



The 2026 LIFE Programme

June 2026
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Speakers



Adriana Trapa



15+ years of experience in EU funding, innovation incentives and large-scale investment projects

Strong expertise in structuring and optimising funding strategies for complex R&D and industrial projects

Deep knowledge of key EU programmes (Horizon Europe, LIFE, Innovation Fund, CEF)

Specialised in turning innovative ideas into financially viable and fundable projects



Marc Hogenhuis



10+ years of experience in sustainability consulting and EU funding advisory (industry-focused)

Supports large companies in energy transition projects (hydrogen, CCS, logistics)

Strong experience in energy, circular economy and decarbonization

Experience leading teams and delivering EU-funded industrial projects at scale



Dan Stefanica



15+ years in EU funding across both programme design and project execution

End-to-end expertise: from calls and consortia to proposal and implementation

Works closely with industry, research and policymakers to turn innovation into funded projects

Specialised in industrial decarbonisation, energy systems, clean technologies, and electrification, managing over 30 EU funded projects in these sectors

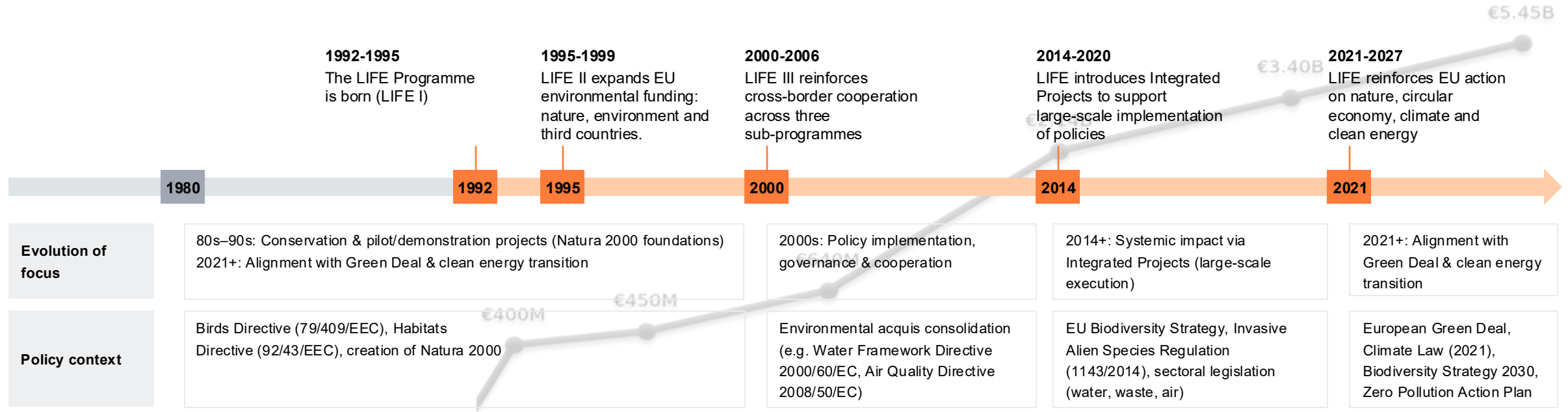


EU LIFE programme overview

Adriana Trapa (PwC Spain)

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From green ideas to impact: 30 years of LIFE*



Projects

Protect, conserve and restore Europe's wildlife, biodiversity and natural spaces.
 Encourage individuals and businesses to rethink, refuse, reduce, reuse and recycle.
 Promote a sustainable, prosperous and competitive economy and quality of life.
 Cut harmful emissions, boost our climate resilience and help us deal with extreme weather.
 Accelerate Europe's transition to clean, renewable, self-sufficient energy supplies.
 Increase energy efficiency, flexibility and overall EU energy system resilience.
 Accelerate energy investments and promote citizen engagement and support in the energy transition.

Impact

Advances EU climate and environmental goals
 Provide models for replication and upscaling

The LIFE programme is the only EU funding scheme dedicated exclusively to the environment, nature conservation and climate action

LIFE programme 2021-2027

€5.4
billion



Circular, energy-efficient, renewable and climate - resilient economy



Protecting and improving environmental quality



Halting and reversing biodiversity loss

Projects

Innovative solutions to environmental challenges

Support EU policies and legislation

Promote best practices and behavioural changes

Catalyse large-scale deployment of successful solutions

Who can apply?

