so as to align them to the new set-up of the proposal.

3.3.2 Validating and Submitting a proposal

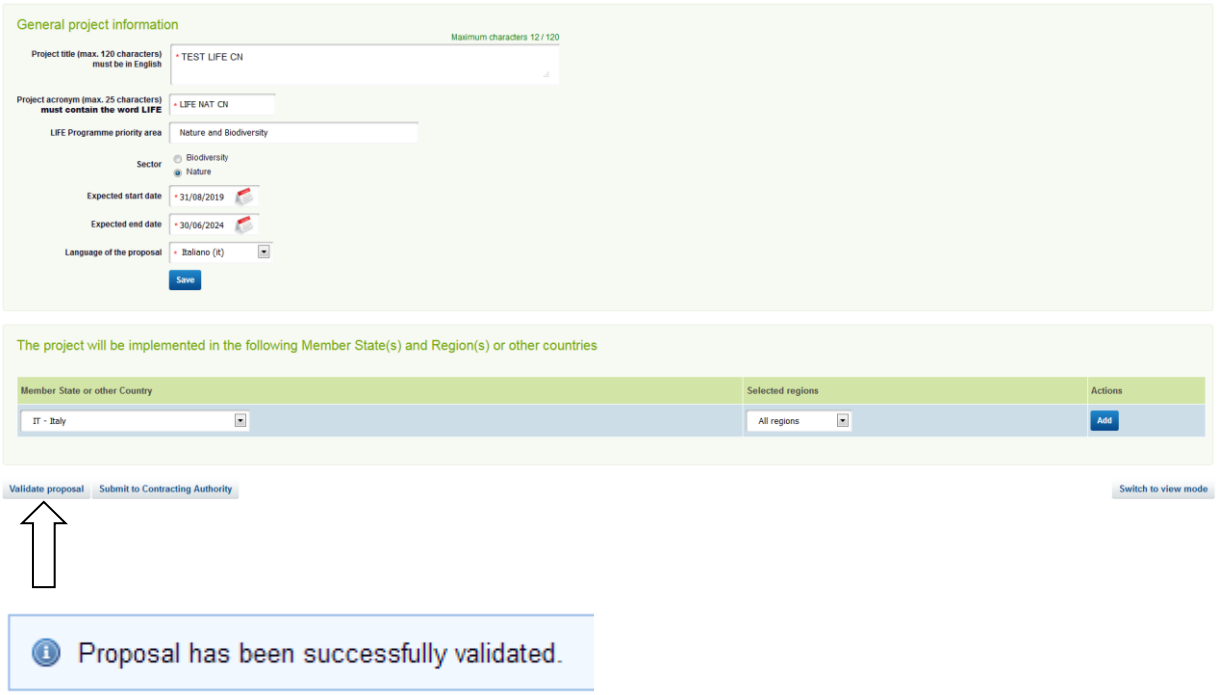
Please note that both steps are compulsory to ensure that the proposal/concept note is taken into consideration during the evaluation process!

Validation

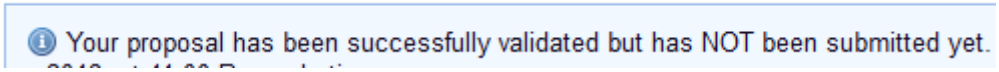
After completing the proposal/concept note, click on the 'Validate' button available on form A1. A number of pre-defined verifications will be launched throughout the entire proposal/concept note.

Validation error messages indicate missing or incorrect information. They block the submission of the proposal.

When the validation is performed without any blocking errors, you will receive the following confirmation message:



Please note that at this stage the proposal has NOT been submitted yet.

