LIFE preparatory projects on LIFE programme post 2020

Guidelines for applicants 2019

The current guidelines apply to the preparation of proposals to be submitted to the Contracting Authority for preparatory projects related to the preparation of the LIFE programme post 2020 as defined in article 2 (paragraph g) of the LIFE Regulation. They aim to help the applicant prepare and submit the project proposal.
The Technical and Financial Application Forms are contained in separate files in Word and Excel format, respectively.

Table of contents

Part 1: General Information

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 1293/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013[1].***

The LIFE programme is structured in two sub-programmes: the sub-programme for Environment and the sub-programme for Climate Action. The overall financial envelope for the implementation of the LIFE programme is EUR 3,456,655,000, 75% of which is allocated to the sub-programme Environment (EUR 2,592,491,250) and 25% of which is allocated to the sub-programme Climate Action (EUR 864,163,750).

1.2 What are the LIFE preparatory projects?

According to Article 2(g) of the LIFE Regulation, the preparatory projects are conceived "to support specific needs for the development and implementation of Union environmental or climate policy and legislation".

The Commission makes an inventory of specific needs regarding the development and implementation of Union environmental or climate policy and legislation that need to be addressed during the following years and identifies among them the needs that could be addressed by preparatory projects. Before launching the calls for proposals, Member States receive a draft list of the identified specific needs that could be addressed by preparatory projects and are asked to comment. Based on these comments, a final list of preparatory projects is established.

The preparatory projects targeted by this call for proposals are aimed at preparing the implementation of the LIFE programme post 2020 and in particular to ensure its smooth and quick start up to maximize its results. They could include three possible components:

- The preparation of Strategic Nature Projects to be submitted in the years 2021-2022;
- The mainstreaming of environment, climate, nature and biodiversity objectives into other policies, EU and non EU programmes and funds;
- The networking with other authorities responsible of the implementation of the LIFE programme at national or regional level in the EU and with environmental and climate authorities of the Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs).

Only national level public bodies responsible for implementation of LIFE in an eligible Member

[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

State in the European Union or an entity explicitly authorised by them may apply for these preparatory projects as coordinating beneficiaries. Project proposals can either be submitted by a single beneficiary or by a partnership which includes a coordinating beneficiary and one or several associated beneficiaries. Associated beneficiaries may include national level public bodies responsible for implementation of LIFE in other Member States in the European Union. However, each Member State can participate in only one proposal in response to this call for proposals either as coordinating beneficiary or associated beneficiary. Additional public or private partners, different from the authorities that are managing the LIFE programme, can also participate in case they have a relevant role to play in the implementation of the projects.

1.3. Personal Data Protection Clause

The personal data supplied with your proposal, notably the name, address and other contact information of the beneficiaries will be transferred to a database called Butler, which will be made available to the EU Institutions and agencies and to external consultants for the monitoring and/or evaluation of the programme selected by the Contracting Authority and bound by confidentiality agreements. 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 will also be published in a public database called the Financial Transparency System[2].

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

Your personal data are processed in accordance with Regulation 2018/1725[3].
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.

2. How, where and when to submit a proposal?

LIFE applicants must submit their proposals using the forms included in this application guide and attaching all relevant documents. For this call for proposals, the applicants have the possibility to submit a proposal within three different deadlines.

Applications must arrive at the following address no later than
First deadline: 17:00 Brussels local time on 4th November 2019;
Second deadline: 17:00 Brussels local time on 11th January 2020;
Third deadline: 17:00 Brussels local time on 25th March 2020.

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

[3] Regulation 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and Agencies on the free movement of such data

Applications may be submitted to the following addresses:

By registered mail:	Delivery by hand:
CALL FOR PROPOSALS "Preparatory projects LIFE post 2020 - Call 2019-2020" **EUROPEAN COMMISSION** DG ENV – LIFE Unit (BU9 07/006) For the attention of Mr. Jean-Claude MERCIOL (Head of Unit) B - 1049 Brussels Belgium	CALL FOR PROPOSALS "Preparatory projects LIFE post 2020 - Call 2019-2020" **EUROPEAN COMMISSION** DG ENV – LIFE Unit (BU9 07/006) For the attention of Mr. Jean-Claude MERCIOL (Head of Unit) Avenue du Bourget 1 B-1140 Brussels (Evere) Belgium
In this case, the evidence of submission will be the date of dispatch on the deposit slip or postmark.	The Central Mail Service is open from 08.00 to 17.00 Monday to Thursday, and from 8.00 to 16.00 on Fridays. It is closed on Saturdays, Sundays and Commission holidays. In this case, the evidence of submission will be the receipt of delivery, signed and dated by the courier or the central mail service.

Proposals must be placed inside two sealed envelopes. Both the outer and inner envelopes should be addressed as indicated above. In addition, the inner envelope should be marked as follows:

Call for proposals "Preparatory projects LIFE post 2020 - Call 2019-2020"

"NOT TO BE OPENED BY THE INTERNAL MAIL DEPARTMENT"

The proposal and all its annexes must be submitted as one complete printed version, containing all technical forms (i.e. A, B and C forms) and all financial forms (F forms). In addition, the proposal and all its obligatory annexes must be submitted in an electronic format on a CD-ROM, DVD or USB stick. The full title of the proposal should be clearly labelled on the CD-ROM/DVD/USB stick.

On the CD-ROM/DVD/USB stick, the proposal itself must be saved and submitted as **one *"black and white only"*** PDF document, including all technical forms (i.e. A, B and C forms) and all financial forms (F forms). These forms should be scanned as a single PDF file of the original, printed, completed and signed (where applicable) in size A4 paper forms. Applicants should ensure that the corresponding PDF file is of a readable quality (at a maximum resolution of 300 dpi - applicants must avoid files scanned at a higher resolution in order to keep file sizes manageable, i.e. usually under 10MB).

The electronic version of the proposal must be printable on a black-and-white printer, and in an A4 format. Where proposal forms are signed, applicants are strongly advised to check whether the signatures are still identifiable on a printout of the form.

Note that applicants should retain the original Word and Excel files containing all of these forms, for possible use in preparation of the final grant agreements.

Additional documents/annexes, other than those required, submitted by applicants will not be evaluated and therefore applicants must not include any such material in the proposal.

Before submitting the proposals to the Contracting Authority, applicants are strongly advised to check whether the CD-ROM/DVD/USB stick can be opened and read, and whether the proposal contains all the required forms and electronic files, and whether the application forms and files provided are correctly filled in and complete.

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 regular basis throughout the duration of the evaluation procedure.

2.1. Administrative and financial information to be provided

Beneficiaries of LIFE projects may include: (1) *public bodies,* (2) *private commercial organisations* and (3) *private non-commercial organisations* (including NGOs). The coordinating beneficiary has to be a public body or an entity explicitly authorised to submit a proposal for this call by the authority responsible at national level for the implementation of LIFE(see also point 1.2).

The term "public bodies" is defined as referring to national public authorities, regardless of their form of organisation - central, regional or local structure - and 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 applying to bodies governed by public law and in the event the entity stops its activities, its rights and obligations, liability and debts will be transferred to a public body. For a complete definition, please refer to form A4 ("Public body declaration"). For these preparatory projects, applicants can demonstrate that they are public bodies by providing this "Public body declaration", fully completed, with a dated signature.

All applicants and associated beneficiaries must show their legal status (by completing application forms A2 or A6). In addition, they must declare that they are not in any of the situations foreseen under Articles 136(1) and 141 of the Financial Regulation[4] (by signing the application form A3 – for the coordinator - or A5 – for the associated partners - instructions for this are given in part 2 of these Guidelines).

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.

[4] (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012, OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p. 1)]. See https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018R1046See https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018R1046

2.2. Specific scope of these preparatory projects for the preparation of LIFE post 2020

The Environmental Implementation Review (EIR) indicates that significant progress is required to accelerate implementation of the Union environment acquis.

European stakeholders and citizens call for immediate and significant action on environment and climate issues.

In the coming years, all the possible financial resources will have to be mobilised to face the environment and climate priorities across all sectors and policies.

In this context, the integration and mainstreaming of environmental and climate objectives into other policies becomes a key strategy.

The LIFE programme should therefore act as a catalyst mobilising investments across Union investment programmes or other financial sources toward environment and climate priorities and supporting actions to overcome the various obstacles to the effective implementation of environment and climate legislation and policies.

To prepare the implementation of the LIFE programme post 2020, this call for proposals is intended to finance projects aimed at facilitating mainstreaming and preparing the Strategic Nature projects.

The projects can last until the end of 2022 and could include one or more of the following components:

1. The preparation of one Strategic Nature Project per Member State. Member State entities, which are beneficiaries of a capacity building project which will be on-going on the 1 January 2022, cannot include in the proposal to which they are participating as coordinating or associated beneficiaries the preparation of the SNaP for their own country. The Strategic Nature Projects are aimed to support the implementation of the Priority Action Frameworks developed in accordance with Directive 92/43/EEC. They are conceived to improve mainstreaming by catalysing the implementation of Union nature and biodiversity legislation and policy. Member States could decide within their Strategic Plan for the Common Agricultural Policy to use a certain share of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development allocation to leverage support for actions that complement the Strategic Nature Projects. The same could happen under other EU and not EU programmes and funds.

2. The reinforcement of mainstreaming of environmental, climate and nature and biodiversity issues/values into other policies and programmes. This could include activities such as:

   - At structural level - the setting up/reinforcing of inter-sectoral forums, task forces and organised dialogue processes for building up consensus on a reinforced joint action on climate and biodiversity among the different institutions and with key stakeholders at national, regional and local levels;

   - At programming level - the definition of expenditure targets, objectives or priorities to contribute to the financing of environment, nature and biodiversity and climate actions (e.g. ambitious targets for expenditures contributing to environment, climate and/or nature and biodiversity objectives) and/or by defining specific bonus or priorities for specific actions and initiatives addressing environmental/climate issues relevant at national level or for disseminating good practices or for complementing LIFE financing for strategic nature and strategic integrated projects).
     The programming phase of the EU-funded programmes 2021-2027 represents an opportunity for mainstreaming and for testing the effectiveness of the structure that will be established/reinforced.

3. Networking activities divided in two sub-components:

   - facilitating the participation of Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) to the future LIFE programme.

   - in case of consortia composed by authorities responsible of the LIFE programme from at least three different Member States, networking activities for exchanging best practices in view to improve mainstreaming.

2.3. How will LIFE preparatory projects for LIFE post 2020 be selected?

The Contracting Authority is responsible for the evaluation procedure.

Applications will follow a fast-track award procedure. Considering the fact that, taking into account the eligibility criteria, these preparatory projects can only be allocated to a predefined number of public organizations and one project per (eligible) Member State can be subsidized, there is no competition between Member States. In response to this call, Member State can submit only one proposal as coordinating beneficiary or associated beneficiary. The national authorities responsible for LIFE need to ensure coordination of the different parts of the proposal from their country, if necessary, and ensure that maximum 1 proposal for the period 2019-2022 is being submitted. If more than 1 proposal are submitted at the same time, none of them will be evaluated and the Member State will be requested to submit a new one. If a second proposal is submitted when a project to which the same Member State is participating has already started, the Member State will be excluded from the participation to that project.

Applications must be submitted according to the deadlines mentioned above in order to be considered for the financing period 2019-2020. Applications will be assessed during three periods following the deadline before which they are received.

Applications will be assessed to ensure compliance with the eligibility and selection criteria and with award thresholds listed below.

Grants will be signed upon successful conclusion of the evaluation process.

2.3.1. Eligibility and selection criteria

The applicant has to fulfil all of the following eligibility criteria:

- The applicant is a Member State represented by the organisation responsible at national level for implementation of LIFE or by an entity explicitly authorised to do so by the organisation responsible for the implementation of LIFE.

- The application contains a **proposal**, in which the Member State **commits**:

  - to maintain resources dedicated to the LIFE programme, including staffing levels, at levels no lower than those in place at the time of the submission of the proposal;

  - If the Member State is implementing a capacity building project, to avoid any overlapping with the present proposal and to maintain the resources, including staffing levels, allocated to the capacity building project for the entire duration of the project;

  - to apply neither for more than one preparatory project for the preparation of the LIFE programme post 2020 at the same time nor for any further preparatory project on the same subject till 2022, if the grant for the preparatory project is awarded.
    Please see the applications forms, in particular A3 and A5.

The proposals must also demonstrate that the project is of Union interest by making a significant contribution to the achievement of one or more of the general objectives of the LIFE programme set out in Article 3 of the LIFE Regulation, in particular by mainstreaming environmental, climate, nature and biodiversity issues into other policies, programmes and funds.

2.3.2. Who may submit a proposal for a preparatory project for LIFE post 2020?

A proposal may be submitted (as coordinating beneficiary) only by the entity responsible at national level for the implementation of the LIFE programme in an EU Member State or by an entity explicitly authorised to do so by the organisation responsible for the implementation of LIFE. Other entities responsible at national level for implementation of the LIFE programme in other EU Member States may participate as associated beneficiaries. The proposal may also include the participation of other entities, public or private, as associated beneficiaries if this is necessary in view of the expected results of the project.

Furthermore, the award of projects is subject to the projects meeting minimum quality requirements (see par 2.3.3 for more information).

For UK applicants: Please note that until the United Kingdom leaves the EU, nothing changes with regard to the participation in EU programmes. Please be aware however that the eligibility criteria must be complied with for the entire duration of our framework partnerships/grants. If the United Kingdom withdraws from the EU during that period (without an agreement ensuring eligibility for UK beneficiaries), the UK beneficiary will cease to receive EU funding or be required to leave the project on the basis of the contractual provisions on termination.

2.3.3. Award criteria

The merit of all eligible proposals will be evaluated and scored according to the following award criteria and scoring system:

Award criteria	**Minimum pass score***	**Maximum score**
AW 1: Technical coherence and quality	10	20
AW 2: Financial coherence and quality (including value for money)	5	10
AW 3: Comprehensiveness of the approach in relation to identified weaknesses	20	40
AW 4: Presentation of the expected improvements of the mainstreaming of nature, environment and climate issues into other policies, economic activities and programmes	15	30
Overall (pass) scores*	**55**	**100**

*A project proposal has to reach at least the minimum pass score for each award criterion and the sum of scores for all criteria has to be equivalent to 55 points or more.

- **AW 1: Technical coherence and quality.** This criterion will focus on the clarity, feasibility and sustainability of the actions proposed in the proposal and the overall organisation of the project. The pre-operational context must be thoroughly described per each participating Member State. There should be a clear link in the proposal between the problems and threats identified per each Member State, the project objectives, the proposed actions and their expected results. All actions should be properly described and quantified. The proposal must clearly describe how, where, when and by whom each action in the proposal will be undertaken.

  The proposal must be drafted to allow the evaluators to assess to what extent the technical means and expertise of the consortium involved are adequate for implementing the project.

  The time planning must be realistic and potential difficulties must have been correctly assessed in the relevant forms.

  Any actions that are not directly contributing to the achievement of the project objectives may be considered as ineligible (example: preparatory actions or studies that are not related to the project implementation, any fundamental scientific research, etc.). A removal of these actions (and of their budget) from the project shall be proposed during revision (see section 2.3.7).

  Proposals may receive up to 20 points for this criterion. The pass score for this criterion is 10 points.

- **AW 2: Financial coherence and quality (including value for money).** The proposed budget and its consistency with the actions proposed and with the applicable rules as well as the cost-effectiveness of the proposed approach will be evaluated. Financial coherence will also be assessed.

  The financial contributions of the beneficiaries/co-financers, the proposed budget and the proposed project expenditures must comply with the rules and principles foreseen in this LIFE guidelines for applicants, the General Conditions of the LIFE Model Grant Agreement (see link under section 3.12) and the LIFE Regulation. The budget must be transparent, coherent and cost-efficient, including for the management of the project.

  Proposals may receive up to 10 points for this criterion. The pass score for this criterion is 5 points. A proposal would receive a score below the pass score if its financial part is poorly conceived and/or requires a considerable revision.

- **AW 3: Comprehensiveness of the approach in relation to the identified weaknesses** should explain how the project is expected to improve the implementation of the LIFE programme post 2020. It should clarify the activities that will be implemented for each of the selected component (preparation of the Strategic Nature Projects, mainstreaming of environmental, nature and biodiversity and climate issues into other policies, programmes and funds) and show how they are supposed to respond to the identified weaknesses.
- For example, for the mainstreaming of environmental, nature and climate issues in to other policies and programmes, the proposal shall for each Member State:
  - describe the mainstreaming practices, including – if relevant – its strong points and its weaknesses as well as the lessons learned;
  - detail the activities that will be implemented to support the mainstreaming at different levels, e.g.:

    - on the definition/implementation/monitoring/assessment of policies and legislation,

    - on next round programming of EU and non-EU funds at the level of the definition of needs/priorities (e. g. in terms of allocation of funds),

    - on the implementation of the EU and non-EU funds for the definition/selection of the activities to be financed (e.g. in terms of award criteria).

  For the preparation of the Strategic Nature Projects, activities may include (this is not an exhaustive list):

  – up-dating the prioritized action framework, in case of need;

– collecting information and studies for the preparation of the proposal (e.g. on sources of funding);
– networking, consultation and coordination work for the preparation of the project;
– consensus-building with stakeholders to be involved in the implementation;
– developing financing plans where such plans are not already part of the prioritized action framework.

Proposals may receive up to 40 points for this criterion. The pass score for this criterion is 20 points.

- **AW 4**: **Presentation of the expected improvements** related to the implementation of the LIFE programme post 2020. In particular in terms of:

  - mainstreaming of environment, climate, nature and biodiversity issues into other policies, economic activities and programmes related to the implementation of the LIFE programme post 2020. In particular, the expected outputs should be decribed in details and the results should be, if possible, quantified to allow for a result-based evaluation (e.g. inclusion of targets for expenditures on environment, nature and biodiversity, climate per programme/fund; priority assigned to environmental/nature and biodiversity and climate action specific objectives or to relevant topics in the selection of the activities to be financed, integration of good practices into the programming, etc.).

- For the preparation of the Strategic Nature Projects, the level of involvement and commitment of the relevant authorities and stakeholders, and the added value of the proposed activities.

- For the networking, in terms of expected results on the exchange of good practices on the two other project components, as well as also on the promotion of the LIFE programme in the newly eligible countries and territories, i.e. OCTs.

  A description of the expected improvements will have to be provided per Member State participating in the proposal.

  Proposals may receive up to 30 points for this criterion. The pass score for this criterion is 15 points.

  Given that LIFE projects represent a considerable investment, the Contracting Authority attaches great importance to the presentation of these improvements and the related outputs.

2.3.4. Mechanics of the Award phase

For any given proposal, each of the above 4 criteria will be assessed and scored by at least two independent evaluators. A synthesis report will then be written on the basis of the individual assessments, and including the score for each criterion.

On the basis of the synthesis reports and scores provided by the evaluators, the final approval on the scores to be awarded to each proposal will be taken during a meeting ("Award Panel") chaired by the Contracting Authority and attended by the evaluators. Each proposal will fall into one of the following situations:

- Any proposal that receives a final score below the pass score for any of the Award criteria for which a minimum pass level is indicated, or for which the total score is less than 55 points, will be declared "rejected at the award phase.
- For all proposals not falling into the above situation, the total score to be awarded is calculated by summing up the final synthesis scores for the 4 Award criteria.

2.3.5. Financial selection phase

All proposals that were not rejected during the Opening, Technical selection, Admissibility or Award phases are checked for their compliance with the financial selection criteria. Proposals which do not comply with one or several of the financial selection criteria listed hereafter are declared not selected.

Step A – Document check:

All applicants (potential coordinating beneficiaries) **other than public bodies**, must provide, as annexes to their proposal, evidence that they comply with the financial selection criterion set out in Article 198 of the Financial Regulation, namely that "the applicant has stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain his or her activity throughout the period for which the grant is awarded and to participate in its funding". Therefore, coordinating beneficiaries other than public bodies have to provide the following administrative and financial documents as annexes to their LIFE proposal. It should be noted that these annexes will be required by the Contracting Authority irrespective of whether they are obligatory or not for the particular type of organisation, according to national legislation, in the coordinating beneficiary's Member State:

A. The "LIFE Simplified Financial Statement", provided as a separate Excel file with the LIFE Application Package. The financial table in this statement must be completed and annexed to the proposal as an Excel file.

B. The most recent balance sheet and profit and loss account. This document must be annexed to the LIFE proposal. If the applicant does not yet have a balance sheet and profit and loss account, because the organisation has been only recently created, it must provide a management/business plan (for at least 12 months in the future) with the financial data prepared in accordance with the standard required under national legislation.

Each applicant (coordinating or associated beneficiary) that declared itself as being a public body (in application form A2) must provide as a financial annex the "Public body declaration", fully completed, with a dated signature (form A4).

In case LIFE proposals are missing one or more mandatory financial annexes the Contracting Authority will first send a message to the applicant indicating the annexes that are missing.

The Contracting Authority will also use this period to request the necessary financial annexes and/or supporting documentation in cases where it has doubt as to the status of any public body.

The applicant will have 5 working days to reply and provide any missing or incomplete annexes. In exceptional circumstances, the Contracting Authority may extend the deadline.

All proposals that do not fully comply with all the above criteria by the end of this process are declared inadmissible and are eliminated from any further evaluation.

Step B – Financial Check

The purpose of the financial check is to verify that *t*he applicant must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain his activity throughout the period during which the action is being carried out and to participate in its funding.

The Contracting Authority will utilise all the information at its disposal to assess whether the applicant and the associated beneficiaries fulfil the selection and the exclusion criteria. On the basis of Article 136 and 198 of the Financial Regulation, a proposal will be rejected if the evaluator has strong evidence showing that it falls into any of the following situations:

- if there is information available to indicate that the coordinating beneficiary and/or one of its associated beneficiaries, contrary to the declaration for exclusion, are in one of the situations referred to in art. 136(1), 136(4) and 141 of the EU Financial Regulation;
- the results of audits carried out by European Union Institutions in relation to the

coordinating beneficiary and/or one of its associated beneficiaries have clearly shown their inability to comply with the administrative rules regulating European Union grants and in particular those applicable to LIFE;

- the coordinating beneficiary has an unpaid debt owed to the Commission at the time of the submission of its application.

The Contracting Authority will make these assessment based, among others, on a consultation of its “Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES)”.

For private commercial and private non-commercial organisations:

- the auditor’s report or auditor-certified balance sheet and profit and loss account provided with the project proposal has not given an “unqualified opinion” about the coordinating beneficiary’s financial viability;
- on the basis of the financial viability test, it is concluded that the coordinating beneficiary does not have the financial capacity to cover its share of co-financing within the proposed project period;
- on the basis of the financial viability test, it is concluded that the coordinating beneficiary does not have the capacity to manage the financial amounts provided for in the proposal budget within the proposed project period.

The financial viability of the coordinating beneficiary and its capacity to manage large EU grants are assessed on the basis of the financial information provided.

The financial viability check will also be used to assess whether a financial guarantee would be required to cover fully or partially the EU pre-financing payment to the project. In particular, a financial guarantee will be always requested in the following cases:

1) proposals from **private commercial organisations** if less than 2 of the following criteria are respected:

1. the ratio “total grant requested divided by the number of project years” / “shareholders’ equity” is lower than 1
2. the ratio “current assets” / “current liabilities” is higher than 1
3. the ratio “total debts” / “total assets” is lower than 0.8
4. there is a positive operational profit

2) proposals from **private non-commercial organisations (NGOs)** if none of the following 3 criteria are respected:

1. the ratio “total grant requested divided by the number of project years” / “subsidies” is lower than 1
2. the ratio “current assets” / “current liabilities” is higher than 1
3. the ratio “total debts” / “total assets” is lower than 0.8

Proposals will be rejected when none of the criteria is respected and the ratios diverge significantly from the thresholds indicated above.

2.3.6. Establishment of the list of selected proposals

The proposals that have passed all phases of the evaluation will be revised in order to address each specific need identified during the assessment (see following section).

2.3.7. Revision of Projects

The aim of the revision phase is to clarify, for selected proposals, all open questions regarding feasibility, cost-effectiveness and eligibility of individual actions, compliance with the LIFE Regulation and the General Conditions of the LIFE Model Grant Agreement.

During the revision phase, the Contracting Authority may ask the applicant to provide further details about particular aspects of the proposal and/or to introduce modifications or improvements to the original proposal. The coordinating beneficiary may also be asked to delete certain actions and/or to reduce the project budget, the EU financial contribution and/or the EU co-financing rate to the project.

The applicant will have 15 **calendar days** to reply to the questions and a further 15 **calendar days** to introduce the requested modifications or improvements to its proposal. In exceptional circumstances, the Contracting Authority may extend the deadline.

The Contracting Authority will send all revision questions and instructions to the coordinating beneficiary.

Applicants shall not introduce any modifications to their proposal other than those requested by the Contracting Authority.

It should be noted here that a revision letter sent out to an applicant with questions or requests for modifying the proposal does not entail, on behalf of the Contracting Authority, any commitment to a definitive funding of the proposal. Furthermore, on the basis of the replies received, the Contracting Authority may still decide to reduce the project budget or even exclude a project from financing.

By the end of the revision phase, all projects retained are expected to be fully coherent and transparent, and in line with all technical and financial requirements of the LIFE Regulation and the General Conditions of the LIFE Model Grant Agreement. The applicants of the selected proposals will then be informed about the outcome of the revision phase and will be asked to provide 3 identical paper copies of the final revised proposals. At this stage, all commitments from associated beneficiaries/co-financers must be fully confirmed in the revised forms.

Applicants shall not introduce any unilateral modifications at all to the revised proposal after the conclusion of the revision phase, otherwise the project may be excluded from the award.

2.3.8. Award Decision

After the formal endorsement of the Contracting Authority of the evaluation results, applicants will be officially informed by letter about the results of the evaluation of their proposals and, where appropriate, about the reasons for rejection.

In case any proposals are rejected or withdrawn during the revision phase or at any time prior to signing of the grant agreement, the relevant authorities will have the possibility to submit a new proposal before the next deadline.

Any budget remaining at the conclusion of the award decision procedure will be reassigned to the budget for other type of LIFE projects.

3. General recommendations

3.1. In which language may the proposal be submitted?

The Contracting Authority recommends that applicants fill in the technical part of the proposal only in clear English even though it may be submitted in any of the official EU languages, except Irish or Maltese. Note that revisions, communication with and reporting to the contracting Authority will have to be in English only. Also, the contract will be signed in English.

Form B1 ("Summary description of the project") must always be submitted in English. Should the proposal not be written in English, all chapters should also be summarised in English.

3.2. Who are the project beneficiaries?

Once a proposal has been accepted for co-funding, the applicant will become the **coordinating beneficiary** and be legally and financially responsible for 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 contract or 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.

In addition to the coordinating beneficiary, a LIFE proposal may also involve one or more associated beneficiaries.

An **associated beneficiary** must always contribute technically to the proposal and hence be responsible for the implementation of one or several project actions. An associated beneficiary must provide the coordinating beneficiary with all the necessary documents required for the fulfilment of its reporting obligations to the Contracting Authority.

There is no obligation to involve associated beneficiaries in a LIFE proposal, similarly not for preparatory projects. On the other hand, a beneficiary should not hesitate to associate other beneficiaries if this would bring an added value to the project.

None of the beneficiaries can act, in the context of the project, as a sub-contractor to one of the other beneficiaries, including the coordinator.

Attention: the total cost of the project should be higher than the total eligible cost of the project, meaning that the remaining (ineligible) cost must be contributed by the concerned beneficiary (or any other source of finance) (see also section 3.4).

Public undertakings whose capital is publicly owned, who are considered an instrument or a technical service of a public administration, and who are under control of the administration, but are in effect separate legal entities, must become beneficiaries if a public administration intends to entrust the implementation of certain project actions to the undertaking[5].

For specific tasks of a fixed duration, a proposal may also foresee the use of **subcontractors**. Subcontractors cannot act as beneficiaries or vice-versa. Subcontractors provide external services to the project beneficiaries who fully pay for the services provided. Sub-contractors should not be identified by name in the proposal unless they are considered an affiliated entity to a project beneficiary; otherwise, even if they are named, the related Article II.11 of the General Conditions of the LIFE grant agreement template (see section 3.12) still has to be respected (see also 3.7 for further details on external assistance/subcontracting).

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

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

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.

3.3. What is the maximum EU co-financing?

The maximum EU co-financing rate for LIFE Preparatory projects is 60% of the eligible project costs.

Moreover, the maximum EU co-financing per Member State participating in each project will be the following:

- For the preparation of the Strategic Nature Projects to be submitted in the years 2021-2022, the maximum EU co-financing is 100 000 EUR. This amount is not eligible for the countries benefitting from on-going capacity building projects on 1 January 2022;
- For the mainstreaming component, the maximum EU co-financing is 300 000 EUR;
- For the networking with environmental and climate authorities from the OCTs the maximum EU co-financing is 30 000 EUR;
- For the networking with other authorities responsible of the implementation of the LIFE programme, the maximum EU co-financing is 100 000 EUR. This amount will be eligible in case of consortia composed by at least three Member States per each Member State that will be actively participating in the related activities.

The payment schedule 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 (for less than 18 month projects)	70%	0%	max. 30%
1 Mid-term report (for projects lasting more than 24 months)	40%	30%	max. 30%

3.4. How much should project beneficiaries contribute to the project budget?

The coordinating beneficiary and each associated beneficiary 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 a lack of commitment. A proposal may not be submitted if the financial contribution of any of the beneficiaries to the proposal budget is 0 Euro.

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 the General Conditions of the LIFE Model Grant Agreement.

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

The earliest possible starting date for projects is the submission date of the project proposal.

Any costs incurred before the project's starting date will not be considered eligible and cannot be included in the project budget. Costs for project proposals that are not evaluated successfully are at the full risk of the proposers.

The project duration must correspond to what is necessary to complete all of the project's actions and to reach all its objectives. The duration of a preparatory project for LIFE post 2020 is around 3 years. All the project activities should be completed by 31st December 2022.

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. Applicants 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.
- if any of the Strategic Nature Projects to be prepared in the framework of this project has not been submitted before, the final payment could be done only after the deadline for the 2022 call for proposals for Strategic Nature Projects.

3.6. Where can a LIFE post 2020 project take place?

The preparatory projects for LIFE post 2020 are expected to take place on the territory of the European Union Member States in which the applicants are established. However, transnational actions such as exchanges of experience or meetings with bodies in Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) can be necessary if the proposal includes specific networking activities with OCTs. Related travel costs need to be in line with the objectives of the actions proposed.

3.7. Subcontracting of project activities/External assistance

The beneficiaries should have the financial and operational 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.

If a beneficiary is a public body, any outsourcing (including any outsourcing of the project management) must be awarded in accordance with the applicable rules on public tendering and in conformity with EU Directives on public tendering procedures.

For amounts exceeding EUR 135,000, private beneficiaries must invite competitive tenders from potential subcontractors and award the contract to the bid offering best value for money; in doing so they shall observe the principles of transparency and equal treatment and shall take care to avoid any conflicts of interest.

Green procurement: all beneficiaries (public and private) are strongly invited to carefully consider the possibility to "green" their procurement activities. 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

3.8. Of what length should a LIFE proposal be?

A proposal should be as concise and clear as possible, so please stick to the maximum page numbers indicated in the application forms. Clear and detailed descriptions should be provided for all project actions. A proposal will be assessed on its quality and not on its length.

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

3.9. Can ongoing activities be included in the project?

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.

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.

3.10. Complementarity with other EU funding programmes must be ensured

According to Article 8 of the LIFE Regulation, support from the LIFE programme should be "complementary to other financial instruments of the Union" and overlap between the LIFE programme and other Union policies and funding programmes should be avoided. These include, amongst others, the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme, the European Fisheries Fund and the Horizon 2020 Programme. Double-financing is, of course, not allowed.

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 (see application form A8).

3.11. Efforts for reducing the project's ”carbon footprint”

As the LIFE programme is the only EU programme targeting specifically the environment, nature and biodiversity and climate action, your project should have the lowest carbon footprint possible. The description of your project should include details on actions taken to reduce CO2 emissions emitted during the project’s lifetime. Be as precise as possible and don’t hesitate to refer to green procurement practices, labels of eco-products bought, reduced transport, etc.

3.12. Useful links

LIFE Regulation: 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

LIFE - Communication:

https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/section/life/life-communication

LIFE Multi-annual Work programme 2018-2020:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/about/index.htm#mawp2018

Financial Regulation:

https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/FR/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32018R1046

The General Conditions of the LIFE Model Grant Agreement (available for download at:

https://ec.europa.eu/easme/sites/easme-site/files/model_ga_action_grants_may_2019.pdf

Part 2: Completing the Application

There are 4 sets of application forms: A, B, C (technical forms) and F (financial forms). The financial forms are in a separate Excel file.

Whenever several copies of one form 2019-X (X= reference of the form) needs to be produced, please use the following naming convention per page: 2019-X/1; 2019-X/2 etc. (e.g. 2019-A5/1, 2019-A5/2)

1. Technical application forms

The technical part of the LIFE Preparatory project building application file consists of 3 parts (A, B and C) available for download as a single Word file.

While filling in the technical forms A - C, please respect the standard A4 format.

All forms are mandatory and must be fully completed, except:

- if there are no associated beneficiaries, the associated beneficiary declaration (form A5) and profile (form A6) don't need to be completed.

Where forms are not obligatory or where you have no specific information to put on certain parts of obligatory forms, you are **strongly advised** to indicate "not applicable" or "no relevant information" or an equivalent indication.

1.1. A Forms - Administrative information

1.1.1. Form A1 - Basic information on the project application

Project title (max 200 characters): It should include the key elements and objective of the project, such as the name of the Member States and the words ' LIFE post 2020'. Note that the Contracting Authority may ask you to change the title in order to make it clearer.

Project acronym (max 25 characters)

Project location: The actions for the preparatory project for LIFE post 2020 should normally take place in the Member State of the applicants. Action can take place in Overseas Countries and Territories, in case of specific networking activities with OCTs.

Expected start and end date: The earliest possible start date is the date of proposal submission. Please use the following format for all dates: DD/MM/YYYY. The end date should not be after the 31/12/2022.

List of beneficiaries: please list here the coordinator and all associated beneficiaries with their full name in English.

Budget and requested EU funding: Please include here the final budget figures fully corresponding to the financial application forms.

1.1.2. Form A2 – Coordinating beneficiary profile

Legal Name: The legal name is the official of name of the applicant, who will become the coordinating beneficiary.

Short Name (max 10 characters)**:** The coordinating beneficiary should be identifiable throughout the technical proposal forms and the financial proposal forms (FB and F1 - F7) by its short name.

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 2.1. part 1 of this document.

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

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.

Legal Registration Number: If applicable, provide the entity's legal national registration number or code.

Member State: Use the relevant Member State code as indicated at:

http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Glossary:Country_codes

Title: Title commonly used in correspondence with the person in charge of proposal co-ordination. Example: Mr., Mrs., Dr., Prof.

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, coordinating 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.

Brief description of the activities of the beneficiary: Please describe the entity, its legal status, its activities and its competence, particularly in relation to the implementation of LIFE in your Member State. 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, expertise and mandate for a successful implementation and follow-up of the project.

1.1.3. Form A3 – Statement of the coordinating beneficiary

Before completing this form, please check that the beneficiary does not fall into any of the situations listed in Articles 136(1), 136(4) and 141 of the EU Financial Regulation.

Financial contribution of the coordinating beneficiary, components in which it will participate: Amount to be provided in Euro (€). The amount indicated here must be identical with the amount indicated as corresponding to the beneficiary's contribution in the financial forms **FA** and **FB.** This amount must be greater than 0€ and cannot include any funding specifically obtained for the project from other public or private sources (this is co-financing). List all the components in the implementation of which the beneficiary will participate (please check consistency with form B1). Indicate the total cost (in Euro) of the beneficiary's part: this amount must be coherent with the costs indicated in forms C and in the financial form FB; it must cover the total costs including equipment costs before depreciation, costs of non-additional staff of public bodies (for a definition of "additional" please see below under Form F1), and overheads. Furthermore, the sum of the estimated total costs mentioned in forms A3 and A5 must equal the total cost of the project as shown in forms A1 and FC.

All the applicants commit themselves not to apply for more than one preparatory project for LIFE post 2020 (see section 2.3 of Part 1) and to maintain resources dedicated to the LIFE programme, including staffing levels, at levels no lower than those in place in 2019 for the duration of the present project (2020-2022). This means that only costs for new staff and for new, improved or changed actions (as compared to 2019) are eligible for funding.

Please note that this form is a Declaration on honour.

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

1.1.4. Form A4 – Public body declaration

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

1.1.5. Form A5 – Statement of associated beneficiaries

If the project foresees associated beneficiaries, this form becomes compulsory. Complete one form per associated beneficiary (A5/1, A5/2, A5/3, etc.).

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

1.1.6. Form A6 – Associated beneficiary profile

If the project foresees associated beneficiaries, this form becomes compulsory. Complete one form per associated beneficiary (A6/1, A6/2, A6/3, etc.).

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

1.1.7. Form A7 – Cofinancer profile and commitment form

If the project foresees cofinancers, this form becomes compulsory. Complete one form per organization that will cofinance the project (A7/1, A7/2, A7/3, etc.).

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

Please note that this form includes the signature of a representative of the cofinancing organization.

1.1.8. Form A8 – Other proposals submitted for EU funding

Other proposals submitted for European Union Funding <u>(max. 5 pages)</u>

Clear and complete answers must be provided to each question. LIFE projects **should not finance** actions that are better financed by other EU funding programmes (see "Complementarity with other EU funding programmes" in the section on general principles). **Applicants must therefore verify this aspect carefully** (please note point 1 of the declaration in form A3 that you have to sign) and provide the information as complete as possible in their answers. Supporting documents (e.g. extracts from the texts of the relevant programmes) should be provided (as far as possible and appropriate).

1.2. B Forms - Technical summary and overall context of the project

1.2.1. Form B1 - Summary description of the project

Please provide a Summary Description of your project in English, in max. 3 pages. The description should be structured, concise and clear. It should include:

- **Project title:** see instructions for form A1.
- **Member State(s) involved and project component targeted:** the table should be completed by indicating:

  - the country code of the Member State(s) that will be participating at the implementation of the projects as coordinating or associated beneficiary.

  - For each of them, as appropriate, Y (yes) for the components that the Member State will be implementing and N (no) for the ones that are not included in the proposal.

  - The intention of the consortium to implement networking activities between Member States and/or with Overseas Countries and Territories by deleting, as appropriate, “Yes” or “No”.
- **Abstract/summary of the proposal:** Provide a short picture of the current situation and the needs identified. Give an overview of the project objectives and the main activities.

These objectives must be realistic (be achievable within the timeframe of the project with the proposed budget and means/actions), clear (without ambiguity), and should directly address the problems and weaknesses identified. Provide a list the key outputs. Identify the results expected at the end of the project that should directly relate to the planned improvements.

1.2.2. Form B2 - Description of the intervention per Member State and project component

For each Member State provide a detailed description of the selected project component, clarifying (max 5 pages per Member State):

- **The background.** You should present a picture of the **current situation**. You should describe the activities undertaken, their organization, the resources available, the result obtained and present their strong points and the weaknesses. Specific indicators will have to be chosen for the project. For each indicator, please provide an explanation and a baseline.

- **The analysis of the existing needs.** You should investigate needs, identify the causes of the problems and explain how they could be addressed. This should represent the guiding line for the project activities.

- **The specific objectives of the intervention.** You should identify the specific objectives, which will be targeted to address the problems and weaknesses identified. Each objective will have to be reflected in one or more of the indicators chosen for the project.

- **The main activities and related means**. You should list the activities to be undertaken and that will lead to the expected results. You should estimate the means used to achieve the intended improvements.

- **The planned outputs.** You should list and provide a short description of the outputs for each project component. Each output should refer only to one project component. You will need to clarify when each output will be provided. The information provided, including the reference to each output, will need to be consistent with the ones mentioned in the forms C and F.

- **The expected results and impacts**. You should estimate the expected improvements during the project providing an estimation based on the indicators chosen for the project.

- **The expected constraints and risks** related to the implementation of the intervention and how they will be dealt with. You should identify all possible external events ("constraints and risks") that could have major negative impacts on the successful implementation of the project. For each constraint and risk identified, please indicate how you envisage overcoming it and how they have been taken into account in the planning of the project.

- **The continuation / valorisation of the project's results after the end of the LIFE**

funding. Describe how the project will be continued after the end of the LIFE funding, and what actions are required to consolidate the results. Please indicate what mechanisms will be put in place to ensure that this will be done. In particular, please reply to the following questions:

- Which actions will have to be carried out or continued after the end of the project?
- How will this be achieved?
- What resources will be necessary to carry out these actions?
- To what extent will the results and lessons of the project be actively disseminated, transferred and/or replicated after the end of the project to those persons and/or organisations that could best make use of them? (Please identify these persons/organisations)

Please provide the above information also for "networking between Member States" and "networking with OCTs" if the related component has been selected in the table in B1.

1.2.3. Form B3 - Efforts for reducing the project's "carbon footprint" and for green procurement

Please explain in maximum 2 pages how you intend to ensure that the "carbon footprint" of your project remains as low as is reasonably possible and how you intend to ensure "green procurement" whenever possible when outsourcing services and supplies. Please refer to internal practices where available, e.g green procurement, labels used for eco-products bought, reduction in transport or its carbon footprint.

1.3. C Forms - Detailed technical description of the proposed actions

1.3.1. Form C1 - List of all actions

Under this part, the applicant must list **all the actions, which will be implemented under the project**.

Each action will need to be classified by project component - "A" for "Facilitating mainstreaming", "B" for "Preparing the Strategic Nature Project", "C" for "Networking - and indicated by a number (e.g. C1).

Each component shall result in one or more outputs. For each Member State that will choose the component "B" for preparing the Strategic Nature Project, one of the output shall be the submission of the Strategic Nature Project. Please consider that the submission should intervene during the implementation of this preparatory project. Each action shall also contribute to one or more outputs. Their contribution to different outputs will have to be defined in the financial forms. The activities related to project management and monitoring of project progress, will have also to be distributed among the different components and outputs.

Please list all the actions foreseen in the project, by mentioning:

- **Action reference**: Number the different actions per component (such as A1, A2, B1, B2, ... etc.), preceded by the Member State's code: e. g. AT-A1; ALL-D1; BE-B1.

- **Name of the action.** Please ensure that the name is short (maximum 1 line) and that it is explanatory for the action.
- **Output(s) to which it will contribute**. Please refer to each output as defined in the form C3.

It is recommended that each action, which is expected to have an important output for the project (e.g. preparation of an action plan, recruitment of new staff, etc.) is presented as a **separate action**. Do not divide actions into sub-actions.

In particular for project management, each project must include one or several distinct actions named "Project management by (name of the beneficiary in charge)" to present the project management and quality control actions. Define, if possible, to which specific output(s) the action will be contributing, otherwise mention "all". However, the project management will have to be divided into quota per output in the financial forms. Each quota will represent the estimated cost of the time spent by the project management (e.g. project manager / project coordinators and other members of the project management) to obtain the concerned output. Please note that the management should be described, even if no costs are charged for this to the project and indicate clearly whether this is the case.

1.3.2. Form C2 - Description of the proposed actions

The description of each action in the form C2 should clearly (and in quantitative terms) indicate how it contributes to the project's expected outputs and results. There should be a **clear coherence between the technical forms and the financial forms.**

- For each action (such as IT-B2, ALL-C3, BE-PM1), the applicant shall provide a short description (max 1 page), including the following information:

  - its objectives and the reasons why this action is necessary (why),
  - the expected results and the output(s) to which it is expected to contribute (what). Please check consistency with B2 and F forms.
  - the beneficiary responsible for implementation and, if relevant, the stakeholders involved (who),
  - the resource involved and the related cost estimation (by what means). Please verify consistency with F forms.

  Where suitable, the applicant should also mention:

  - the approach used and related constraints and assumptions (how),
  - the indicators of progress (in what way).

Please note that the action(s) on project management should 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.

- a description of the project management **staff** and describe management and reporting duties of the project beneficiaries. Explain if the management staff has **previous project management experience**.

1.3.3. Form C3 – Outputs and Milestones

Please provide quantitative information as far as possible.

Outputs: Please list all deliverable products chronologically according to their deadline for completion (day/month/year). Please check consistency with B2 and F forms.

- ***Deliverable products/Outputs*** are all those **tangible** products that can be shipped (e.g. brochures, studies and other documents, software, videos, etc). For each deliverable, please include the number of the associated action (e.g. AT-PM.2, ALL-C3, BE-PM1) and 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 chronologically according to their deadline for delivery/achievement (day/month/year).

Project milestones are defined as **key steps** during the implementation of the project e.g. "Completion of new recruitment". Milestones (or corresponding documents) do not need to be submitted to the Contracting Authority. In a report, you would need to inform the Contracting Authority whether the milestone has been completed or not.

Activity reports foreseen: The coordinating beneficiary shall provide to the Contracting Authority a report per component. The overall technical and financial progress, the project's achieved results and possible problems should be highlighted in these reports per component. The reporting schedule should include a mid-term and a final reports (the latter accompanied by a payment request) per component. One "Mid-term report" per component should be submitted at the mid-term of the activities related to each component. One "Final Report with payment request" shall be submitted, not later than 3 months after the project end date.

Audit: If the Union funding requested by the coordinating beneficiary is larger than 750.000€, an audit certificate shall be produced by an approved auditor or, in case of public bodies, by a competent and independent public officer. This certificate shall be provided to the Contracting Authority in the final project report. This audit should not only verify the respect of national legislation and accounting rules as well as the respect of the accounting practices of the beneficiary but should also certify that all costs incurred respect the LIFE Common Provisions. In the financial forms, the costs for the audit should be under the budget item "other goods and services".

1.3.4. Form C4 - Timetable

In the table, please list all actions ordered by number and using their numbers and names as presented in the project proposal (e.g. IT-B2, ALL-C3, BE-A4, etc.). For each project action, please tick the action's implementation period.

When planning the implementation period of your project, please bear in mind that a LIFE post 2020 preparatory project cannot start before the date of submission of the proposal. It is recommended to incorporate in the timetable an appropriate safety margin to allow for potential unforeseen delays (e.g. 6 months).

2. Financial application forms

The financial part of the LIFE preparatory projects application file consists of 10 forms (F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, FA, FB and FC). It is available for download as an Excel file.

To make the project administrative management easier, the EU contribution will be calculated on based on lump-sums per project component and outputs.

All project costs, including ineligible costs such as overhead and non-additional staff (see also below under F1), must be described in these financial forms. Only costs incurred during the lifetime of the project should be included. In case the signature date of the grant agreement is before the project start date, the legal obligation to pay for project costs may be contracted between the date of signature and the start date of the project.

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

Internal invoicing (i.e. costs which result from transactions between departments of a beneficiary) is not allowed, unless it is possible to prove that such transactions represent the best value for money and exclude all elements of profit, VAT and overheads.

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.

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 the grant agreement.

Please note that, in each financial form, only the cells in light yellow have to be filled in. The rest is done automatically.

We suggest filling in the financial forms respecting the order: from F1 to F7, FA, FB and FC

2.1. Cover page

Please fill in the acronym of your proposal as stated in the technical forms.

2.2. Forms F1 – F7 – Project costs by category

Beneficiary short name: Please use the short name given in the Coordinating beneficiary and Associated beneficiary profiles in the LIFE technical forms **A2** and **A6**.

Project component: For each beneficiary, please insert the project component - “A” for “Facilitating mainstreaming”, “B” for “Preparing the Strategic Nature Project”, “C” for “Networking -. If the costs will be contributing to one or more component please select one of the alternatives: "A – Mainstreaming + B SNaPs", "A – Mainstreaming + C Networking", "B SNaPs + C Networking" or "All".

Output to which this cost will contribute: Indicate to which output the cost will contribute.

All costs must be rounded to the nearest Euro and must exclude value-added tax (VAT) when the beneficiary can recover this cost from its national authorities.

2.2.1. Form F1 - Direct personnel costs

General: Please include here only those costs of the "total direct personnel costs", which are considered eligible direct personnel costs.

The costs of any public staff which is already responsible, prior to the start date of the project, for tasks related to the implementation of the LIFE programme, are not eligible for EU co-financing. (They should be included in total project costs, but not as an eligible expense.)

However, in view of article 19(9)(a) of the LIFE Regulation, the cost of new personnel (whether permanent or temporary, full-time or part-time) is an eligible cost.

Furthermore, as mentioned in recital 38 of the LIFE Regulation[6], the sum of the contributions to the project of the coordinating and associated beneficiaries should exceed by at least 2% the sum of the salary costs of the personnel of national administration charged to the project.

New personnel ("additional personnel") is defined as personnel whose contracts:

(a) do not begin before the date of signature of the grant agreement, or whose contractual responsibilities were previously unrelated to implementation of the LIFE programme. Staff that was considered as additional under the capacity building projects resulting from the call for proposals 2014 can be considered as additional staff in this call for proposals 2019 providing that the previous contract is ended when the staff member will start working for the preparatory project for the LIFE programme post 2020; and

(b) mention (including through amendment) responsibilities related to the implementation of the LIFE programme in the target Member State specifically.

In addition, the notion of "additional personnel" shall also include employees - permanent or temporary - whose contracts started before the start date of the project and whose responsibilities were previously unrelated to the implementation of the LIFE programme.

[6] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1396615646363&uri=CELEX:32013R1293

Important: 1. Please note that the amount of the eligible costs for personnel plus the costs for sub-contracting/technical assistance should not exceed 67% of the overall eligible costs. In case this happens, a justification shall be provided.

2. Please note that, in case of a consortium of more than one Member State, the costs for the overall coordination of the networking are eligible. However they should not exceed 7% of the costs attributed to the associated beneficiaries.

Type of contract: full time or part time.

Note that service contracts with individuals may be charged to this category on condition that 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.

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. When the professional category is not explanatory of the role that the person will play in the project, you should also include this information. *Examples of staff categories/roles in the project are: senior engineer/project manager; technician/data analysis, /financial management etc.*

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, any other statutory cost but excluding any other costs. For the purpose of establishing the budget proposal, the salary may be calculated based on indicative average rates which are reasonable to 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. Costs might need to be substantiated by salary slips during the revision phase.

The total number of person-days 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 days 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
	10 days
Less illness/other (when relevant)	
= Total productive days	215 days

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.

2.2.2. Form F2 - Travel and subsistence costs

General: 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. The cost of participation in a conference is only considered eligible if this is necessary in the framework of a specific project component. The number of participants in conferences is limited to those for whose attendance there is a valid technical justification.

Important: Please note that the amount of the eligible costs for travel and subsistence expenditures should not exceed 20% of the overall eligible costs, otherwise a justification shall be provided.

Travel Destination: For each project component and coordinating or associated beneficiary, please **i**dentify the costs of the travels and subsistence allowances by three categories: (1) travels "in the country", (2) travels outside the country and "in Europe" and (3) travels outside the country and "outside Europe".

Purpose of travel: The purpose of travel must be clearly described, in order to allow an assessment of the costs in relation to the objectives of the project (examples: 'dissemination event', 'technical co-ordination meeting'). Identify the number of trips foreseen and the number of people who will be travelling as well as the duration of the travel in days.

Travel costs: 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: 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 within "travel costs".

2.2.3. Form F3 – Sub-contracting - external assistance costs

General: Sub-contracting costs refer to external technical assistance costs: services/works carried out by external companies or persons (other than those for which costs can be included under Form F1). Renting of equipment is also included here.

For example, the creation of a logo, establishment of a dissemination plan, design of dissemination products, translation services, publication of a book or renting of material could be included in external assistance. However, transportation of materials, printing of dissemination materials and others, even if done by an external company, should be reported under other costs.

Costs related to the **purchase or leasing** (as opposed to renting) **of equipment** supplied under subcontract should be budgeted under the cost category of "Durable Goods/ Equipment costs" and not under external assistance.

Important: Please note that the amount of the eligible costs for sub-contracting/technical assistance plus the costs for personnel should not exceed 67% of the overall eligible costs. In case this happens, a justification shall be provided.

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 more than one line for the description of the subcontract if necessary.

Procedure: Specify the procedure foreseen to sub-contract the work, e.g. 'public tender', 'direct contract', 'framework contract', etc.

2.2.4. Form F4 - Equipment costs - durable goods

Please put in this category all 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 responsible for the purchase do not classify as durable goods. Only equipment costs could be considered as durable goods. Land purchase, infrastructure and prototype costs are not eligible under these projects.

You need to indicate the actual cost as well as the value of depreciation. <u>Only the </u>depreciation is an eligible cost for the project and the EU co-financing will be calculated on <u>the basis of this amount.</u>

Important:

1. Depreciation of durable goods already owned by beneficiaries at the start of the project is not eligible for LIFE funding.
2. The amount of the eligible costs for equipment and consumables should not exceed 5% of the overall eligible costs. In case of need, a justification shall be provided.

Description: Provide a clear description of each item, e.g. laptop, if needed for campaigning, a vehicle needed for a mobile information campaign, 'database software (off-the-shelf or developed under sub-contract)', etc.

Procedure: Specify the procedure foreseen to procure the equipment, e.g. 'public tender', 'direct contract', 'framework contract', etc.

Actual cost: Full cost of the 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.

Please note that the amount of depreciation to be included as eligible cost in the budget is limited to a maximum of 50% of the actual cost for equipment.

2.2.5. Form F5 - 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 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, photocopying, or other communication forms are used, the corresponding costs may also be declared here.

Costs must also be specifically related to the implementation of project components. However, **general consumables/supplies** (as opposed to direct costs), such as telephone, communication costs, photocopies, office material, water, gas, etc. are covered by the overheads category and are not eligible under "costs for consumables".

Catering costs/meals/coffees related to dissemination activities, such as presentations of the project, workshops or conferences should be reported here. However, please note that if the whole organisation of the conference is subcontracted, the corresponding cost should all be budgeted under external assistance/subcontracting.

Important: The amount of the eligible costs for consumables and equipment should not exceed 5% of the overall eligible costs. In case of need, a justification shall be provided.

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 FR-C2, 'stationery for dissemination products (deliverable 5) ', etc.

Procedure: Specify the procedure foreseen to procure the work, e.g. 'public tender', 'direct contract', etc.

2.2.6. Form F6 – Costs for other goods and services

General: Direct costs which do not fall in any other cost category should be placed here. Costs for bank charges borne by the Coordinating beneficiary, conference fees, insurance costs when these costs originate solely from the project implementation, etc. should be placed here.

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, I.4.4 and I.4.9 of the Special Conditions and Article 11.19.2 (e) of the General Conditions of the Model LIFE Grant Agreement for more information.

Important: The amount of the eligible costs for other goods and services should not exceed 18% of the overall eligible costs. In case of need, a justification shall be provided.

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

Procedure: Specify the procedure foreseen to procure the work, e.g. 'public tender', 'direct contract', 'framework contract', etc.

2.2.7. Form F7 – overheads and non eligible costs

General: Form 7 includes two tables to be filled in:

- Table 7.1 on **Overheads.** Overheads are indirect costs which cannot be attributed to a specific project action (e.g. electricity, rental costs, paper, etc.). A summary description of the overheads should be provided and referred to one or more project output. Please note that in any case the quota of the overheads per project output will have to be provided in the form FB.

  Important: Overheads**/i**ndirect costs are eligible for a maximum of 7% of the total eligible direct costs.

- Table 7.2 on **Non eligible costs.** Non eligible costs may include costs which are necessary for the implementation of the projects but which are non-eligible (e.g. contributions in kind, costs for non-additional personnel, etc..)

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

Category of costs: Please indicate if this cost is related to staff, travels, external assistance; equipment, consumable or other goods and services.

2.3. Form FA - Cost breakdown for component and output

This form this will the basis for the definition of the lump sums.

For every output of each project component (A, B, C) described in the technical forms C1, a detailed breakdown of the eligible projects costs per project category should be provided.

This form is very useful in order to link technical outputs and costs, and to thus show cost effectiveness of the components. Particular attention should be given to the coherence of the presented costs with the costs included in forms F1-F7.

Expected output: Please list the expected outputs and the activity reports indicated in the form C3.

Project component: For each output, please select the related project component - “A” for “Facilitating mainstreaming”, “B” for “Preparing the Strategic Nature Project”, “C” for “Networking'. In case one output refer to one or more project component, please separate the output (i.e. in case of a report, consider the preparation of separate reports) or choose the component to which each output will contribute the most..

Beneficiary short name: Please use the short name given in the Coordinating beneficiary and Associated beneficiary profiles in the LIFE technical forms **A2** and **A6**.

Eligible costs per category of costs. Please group the costs indicated in forms F1-F6 per output and per beneficiary. The total cost per category should correspond to the total of the forms F1-F6.

Overheads. Indirect costs are eligible for a maximum of 7% of the total eligible direct costs. Please provide an estimate of the quota of overheads for each output. and check the consistency with the data in the F7 and FC form.

EU contribution requested. The EU contribution cannot exceed 60% of the overall eligible costs. For each output, the applicant(s) shall clarify the amount of the EU contribution requested.

2.4. Form FB - Project funding breakdown

This form describes the funding of the project by the beneficiary/ies, 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, should be included under total costs.

Beneficiary country: Include the Member State code of the beneficiary (see instructions for form A2 above for choosing the correct code).

Beneficiary short name: Please use the short name given in the Coordinating beneficiary and Associated beneficiary profiles in the ***LIFE*** technical forms **A2** and **A6**.

Total costs of the actions in €: Indicate the total costs of the actions undertaken by the beneficiaries as in the ***LIFE*** technical forms **A3** and **A5**. These amounts must include non eligible costs (e.g. non-additional staff – see form F7.2) and overheads. The sum of beneficiaries' "total costs of the actions" must equal the total cost of the project as shown in the form FC and in the technical form A1.

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. Any other entity providing funds to the project should become an associated beneficiary. The amount indicated here should be the same as in the ***LIFE*** technical form **A3**.

Associated beneficiary contribution: Indicate the financial contribution from each associated beneficiary, as in the ***LIFE*** technical form **A5.** These amounts cannot include any funding obtained from other public or private sources specifically earmarked for the project or for a part of it.

Amount of EU contribution requested: Specify the amount of EU financial contribution requested by the coordinating beneficiary and each of the associated beneficiaries. It should be the same as shown in forms FA and correspond to the amount of EC contributions requested in the financial form FC and in the technical form A1.

2.5. Form FC - Budget breakdown and project funding

This form is for the most part filled in automatically, based on the data provided in the other forms in this section. No cell can be modified.

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

You should indicate the eligible costs per project category.

Non-eligible project costs included in form F7.2 should appear as part of the total project costs, but not as part of the eligible costs.

For what concerns the costs of durable goods (equipment), only the depreciated amount can be claimed, corresponding to the duration of the project, and only a maximum of 50% of its real costs.

3. Checklists

3.1. Admissibility checklist

A project may be declared inadmissible for one or more of the following reasons:

1. **Forms are partly or completely hand-written**
2. **Non-standard forms have been used**

This does not refer to changes in font, size and layout, but to modifications of the format and content of the forms as presented in this application file.

3. Obligatory forms or signatures are missing

All Forms are mandatory for all projects except forms A5 and A6, which only have to be submitted for projects with associated beneficiaries. In this case, they need to be completed by each associated beneficiary, and A7 in case of third parties cofinancing the project.

All mandatory signatures should be present.

4. The coordinating beneficiary is not an entity responsible for the implementation of LIFE in an eligible Member State of the European Union or is not duly authorised by it to submit a proposal.

5. Other Member States are involved without the entities responsible for the implementation of LIFE in the concerned Member State.

6. The project proposal was submitted to the Contracting Authority after the last deadline.

Inadmissible proposals will not be assessed any further and will be rejected.

3.2. Additional checklist for this preparatory projects proposals

1. In case some forms or sections are blank, have you indicated "not applicable", "no relevant information" or an equivalent mention?
2. Is the start date not earlier than submission date?
3. For each component have you indicated the expected output(s)? Is each output referring to only one component?
4. Have you included indicators and actions to monitor the impact of the project?
5. Is the project management team sufficient?
6. Have you and your associated beneficiaries read the model Grant Agreement in full?
7. Is your application on a CD-ROM/DVD/USB stick in the correct file format? Don't forget the financial forms in Excel and obligatory annexes (where required).