Any legal entity based in the EU or in countries associated with the LIFE Programme

Applications can be submitted by a single organisation or by consortia



The programme supports demonstration, best practice, coordination and support actions, capacity building, and governance projects.



€606 million
Budget for 2026 Calls

€596 million
Budget for 2025 Calls

€571 million
Budget for 2024 Calls



2026
Calls for proposals

LIFE Programme in numbers (2025 Call)

1,095

Grant applications

+22%

Grant applications compared to 2024

€3.1 billion

Requested financing

+16%

Requested financing compared to 2024

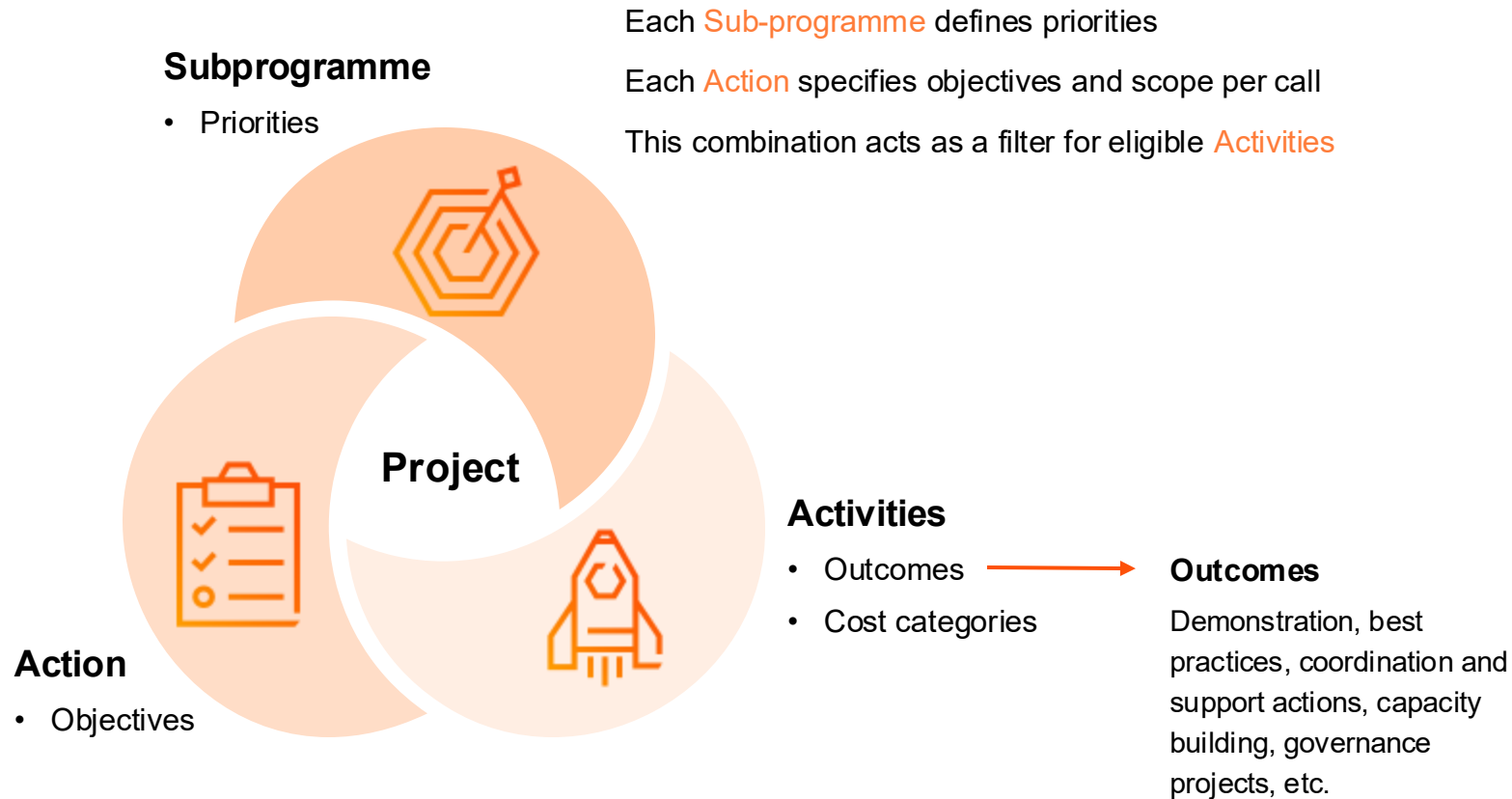
14%



Average success rate

LIFE Sub-programme	Submissions	Total project value (€bn)	Requested EU contribution (€m)	EU funding share	Growth vs FY25
					■ 2024 ■ 2023
 Nature and biodiversity	168	€1.620bn	€940m	 58%	137 +22.6% 108 +55.6%
 Circular economy and quality of life	348	€1.862bn	€939m	 50%	265 +31.3% 155 +124.5%
 Climate change mitigation and adaptation	260	€1.171bn	€598m	 51%	183 +42.1% 133 +37.6%
 Clean energy transition	319	€0.970bn	€656m	 67%	310 +2.9% 236 +35%

Calls are defined by a combination of Sub-programmes and Actions



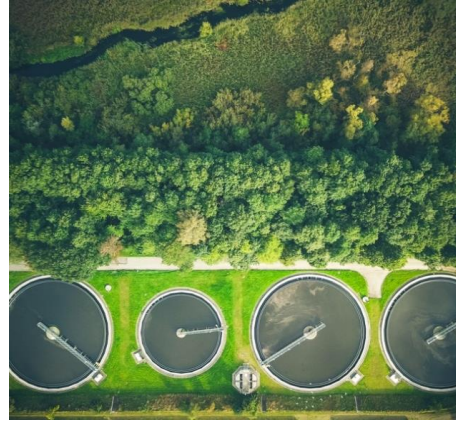
Some calls include additional eligibility constraints (e.g. consortium composition or beneficiary type)

Calls are defined by a combination of Sub-programmes and Actions



Nature and Biodiversity (NAT)

Supports the protection and restoration of Europe's nature, aiming to **halt and reverse biodiversity loss** through projects focused on biodiversity, habitats and species conservation.



Circular Economy and Quality of LIFE (ENV)

Aims to facilitate the transition towards a sustainable, circular, toxic-free and climate-resilient economy, while protecting and improving environmental quality through projects on **circular economy, waste and water management, pollution reduction, chemicals and environmental governance**.



Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation (CLIMA)

Supports the transition towards a climate-neutral and resilient economy, covering key areas such as **renewable energy and energy efficiency, land use and agriculture, climate-resilient infrastructure, water management, and flood and coastal protection**, in line with EU climate policies and strategies.



Clean Energy Transition (CET)

Aims at facilitating the transition towards an energy-efficient, renewable energy-based, climate-neutral and climate-resilient economy by funding **coordination and support actions that address market barriers** and engage a wide range of stakeholders across Europe.



Sub-programmes define priorities, forming the basis for call design

[LIFE Public Database](#)



Which actions are funded by LIFE 2026?



LIFE Action Grants

OAG - Coordination and Support Actions (CSA)



One Stage

21/04/2026 - 16/09/2026

Standard Action Projects (SAPs)



One Stage

21/04/2026 - 22/09/2026

TA for Preparation of SIPs/ SNaPs (TA-PP)



One Stage

21/04/2026 - 22/09/2026

OA - Policy & Legislative Priorities projects (PLP)



One Stage

21/04/2026 - 22/09/2026

Strategic Projects (SIPs & SNaPs)



Two Stage

21/04/2026 - 03/09/2026 - 04/03/2027

LIFE Operating Grants (only NGOs)

Operating grants for NGOs

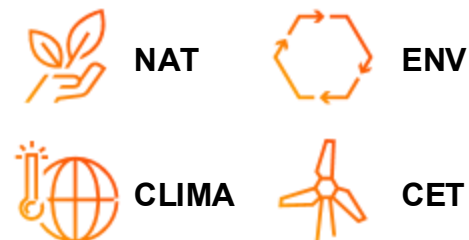


Two-Step application

12/05/2026 - 22/09/2026

Framework partnership agreement (FPA)

Specific grant agreement (SGA)



Calls combine Sub-programmes and Actions, with Actions defining objectives and scope per call

Types of activities funded by LIFE Action grants



Standard action projects (SAPs)

“Regular projects”

What they are

Concrete projects that test, demonstrate or implement a specific solution.