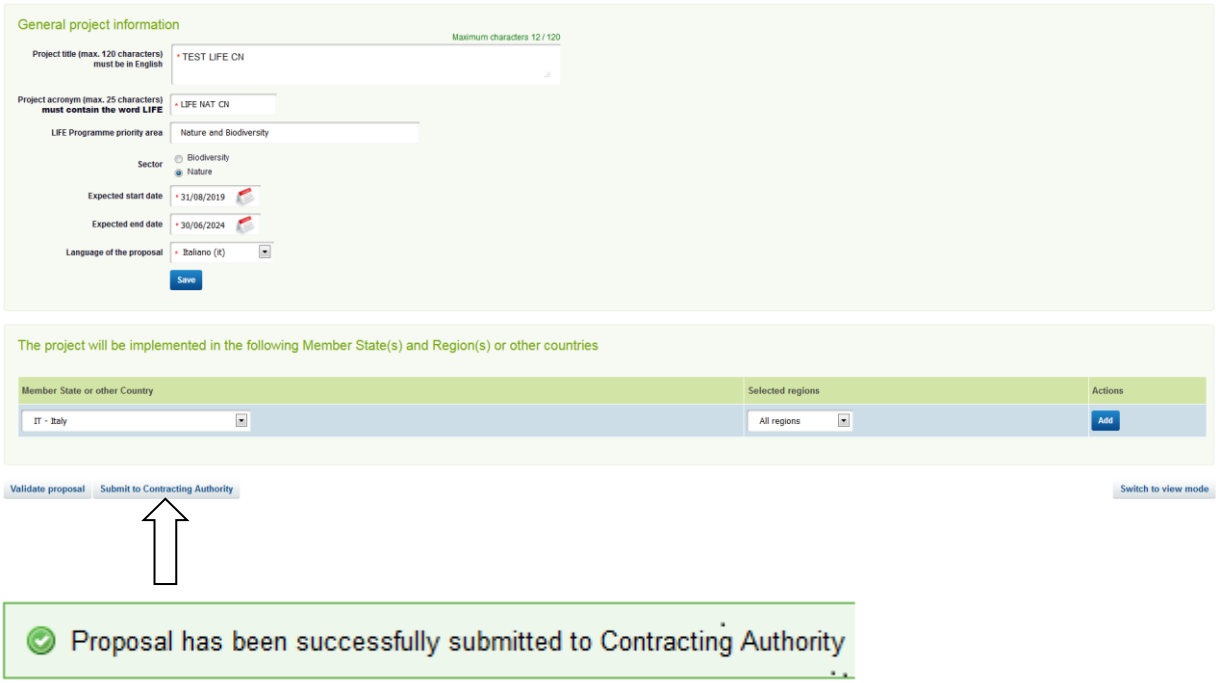


Upon successful validation of the proposal/concept note, eProposal will request the owner whether s/he wants to submit the proposal/concept note at that moment.

Submission

Once the proposal/concept note is validated and before the submission deadline, the coordinating applicant (owner of the proposal/concept note) should submit the proposal/concept note by clicking on the 'Submit to Contracting Authority' button (this button becomes available on form A1 only after the proposal has been validated and no more blocking validation errors are identified).

After clicking on this button, you will receive the following message confirming that the proposal/concept note is successfully submitted:



The proposal/concept note can be modified, validated and (re)submitted as many times as needed until the submission deadline. Each subsequent submission overwrites the previously submitted version (earlier versions are not archived and are therefore not available anymore).

This submission deadline will only be extended in case of 'force majeure' or breakdown of the system and the new deadline (established in a way to compensate the down period) will be communicated on the LIFE website and eProposal welcome page immediately.

The proposal/concept note will be automatically forwarded to the Contracting Authority. National Authorities of the Member States in which beneficiaries are legally registered, may also view the proposal/concept note if the owner of the proposal ticks the button National authorities access (see description page 44).

Each submitted proposal/concept note is automatically attributed a unique project reference code that includes the year of the call, the LIFE priority area and a sequential 6 digits number. All technical, financial and reporting forms will bear this code (e.g. 'Proposals / **LIFE14 ENV/FI/000001 LIFE Water** / Financial Forms / **F1 – Direct personnel costs'**). This code will be referred to in all correspondence with the Contracting Authority during the selection procedure and during the project implementation, if the proposal is retained for LIFE co-financing. A proposal/concept note that has not been submitted yet does not carry a reference.

Important: proposals/concept notes submitted can be modified and re-submitted until the submission deadline is reached. Only the final submitted version of the proposals/concept note will be evaluated by the Contracting Authority.

If you want your proposal to be taken into account under the evaluation process, please make sure that you click on the 'Submit to Contracting Authority' button prior to the submission deadline.

The button 'Submit to Contracting Authority' will be deactivated at the submission deadline. The Contracting Authority may not be held responsible for any problem caused by slow performance of the system or similar issues. Applicants should take the necessary steps to avoid "last minute" submissions.

Concept note submission deadline: 14/06/2018 at 16:00 Brussels time.

Full proposal submission deadline: End of January 2019.

Post-submission Communication

Once the submission deadline has passed, communication with applicants who have submitted a proposal/concept note will be solely through the proposal Mailbox.

Only the owners of proposals/concepts notes with status 'Received by Contracting Authority' (and later statuses) have access to this Mailbox.

WHO CAN USE IT?
- the applicant: to read messages sent by the Contracting Authority or its Consultant and to reply to these messages and to initiate new messages addressed to the Contracting Authority or its Consultant;
- the Contracting Authority or its Consultant: to send messages to any Applicant and to read Applicants' replies.
- National Authorities: to view correspondence for the proposals to which they have access (Applicant or Associated Beneficiaries established in their Member State).

HOW DO I READ AND SEND MESSAGES?
There are 2 options to access the messages:

- go to the List of proposals: if you have a new message for a particular proposal, the icon  becomes visible in the 'Unread' column; click on  it to access the mailbox directly
- if you have already opened a particular proposal/concept note, the "Mailbox" is available in the drop-down menu under 'Proposal'

These 2 options lead to the Thread list:

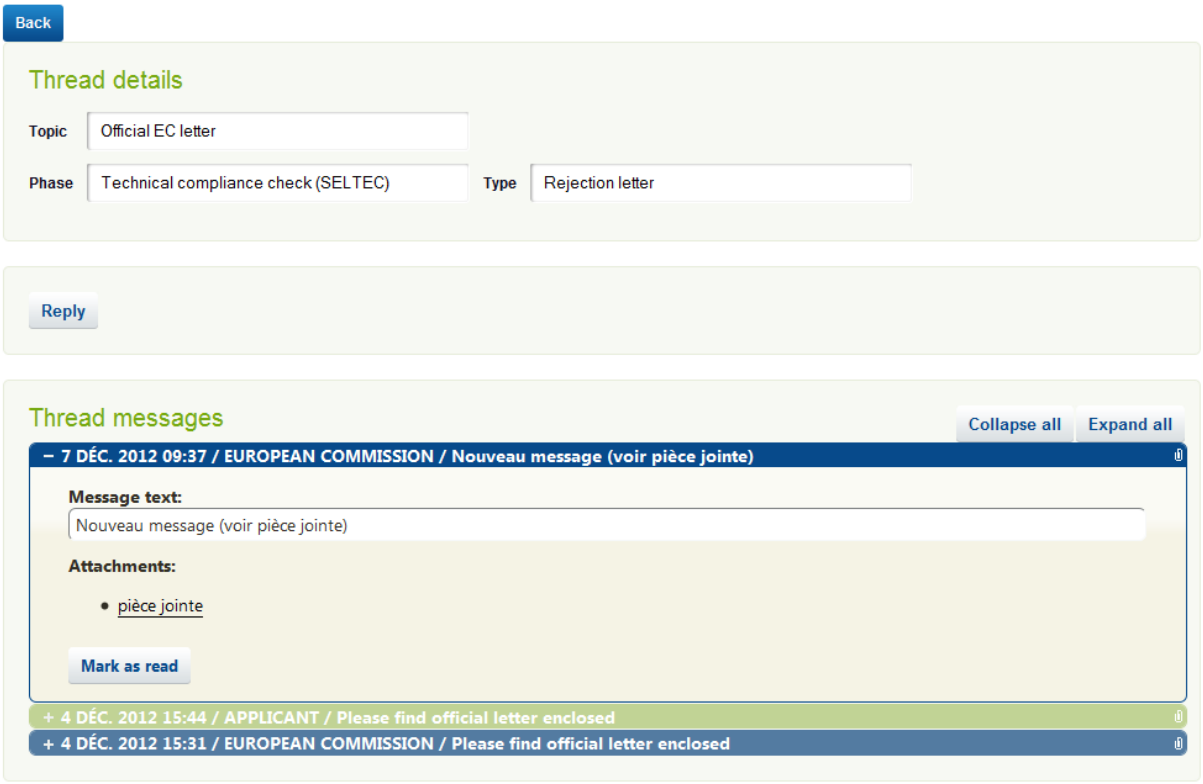


A thread groups all messages linked to the same 'Topic' (which is defined by the one who creates the thread), 'Phase' (the phase of the selection process to which this message is linked) and 'Type' (e.g.: rejection letter, question letter, instruction letter or 'Other').

Threads can be created and closed. Official threads (such as Rejection letter, Instructions letter, etc…) can only be created by the Contracting Authority. Applicants can create (and afterwards Close) 'Other' types of threads, using the button 

. The Contracting Authority and its Consultant can close any type of thread.

When clicking on icon  for a given thread, the Thread details appear:



This screen enables you to view all past correspondence (green colour is used for messages posted by applicants, blue colour for messages posted by the Contracting Authority and its consultant). The same colours appearing in a stronger shade indicate a new message, whereas a message in a lighter shade indicates that it has been marked as read.

All applicants have the possibility to define one or many new messages

by clicking the button Create thread .. This is also used to reply to messages previously sent to them (choosing the recipient: Contracting Authority or consultant and clicking on Save; if necessary attachment(s) of 2MB maximum size each may be uploaded; please use only generic formats to ensure readability by other users).

By clicking on Ready to send the Applicant may see the message about to be sent and check its content and list of attachments. To send the new message click on Send . To continue editing the message click on Not ready to send .

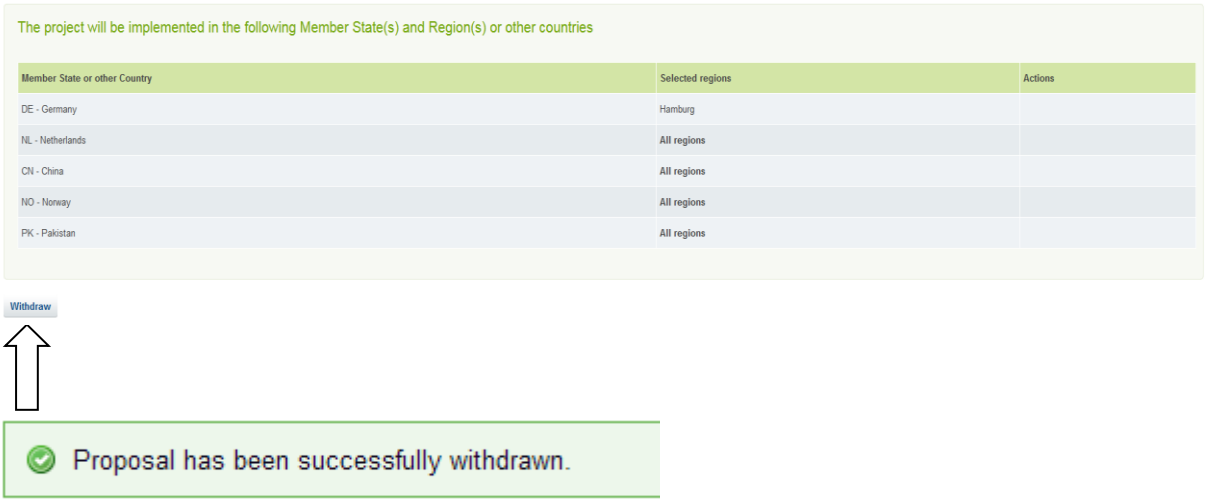
HOW WILL I BE ALERTED IF A NEW MESSAGE IS AVAILABLE?
Applicants will receive an e-mail notification message in the mailbox corresponding to the e-mail address indicated on form A2, informing that a new message is available in their Proposal Mailbox.
We advise applicants to regularly check the Proposal Mailbox in eProposal as notification messages may sometimes not reach the recipient (e.g. filtered as SPAM, mailbox changed, mailbox full, etc.).
Only coordinating applicants will receive notification messages.