What they are for

- Pilot and demonstration projects
- Best practices
- Solving a specific environmental or climate problem

Examples

- Restore a wetland or a habitat
- Reuse waste from industry as a secondary raw material
- Create a governance model for climate mitigation and adaptation in tourism.



Strategic Nature Projects (SNaPs)

“Large-scale biodiversity implementation projects”

What they are

Projects designed to implement national or regional nature and biodiversity plans, mainly linked to Natura 2000 and EU nature legislation.

What they are for

- Mainstream nature and biodiversity across policies and finance in EU countries.
- Implement biodiversity strategies at large scale
- Coordinate many actions, actors and funding sources

Examples

- Implement a national plan for ecosystem restoration
- Coordinate several regions to protect priority habitats

Strategic Integrated Projects (SIPs)

“Large-scale implementation of EU policies”

What they are

Projects that implement EU environment or climate policies at regional, national or multi-regional level.

What they are for

- Implement climate, energy, air, water or adaptation strategies
- Combine LIFE funding with other private funds
- Deliver structural, long-term impact

Examples

- Implement a River Basin Management Plan
- Roll out of a sustainable urban mobility plan

Technical Assistance (TA-PP)

“Support to prepare big projects”

What they are

Projects that do not fund environmental actions directly but help prepare or scale up other projects.

What they are for

- Preparing SIPs or SNaPs
- Accessing EU funding
- Upscaling or replicating results
- Training public authorities

Examples

- Studies, coordination, project design
- Capacity building for public administrations

Other Action Grants (OAG)

Policy and Legislative Priorities projects (PLP)

“Support actions for the LIFE programme”

What they are

Projects that establish or strengthen permanent multilevel climate & energy dialogues & governance processes across MS (top-bottom approach).

What they are for

- Coordination & facilitation of structured dialogues
- Knowledge exchange and good practices (multilevel governance)
- Co-definition of measures + institutionalised collaboration
- Reporting templates/processes for NECP updates

Examples

- Set up national–regional–city NECP dialogue platforms
- Develop a shared monitoring/reporting model combining top-down & bottom-up inputs

Coordination and Support Action Grants (CSA)

“Coordination, capacity building and policy support actions”

What they are

Actions that support the implementation of EU environment, climate or energy policies.

What they are for

- Capacity building,
- Coordination and stakeholder engagement
- Knowledge sharing, dissemination and awareness-raising
- Supporting market uptake of existing solutions and best practices

Examples

- Developing roadmaps, strategies or action plans
- Platforms for stakeholder coordination
- Training programmes and skills development for the clean energy transition



Projects are framed within specific Activities



Zoom in: Clean Energy Transition

Dan Stefanica (PwC Belgium)

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LIFE Clean Energy Transition (CET) sub-programme

- CET sub-programme budget is approximately €1B (2021–2027)
- CET budget for 2026 is approximately €85.5M
- The calls are complementing Horizon Europe and are created upon a process that involves stakeholder inputs (e.g., via European Technology and Innovation Platforms or Industry Association expert groups)
- The calls opened on the 21st of April and will close in the second half of September
- The funding rates are 95% with 7% overheads and a typical project size of € 2M

Core thematic priorities

- Energy efficiency & building renovation in different housing types (e.g., social housing, single family homes, offices etc);
- Industrial decarbonisation & electrification (via electrical and thermal storage, e-boilers etc)
- Energy communities & citizen engagement (via cascade or direct funding)
- Private financing & business models (putting policies into effect)
- Policy implementation & governance (e.g., standardization of technology and design)

Key trends (very important for your positioning)

- Strong shift toward market replication & scale-up
- Focus on business models + investment mobilisation
- Integration of digital tools, data and financing mechanisms
- Continuation of work that was done as part of past projects or initiatives (e.g., EU Tenders)
- Alignment with EPBD, EED, Net-Zero Industry Act, Clean Industrial Deal etc



Examples: LIFE-2026-CET-INDUSTRY (Scopes A & B)



Objective

- Support **clean energy transition of European industry** in areas not yet addresses by past/ongoing funding
- Focus on **market deployment of net-zero solutions**

Call specifics

- Total budget of €7M with EU contribution of up to **€2M/project**
- Funding rate: **95%**
- Consortium: **≥3 partners / 3 countries**

Scope A: Industry–technology collaboration

- Co-design solutions between **industrial sectors + tech providers**
- Focus on **TRL 8–9 solutions (market-ready)**
- Outputs:
 - Standardised solutions
 - Business models
 - Capacity building & roll-out strategies

Scope B: Industrial energy cooperation

- Develop **energy cooperation in clusters / parks / ports**
- Activities:
 - Energy sharing, electrification use/generation, waste heat use, flexibility
 - Investment plans & business models
 - Removal of legal/organisational and/or financial barriers

Examples: LIFE-2026-CET-OSS



Objective

- Scale **integrated “one-stop-shop” services for a diverse set of building renovation services**
- Simplify customer journey (technical + financial + delivery + maintenance + replacement): **all in one place**

Call specifics

- Total budget of €9M with EU contribution of up to **€1.5M/project**
- Funding rate: **95%**
- Single applicant allowed (exception vs most CET calls)

Core concept

- Deliver **end-to-end services**, including:
 - Technical assessment & design
 - Contractor selection
 - Financing facilitation
 - Quality assurance & monitoring

Target segments

- Residential (owner-occupied / rental)
- SMEs / tertiary buildings

Key expectations

- Demonstrate **sustainable business model**
- Trigger **real investments & energy savings**
- Show **replicability and EU-wide scaling**



Zoom in: Circular Economy and Quality of LIFE

Marc Hogenhuis (PwC Netherlands)

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Circular Economy & Quality of Life priorities

ENV-ENVIRONMENT (SAP)



General information

- Budget for the call is 79 million, approx. 2-10 million per project
- 60% funding rate
- Type of projects:
 - Innovative projects supporting the deployment of technology
 - Catalysation of development of a certain technology in the EU
 - Demonstration and scale-up
- Alignment with the relevant EU policy focus area's



Recovery of resources from waste

- Innovative solutions to help facilitate the roll out of value-added materials from waste streams
- Separate collection, disassembly, treatment and recycling projects aligned with current EU policy objectives:
 - Electrical and electronic equipment
 - End of life vehicles and ships
 - Buildings and construction
 - Recovery of critical raw materials
 - Plastics, Biowaste, textiles, composite, multilayer materials, packaging
- Implementing solutions waste containing hazardous substances, dealing with identification, separation, prevention and decontamination

Circular economy and the environment

- Circular business and consumption models supporting value chains (incl. bio-based), aimed at reducing resource use and preventing waste across priority product chains.
- Improved extended producer responsibility (EPR) schemes, including new models and eco-modulation of fees.
- Circular design and planning approaches to reduce environmental impacts, enhancing durability, reparability, reusability, recyclability and use of recycled or bio-based materials.
- Solutions to extend product lifetime, including reuse, repair, upgrading, remanufacturing and digital platforms for refurbishment and resale.
- Deployment of circular solutions and tools, such as circular business models, increased demand for secondary raw materials, industrial symbiosis and Digital Product Passports.

Relevance: policy developments and market conditions

EU policy developments within the waste management sector

- EU policy development seems to heavily target the waste and recycling sectors in the coming years:
 - Waste framework directive
 - Packaging and Packaging waste Directive
 - Circular economy directive
 - Extended producer responsibility
 - Battery regulation
 - Key circularity sectors of interest:
 - Plastics and textiles sectors with the largest gap compared to the policy targets
 - REDIII, ETS and CCS developments provide additional demand for biofuel utilization
 - CRMA and developments on resource sovereignty make material and battery recycling key topics from a policy perspective

Market conditions and current changes

- Waste management sector strongly influenced by regulatory drivers, strong consolidation in the sector with especially mid-market operators facing difficulty due to regulatory requirements
- EU legislation meets various threshold dates in coming years, strong impetus for innovation within the sector, added push due to sovereignty targets for materials
- Recycling rates fall significantly below targets
- Rising fossil fuel cost dual impact, possible momentum for plastic recycling (reduced cost gap virgin plastics) and increasing revenue for incinerator facilities, though higher energy costs thermal treatment operators



Example projects for ENV-ENVIRONMENT (SAP)

Green waste valorisation through innovative low temperature STEAM explosion into advanced biofuel and agri-products

- Project aimed at green waste valorisation
- Demonstration plant with increased biogas production from bio waste streams
- Validation of plant operating life cycle, business case and revenue models, LCA
- Provide steps for market replicability for at scale projects, identifying possible partners for expansion of technology and continued valorisation
- Measurable impact on landfilled waste and emission reduction

- Alignment with EU policies:
 - Waste framework directive
 - Fuel quality directive
 - Renewable energy directive

Circular reinforced concrete with upgraded waste

- Project aimed at the recycling of concrete, reusing waste and reducing the need for virgin feedstocks
- Demonstration plant with significant operating capacity from a variety of selected waste streams
- Validation of the technical performance of the recycled product for a variety of use cases, included continued testing of new construction, business model including main business model drivers
- Measurable impact on CO2 emissions, virgin material usage and waste reduction

- Alignment with EU policies
 - Circular economy action plan
 - European climate pact
 - Green Deal





LIFE Application process: *do's and don'ts*

Dan Stefanica (PwC Belgium)

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How to Build a Strong Proposal

1

Clearly link to policy

Usually calls originate in policy objectives, with the respective documents being cited in the call itself. Additional policy complementarity can be added, given priorities and new legislation is constantly appearing (e.g., the Electrification Action Plan 15th of June). Use policy to inform your project and your project to create results that reinforce policy implementation

2

Demonstrate measurable and long-term impact

The call scope usually quantifies the measurable impact the project should have (e.g., CO2 avoided, energy generated, contracts signed etc). Feel free to add supporting ones (e.g., additional investment mobilised, jobs created, water use efficiency increased). Add measurable and justifiable numbers and projections, while considering what happens after the project is over. How will the project results be exploited, what potential work will be carried out in the next five years after the project was concluded ?

3

Focus on replication, scalability and transferability

Pilot/demo sites with different conditions (e.g., geography, sector, technology used etc) need to provide the first steps on a roadmap that can be expanded to other locations under similar conditions in the EU and ultimately globally. Consider already including such future sites in your project.

4

Partners and types of partners

The consortium has to address (and go beyond if possible) all call requirements. Having the relevant partners in the consortium as well as coordinator is paramount. The coordinator has to have prior experience in coordinating EU funded projects or in being a partner in such proposals. Consider that financial, engineering, industrial, policy, communication, management expertise is delivered via specialised partners. Consider their reach (e.g., a European Industry Association has much better reach than a Regional one, indeed most European Associations have National Industry Associations as part of their membership)

5

Make efficient use of budget

The budget informs the activities and vice-versa. Many things are flexible, but the budget requested is not. As such it needs to be carefully prepared with the expenses justified. Consider not only the current costs, but the costs during the project duration and how they might change.

How to Build a Strong Proposal

1

Start with the call and your work: How can your proposed solution be applied EU wide?

2

Why was the LIFE, LIFE CET, particular call chosen? How does the funding and timing align with internal priorities (investments) and external priorities (policies)

3

Does the organisation have a policy department, is it member of industry associations? Keep in mind the policy + market + technical dimensions and how each partner brings capabilities in each.

4

Design the project forward looking via business models, policy integration, a financing strategy, a lifecycle analysis. Show how the project continues after EU funding or provide an alternative to it (completely or partially)

5

Keep proposals simple, structured, and convincing (consider adding graphs, tables, images). Evaluators review many complex proposals, and clarity is instantly recognised (avoid making phrases overly complicated, create a story from the start that engages the reader, use clear messages, a logical structure.

6

Keep an eye on the page limit and concepts that are repeating.

7

Don't forget about annexes and the EU portal.

8

Partners that have not done this before require more time and support (in all areas). How are the consortium meetings planned?

9

Verify the budget and include the necessary justifications for deviations.

10

Include a sound Risk and Mitigation strategy.

11

Do not wait until the last moment to submit.



Q&A

5



Closing remarks

Isabel Benito (PwC Spain)

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Get in touch with our local leaders



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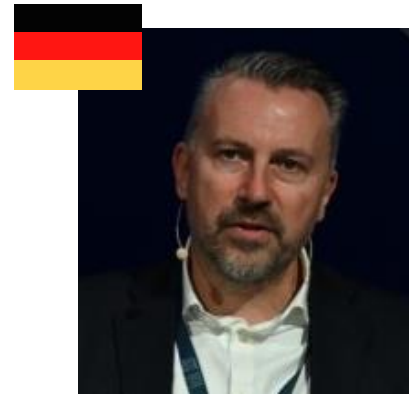
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Thank you

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