Withdrawal of a Proposal/Concept Note

The applicant (owner) retains the right to withdraw a proposal/concept note at any moment after submission. A withdrawn proposal/concept note will not be considered during the evaluation.

To withdraw a proposal/concept note:

- Find it in your list of proposals/concept notes;
- For that proposal/concept note, click on the Edit icon in the corresponding Actions column;
- In the proposal/concept note menu, choose the Withdrawal form. There you will be able to detail the reason(s) why you need to withdraw your proposal/concept note (for instance: expected financing did not materialise), and to confirm the fact that you withdraw your proposal/concept note.
- If you click on 'OK' you will receive the following confirmation message:



General rules

- It is recommended to use either Firefox and/or Google Chrome browsers.
- In order to enter data into the proposal, use the 'Edit' mode; a 'View' mode is also available and you can switch from one mode to the other at any time during preparation of your proposal;
- You may introduce the information either directly into the textboxes or you may copy and paste information in simple text format; note that for security reasons, a text copied and pasted from a Word document or an html page may not be accepted entirely, therefore simple, basic text editors such as Notepad suit better for this purpose;
- **Always click on the 'Save' button before switching to another form**;
- All fields allow introducing a limited number of characters – these limits are clearly displayed. Please note that in order to ensure that the text input in large text fields can be printed in the pdf extract, only the following formatting may be used: bold, italics, underlined. Only simple lists (simple enumerations 1,2,3, A, B,C etc; or bullet points) will appear correctly. If you need to insert tables, do not do so in text fields: please use the Add picture(s) functionality available at the end of most forms;
- Fields marked with a red asterisk * are related to obligatory information and must be filled in; when validating the proposal, error messages will be displayed if mandatory fields have been left empty;
- The data between various technical and financial forms are intrinsically connected, this is why as a matter of principle the information will be introduced manually only once and then automatically transferred to other relevant forms across the application;
- Disabled fields cannot be filled in manually since the respective information will be extracted and/or calculated automatically from other forms;
- You will be allowed to insert objects (such as maps, graphs, tables, photos) in certain forms where the "Maps", "Pictures" or "Declaration" headings appear; you may only use png, jpg, tif, gif, bmp formats; the maximum size accepted is 2MB;
- Enter all dates in DD/MM/YYYY format or use the calendar functionality where available;
- At any stage, you may view your concept note / proposal as a pdf document, by clicking the 'Request pdf' button available in the Proposal exports and Attachments sections of eProposal. Once the pdf version of your proposal has been created, you will receive an e-mail which will allow you to download it straight away, or to do so from the Proposal exports and Attachments sections of eProposal (remember to 'refresh' the page, press key F5);
- You may extract the content of your proposal in order to work off-line:
    - B and C forms to an editable Word document, by clicking on the 'Download working copy' button available in the Proposal exports section;
    - Financial forms and reports to an editable Excel document, by clicking on the 'Financial data export' button available in the Proposal exports and Attachments sections;
    - Please note that these are only working documents to be used to prepare input in eProposal forms and fields. It is not possible to automatically transfer the Word text or the Excel data back into eProposal.

- All the content of a proposal can be edited / viewed using the Proposal menu available at the top of the screen:

