Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)

Call for proposals

LIFE Clean Energy Transition
(LIFE-2026-CET)

Version 3.0
4 June 2026

HISTORY OF CHANGES			
Version	Publication Date	Change	Page
1.0	21.04.2026	Initial version.	
2.0	23.04.2026	Addition of footnote 21 Removal of a repeated sentence	14 20
3.0	04.06.2026	Update of footnote 48	36

EUROPEAN CLIMATE, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT EXECUTIVE AGENCY (CINEA)
CINEA.D – Natural Resources, Climate, Sustainable Blue Economy and Clean Energy
CINEA.D.1 – LIFE Energy + LIFE Climate

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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0. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU action grants in the field of Clean Energy Transition under the Programme for Environment and Climate Action (LIFE).

The regulatory framework for this EU Funding Programme is set out in:

- Regulation 2024/2509 (EU Financial Regulation)[1]
- the basic act (LIFE Regulation 2021/783[2]).

The call is launched in accordance with the 2025-2027 Multiannual Work Programme[3] and will be managed by the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA) ('Agency').

The call covers the following topics:

- LIFE-2026-CET-HEATCOOLPLAN: Supporting the delivery of actionable, integrated, and comprehensive local heating and cooling plans
- LIFE-2026-CET-POLICY: Towards an effective implementation of key legislation in the field of sustainable energy
- LIFE-2026-CET-RENEWHC: Strengthening national frameworks for renewable and efficient heating and cooling in existing buildings
- LIFE-2026-CET-BETTERRENO: Energy renovation solutions – Boosting building renovation through effective markets and instruments
- LIFE-2026-CET-INDUSTRY: Supporting the clean energy transition of European industry and businesses
- LIFE-2026-CET-BUILDSKILLS: BUILD UP Skills - National Platforms on energy efficiency skills for the clean energy transition
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- LIFE-2026-CET-PRIVAFIN: Crowding in private finance
- LIFE-2026-CET-OSS: One-Stop-Shops - Integrated services for clean energy transition in private buildings
- LIFE-2026-CET-PDA: Project Development Assistance for sustainable energy investments
- LIFE-2026-CET-EMPOWER: Scaling up smart and clean energy solutions for affordability in EU cities
- LIFE-2026-CET-ENERPOV: Alleviating household energy poverty in Europe

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[1] Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast) ('EU Financial Regulation') (OJ L, 2024/2509, 26.9.2024).

[2] Regulation (EU) 2021/783 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2021 establishing a Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) (OJ L 172, 17.5.2021, p. 53).

[3] Commission Implementing Decision C(2025)955 final of 15 April 2025 on the financing of the LIFE Programme and the adoption of the work programme for the years 2025, 2026 and 2027.

- LIFE-2026-CET-ENERCOM: Facilitating cooperation among energy communities

Each project application under the call must address only one of these topics. Applicants wishing to apply for more than one topic, must submit a separate proposal under each topic.

We invite you to read the call documentation carefully, and in particular this Call document, the Model Grant Agreement, the EU Funding & Tenders Portal Online Manual and the EU Grants AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement.

These documents provide clarifications and answers to questions you may have when preparing your application:

- the Call document outlines the:
  - background, objectives, scope, activities that can be funded and the expected results (sections 1 and 2)
  - timetable and available budget (sections 3 and 4)
  - admissibility and eligibility conditions (including mandatory documents; sections 5 and 6)
  - criteria for financial and operational capacity and exclusion (section 7)
  - evaluation and award procedure (section 8)
  - award criteria (section 9)
  - legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements (section 10)
  - how to submit an application (section 11)
- the Online Manual outlines the:
  - procedures to register and submit proposals online via the EU Funding & Tenders Portal ('Portal')
  - recommendations for the preparation of the application
- the AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement contains:
  - detailed annotations on all the provisions in the Grant Agreement you will have to sign in order to obtain the grant *(including cost eligibility, payment schedule, accessory obligations, etc)*.

You are also encouraged to visit the LIFE database to consult the list of projects funded previously. For the Clean Energy Transition sub-programme, projects funded previously (under the Horizon 2020 programme) can be found on the CORDIS website.

1. Background

What is the LIFE Programme?

The LIFE Programme is the EU Programme for Environment and Climate Action.

As such, it is one of the key contributors to the European Green Deal[4] which aims to:

- transform the EU into a fair and prosperous society, with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy where there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050 and where economic growth is decoupled from resource use and
- protect, conserve and enhance the EU's natural capital, and protect the health and well-being of citizens from environment and climate related risks and impacts.

The LIFE Programme will contribute to these priorities through its four sub-programmes in particular by:

- boosting and integrating the implementation of the EU's policy objectives for halting and reversing loss of wildlife habitats and species across all sectors
- supporting the transition to a circular economy and protecting and improving the quality of EU's natural resources, including air, soil and water among others
- supporting implementation of the 2030 energy and climate policy framework, the EU's climate neutrality objective by 2050, and the new EU strategy on adaptation to climate change and
- building capacity, stimulating investments and supporting implementation of policies focused on energy efficiency and small-scale renewables.

The LIFE Programme is structured in two fields and four sub-programmes (described in more detail below):

Environment:

- sub-programme Nature and Biodiversity
- sub-programme Circular Economy and Quality of Life

Climate Action:

- sub-programme Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation
- sub-programme Clean Energy Transition.

Nature and Biodiversity

In line with the specific objectives of the LIFE Programme as set out in Article 3(2) of the LIFE Regulation, the sub-programme 'Nature and Biodiversity' aims:

- to develop, demonstrate, promote and stimulate the scale up of innovative techniques, methods and approaches (including nature-based solutions and ecosystem approaches) for reaching the objectives set out under the Union legislation and policy on or related to nature and biodiversity, and to contribute to the knowledge base and to the application of best practices, including through the support of the Natura 2000 network
- to support the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of the relevant Union legislation and policy on or related to nature and biodiversity, including by improving governance at all levels, in particular

[4] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: The European Green Deal (COM(2019)640 final).

through enhancing the capacities of public and private actors and the involvement of civil society, also taking into due consideration the possible contributions provided by citizen science[5]

- to catalyse the large-scale deployment of successful solutions/approaches for implementing relevant Union legislation and policy on nature and biodiversity, by replicating results, integrating related objectives into other policies and into public and private sector practices, mobilising investment and improving access to finance.

LIFE has been a key tool supporting the implementation of the EU Birds[6] and Habitats[7] Directives since 1992 and has been instrumental and, in some cases crucial, to ensure the establishment of the Natura 2000 network.

The Nature Directives' fitness check[8], the Action plan for nature, people, and the economy[9] as well as the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030[10] underline the need to increase funding for nature and biodiversity.

The sub-programme covers two priority areas:

1) EU Nature and Biodiversity

2) Awareness raising, compliance assurance and access to justice related to nature and biodiversity legislation.

Circular Economy and Quality of Life

The specific objectives of the sub-programme 'Circular Economy and Quality of Life' are:

- to develop, demonstrate and promote innovative techniques, methods and approaches for reaching the objectives of Union legislation and policy on environment, and to contribute to the knowledge base and, where relevant, to the application of best practices

- to support the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of relevant Union legislation and policy on environment, including by improving governance at all levels, in particular through enhancing capacities of public and private actors and the involvement of civil society

- to catalyse the large-scale deployment of successful technical and policy-related solutions for implementing relevant Union legislation and policy on environment, by replicating results, integrating related objectives into other

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5 Scientific work undertaken by members of the general public, often in collaboration with or under the direction of professional scientists and scientific institutions.

6 Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (OJ L 20, 26.1.2010, p. 7)

7 Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7).

8 Commission Staff Working Document SWD(2016) 472 final of 16 December 2016 'Fitness-check of the EU Nature Legislation (Birds and Habitats Directives) Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds and Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora' (hereinafter referred to as 'the Fitness-check of the Birds and Habitats Directives').

9 Communication COM(2017) 198 final of 27 April 2017 from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 'An Action Plan for nature, people and the economy'.

10 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 'The European Green Deal' (COM/2019/640 final).

policies and into public and private sector practices, mobilising investment and improving access to finance.

This sub-programme covers three priority areas:

1) Circular economy and waste

2) Zero pollution and sustainable management of natural resources

3) Environmental governance.

This sub-programme aims at facilitating the transition toward a sustainable, circular, energy-efficient and climate-resilient economy, a toxic-free environment and at protecting, restoring and improving the quality of the environment in line with the European Green Deal and recent policy developments.

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

The specific objectives of the sub-programme 'Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation' are:

- to develop, demonstrate and promote innovative techniques, methods and approaches for reaching the objectives of Union legislation and policy on climate action and to contribute to the knowledge base and to the application of best practices

- to support the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of relevant Union legislation and policy on climate action, including by improving governance at all levels, in particular through enhancing capacities of public and private actors and the involvement of civil society

- to catalyse the large-scale deployment of successful technical and policy-related solutions for implementing relevant Union legislation and policy on climate action by replicating results, integrating related objectives into other policies and into public and private sector practices, mobilising investment and improving access to finance.

This sub-programme will support the implementation of the European Green Deal by contributing to the objectives and targets set out in the European Climate Law[11]: the goal for Europe's economy and society to become climate-neutral by 2050; the intermediate Union climate target to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% compared to 1990 levels by 2030; the 2040 Union climate target that the Commission should propose within six months of the first global stock take carried out under the Paris Agreement[12]; and the obligation for Union institutions and Member States to ensure continuous progress in enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change, in line with the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change[13].

[11] Regulation (EU) 2021/1119 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 June 2021 establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amending Regulations (EC) No 401/2009 and (EU) 2018/1999 ('European Climate Law'), OJ L 243, 9.7.2021, p. 1–17.

[12] On 6 February 2024, the Commission recommended reducing the EU's net greenhouse gas emissions by 90% by 2040 relative to 1990 in the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 'Securing our future - Europe's 2040 climate target and path to climate neutrality by 2050 building a sustainable, just and prosperous society', COM/2024/63 final.

[13] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 'Forging a climate-resilient Europe - the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change', COM/2021/82 final.

The sub-programme covers three priority areas:

1. Climate Change Mitigation
2. Climate Change Adaptation
3. Climate Change Governance and Information.

Clean Energy Transition

The specific objectives of the sub-programme 'Clean Energy Transition' are the following:

- to develop, demonstrate and promote innovative regulatory, governance and market-oriented techniques, methods and approaches for reaching the objectives of Union legislation and policy on the clean, sustainable and just energy transition by upscaling renewable energy solutions and increasing energy efficiency, and contributing to the knowledge base and to the application of best practices
- to support the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of relevant Union legislation and policy on the clean, sustainable, and just energy transition upscaling renewable energy solutions and increasing energy efficiency, including by improving governance at all levels, by enhancing capacities of public and private actors, by assisting and engaging citizens and the involvement of civil society, and by structuring the market to enable and foster the uptake of energy transition technologies
- to catalyse the large-scale deployment of successful technical and policy-related solutions supporting cross-European actions integrating market and regulatory approaches able to favour the implementation of relevant Union legislation and objectives on the clean, sustainable, and just energy transition upscaling renewable energy solutions and increasing energy efficiency, by replicating results and successful best practices, by mobilising investment, upscaling the use of financial instruments and improving access to finance, and by fostering cross-sectoral business cooperations, public-private partnerships and activities of EU cross-border market actors.

This sub-programme aims at facilitating the transition toward an energy-efficient, renewable energy-based, climate-neutral and -resilient economy by funding mainly Coordination and Support Actions (CSA). These actions aim at capacity building, at dissemination of information and of knowledge, and at awareness-raising to support the transition to renewable energy and increased energy efficiency. They support breaking market barriers that hamper the socio-economic transition to sustainable energy, typically engaging multiple small and medium-size stakeholders, including but not limited to local and regional public authorities, non-profit organisations, energy services companies and utilities, project developers, net-zero technologies manufacturers, financial institutions, professional organisations, consumers associations and citizens initiatives.

The sub-programme covers five priority areas:

1. Building a national, regional and local policy framework supporting the clean energy transition
2. Accelerating technology roll-out, digitalisation, new services and business models and enhancement of the related professional skills on the market for the clean energy transition

3. Attracting private finance for sustainable energy
4. Supporting the development of local and regional investment projects
5. Involving and empowering citizens in the clean energy transition.

2. Type of action — Objectives — Themes and priorities — Activities that can be funded — Expected impact

Type of action

The topics under this call for proposals concern LIFE Other Action Grants (OAGs) Coordination and Support Actions (CSA).

Other Actions may include:

- Coordination and Support Actions (CSA)
- Other Projects, including Projects addressing ad hoc Legislative and Policy Priorities (PLP projects).

Due to their specific nature, Other Actions are typically more prescriptive in the calls for proposals than bottom-up calls (such as for SAPs), where the identification of needs and possible solutions is in the remit of the applicants.

Coordination and Support Actions (CSAs)

Coordination and Support Actions (CSAs) are designed to support the implementation of specific EU policies in the different eligible countries and at EU level and are aimed at capacity building, dissemination of information and knowledge, and awareness-raising to support the transition to renewable energy and increased energy efficiency. They support breaking market barriers that hamper the socio-economic transition toward a sustainable, circular, energy-efficient, renewable energy-based, climate-neutral and - resilient economy. The main focus is on the coordination and support to local, national and European stakeholders, public, private and civil actors, to build capacity for the effective implementation of the transition.

CSAs can fund activities such as capacity building, dissemination of information and knowledge, awareness raising, development and adaptation of the policy frameworks, policy dialogues, market monitoring, data gathering, standardization, accelerating technology roll-out and digitalisation, developing new services and business models, ensuring the availability of skilled workers, attracting private finance, developing investment plans, supporting the development of local and regional investment projects, involving and empowering citizens.

CSAs focus on the non-technological barriers to the transition. They are not designed to fund technology development or demonstration projects.

CSA grants may be directly awarded to identified beneficiaries in duly specified cases.

The maximum funding rate for CSAs is 95%. The priorities for the CSA proposals are defined in the specific calls for proposals.

Other Projects

Other Projects may include:

- Policy and Legislative Priority Projects addressing specific Union priorities (PLP projects). PLP projects follow a top-down approach in consideration of their

potential to address the challenges relating to the political momentum and to the EU legislative landscape. They are defined on an annual basis, following a consultation with the Member States and the third countries associated to the LIFE Programme

- Action grants benefitting the organisations mentioned in Annex I of the LIFE Regulation (see also point 2 of section 4.3 below)
- Other specific projects financed according to Article 195 of the Financial Regulation to support EU policies related to environment, climate action and energy fields to be identified during the implementation of this work programme.

Building a national, regional and local policy framework supporting the clean energy transition

LIFE-2026-CET-HEATCOOLPLAN: Supporting the delivery of actionable, integrated, and comprehensive local heating and cooling plans

Objectives

The topic supports local and regional authorities to develop and deliver actionable and integrated local heating and cooling plans (LHCPs) as effective instruments for clean and sustainable energy planning and investment at the local and regional level.

Heating and cooling account for half of final energy use[14] in the EU, about 70% of which still comes from imported fossil fuels, mainly fossil gas[15]. Many households still rely on solid fuels, which harm air quality. Cooling demand is rising as temperatures and heatwaves increase, and demand from data centres grows. For households, heating and cooling account for most of the energy use and affect comfort, health and well-being. The shift to clean, secure, and affordable heating and cooling requires significant changes to energy infrastructures and buildings, integrated planning, spatially tailored decarbonisation measures, and targeted investments.

Local and regional authorities play a critical role in planning an energy efficient, renewable energy based, and resilient heating and cooling sector. The Energy Efficiency Directive (EED)[16] sets a specific objective for local and regional authorities to prepare LHCPs at least in municipalities with a total population higher than 45,000.

LHCPs are key policy and governance instruments to drive the decarbonisation of heating and cooling. They can guide long-term decisions on policies, infrastructure, and investments for a just and efficient shift to decarbonised buildings and more integrated, flexible and resilient energy systems.

LHCPs can identify and unlock local renewable and waste heat sources, deploy and integrate renewable heating and cooling systems and infrastructures, enable neighbourhood and district-level integrated renovation programmes and heating and cooling solutions, and implement cost-effective and

[14] Decarbonising heating and cooling — a climate imperative, European Environment Agency (EEA), 2023
[15] Call for evidence for the EU Heating and Cooling Strategy
[16] See in particular Article 25.6, Directive (EU) 2023/1791

socially acceptable measures to phase out fossil fuels in buildings. Consequently, they can deliver significant economic, environmental, and social benefits and strengthen the EU's energy independence, competitiveness, and climate resilience.

Effective LHCPs require integrating energy, climate and spatial planning approaches, instruments, and policies, as well as facilitating engagement and support of citizens and key stakeholders. Making LHCPs actionable also requires political buy-in, access to relevant data, and support mechanisms to help municipalities and regions prepare, finance, implement, and monitor LHCPs. These actions must reflect the specific conditions, needs and constraints of territories, municipalities, and regions.

The EU is facing important increases in energy prices, driven by market volatility and exacerbated by its dependence on imported fossil fuels. A key priority for the EU is to strengthen the resilience of its energy system vis-a-vis geopolitical crises impacting the global energy market. Therefore, applicants under this topic are invited, where possible, to develop and implement long-term structural sustainable and energy efficiency measures to enhance EU energy system resilience against future crises, in coherence with short-term energy relief measures needed to respond to the current shock on the global energy markets.

Proposed actions should consider complementarity and alignment with relevant local, regional, and national plans, strategies, initiatives, and planning frameworks. These include, but are not limited to, Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAPs) or similar, climate change adaptation plans, National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs), National Building Renovation Plans (NBRPs), the National Comprehensive Heating and Cooling Assessments[17], and the forthcoming EU heating and cooling strategy[18].

Scope

Proposals under this topic should provide targeted support to help local and regional authorities develop actionable and integrated LHCPs covering different energy carriers, infrastructures and economic sectors.

Support should be clearly tailored to the targeted local and regional contexts, and used by municipalities and regional authorities. By the end of the action, proposals must result in the actual delivery of LHCPs in the targeted municipalities or regions. The plans should align with EU and Member State guidance and requirements and be developed through highly participatory processes.

Proposals should serve multiple municipalities in each targeted region and country. They should guide LHCP development by supporting data collection and use of tools, building technical capacity, engaging citizens and stakeholders, and supporting financing of decarbonisation measures. Proposals should include a detailed analysis of the current state of heating and cooling planning and related challenges in the targeted regions and countries.

Proposals should ensure that support activities are made available to the municipalities in the targeted territories, including those with fewer than 45,000 inhabitants. They should also facilitate joint action among municipalities at regional or other appropriate governance and territorial levels, to pool skills and resources and support inter-municipal and/or regional energy system planning.

Specific support activities for local and regional authorities should include:

[17] See Article 25.1, Directive (EU) 2023/1791

[18] https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-efficiency/heating-and-cooling_en

- Building technical skills and expertise to prepare, finance, implement and monitor LHCPs
- Collecting granular and context-specific geospatial, technical, climatic[19] and socio-economic data for the preparation of LHCPs[20], using national approaches/standards where available, or approaches which facilitate future compatibility of local data with national databases
- Developing comprehensive outlooks for energy demand and supply and identifying spatially tailored decarbonisation measures, for instance the potential for heating and cooling networks in urban and industrial areas
- Identifying and assessing financing options for LHCP measures, considering public and private funding, local and regional budgets, energy costs for end users, social acceptance and the needs of energy-poor and vulnerable households
- Running participatory processes to streamline planning and administrative procedures including permitting, to address regulatory barriers, and to engage key stakeholders, including public authorities, infrastructure operators, citizens, energy communities, associations, industry, businesses and services, energy producers, energy service providers, utilities and distribution system operators (DSOs)
- Coordinating LHCPs with electricity and heating and cooling distribution network and infrastructure development plans, and where relevant, with decommissioning plans for natural gas networks[21]
- Establishing structured dialogue and collaboration with competent regional and national authorities, including to inform national-level planning such as NECPs and the National Comprehensive Heating and Cooling Assessments.

Proposals should include specific activities to transfer knowledge and experience to help initiate LHCP processes beyond the targeted territories.

Proposals should also explain how they will help establish lasting and institutionalised LHCPs planning and governance frameworks under the responsibility of the targeted municipalities and regions. This may include, but not limited to, dedicated structures, hubs, or task forces to support the implementation of LHCPs in the territories covered.

Proposals may use existing digital tools, such as those developed by national authorities or EU-funded projects, to support the development of LHCPs. Proposals whose main focus is to develop new digital tools are outside the scope of this topic.

Proposals that only focus on district heating and cooling investment plans are outside the scope of this topic.

Proposals should clearly identify the targeted territories and the municipalities and regional authorities involved. They should demonstrate their active involvement and firm political commitment, for instance by including them in the consortium or providing tailored letters of support clearly specifying their commitment and role in the project.

[19] Taking into account changing climatic conditions resulting from climate change, including increased frequency of episodes of extreme heat

[20] Including data on heating and cooling demand, local renewable heat and waste heat sources, energy supply infrastructures, heating and cooling appliances in buildings, and the energy performance of buildings (Directive (EU) 2024/1275)

[21] Directive (EU) 2024/1788

Proposals must be submitted by at least 3 applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities) from 3 different eligible countries.

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of up to EUR 2 million would allow the specific objectives to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

Expected impact

Proposals should present the concrete results which will be delivered by the activities and demonstrate how these results will contribute to the topic-specific impacts. This demonstration should rely on a solid analysis of the current situation, realistic assumptions and baselines, and establish clear causality links between proposed activities, results and impacts.

In terms of qualitative impact, proposals under this topic should demonstrate how they will contribute to the following outcomes, as relevant:

- delivering actionable and integrated LHCPs, aligned with EU and Member State guidance and requirements
- empowering local and regional authorities and support them in creating lasting and institutionalised planning and governance frameworks
- engaging public and private stakeholders to accelerate the decarbonisation of heating and cooling at the local level.

In terms of quantitative impact, proposals should quantify their results and impacts using the indicators provided for the topic, when they are relevant for the proposed activities. Proposals are not expected to address all the listed impacts and indicators. The results and impacts should be quantified for the end of the project and for 5 years after the end of the project. The quantitative indicators for this topic include:

- Number of planning and governance frameworks established at local, inter-municipal or regional levels
- Number of LHCPs delivered, ideally adopted as local, inter-municipal or regional policy documents
- Number of policy makers/public officers with improved skills in heating and cooling planning, and average training hours per participant in capacity building programmes
- Number of public and private stakeholders engaged in LHCP planning processes and in structured dialogues on local heating and cooling planning at the local, regional, and national level
- Number of LHCP processes initiated in other municipalities during the action.

Proposals should also provide indicators which are specific to their proposed activities.

Proposals should also quantify their impacts related to the following common indicators for the LIFE Clean Energy Transition sub-programme.

- Primary energy savings triggered by the project in GWh/year
- Final energy savings triggered by the project in GWh/year
- Renewable energy generation triggered by the project (in GWh/year)
- Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (in t CO2-eq/year)

- Investments in sustainable energy (energy efficiency and renewable energy) triggered by the project (cumulative, in million Euro).

Funding rate

Other Action Grants (OAGs) — 95%

LIFE-2026-CET-POLICY: Towards an effective implementation of key legislation in the field of sustainable energy

Objectives

Energy efficiency and the built environment are at the heart of many of the policy challenges that the European Union is facing today: the EU's competitiveness, Europe's energy security, the affordability of housing, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the strengthening of resilience. Key legislative pieces of the Fit for 55 package and the REpowerEU are designed to address those challenges. The LIFE-2026-CET-POLICY topic aims to support the implementation of some of the key pieces of legislation in the field of sustainable energy, notably the Energy Efficiency Directive[22] (EED) and the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive[23] (EPBD).

Scope

Proposals are expected to support Member States in the implementation of:

- the Energy Efficiency Directive (Scope A).
- the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (Scope B).

Proposals are expected to focus on one of the 2 scopes, as detailed below. The scope addressed should be specified in the introduction of the proposal. Proposals may address elements of more than one scope; the coherence and added-value of a cross-cutting approach should be adequately explained.

Proposals are expected to:

- Promote and enable exchange of insights and sharing of best practices within/ across Member States
- Provide support, technical advice and tools for the implementation of requirements of the directives, according to the national and regional context
- Support the monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation
- Develop, support and apply methodologies to more accurately measure, calculate and account for contributions made under the specific policy measures and programmes, including data gathering for the energy efficiency and buildings sector
- Develop and support integrated methodologies for areas and sectors that are addressed by different policies and pieces of legislation, notably approaches for integrated collection of data, calculation/accounting, verification, monitoring, evaluation and reporting as well as modelling and monitoring of energy and non-energy impacts of integrated solutions.

[22] Directive (EU) 2023/1791 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 September 2023 on energy efficiency and amending Regulation (EU) 2023/955 (recast)
[23] Directive (EU) 2024/1275 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 April 2024 on the energy performance of buildings

For proposals focused specifically on local heating and cooling plans please consider applying under the topic LIFE-2026-CET-HEATCOOLPLAN: Supporting the delivery of actionable, integrated, and comprehensive Local Heating and Cooling Plans.

For proposals focused specifically on improving information instruments under the EPBD, please consider applying under the topic LIFE-2026-CET-BETTERRENO.

Scope A: Support for the implementation of the Energy Efficiency Directive

Actions under Scope A are expected to address the core provisions and aspects of the Energy Efficiency Directive, notably at least one of the following:

- the Energy Efficiency First principle, supporting Member States in the efficient implementation of the principle and helping develop easy-to-learn, standardised or simplified (cost effective) assessment methodologies, tools, benchmarks and processes, including for the application of the principle in policy design and planning decisions in energy infrastructure, in national policies supporting the energy transition, in public support schemes, and in planning and investment decisions at regional and local levels
- the role of the public sector in delivering the specific targets established for the public sector, e.g. by supporting Member States in developing strategies, mapping public buildings and gathering and calculating data from public bodies
- the Energy Savings Obligations and Energy Efficiency Obligation Schemes, supporting Member States in the design and implementation of the schemes and in the calculation of contributions and evaluation of measures
- supporting Member States for the Comprehensive Assessments for Heating and Cooling in accordance with EED Art. 25 by providing national guidance, tools and structures to support regional and local authorities, by developing heat transition governance linking regional, local and national level, by collecting necessary data for planning the heating transition (based also on local heating and cooling plans) and by ensuring coherence in data collection and planning of the heat transition between the Energy Efficiency Directive's comprehensive heating & cooling assessment and policies (EED Art. 25), and (iv) the local heating & cooling plans (EED Art. 25(6)), as well as other relevant planning and data collection (e.g. National Building Renovation Plans (EPBD Art. 3), national energy performance of buildings databases (EPBD Art. 22))
- supporting Member States in the implementation of EED Art. 11 provisions related to Energy Audits and Energy Management System, notably to facilitate faster implementation of recommended measures listed in the companies' Action Plan through a harmonised approach on the audit methods across EU Member States and sectors.

Scope B: Support for the implementation of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive

The EPBD aims to deliver energy efficiency, more affordable energy costs in buildings and to strengthen resilience. The transposition deadline of the EPBD is on 29 May 2026 and Member States are aiming for coherent and effective implementation actions at all levels of governance, including regional and local level. The transposition and implementation of the EPBD requires strong political and practical commitment from Member States. In this context, the actions under Scope B are expected to address core provisions and practical implementation aspects of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD).

Actions should address one of the three focus areas below, even if not limited to these:

1. Actions to enhance the public awareness of the benefits of implementing the EPBD provisions, effectiveness and coherence of instruments designed to improve the energy performance of buildings through a higher number of and deeper renovations
2. Actions to support the implementation of all EPBD policy tools for the transition to a climate-neutral building stock
3. Actions to support an optimal roll-out of building data and information tools in the context of EPBD.

For both scopes A and B:

Proposals must be submitted by at least 3 applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities) from 3 different eligible countries.

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of up to EUR 2 million would allow the specific objectives to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

Expected impact

Proposals should present the concrete results which will be delivered by the activities and demonstrate how these results will contribute to the topic-specific impacts. This demonstration should rely on a solid analysis of the current situation, realistic assumptions and baselines, and establish clear causality links between activities, results and impacts.

In terms of qualitative impact, proposals under this topic should demonstrate how they will contribute to the following outcomes, as relevant:

- Increased understanding and practical knowledge in public administrations in charge of implementing European energy legislation; improved collaboration of implementing bodies within and across Member States
- More effective implementation of provisions, including better planning, design, implementation and evaluation of policy measures; more consistent implementation of legal provisions across energy legislation, energy policy and energy sectors
- Use of appropriate tools and methods that facilitate availability and access to data; improved quality of data in all end-use sectors and better monitoring; use of more accurate calculation and Measurement & Verification methodologies, including for cross-sector use of energy; improved quality of reporting; improved understanding and measurement of the impacts and non-energy benefits of policy measures, also in view of the circular economy.

In terms of quantitative impact, proposals should quantify their results and impacts using the indicators provided for the topic, when they are relevant for the proposed activities. Proposals are not expected to address all the listed impacts and indicators. The results and impacts should be quantified for the end of the project and for 5 years after the end of the project.

- Number of public authorities with increased capacity and better access to information and data
- Number of public authorities and stakeholders using tools, resources, information and data established and provided by the project
- Number of policy measures, implementing acts and related documents improved by the project

- Number of monitoring and reporting tools and documents improved by the project
- Number of references in policy-relevant documents, such as impact assessments, guidance documents etc.

Proposals should also provide indicators which are specific to their proposed activities.

Proposals should also quantify their impacts related to the following common indicators for the LIFE Clean Energy Transition subprogramme:

- Primary energy savings triggered by the project in GWh/year
- Final energy savings triggered by the project in GWh/year
- Renewable energy generation triggered by the project (in GWh/year)
- Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (in tCO_2-eq/year)
- Investments in sustainable energy (energy efficiency and renewable energy) triggered by the project (cumulative, in million Euro).

Funding rate

Other Action Grants (OAGs) — 95%

LIFE-2026-CET-RENEWHC: Strengthening national frameworks for renewable and efficient heating and cooling in existing buildings

Objectives

This topic will support the establishment of national collaborative platforms to strengthen the existing regulatory and financial frameworks at the national and local levels, thereby facilitating a large-scale rollout of on-site heat pump and solar thermal installations in existing buildings, including in combination with photovoltaic (PV) or photovoltaic thermal (PVT) systems.

Heat pumps and solar thermal are mature technologies which will be key to meeting the 2030 EU energy and climate targets and towards the climate neutrality of the EU's building and heating and cooling sectors by mid-century.

However, high upfront costs for the purchase and installation in existing buildings and split incentives can be a barrier for many consumers across all building segments. Additionally, high electricity prices compared to natural gas prices represent another key barrier, notably in EU markets with higher levies and taxes on electricity compared to natural gas.

Alternative financing schemes and business models are emerging such as heating as a service, leasing, all-in offers, community financing or aggregators monetising the flexibility of heat pumps. Some of these models reduce or shift investment costs, risks and administrative burden from the consumer to the provider. In this context, LIFE CET and other EU programmes have funded projects assessing, testing and replicating alternative business models and/or solutions for technical energy delivery models.

These projects have developed, among others, standardised contractual models and methods/tools simplifying processes and assessments ensuring that installations are of high quality and suitable for the selected buildings prior to any installation.

Notwithstanding, the large-scale uptake of those alternative models is hampered, among others, by various national and local regulatory and market barriers. These concern, among other aspects, permitting, urban, building and rental regulations, third-party ownership and the nature of service agreements, the valorisation of demand response in electricity markets and the electricity-to-gas price ratio.

Given this background, the specific objectives of this topic are to identify and assess in detail and address, in maximum three to five national markets (for a single proposal), options to address specific regulatory and market barriers hampering the large-scale roll-out of alternative business models and to strengthen the capacity of public authorities and other relevant stakeholders.

This topic supports the implementation of EU energy and climate legislation. The built environment is at the heart of many of the policy challenges that Europe is facing today: of the climate emergency, of energy security, of housing affordability, and of the EU's competitiveness. The topic addresses these by creating the conditions to strengthening, among others, the supply chain within the EU, as well as support the upcoming Heating and Cooling Strategy and Electrification Action Plan. Additionally, the topic will also address specific barriers that remain beyond the direct reach of EU legislation.

The EU is facing important increases in energy prices, driven by market volatility and exacerbated by its dependence on imported fossil fuels. A key priority for the EU is to strengthen the resilience of its energy system vis-a-vis geopolitical crises impacting the global energy market. Therefore, applicants under this topic are invited, where possible, to develop and implement long-term structural sustainable and energy efficiency measures to enhance EU energy system resilience against future crises, in coherence with short-term energy relief measures needed to respond to the current shock on the global energy markets.

Scope

Building on the work and lessons learned from on-going LIFE CET projects[24] and other initiatives, proposals shall target three to five LIFE eligible countries (for a single proposal) to establish or adapt existing national platforms/fora of key relevant stakeholders to:

- Assess in detail for each target country the barriers and enabling conditions for the uptake of alternative business models and financing schemes for on-site heat pumps and solar thermal systems, including hybrid systems, in buildings;
- Scope, assess and model for each target country the impact of specific regulatory and non-regulatory options to address the identified barriers;
- Assess options for
  - attracting a broader range of economic actors to deploy heat pumps, solar thermal and PVT and offer new business models;
  - adapting public incentives to alternative business models;
  - updating existing and creating new tools to enhance cost transparency and competition;

[24] See proposals selected under LIFE-2022-CET-HEATPUMPS, LIFE-2023-CET-HEATPUMPS and LIFE-2024-CET-HEATPUMPS.

- creating marketplaces and alliances that increase market transparency and facilitate decision making by consumers and support installers in view of improving consumer offers.

Proposals shall describe how they intend to organise the national platforms to achieve the above and are encouraged to start and monitor the first phase of implementation of selected measures within the duration of the action.

Proposals shall provide a clear and detailed overview of the state of play in each target market, the uptake level of the alternative financing schemes and the business models they intend to address and the barriers to be tackled.

The addressed business models and financing schemes should focus on the supply of at least space heating; however, this does not preclude considering additional services such as water heating and space cooling, including free cooling. For heat pumps specifically, actions may also address the unfavourable electricity-to-gas price ratio. On the other hand, business models and financing schemes for new heating and cooling networks, including small-scale networks, are out of scope.

The national collaborative platforms should include market players such as heating systems providers and installers, investors and economic actors, the financing community, utilities, consumer associations, and relevant competent national or regional public authorities (e.g. from different relevant ministries), regulators, energy suppliers and distribution system operators. Proposals shall demonstrate at the proposal stage the interest and nature of commitment from the above-mentioned actors, either through direct participation in the consortium or through tailored and detailed letters of support. The latter should also clearly specify for authorities their competence in the matter.

Proposals should collaborate and/or provide input, where relevant, to the national hubs of the European Energy Efficiency Financing Coalition, or other relevant working groups on sustainable finance.

Although the focus of the activities is mostly on the national level, proposals may also envisage the exchange of experience between key stakeholders from participating countries.

Proposals must be submitted by at least 3 applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities) from 3 different eligible countries.

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of up to EUR 2 million would allow the specific objectives to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

For proposals focused on local heating and cooling planning, please consider applying under the topic LIFE-2026-CET-HEATCOOLPLAN.

Expected impact

Proposals should present the concrete results which will be delivered by the activities and demonstrate how these results will contribute to the topic-specific impacts. This demonstration should rely on a solid analysis of the current situation, realistic assumptions and baselines, and establish clear causality links between activities, results and impacts.

In terms of qualitative impact, proposals under this topic should demonstrate how they will contribute to strengthen the national frameworks for business and financing models reducing or shifting high investment costs for the installation of heat pumps and solar thermal systems in existing buildings.

In terms of quantitative impact, proposals should quantify their results and impacts using the indicators provided for the topic, when they are relevant for the proposed activities. Proposals are not expected to address all the listed impacts and indicators. The results and impacts should be quantified for the end of the project and for 5 years after the end of the project. The quantitative indicators for this topic include:

- Number of relevant stakeholders participating in the national collaborative platforms
- Number of public authorities using resources and information produced and provided by the activity
- Number of public authorities and other relevant stakeholders endorsing the identified measures
- Number of relevant stakeholders, along the value chains, including consumers, with improved skills/knowledge during the action

Proposals should also provide indicators which are specific to their proposed activities.

Proposals should also quantify their impacts related to the following common indicators for the LIFE Clean Energy Transition subprogramme:

- Primary energy savings triggered by the project in GWh/year
- Final energy savings triggered by the project in GWh/year
- Renewable energy generation triggered by the project (in GWh/year)
- Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (in tCO2-eq/year)
- Investments in sustainable energy (energy efficiency and renewable energy) triggered by the project (cumulative, in million Euro).

Funding rate

Other Action Grants (OAGs) — 95%

Accelerating technology roll-out, digitalisation, new services and business models and enhancement of the related professional skills on the market for the clean energy transition

LIFE-2026-CET-BETTERRENO: Energy renovation solutions – Boosting building renovation through effective markets and instruments

Objectives

This topic contributes to the goals of the EU Renovation Wave strategy[25] and aims to help implement current building policies and strategic plans, notably the recast Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD)[26] and the elements of the European Affordable Housing Plan[27] of relevance for building renovation. This topic supports energy renovations that provide scalable, high-performance and affordable solutions

[25] Communication A Renovation Wave for Europe - greening our buildings, creating jobs, improving lives, COM(2020) 662 final
[26] DIRECTIVE (EU) 2024/1275
[27] COM(2025) 1025 final

to massify renovations and improve the energy performance and the affordability of buildings and make buildings active energy system assets.

This topic addresses areas that are key for the achievement of the ambitious EU targets for the decarbonisation of buildings, along with improving the energy security and industrial competitiveness in the EU and the affordability of energy. This topic supports the Better Homes partnerships[28] bringing together stakeholders from a fragmented renovation chain to collaborate, conceptualise and deploy renovation projects on the ground. It aims to deploy approaches that bring together market actors and policy frameworks in order to support the large-scale roll out of renovation solutions. The topic aims to increase the attractiveness and cost-effectiveness of building energy performance upgrades and to reduce the administrative, logistical and financial burden that still goes along with building retrofitting.

The topic also aims to ensure the market uptake and integration to the policy framework of advanced building policy and information instruments, to increase their public acceptance and demonstrate their value for verification and financing of building renovation and upgrade. Proposals should, where appropriate, explore synergies with, build on or complement, and promote the market deployment of the results from projects funded under other EU programmes, notably Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe.

The EU is facing important increases in energy prices, driven by market volatility and exacerbated by its dependence on imported fossil fuels. A key priority for the EU is to strengthen the resilience of its energy system vis-a-vis geopolitical crises impacting the global energy market. Therefore, applicants under this topic are invited, where possible, to develop and implement long-term structural sustainable and energy efficiency measures to enhance EU energy system resilience against future crises, in coherence with short-term energy relief measures needed to respond to the current shock on the global energy markets.

Scope

Proposals are expected to focus on one of the two scopes (A or B) established below. In their introduction, proposals should clearly identify the scope against which the proposal will be evaluated. In case a proposal addresses elements of more than one scope, this should be duly justified.

Scope A: Scaling up high-quality and competitive energy renovations

Under Scope A, actions should aim to increase renovation rates and deliver progress towards a fully decarbonised, zero emission building stock by 2050, as defined in the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive. Proposals should focus on removing market barriers, stimulating demand and scaling up energy renovations.

Proposals should deploy strategies and business models for renovation that can be replicated across multiple buildings and markets, increasing current renovation rates, aggregating demand for products and services with a view to facilitating faster, more cost-effective, affordable, simple and efficient renovations.

Proposals should support the large-scale roll out of solutions, models and approaches that deliver high-quality renovations with energy performance guarantees or other business models, driving market confidence and stimulating investments. They should support the competitiveness and productivity of construction companies, for example through industrialised and standardised processes, digital tools, improved

[28] European Affordable Housing Plan: Action 3. Combining affordability, sustainability and quality in housing

coordination across the supply chain and the uptake of circular and low-carbon solutions.

Proposals should take into account all relevant actors in the renovation value chain, notably building owners, energy solution providers and investors, occupants, public authorities, financial institutions, construction sector representatives, electricity market operators, etc.

In line with the 2050 vision for the building stock, besides improving energy performance, indoor environmental quality and decarbonising energy use in buildings, proposals can go beyond and consider reduction of whole lifecycle emissions, addressing materials, or increased resilience against climate risks in renovations.

Proposals should explain how the proposed activities are adapted to the specific context and maturity of the markets and/or countries addressed and should coordinate with existing support, funding instruments, one stop shops or existing renovation facilitation services in their area of action. Proposals may consider deploying technical building systems and strategies enabling flexibility.

Scope B: Strengthening information instruments under the EPBD

Proposals are expected to strengthen the market and policy uptake, usability and effectiveness of key EPBD instruments, notably Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs), Renovation Passports (RPs) and where relevant the Smart Readiness Indicator (SRI), and the Digital Building Logbooks (DBLs) and Indoor Environmental Quality (IEQ).

Proposals should demonstrate the reliability and market relevance of these instruments for their intended users and customers, and strengthen their contribution to achieving EPBD policy objectives. This roll-out should result in increased and improved use of building energy data for renovation and/or energy management.

Proposals should address the improved implementation and accelerated market roll-out of existing schemes and tools that improve on the one hand the accuracy and quality, and on the other hand the integration and consistency of EPCs, RPs and where appropriate, the SRI, the DBL and IEQ.

Proposals should detail their specific approach, where relevant, for enhancing transparency, assessing renovation needs and energy costs, improving indoor environmental quality and measuring the impacts of building performance improvements. These instruments should strengthen the market value of energy performance by linking its improvements to building valuation and investment decisions.

The roll-out and market uptake of Renovation Passports in line with the recast EPBD should enable clear, staged renovation pathways for building owners, ensuring coherence with EPCs and where relevant, SRI assessments, the DBL and IEQ. This could include actions to improve the practical market implementation aspects, as well as measures to create demand and promote the use of RPs.

The proposed activities need to be compatible with all implementation choices that Member States make in the context of transposing the EPBD and thus need to follow the policy evolutions and frameworks as appropriate. Proposals should also take into account existing funding schemes as well as relevant renovation support services, including one-stop shops.

Technological, including innovative, solutions may be employed as enablers but must not be at the centre of the action.

For both scopes A and B:

All proposals are required to implement pilot actions in real-life buildings or renovation projects, demonstrating practical application, effectiveness and replicability of the proposed solutions and instruments.

Proposals must be submitted by at least 3 applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities) from 3 different eligible countries.

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of up to EUR 2 million would allow the specific objectives to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

Expected impact

Proposals should present the concrete results which will be delivered by the activities and demonstrate how these results will contribute to the topic-specific impacts. This demonstration should rely on a solid analysis of the current situation, realistic assumptions and baselines, and establish clear causality links between activities, results and impacts.

For Scope A:

In terms of qualitative impact, proposals under this topic should demonstrate how they will contribute to the following outcomes, as relevant:

- Increased demand for energy renovation and increased energy renovation rates
- Implementation of demand aggregation strategies
- Viable business models for renovations with reduced costs and time, replicable at large scale
- Improved capacity of companies in the building renovation sector to deliver high quality renovations.

In terms of quantitative impact, proposals should quantify their results and impacts using the indicators provided for the topic, when they are relevant for the proposed activities. Proposals are not expected to address all the listed impacts and indicators. The results and impacts should be quantified for the end of the project and for 5 years after the end of the project. The quantitative indicators for this topic include:

- Number of building units renovated and/or increased renovation rates in the territories targeted by the project
- Number of building units that undergo a deep renovation and/or increased deep renovation rates
- Percentage reduction in renovation costs compared to baseline, potentially detailed by building typology and type of intervention
- Investments in building energy renovation triggered
- Number of companies with improved technical, organisational and business capacity to deliver energy renovations through the uptake of new products, materials, services and processes under the scope of the topic.

Proposals should also provide indicators which are specific to their proposed activities.

For Scope B:

In terms of qualitative impact, proposals under this topic should demonstrate how they will contribute to the following outcomes:

- Enhanced market uptake and effective use of advanced EPCs, SRIs, RPs, DBLs and IEQ
- Roll-out of existing schemes and tools allowing enhanced, integrated, cost-effective building assessments and staged renovation strategies
- Improved use of buildings performance data in actual renovations or building management by financial institutions, service providers and building owners/operators.

In terms of quantitative impact, proposals should quantify their results and impacts using the indicators provided for the topic, when they are relevant for the proposed activities. Proposals are not expected to address all the listed impacts and indicators. The results and impacts should be quantified for the end of the project and for 5 years after the end of the project. The quantitative indicators for this topic include:

- Number of Renovation Passports issued and applied to actual renovation projects
- Number of renovations or building management projects making use of enhanced and integrated building assessment schemes (EPCs, SRI and IEQ) and data repositories (DBL)
- Number of relevant stakeholders (e.g. building owners, service providers, financial institutions, one-stop-shops) actively using improved building-related data and services.

Proposals should also provide indicators which are specific to their proposed activities.

For both scopes A and B

Proposals should also quantify their impacts related to the following common indicators for the LIFE Clean Energy Transition sub-programme:

- Primary energy savings triggered by the project in GWh/year
- Final energy savings triggered by the project in GWh/year
- Renewable energy generation triggered by the project (in GWh/year)
- Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (in tCO2-eq/year)
- Investments in sustainable energy (energy efficiency and renewable energy) triggered by the project (cumulative, in million Euro).

Funding rate

Other Action Grants (OAGs) — 95%

LIFE-2026-CET-INDUSTRY: Supporting the clean energy transition of European industry and businesses

Objectives

The overall objective of this topic is to support the competitiveness, clean energy transition and decarbonisation of industry by bridging the gap between the demand and supply side of net-zero energy technologies as well as by fostering collaborative approaches among companies operating in physical proximity.

In 2023, the industry sector made up 25% of the total EU-27 final energy consumption, out of which energy-intensive companies account for almost 40%. Exposure to energy prices, increased global competition as well as potential transition risks linked to changing regulation, market demand and buyers/suppliers procurement criteria are increasing pressure on EU companies.

For this reason, modernising and decarbonising the industry sector while enhancing competitiveness remains a top priority to succeed in the clean energy transition, as highlighted in the Future of European Competitiveness report[29]. New business models and financial schemes are needed to boost the decision to invest in energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Through the Net-Zero Industry Act[30], the European Commission is aiming to increase the manufacturing capacity of strategic net-zero technologies to meet at least 40% of the EU's annual deployment needs by 2030. Furthermore, the Commission has adopted the Clean Industrial Deal communication[31] and the Affordable Energy Action Plan[32] with the aim, among others, to foster the competitiveness of energy-intensive industries through the establishment of cooperation initiatives (e.g. at industrial cluster level). The EU ports strategy[33] adopted on 4 March 2026 announced Commission support, including via this call for proposals, to partnerships with ports and industrial clusters promoting deployment of renewables, energy sharing, reuse of waste heat, storage solutions and the development of port-centred energy communities and integration with local heating and cooling networks.

The EU is facing important increases in energy prices, driven by market volatility and exacerbated by its dependence on imported fossil fuels. A key priority for the EU is to strengthen the resilience of its energy system vis-a-vis geopolitical crises impacting the global energy market. Therefore, applicants under this topic are invited, where possible, to develop and implement long-term structural sustainable and energy efficiency measures to enhance EU energy system resilience against future crises, in coherence with short-term energy relief measures needed to respond to the current shock on the global energy markets.

Scope

Proposals should address only one of the two scopes below. The scope addressed should be clearly specified in the introduction of the proposal.

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[29] https://commission.europa.eu/topics/competitiveness/draghi-report_en

[30] https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/industry/sustainability/net-zero-industry-act_en

[31] https://commission.europa.eu/topics/competitiveness/clean-industrial-deal_en

[32] https://energy.ec.europa.eu/strategy/affordable-energy_en

[33] https://transport.ec.europa.eu/transport-modes/maritime/eu-ports-and-industrial-maritime-strategies_en

For both scopes, proposals are encouraged to connect with financial players and investors for the validation of the proposed approach, as well as to create synergies with the national hubs of the European Energy Efficiency Financing Coalition.

Scope A: Collaboration between industrial sectors and technology providers for clean energy technology optimisation and deployment

This scope aims to establish new collaborations between one or a few industrial sectors/sub-sectors sharing similar processes and energy related needs with sustainable energy technology manufacturers and providers. Applicants shall focus on a clearly identified clean energy technology or a coherent set of technologies contributing to a higher energy performance for the targeted industrial sector(s)/process(es).

Relevant technologies could include for example: local renewable energy integration, waste heat recovery, heat electrification solutions, including through the use of heat pumps, as well as energy efficiency and storage solutions, energy-efficient electric motor systems and more generally the renewable energy and energy efficiency related technologies covered by the Net-Zero Industry Act. Commercially available technologies and recent innovations ready for market deployment (Technology Readiness Level 8-9) are eligible for this scope.

Proposals addressing sectors already covered by ongoing similar initiatives should clarify the added value and/or complementarity of their proposed activities; there are ongoing collaborations[34] between industrial heat pump manufacturers and the pulp and paper, food and drink sectors, and several chemical sub-sectors.

On the user side, the specific industrial sector(s) should survey and synthesise the technological and energy needs of the industrial plants/sites concerned across the participating countries in the LIFE Programme, and review them through a closer exchange with technology suppliers and manufacturers, to co-design and optimise a more standardised and streamlined technological solution, as well as develop technical-economic guidelines and design tools to support the tailoring of concept solutions to the specific needs of the industrial plants in Europe.

On the supply side, Europe-based manufacturers and technology providers, together with other relevant stakeholders along the value chain, should optimise and standardise their existing technological offers, products and solutions to meet the needs of the industrial sector.

The goal is to move from a custom-built, project by project approach for each specific industrial plant and process, to more streamlined, standardised solutions and design tools for industrial clients operating the same processes. This cooperation should go beyond a simple business-to-customer approach and support business-to-business-to-customer collaboration models.

Proposals are expected to support the establishment of concrete collaboration initiatives, including the governance structure, and their initial operation. Activities should address the development and validation of business models for the deployment of the specific solutions explored in the sector(s) addressed, dissemination via multiple channels and capacity building activities for the deployment and installation of the solutions, including with multipliers, such as national energy agencies and energy auditors.

[34] EXQUISHEAT (101215816) and HP4INDUSTRY (101215522) projects

Proposals should present a clear strategy to roll out the technical solutions on the targeted industrial sector/processes, including access to public and private finance.

The involvement of the relevant representative organisations at European level both for the end user industrial sector(s) and for technology providers should be ensured through direct participation in the consortium to enable a European wide consultation of the needs of the user sector(s), a faster market acceptance and uptake of the co-designed solution along with the proposed benchmarks and standards. In addition to European representative organisations, proposals may also involve national and regional players representing the targeted end-users if deemed necessary for the action.

Proposals should focus on technologies ready to market or that have been successfully implemented under real operating conditions and should justify the choice of the targeted sector(s)/processes based on a clear quantification of the market's needs and a detailed analysis of the barriers and proposed solutions. The demonstration of the proposed solutions is not in the scope of this topic, and potential costs for equipment will be eligible only to a very small extent, if justified.

Scope B: Energy cooperation among industries in geographical proximity, including ports, to foster clean, affordable and sustainable energy use

Proposals under this scope should support the cost-effective and energy-efficient transition of industrial processes to renewable and low-carbon energy sources, including process electrification and waste heat recovery, through energy cooperation approaches among companies, particularly energy-intensive industries, that are in geographical proximity (local/regional industrial clusters, industrial park/sites, maritime and inland ports).

Energy cooperation can refer to the process of sharing energy-related assets (e.g. renewable and low-carbon energy generation, energy storage), sharing energy services, implementing energy exchanges (e.g. recovery and use of waste heat from industrial and manufacturing processes, or flexible electricity demand and complementarity between the demand profiles of industrial prosumers) as well as the voluntary interfacing of industrial energy prosumers with system operators (e.g. electricity, heat, hydrogen, CO_2) for infrastructure planning. Energy cooperation can take place within the same industrial cluster, park/area or among them (e.g. at regional level among different industrial clusters/areas) as well as in industrial port areas. The development of green regional/local industrial areas/clusters can also facilitate better access to finance, energy services via ESCO contracts and power purchase agreements.

Proposals should facilitate the establishment of energy cooperation mechanisms within the timeframe of the project, including but not limited to identifying, investigating and validating economically viable business models (based on concrete interaction with participating companies), ensuring added value for each involved actor (e.g. buyers/suppliers/final users). Proposals should also work on removing barriers that hinder energy cooperation, e.g. organisational (coordination, trust, responsibilities, data management, risk sharing), legal (identification of update needs or regulatory sandboxes where relevant) or social.

Proposals should deliver investment plans including a pipeline of feasible projects aiming, among others, to accelerate the electrification of the energy demand and energy efficiency improvements in the targeted industrial areas/clusters. The proposed investment plans should be endorsed by key relevant stakeholders (businesses, public authorities, including port authorities where applicable, industry park managers, investors, TSOs, DSOs, ESCOs etc.).

Proposals may explore the use of voluntary national or regional agreements to mobilise private and public resources instrumental for the implementation of the investment plans. The envisaged plans are expected to complement and feed into the preparation of local, regional and national strategies to climate neutrality and energy efficiency (e.g. Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAPS) or similar).

Proposals should clearly explain their approach to engage with companies and how it is adapted to the specific needs of the targeted areas/clusters. The proposals should demonstrate a high degree of replicability, present and commit to implement a clear strategy to disseminate the results to other industrial and port areas along with a clear action plan to communicate experiences, critical success factors and results towards relevant energy cooperation actors and stakeholders across the EU.

For both scopes A and B

Proposals must be submitted by at least 3 applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities) from 3 different eligible countries.

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of up to EUR 2 million would allow the specific objectives to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

Expected impact

Proposals should present the concrete results which will be delivered by the activities and demonstrate how these results will contribute to the topic-specific impacts. This demonstration should rely on a solid analysis of the current situation, realistic assumptions and baselines, and establish clear causality links between proposed activities, results and impacts.

In terms of qualitative impact, proposals under this topic should demonstrate how they will contribute to the following outcomes, as relevant and depending on the scope (A or B):

- Implementation of EU legislation (in particular Energy Efficiency Directive and Renewable Energy Directive) addressing the business sector
- Viable business models either for the deployment of specific solutions or for industrial energy cooperation ready to be rolled out on the market
- Industrial actors integrating sustainable energy solutions in their processes
- Deployment of energy related infrastructure, energy services, and/or energy exchanges contributing to the clean energy transition of businesses
- Sustainable energy technological solutions adapted to meet industrial processes demands
- Acceleration and streamlining of projects to foster clean, affordable and sustainable energy use at regional/local level

In terms of quantitative impact, proposals should quantify their results and impacts using the indicators provided for the topic, when they are relevant for the proposed activities. Proposals are not expected to address all the listed impacts and indicators. The results and impacts should be quantified for the end of the project and for 5 years after the end of the project. Depending on the scope (A or B) and as relevant, the quantitative indicators for this topic include:

- Number of standardised technological solutions co-designed to the needs of a specific industrial sector

- Number of new installations of net-zero energy technologies triggered by the project (including commitments)
- Number of investment plans within industrial clusters endorsed by the relevant stakeholders (e.g. through Memorandum of Understanding)
- Number of companies implementing energy cooperation approaches
- Number of key actors along the value chains with improved skills/knowledge triggered during the action, broken down by relevant categories
- Number of relevant stakeholders approached and mobilised, broken down by relevant categories.

Proposals should also provide indicators which are specific to their proposed activities.

Proposals submitted under this topic should also quantify their impacts related to the following common indicators for the LIFE Clean Energy Transition sub-programme:

- Primary energy savings triggered by the project in GWh/year
- Final energy savings triggered by the project in GWh/year
- Renewable energy generation triggered by the project (in GWh/year)
- Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (in tCO_2-eq/year)
- Investments in sustainable energy (energy efficiency and renewable energy) triggered by the project (cumulative, in million Euro).

Funding rate

Other Action Grants (OAGs) — 95%

LIFE-2026-CET-BUILDSKILLS: BUILD UP Skills - National Platforms on energy efficiency skills for the clean energy transition

Objectives

With the accelerated pace of the clean energy transition, the lack of professionals with the relevant skillset is becoming a real bottleneck for both the energy transition and for the European economic growth potential.

Launched in 2011, the BUILD UP Skills initiative[35] aims to increase the number of skilled professionals (blue- and white-collars) along the construction and renovation value chains. BUILD UP Skills has also engaged public authorities, building owners and tenants, to create awareness about the importance of a skilled workforce.

BUILD UP Skills supports the objectives of the EU Pact for Skills, and especially the Large-Scale Partnership for the Construction Ecosystem, which aims to have 30% workers participating in upskilling or reskilling actions annually by 2030, as well as the Renewable Energy skills Large-Scale Partnership.

The projects supported since 2011 have set up a framework to increase the skills level of energy efficiency professionals needed across Europe to deliver energy renovations and nearly-Zero Energy Buildings at the scale implied by the EU targets for energy efficiency and energy performance of buildings. One of the key challenges in achieving this is the division of responsibilities and lack of coordination between public authorities, training institutions, construction sector associations and building

[35] https://build-up.ec.europa.eu/en/bup-skills

professionals. To develop the national skills roadmaps articulating these national upskilling actions, the BUILD UP Skills projects established national platforms gathering key stakeholders. In a first phase, all EU Member States developed such a platform and roadmap[36]. More recently, 15 Member States had the opportunity to expand their platform and to update their national roadmap with a 2030 perspective[37]. The topic provides an opportunity for additional eligible countries to carry out such an update.

Under Article 28 of the Energy Efficiency Directive (EU/2023/1791), Member States need to set up a network to ensure the appropriate level of competences for energy efficiency-related professions, and promote certification, training and education to reach this goal. The Commission will support these efforts by exploring ways to promote energy efficiency professions including support to campaigns and to setting up a single point of access platform, making use of existing initiatives where possible. Moreover, Member States should assess the skills gap on their national markets in relation to energy efficiency related professions, make the assessment and recommendations publicly available and submit them to the Commission through the online platform established under Article 28 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1999[38].

Under Article 17(12) of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EU/2024/1275), Member States shall put in place measures and financing to promote education and training with a view to ensuring that there is a sufficient workforce with the appropriate level of skills corresponding to the needs in the building sector, especially targeting SMEs, including microenterprises, as appropriate. This should be reflected in the national building renovation plans, to be submitted every five years to the Commission.

Article 18 of the Renewable Energy Directive (EU/2023/2413) also places strengthened requirements in relation to skills, qualifications and certification.

The EU Affordable Housing Plan acknowledges the need to address labour and skills shortages in the construction sector, and the Commission will support the large-scale roll out of relevant training programmes, notably through the BUILD UP Skills initiative[39].

As part of the Energy Efficiency Roadmap, the Commission will actively support EU countries in closing the skills gap, including through national training plans and toolkits[40].

In the light of this policy framework, the topic aims to build upon the BUILD UP Skills national platforms to increase the number of skilled professionals in Europe by improving awareness and cooperation between key public and private stakeholders, rolling out the needed upskilling and reskilling actions, as well as promoting and attracting more people to energy efficiency professions at national level.

The main focus of proposals should be on the skills and professions relevant for the energy transition of the construction and renovation value chains, for the integration of renewable energy sources in buildings, and expanding to other energy efficiency

[36] Under the Intelligent Energy Europe programme. Relevant deliverables are available here: https://build-up.ec.europa.eu/en/skills/skills-projects?f%5B0%5D=programme%3Aieepillar1

[37] Under the LIFE Clean Energy Transition call of 2021 and 2022: https://build-up.ec.europa.eu/en/skills/skills-projects?f%5B0%5D=programme%3Alifecet2030

[38] https://policy-reporting-platform.ec.europa.eu/Reporting/web/screen/home

[39] COM(2025) 1025 final

[40] https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-efficiency/new-impetus-energy-efficiency_en#energy-efficiency-roadmap

professions listed under Article 28(1) EED[41] when relevant and identified as a priority by the national platform, considering also the gaps identified by Member States in the national reports submitted under Article 28(6) EED.

Scope

The topic focusses on eligible countries not having yet updated their national skills platform and roadmap[42].

Proposals should carry out the following activities.

- (re)establish the national skills platform and secure involvement of key stakeholders. A good starting point could be the work supported under the Intelligent Energy Europe programme during which a first group of national stakeholders was mobilised[43], but this should be expanded, also considering other energy efficiency professions listed under Article 28(1) EED.

  Proposals should clearly explain the starting point for the proposed activities, e.g. the needs and constraints of relevant stakeholders, as well as elaborate on any previously established national platform or network (e.g. structure, composition, lessons-learnt).

  The platform should operate as a permanent structure gathering national experts from all relevant stakeholder organisations, including, but not limited to government authorities responsible for education and energy, professional chambers, education and training providers, trade unions and academia.

  The platform should focus on bringing to light the skills dimension of the clean energy transition to the relevant policy makers and decision-makers from the private sector, and run regular thematic working groups with relevant stakeholders, focused on specific issues.

  There should be a clear objective to institutionalise the national skills platform based on formalised coordination mechanisms to align efforts and pool resources between major national stakeholders.

  Digital platforms can be supported only if relevant to the project activities and appropriately supporting a coordinated approach of all relevant actors at the national level.

- carry out skills intelligence activities (including evaluation of the effectiveness of any previous national roadmap, market research, data collection, analysis of existing labour statistics and databases, targeted interviews with national stakeholders, participatory workshops, surveys…) to provide a comprehensive analysis of the national building, energy efficiency and education sectors, as well as a detailed mapping of the gaps in terms of workforce (occupations), skills and qualifications. The resulting 'status quo analysis' should cover initial education, vocational education as well as higher education.

[41] Providers of energy services, providers of energy audits, energy managers, independent experts, installers of building elements as referred to in Directive 2010/31/EU, and providers of integrated renovation works.

[42] This includes the following EU Member States: Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden; and countries associated to the LIFE Programme: Iceland, Moldova, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Ukraine.

[43] Key outputs can be accessed here: https://build-up.ec.europa.eu/en/skills/skills-projects?f%5B0%5D=programme%3Aieepillar1

- design a national roadmap to address the identified gaps and barriers. The national roadmap should notably include: a set of priority measures related to the various professions to meet the defined targets; an action plan including implementation timing for the identified measures; an identification of actors, resources and financing needed to drive the implementation; synergies with support mechanisms increasing the demand for skills in the energy efficiency sector, such as one-stop shops for homeowners or public procurement rules; measures and indicators to monitor the implementation of the proposed activities.

- promote widely the results of the status quo analysis and the measures in the roadmap and make the necessary arrangements to pave the way for the roadmap's implementation. Proposals should notably include activities ensuring the official endorsement of the roadmap by relevant national stakeholders, including public authorities.

- design and conduct a large-scale national communication and awareness raising campaign aimed at 1) promoting the contribution of skilled professionals to the clean energy transition; 2) making the case for the upskilling of energy efficiency professionals; and 3) attracting more people to energy efficiency professions, specifically for those occupations and skills where a gap has been identified by Member States in the national reports submitted under the Article 28(6) EED and in the national roadmap and action plan developed, when appropriate.

  It is expected that the campaign will represent a substantial part of the proposed activities, indicatively at least 30% of project resources.

  The campaign design and the focus on specific gaps and professions should be duly justified, including an explanation of the relevance and added value of the planned activities.

  The campaign should mobilise all relevant stakeholders, notably energy efficiency professionals, training providers, and employment agencies. It should also attract relevant profiles external to the energy sector, e.g. professionals from other sectors offering reskilling potential, as well as underrepresented groups such as women and youth, including students from vocational and higher education institutions.

  The campaign should be deployed both through online and onsite channels and activities that should be tailored to the specific target groups. As part of onsite activities, roadshows in dedicated cities should be organised[44].

Proposals must demonstrate a substantial preliminary interest from a range of relevant national stakeholders, including public authorities, through letters of support.

Proposals should include a small share of activities to exchange with similar platforms across Europe; those exchanges will be coordinated by the Commission services.

Proposals should build upon existing national initiatives in the field of training on skills for the clean energy transition, including those supported by the BUILD UP Skills

[44] A good example of such a campaign is the work done by the *nZEB Roadshow* project (H2020): https://cordis.europa.eu/article/id/443072-on-the-road-with-energy-efficient-buildings

initiative and under the EU Pact for Skills. Close cooperation with the BUILD UP Skills Community of Practice (BUSUnited project[45]) should be maintained.

Proposals may be submitted by a single applicant or by applicants from a single eligible country.

The focus should be on setting up an impactful national initiative, although one proposal may cover several eligible countries. Only one platform will eventually be supported in a given country.

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of a range of EUR 1 to 1.5 million would allow the specific objectives to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

Expected impact

Proposals should present the concrete results which will be delivered by the activities and demonstrate how these results will contribute to the topic-specific impacts. This demonstration should rely on a solid analysis of the current situation, realistic assumptions and baselines, and establish clear causality links between proposed activities, results and impacts.

In terms of qualitative impact, proposals under this topic should demonstrate how they will contribute to the following outcomes:

- Increased collaboration between key stakeholders, including public authorities, towards the goal of upskilling professionals in the construction and renovation value chains
- National skills roadmap with detailed measures and action plan addressing the identified skills gaps, endorsed by key stakeholders
- Increased visibility and attractiveness of energy efficiency professions through communication and awareness raising campaigns.

In terms of quantitative impact, proposals should quantify their results and impacts using all the indicators provided below. The results and impacts should be quantified for the end of the project and for 5 years after the end of the project. The quantitative indicators for this topic include:

- Number of key stakeholders involved in the national platform
- Number of meetings of the platform, including thematic working groups organised
- Number of relevant national stakeholders endorsing the updated national roadmap
- Number of people impacted by the communication and awareness raising campaign (to be measured through specific indicators e.g. gross reach, net reach, recall, increased knowledge, percentage of audience who took action as a result of the campaign)
- Amount of funding secured (public and/or private) to roll out training and qualification programmes.

Proposals may also provide indicators which are specific to their proposed activities.

Proposals should also quantify their impacts related to the following common indicators for the LIFE Clean Energy Transition sub-programme:

[45] https://descargas.five.es/archivos/EUprojects/BUSUnited/BUSUnited_summary.pdf

- Primary energy savings triggered by the project in GWh/year
- Final energy savings triggered by the project in GWh/year
- Renewable energy generation triggered by the project (in GWh/year)
- Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (in tCO_2-eq/year)
- Investments in sustainable energy (energy efficiency and renewable energy) triggered by the project (cumulative, in million Euro).

Funding rate

Other Action Grants (OAGs) — 95%

LIFE-2026-CET-DIGITAL: Supporting digitalisation of Distribution System Operators for a smart energy transition

Objectives

The clean energy transition requires a modernised, smart energy system that can manage decentralised and variable power sources, ensure grid stability and security of supply, and improve energy efficiency and overall system efficiency, including through digitalisation-enabled demand flexibility. The digitalisation of electricity Distribution System Operators (DSOs), within the framework of Electricity Market Design[46] and the Digitalisation of Energy Action Plan[47], enables smarter operation of distribution networks, facilitates active consumer participation and flexibility markets, and supports the EU's long-term objective of climate neutrality by 2050.

However, the transition towards digitalisation presents a multitude of challenges for DSOs, notably for small and medium-sized DSOs. As they modernise their networks and integrate new technologies, DSOs must address complex technical, operational, and organisational constraints. These challenges are driven by the accelerating energy transition, the rapid growth in the installation of renewable energy sources, rising electricity demand, distributed loads, and the need to balance innovation with system reliability and (cyber)security. At the same time, stakeholders notably market participants including energy communities, smart building owners, regulators, customers increasingly expect greater data availability, transparency, and performance.

This topic aims to support capacity building for the roll-out of digital technologies and processes in Distribution System Operators, covering data management systems, network observability, and the safe deployment and operation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies. Proposals should focus on available technologies and solutions; the development and demonstration of new technologies are not in the scope of the topic. The topic supports the implementation of key provisions of EU legislation in line with the Strategic Roadmap for Digitalisation and AI in the Energy Sector[48], the Directives

[46] https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/markets-and-consumers/electricity-market-design_en
[47] https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/eus-energy-system/digitalisation-energy-system_en#eu-action-plan-for-digitalising-energy
[48] https://energy.ec.europa.eu/news/commission-presents-measures-digitalise-europes-energy-system-while-ensuring-sustainable-2026-06-03_en

on Renewable Energy[49] and Energy Efficiency[50] and the Union of Skills communication[51].

The EU is facing important increases in energy prices, driven by market volatility and exacerbated by its dependence on imported fossil fuels. A key priority for the EU is to strengthen the resilience of its energy system vis-a-vis geopolitical crises impacting the global energy market. Therefore, applicants under this topic are invited, where possible, to develop and implement long-term structural sustainable and energy efficiency measures to enhance EU energy system resilience against future crises, in coherence with short-term energy relief measures needed to respond to the current shock on the global energy markets.

Scope

Proposals are expected to support DSOs, in particular small/local DSOs, to build necessary in-house capacity, knowledge and skills to modernise and digitalise their activities, allowing them to play a key role in the clean energy transition. To do so, proposals should support DSOs in developing a Digitalisation Roadmap and support them in embedding this Roadmap, fully or partially, in the DSO's Distribution Network Development Plan (DNDP)[52].

The Digitalisation Roadmap should not be a standardised document, but tailor-made to the size, grid typology and digital readiness level of each DSO. The Digitalisation Roadmap should cover at least the following areas depending on the specificities of each DSO:

- Data Exchange and Interoperability: Create the conditions for DSOs to exchange data with other electricity market stakeholders, such as Transmission System Operators (TSOs), consumers or distributed energy producers, to enhance the efficiency and reliability of the energy system, for example:
  - Integrate data from different sources into a cohesive operational frame (e.g. from smart meters, GIS, SCADA, sensors, etc.)
  - Enhance data governance across planning and operations, improve data quality, define data architectures, information models and standards
  - Improve data interoperability and enable real-time data-exchange with other DSOs, TSOs or with market participants as relevant
- Grid Observability: Increase the observability of distribution networks, enabling DSOs to better plan and manage the grid, predict demand and integrate distributed energy resources, while minimising curtailment and reducing energy losses, including:
  - Real-time monitoring and control of distribution network assets, e.g. through IoT sensors, ICT systems, digital twins
  - Enable observability and integration of distributed energy resources (DERs), e.g. solar panels, batteries, heat pumps and EV chargers

[49] Directive (EU) 2023/241
[50] Directive (EU) 2023/179
[51] https://commission.europa.eu/topics/competitiveness/union-skills_en
[52] The Distribution Network Development Plan (DNDP) is a strategic document mandated by the EU Directive 2019/944 to be developed, published, and updated biennially by European DSOs.

  - Design necessary tools, such as market platforms and energy management systems (EMSs), to enable flexibility and other demand side services in coordination with TSOs, DSOs, and market participants
- Artificial Intelligence (AI): Support the deployment of AI solutions in distribution management systems, enabling DSOs to optimise grid operations, predict energy demand, and improve customer service, including:
  - Integrate AI models in advanced distribution management systems (ADMS): e.g. for grid congestion, voltage control, load and weather forecasting etc.
  - Use AI to enhance security (and cybersecurity) of distribution network, e.g. forecasting extreme events
  - Support in deploying high-risk AI systems: testing and validation of AI systems, legal support and regulatory compliance
  - Use AI and digital solutions in grid connection procedures, for faster processing of connections where relevant

Other areas where digitalisation could improve efficiency of a DSO and of the distribution network and contribute to the expected impacts of the call, could also be in scope, for example grid planning, procurement, permitting, energy efficiency services, customer service etc.

To support DSOs in developing their Digitalisation Roadmaps, the following activities should be covered:

1. Proposals should describe the current state of the art of digitalisation of targeted DSOs (e.g. technological infrastructure, digital tools, skills, etc.) and seek a clear advancement beyond it, bridging the gaps between planning, operational technologies and information technologies.
2. Proposals should strengthen the capacity of DSO staff to plan, prioritise and implement digitalisation measures enabling them to acquire the necessary skills, knowledge and strategic insight across technical, economic, organisational and regulatory dimensions including procurement aspects, and to define context-specific digitalisation pathways.
3. Proposals should define capacity building activities and technical assistance services to DSOs, including targeted pilot projects to test the feasibility and value of proposed digital solutions. Networking, pairing and peer exchange could be used too.
4. Proposals should aim to reach a large number of DSOs in the targeted countries, seek to pool resources for DSOs with similar needs or in proximity, be ambitious in terms of number of trained participants and volume and depth of the training offer, with lasting effects and tailored to specific needs and national languages, as appropriate. Individual training could also be supported if needed.
5. Proposals should promote collaboration activities and knowledge sharing among DSOs and relevant stakeholders including but not limited to technology providers, regulations, customers and energy communities.

Proposals should support a substantial number of DSOs and work with follower/associated DSOs for which transfer of knowledge should be described and effectively provided during the project lifetime. The proposal should clearly explain and justify the choice of the DSOs and territories they intend to address. Cooperation of small DSOs operating in territorial proximity is encouraged. Participation of European / national / regional associations of DSO is encouraged. Applicants should

propose approaches that can be upscaled at national level or cross-border level with DSOs with similar conditions.

Proposals should clearly identify the targeted DSOs and demonstrate their involvement and commitment, for example through participation in the consortium or through specific and tailored letters of support at executive level. Proposals should also explain the content of the support to be provided and how the consortium will deliver this support on the ground.

Proposals are encouraged to explore synergies with the Large-Scale Partnership for the Digitalisation of the Energy System in the Pact for Skills (Renewables)[53] take into account the factors of success and review of existing academies, including Net-Zero Industry Academies[54], indicated in the Union of Skills communication.

Proposals must be submitted by at least 3 applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities) from 3 different eligible countries.

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of up to EUR 2 million would allow the specific objectives to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

Expected impact

Proposals should present the concrete results which will be delivered by the activities and demonstrate how these results will contribute to the topic-specific impacts. This demonstration should rely on a solid analysis of the current situation, realistic assumptions and baselines, and establish clear causality links between proposed activities, results and impacts.

In terms of qualitative impact, proposals under this topic should demonstrate how they will contribute to:

- Enhanced operational efficiency, resilience and flexibility of distribution networks through accelerated and fit-for-purpose digitalisation of DSOs
- Strengthened institutional and human capacity of DSOs, in particular small/local DSOs, to plan, implement and govern digital transformation in line with EU energy and digital policy frameworks
- Improved integration of DERs and demand-side measures and participation of active consumers.

In terms of quantitative impact, proposals should quantify their results and impacts using the indicators provided for the topic, when they are relevant for the proposed activities. Proposals are not expected to address all the listed impacts and indicators. The results and impacts should be quantified for the end of the project and for 5 years after the end of the project. The quantitative indicators for this topic include:

- Number of Digitalisation Roadmaps developed
- Number of Digitalisation Roadmaps consequently embedded in the DNDPs[55]
- Number of DSOs directly involved in trainings, workshops, etc.

[53] https://pact-for-skills.ec.europa.eu/about/industrial-ecosystems-and-partnerships/renewables_en

[54] See European Battery Academy, European Solar Academy and European Raw Materials Academy

[55] During or after the end of the project, depending on the DNDP timing for each DSO.

- Number of follower/associated DSOs indirectly involved in capacity building activities (e.g. through networking, pairing)
- Number of trainings activities, and personnel involved in them
- Investments in digitalisation triggered by the implementation of investment plans developed thanks to the project (cumulative, in million Euro).

Proposals should also provide indicators which are specific to their proposed activities.

Proposals should also quantify their impacts related to the following common indicators for the LIFE Clean Energy Transition sub-programme:

- Primary energy savings triggered by the project in GWh/year
- Final energy savings triggered by the project in GWh/year
- Renewable energy generation triggered by the project (in GWh/year)
- Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (in tCO2-eq/year)
- Investments in sustainable energy (energy efficiency and renewable energy) triggered by the project (cumulative, in million Euro).

Funding rate

Other Action Grants (OAGs) — 95%

Attracting private finance for sustainable energy

LIFE-2026-CET-PRIVAFIN: Crowding in private finance

Objectives

The topic aims to increase the amount of private finance allocated to energy efficiency and renewable energy sources by establishing dedicated financing schemes.

Significant investments in energy efficiency and renewables need to be mobilised to achieve the ambition set by the Energy Efficiency Directive, the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive, the Renewable Energy Directive, the Clean Industrial Deal and the Affordable Energy Action Plan, and the objective to reduce EU dependence on fossil fuel imports set out in the REPowerEU Plan[56]. In order to meet the required level of investments, it is necessary to progressively maximise the mobilisation of private capital, using public funds as a catalyst, and to put in place an enabling regulatory framework. This is a central objective of the recently established European Energy Efficiency Financing Coalition[57], as well as the recently published Commission Recommendation on unlocking private investment in energy efficiency[58].

In addition, the revised Energy Efficiency Directive and Energy Performance of Buildings Directive aim to increase the cost-effectiveness of public funding and the mobilisation of private investments in energy efficiency measures, including by promoting dedicated financing mechanisms. National Energy and Climate Plans provide a solid framework for Member States to evaluate and report on investment

[56] Cf. Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on Energy Efficiency financing in Europe. An assessment of public spending for energy efficiency and the energy performance of buildings, COM/2026/118 final
[57] https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/funding-and-financing/european-energy-efficiency-financing-coalition_en
[58] Commission Recommendation (EU) 2026/537

needs and gaps to achieve their 2030 national energy and climate targets, including regarding the mobilisation of private investments.

While significant public sector expenditure is allocated to leverage private finance for energy efficiency and renewables (e.g. through the InvestEU facility), most private investors still view this type of investments as risky, complex and/or insufficiently profitable. This is due to the limited availability of investment opportunities which comply with the requirements of financial institutions in terms of size, scale, standardisation and transaction costs.

There is a need to set up and roll-out private financing schemes which can be expanded and/or replicated at scale, and contribute to the national strategies to achieve the 2030 energy efficiency targets and the building renovation policy objectives. These schemes have to be adapted to the specificities of energy efficiency investment profiles, as well as those of renewables, in buildings, SMEs, district heating and other relevant sectors.

The financing schemes may be initiated by private sector stakeholders or local and regional authorities, as well as other types of actors; they need to work with and use available public funds as a catalyst and/or in blended approaches. The topic aims in particular to stimulate synergies and develop long-term partnerships between financial institutions and energy services market operators.

The EU is facing important increases in energy prices, driven by market volatility and exacerbated by its dependence on imported fossil fuels. A key priority for the EU is to strengthen the resilience of its energy system vis-a-vis geopolitical crises impacting the global energy market. Therefore, applicants under this topic are invited, where possible, to develop and implement long-term structural sustainable and energy efficiency measures to enhance EU energy system resilience against future crises, in coherence with short-term energy relief measures needed to respond to the current shock on the global energy markets.

Scope

Proposals should set up a financing scheme leveraging private finance for investments in energy efficiency, potentially combined with renewables and energy storage.

The financing scheme should be established in at least 1 eligible country under the LIFE programme, in order to ensure the development of a sound and robust investment pipeline.

The financing scheme should be operational by the end of the project, with credible access to financing sources and a prospective pipeline of investments. The related investments may be implemented after project completion, but proposals are expected to pilot test the financing scheme during the project time.

Proposals can build on and/or upscale financing schemes successfully tested previously, which should be documented as relevant. The financing schemes can involve, for example but are not limited to:

- Equity and debt, potentially combined with non-reimbursable grants ("blending"), in particular for low-income households or SMEs
- Guarantees, risk-sharing, insurance or other de-risking instruments
- Energy services such as energy performance contracting, efficiency as a service, and variants thereof, including the integration of demand-side flexibility, if the service includes the provision of finance for the investments

- White certificates schemes, energy efficiency auctions, and other competitive bidding mechanisms and market-based instruments favouring a cost-efficient and competitive allocations of funding to energy efficiency improvements
- On-bill, on-tax and building-based financing, where the debt is attached to the energy meter or the building rather than the household or company
- Schemes complementing, with a dedicated financing component, already existing local and regional technical assistance facilities, in particular integrated home renovation services
- Schemes targeting the secondary market, including refinancing mechanisms, specialised securitisation vehicles and green bond schemes
- Local investment structures, including citizen financing (e.g. crowdfunding) for energy efficiency
- Market-based instruments relevant for sustainable energy (e.g. carbon finance instruments, energy efficiency obligations, etc.)
- Brokering, aggregation or clearing houses, which facilitate matching of demand and supply of sustainable energy finance.

Proposals should take into account all the following elements:

- Establish an operational financing scheme supporting investments in energy efficiency, potentially combined with renewables and energy storage, in at least 1 eligible country. Proposals only addressing renewable energy, renewable fuel switch, and/or energy storage without addressing energy efficiency will be judged out of scope.
- Address the provision of finance as well as ensure the availability of demand in the form of a project pipeline complying with the requirements of the scheme, in particular at regional and national level. The pipeline does not need to be originated by the proposed activities.
- Define the targeted region(s) and sector(s) and clearly demonstrate the business case and financial viability of the proposed scheme (including e.g. market analysis, investment sizes targeted, transaction and management costs, expected energy/cost savings and other returns, etc.).
- Plan replication and/or rollout of the scheme envisaged beyond the region(s) targeted for the establishment, including the analysis of legal and market conditions for replication.
- Demonstrate support of the targeted stakeholder groups and present in a detailed manner how they will be involved throughout the project.
- Demonstrate the additionality and/or innovation of the proposed financing scheme compared to current market practices in the targeted sector(s) and region(s).
- Where relevant, demonstrate complementarity to available public funds, notably under the EU Cohesion funds in view of the preparation of the multiannual financial framework 2028-2034. Applicants should explain how they build on existing funding programmes and initiatives relevant for the targeted region/sector, in particular related to one-stop shops and project development assistance. If public funding is involved in the proposed financing scheme, proposals should demonstrate support from the relevant managing authorities.
- Coordinate with and potentially participate in the national hubs of the European Energy Efficiency Financing Coalition, when relevant.

Proposals may be submitted by a single applicant or by applicants from a single eligible country.

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of up to EUR 1.5 million would allow the specific objectives to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

Expected impact

Proposals should present the concrete results which will be delivered by the activities and demonstrate how these results will contribute to the topic-specific impacts. This demonstration should rely on a solid analysis of the current situation, realistic assumptions and baselines, and establish clear causality links between activities, results and impacts.

In terms of qualitative impact, proposals under this topic should demonstrate how they will contribute to the following outcomes, as relevant:

- delivering financing schemes that are operational and ready to finance investments, with credible access to financing sources and a prospective pipeline of investments
- increasing the investibility of energy efficiency projects (potentially combined with renewable energy and energy storage) for private financing sources
- accelerating investments in energy efficiency.

In terms of quantitative impact, proposals should quantify their results and impacts using the indicators provided for the topic, when they are relevant for the proposed activities. Proposals are not expected to address all the listed impacts and indicators. The results and impacts should be quantified for the end of the project and for 5 years after the end of the project. The quantitative indicators for this topic include:

- Number of investment projects and volume of investments processed during the project (i.e. pilot testing phase) and expected to be financed by the financing scheme in the next 5 years; the projection after the project needs to be justified in detail based on the proposed activities and a detailed market analysis
- Number of investors and project developers using the financing scheme
- Investments in sustainable energy (energy efficiency and renewable energy) triggered by the project (cumulative, in million Euro)
- Average % of primary energy savings targeted by investment projects

Proposals should also provide indicators which are specific to their proposed activities.

Proposals should also quantify their impacts related to the following common indicators for the LIFE Clean Energy Transition sub-programme:

- Primary energy savings triggered by the project in GWh/year
- Final energy savings triggered by the project in GWh/year
- Renewable energy generation triggered by the project (in GWh/year)
- Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (in tCO_2-eq/year).

Funding rate

Other Action Grants (OAGs) — 95%

Supporting the development of local and regional clean energy investment projects

LIFE-2026-CET-OSS: One-Stop-Shops - Integrated services for clean energy transition in private buildings

Objectives

Achieving the EU target of a climate-neutral, resource-efficient and prosperous economy by 2050 requires the rapid implementation of ambitious measures to reduce energy consumption and expand renewable-based heating and cooling systems. However, private building owners often lack the capacity and resources to implement complex sustainable energy improvements. At the same time, developers face fragmented demand, high delivery costs, and limited access to appropriate financing.

This topic supports the creation or replication of One-Stop Shops (OSS) for the clean energy transition in private buildings, in line with the Energy Efficiency Directive[59], the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive[60], and the Commission Recommendation on one-stop shops[61].

The EU is facing important increases in energy prices, driven by market volatility and exacerbated by its dependence on imported fossil fuels. A key priority for the EU is to strengthen the resilience of its energy system vis-a-vis geopolitical crises impacting the global energy market. Therefore, applicants under this topic are invited, where possible, to develop and implement long-term structural sustainable and energy efficiency measures to enhance EU energy system resilience against future crises, in coherence with short-term energy relief measures needed to respond to the current shock on the global energy markets.

Scope

The topic supports the establishment of One-Stop Shops delivering integrated services for clean energy transition in one of the three following market segments:

1. residential buildings owned by a physical person (owner-occupied or rental housing)
2. or residential buildings owned by a professional landlord
3. or commercial tertiary buildings, in particular occupied by SMEs.

While cross-cutting interventions may be considered, for example addressing buildings combining owner-occupied and rented units, private and social housing, or residential and commercial premises (typically located on the ground floor), proposals are expected to focus *primarily* on only one of the three target market segments above, which must be clearly specified in the proposal introduction.

The OSS services to be developed should provide end-to-end support, covering the entire "customer journey" for the preparation and implementation of clean energy transition works[62]. Proposals should therefore ensure that proactive and comprehensive support is available across ALL of the following areas:

- technical assessment and renovation design;

[59] Directive EU/2023/1791 art.22
[60] Directive EU/2024/1275 art.18
[61] Commission Recommendation (EU) 2026/536
[62] Clarification of the "customer journey" concept in housing refurbishment can be found in the annex to Commission Recommendation (EU) 2026/536

- selection of qualified professionals and contractors;
- contracting and coordination of works;
- facilitation and/or provision of financing solutions (e.g. loans);
- supervision of works, performance verification and quality assurance.

Proposals are not considered relevant if they only provide generic information or diagnostics, if they fail to offer operational support for contracting and implementing renovation works, or if they rely mainly on online platforms without adequate on-site interaction.

To be considered relevant, proposals should convincingly address ALL of the following requirements:

- Proposals should establish OSS services that reduce complexity and simplify decision-making. Through an effective combination of online and in-person support, these services should trigger action and stimulate investment in sustainable energy. They should connect key actors across value chains, improve access to support measures, and build trust through clear accountability mechanisms, including robust quality assurance.
- Proposals should clearly explain how the proposed services will be implemented and tested through pilot activities, that will necessarily trigger first investments, strengthen organisational capacity, standardise processes, reduce costs and delivery times, and ensure price transparency. Applicants should clearly define and justify the targeted territories or sectors, including a well-structured segmentation and a quantified estimate of potential users.
- Proposals should explicitly provide a precise description of their starting point, and demonstrate a nuanced understanding of comparable initiatives, especially within their national context(s).
- In particular, proposals should explain the current national implementation status of the EED and EPBD articles relating to One-Stop Shops in the targeted Member State(s). They should also clarify how the proposed initiative fits within this framework and demonstrate clear added value beyond existing or planned legal compliance. Actions limited to compliance with national regulations resulting from the transposition of the EED and EPBD articles on OSS are not considered relevant.
- Proposals should articulate a clear and coherent service concept and show convincingly that the proposed approach meets the specific needs of the targeted territory(ies), and represents a meaningful improvement over current practice. Proposals should specify the conditions for accessing support (a permanent physical presence is not required, and support may also consider, for example, temporary counters, mobile services, or direct on-site consultations).
- Proposals should build upon, or establish, dedicated structures (either legal entities or organisational consortia) capable of delivering end-to-end renovation services, either directly or through complementary partnerships with different providers, with the explicit capacity to deliver some services which are of commercial nature. Services may be delivered by public or private entities, on either a not-for-profit or for-profit basis. Strategic partnerships, for example with construction companies or financial institutions, and careful attention to contractual liabilities and governance issues (e.g. in co-owned properties) are strongly encouraged.
- Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the integrated services will develop and ultimately operate on sustainable business models, that minimise

reliance on public funding, thereby allowing large-scale deployment and facilitating possible replication.

Applicants are expected to draw on existing information and resources provided by the EU Directives, Commission Recommendation, and the EU-PEERS[63] project. Proposals focused on residential buildings must include plans to cooperate with the EU-PEERS community and to share relevant information and data, including practical challenges and good practices.

The Commission will prioritise proposals that demonstrate innovative approaches to effectively address the objectives, and/or that address regions where integrated home renovation services remain underdeveloped. The Commission will also prioritise proposals that convincingly demonstrate how the specifics of their approach will enable the delivery of ambitious energy renovations.

Proposals may be submitted by a single applicant or by applicants from a single eligible country.

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of up to EUR 1.5 million would allow the specific objectives to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

For proposals addressing mostly the development of a financing offer for home renovation, please consider applying under the topic LIFE-2026-CET-PRIVAFIN.

For proposals primarily addressing energy poor households that require support beyond One-Stop Shop approaches, please consider applying under the topic LIFE-2026-CET-ENERPOV.

Expected impact

Proposals should present the concrete results which will be delivered by the activities and demonstrate how these results will contribute to the topic-specific impacts. This demonstration should rely on a solid analysis of the current situation, realistic assumptions and baselines, and establish clear causality links between activities, results and impacts.

In terms of qualitative impact, proposals under this topic should demonstrate how they will contribute to the following outcomes:

- Integrated services fully implemented, operational and tested before the end of the project evidenced, for example, by established infrastructure, formalised partnerships, recruited staff, and launched outreach activities. During a pilot phase, proposals must trigger the first investments that validate the service concept, with the understanding that actual delivery at the worksites, comprehensive scaling of activities and subsequent investments will continue beyond the project's completion.

- Strong and trustworthy partnerships with local actors, such as SMEs, architects, engineers, energy service companies (ESCOs), financial institutions, chambers of commerce, professional associations, local and regional authorities, energy agencies, and civil society organisations. Evidence may

[63] The EU-PEERS project (see https://eu-peers.eu) provides a community platform for EU practitioners involved in integrated home renovation services. It offers operational guidance, best practice examples, strategic analysis, and capacity-building resources to support the establishment and development of such services.

include, for example, signed commitment charters, collaboration agreements, or framework contracts.

- Increased awareness and trust among end-users, evidenced by clear accountability mechanisms such as, for example, comprehensive quality assurance mechanisms and/or dedicated consumer protection policies
- Clear prospects for economically viable business models that minimise reliance on public subsidies to cover operating costs evidenced, for example, by the identification of robust revenue streams and the clear definition of strategic actions to approach long-term financial independence
- Public availability of data and guidance to support replication by other market actors, including clear information on the type of data provided (e.g. average time required for support at each stage of the renovation journey, average conversion rates, typical profiles of the professionals involved, etc.), the intended users, and the conditions for access.

In terms of quantitative impact, proposals should quantify their results and impacts using the indicators provided for the topic, when they are relevant for the proposed activities. Proposals are not expected to address all the listed impacts and indicators. The results and impacts should be quantified for the end of the project and for 5 years after the end of the project. The quantitative indicators for this topic include:

- Number of building units credibly expected to benefit from OSS services, based on the territorial scope and justified service availability
- Amount of in-person support made available to building owners (realistically aligned with other quantified impacts), measured in full-time equivalent staff
- Number of initial contacts (in number of building owners) made by the One-Stop Shop
- Number of on-site visits conducted (in number of building units, differentiated by category where relevant)
- Number of investment projects effectively implemented (in number of building units, differentiated per categories if relevant)
- Average global conversion rate (in %) from initial contacts to completed investments, demonstrating the value of the services offered
- Average percentage of energy savings per investment project (in %, differentiated per categories if relevant).

Proposals should also provide indicators which are specific to their proposed activities.

All proposals must also quantify their contribution to the common indicators of the LIFE Clean Energy Transition sub-programme:

- Primary energy savings triggered by the project (in GWh/year)
- Final energy savings triggered by the project (in GWh/year)
- Renewable energy generation triggered by the project (in GWh/year)
- Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (in t CO2-eq/year)
- Investments in sustainable energy (energy efficiency and renewable energy) triggered by the project (cumulative, in million Euro).

Funding rate

Other Action Grants (OAGs) — 95%

LIFE-2026-CET-PDA: Project Development Assistance for sustainable energy investments

Objectives

Project Development Assistance (PDA) offers technical assistance to convert sustainable energy project ideas into actual investments. It supports public and private project developers in every step of the way to deliver sustainable energy investments of ambition and scale.

Significant investments in sustainable energy need to be mobilised to achieve the EU's energy and climate targets, and to support EU competitiveness and energy independence. In order to meet the required level of investments, it is necessary to progressively maximise the mobilisation of private capital, using public funds as a catalyst. PDA projects contribute significantly to the implementation of the Energy Efficiency Directive, Energy Performance of Buildings Directive, Renewable Energy Directive, and the Clean Industrial Deal[64] and Affordable Energy Action Plan[65], and will help pave the way for a decarbonised and clean energy system. PDA actions significantly contribute to accelerating the clean energy transition, including energy independence, by supporting the phase out of EU fossil fuel imports from Russia in line with the REPowerEU roadmap[66] and the Green Deal Investment Plan[67], and to EU competitiveness by stimulating market demand for Net-Zero technologies and assisting in their uptake.

Overall, PDA projects are expected to increase the cost-effectiveness of EU and national public budgetary resources by developing ready-to-finance projects, which are, *inter alia*, bankable and/or mobilise private investments (as appropriate in the specific project context).

A range of innovative solutions with regard to financing and investment mobilisation were developed in PDA projects under LIFE CET and Horizon 2020 which helped to accelerate investment, shift market boundaries, overcome legal and structural barriers, improve organisational structures and demonstrate practical application of inspiring solutions, replicable in other cities and regions throughout the EU. These projects could serve as a reference for further PDA projects.

PDA projects can also aim to implement investment concepts developed under the European City Facility[68], or under the LIFE CET support to heating and cooling networks and industrial clusters, amongst other.

The EU is facing important increases in energy prices, driven by market volatility and exacerbated by its dependence on imported fossil fuels. A key priority for the EU is to strengthen the resilience of its energy system vis-a-vis geopolitical crises impacting the global energy market. Therefore, applicants under this topic are invited, where possible, to develop and implement long-term structural sustainable and energy efficiency measures to enhance EU energy system resilience against future crises, in coherence with short-term energy relief measures needed to respond to the current shock on the global energy markets.

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[64] https://commission.europa.eu/topics/competitiveness/clean-industrial-deal_en
[65] COM/2025/79 final
[66] COM(2025) 440 final/2
[67] The European Green Deal Investment Plan and Just Transition Mechanism explained
[68] https://www.eucityfacility.eu/

Scope

Project Development Assistance (PDA) will support project promoters in preparing and launching investment pipelines of sustainable energy projects, i.e. energy efficiency and/or renewable energy projects. This topic aims to provide and build technical, economic and legal skills and expertise for project developers needed for the successful project development and implementation. Activities can include project bundling, technical studies, energy audits, assessing financing options, legal advice, tendering procedure preparation, outreach and engagement etc.

Proposals for this topic can be submitted by public or private project promoters such as public authorities or their groupings, public/private infrastructure operators and bodies, energy agencies, energy service companies, retail chains, large property owners, services or industry.

PDA projects must lead to the actual launch of sustainable energy investments within the project duration, demonstrating a leverage factor of at least 15 compared to the technical assistance grant (or at least 10 for projects targeting exclusively investments in residential buildings). In this context, proposals need to identify the initially envisaged investment pipeline.

Proposals should target one or more of the following sectors:

Buildings:

- Existing residential buildings, including the rental sector, social housing, or district-level renovation approaches
- Existing non-residential buildings, such as public buildings, hospitals, academies, defence facilities or commercial buildings

Proposals including support for construction of new buildings are not within the scope.

Local energy and other infrastructures:

- Decarbonisation and modernisation of existing district heating/cooling networks, including the extension of existing networks provided that the extended networks are fully based on low-temperature renewable energy or waste heat
- Digitalisation and modernisation of existing local electricity grids focussing on energy efficiency improvements, renewable energy deployment, electrification of energy demand, including in industry, and deployment of energy flexibility solutions
- Decarbonisation and energy efficiency improvements in existing public infrastructure such as water/wastewater services

Proposals addressing local energy infrastructures are in the scope of the topic only if they clearly demonstrate the necessity of intervention to foster energy efficiency improvements and renewable energy deployment in line with the objectives of the LIFE Clean Energy Transition sub-programme.

Industry:

- Industry, businesses and services, including SMEs or industrial clusters, clearly advancing beyond business-as-usual approaches in terms of organisational and financial innovation.

Renewables:

- Decentralised renewable electricity production and other renewable energy production directly replacing solid and/or fossil fuel use in targeted end-use

sectors, clearly advancing beyond business-as-usual approaches in terms of organisational and financial innovation. Proposals aiming to implement innovative technological solutions, i.e. solutions not already fully commercially available on the market, are not within the scope.

Proposals should demonstrate a clear showcase dimension in delivering innovative solutions for accelerating sustainable energy investments across Europe, as regards

- Organisational innovation regarding the mobilisation and/or structuring of the investment programme, such as setting up facilitation structures, project development units, one-stop-shops, aggregation and bundling/pooling approaches, or efficient procurement procedures for large-scale portfolios of (mixed) assets; and/or
- Financial engineering tailored to the specific project context, with a particular focus on leveraging private investment including blending public with private financing or improved combination of existing funds, whenever appropriate. This could include Energy Performance Contracting (EPC), dedicated financial instruments, on-bill and on-tax payment schemes, community-based financing schemes etc.

Proposals should aim for high ambition levels, including e.g., as relevant and appropriate in the project context, with regard to the investments and/or leverage envisaged, innovation, the sector(s) and location(s) addressed, and/or the level of energy savings and decarbonisation targeted (*inter alia* by focusing on energy efficiency interventions such as deep renovation, nearly zero-energy buildings (nZEB) or zero-emission buildings (ZEB), including building-integrated renewables, positive energy buildings or districts and/or highly energy efficient infrastructure).

Proposals should convince regarding the potential to actually launch the investments during the project duration. In this context, proposals should clearly identify the starting point of their activities and investments and, if applicable, clarify how they are building on and are additional to related past or ongoing activities. Moreover, proposals should provide an adequate overview of the initially envisaged investment pipeline, and specify the needs to be addressed, including e.g. a related market/barrier analysis, the financial and organisational approaches/options to be further investigated and operationalised during the project duration and the engagement of key stakeholders, ex-ante and/or during the project duration (including financial stakeholders).

Proposals may be submitted by a single applicant or by applicants from a single eligible country.

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU in a range of EUR 1 to 1.5 million would allow the specific objectives to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

For proposals focused on supporting the clean energy transition of European industries and businesses, please consider applying under the topic LIFE-2026-CET-INDUSTRY.

For proposals focused on supporting the development of integrated services for clean energy transition in private buildings, please consider applying under the topic LIFE-2026-CET-OSS.

Expected impact

Proposals should present the concrete results which will be delivered by the activities, and demonstrate how these results will contribute to the topic-specific impacts. This demonstration should include a detailed analysis of the starting point and a set of well-substantiated assumptions, and establish clear causality links between the results and the expected impact.

PDA proposals should result in the actual launch of an energy efficiency and/or renewable energy investment programme, as well as the delivery of an innovative organisational approach and/or financing solution for sustainable energy investment projects.

Proposals should demonstrate that every million EUR of EU support will result in at least EUR 15 million of investments in sustainable energy launched during the project duration (or at least EUR 10 million for projects targeting exclusively investments in residential buildings). The evidence in form of signed work or investment contracts, or a similar convincing proof, needs to be clearly identified in the proposal, and must be submitted as part of the deliverables of the project. In case a similar convincing proof is proposed, it should be clearly explained in the specific investment context; a general (contractual) access to finance alone is not considered a sufficiently convincing proof for the actual investment launch. Proposals should also contribute to increased skills and capacity to deliver further sustainable energy investments.

Proposals should quantify their results and impacts using the indicators provided for the topic, when they are relevant for the proposed activities. The results and impacts should be quantified for the end of the project and for 5 years after the end of the project. The quantitative indicators for this topic include:

- Investments in sustainable energy (energy efficiency and renewable energy) launched and evidenced by the end of the project
- Ratio of sustainable energy investments launched to EU support requested (leverage factor)
- Number of staff with increased skills within project organisations
- Number of organisations with increased capacity to deliver sustainable energy investments and/or tailored organisational structures
- Number of jobs directly and indirectly created.

Proposals should also provide indicators which are specific to their proposed activities.

All proposals submitted under this topic should also quantify their impacts related to the following common indicators for the LIFE Clean Energy Transition sub-programme:

- Primary energy savings triggered by the project (in GWh/year)
- Final energy savings triggered by the project (in GWh/year)
- Renewable energy generation triggered by the project (in GWh/year)
- Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (in tCO_2-eq/year)
- Investments in sustainable energy (energy efficiency and renewable energy) triggered by the project (cumulative, in million Euro)

Funding rate

Other Action Grants (OAGs) — 95%

LIFE-2026-CET-EMPOWER: Scaling up smart and clean energy solutions for affordability in EU cities

Objectives

This topic aims to set up the EmpowerEUcities support initiative to accelerate the roll-out of smart distributed energy solutions that help to provide tangible economic benefits for citizens in European cities.

The recently published Citizens Energy Package communication[69] includes an action point aimed at boosting the use of clean and energy efficient technologies that will contribute to improving energy affordability for European citizens, amongst others by facilitating local consumption and production of renewable energy. Many successful solutions have been developed and demonstrated under EU-funded programmes such as Horizon Europe, LIFE Clean Energy Transition, and the Innovation Fund.

EmpowerEUcities focuses on scaling up demonstrated solutions, which can refer to a) expanding or replicating within the same local authority a solution already successfully piloted in that city; or b) replicating in a local authority a solution successfully piloted in another city. The gap between demonstration and market deployment is often due to a lack of capacity in the local context, lack of cooperation amongst the necessary partners (such as local authorities, local/regional energy agencies, system operators, communities and citizens, financial actors, amongst others) and lack of fit-for-purpose governance models that would facilitate the financial, regulatory, organisational and social environment needed for the implementation of smart energy solutions.

EmpowerEUcities will deliver scale-up roadmaps agreed between local authorities and relevant stakeholders such as system operators, technology and/or service providers, financiers, and community actors to translate the solutions demonstrated under EU programmes (Horizon Europe, Innovation Fund) into full-scale, market-ready infrastructure, delivering direct benefits to EU citizens.

EmpowerEUcities builds on the strengths and expertise of other EU city initiatives, in particular the Smart Cities & Communities Lighthouse Programme and Scalable Cities, and strengthens the implementation arm of the Covenant of Mayors to help cities deliver on their 2030 and 2050 political commitments through the implementation of actions identified in their climate and energy action plans.

The EU is facing important increases in energy prices, driven by market volatility and exacerbated by its dependence on imported fossil fuels. A key priority for the EU is to strengthen the resilience of its energy system vis-a-vis geopolitical crises impacting the global energy market. Therefore, applicants under this topic are invited, where possible, to develop and implement long-term structural sustainable and energy efficiency measures to enhance EU energy system resilience against future crises, in coherence with short-term energy relief measures needed to respond to the current shock on the global energy markets.

Scope

Under this topic, one proposal will be selected to set up and manage an integrated initiative which offers capacity building and financial support for local administrations and relevant stakeholders to plan, finance, implement, manage and monitor specific smart, clean and energy efficient energy solutions that contribute to improving energy affordability for European citizens, amongst others by facilitating local consumption

[69] COM/2026/115 final

and production of renewable energy. The activities should include capacity building and peer-to-peer learning, the delivery of lump sum grants to local authorities and monitoring, capitalisation and communication.

Requirements regarding capacity building activities

The capacity building support should target local authorities and relevant stakeholders, focusing on:

- The identification of the smart solutions relevant for their needs, by mobilising existing resources available at EU level (e.g. through Horizon Europe projects or Scalable Cities)
- How to develop a scale-up roadmap once they receive the lump sum grant (see below), in order to use the financial support in the most effective manner and guide them in the implementation phase of the roadmap.

The capacity building activities should also include opportunities for exchange of best practices, including potentially at national level, with a view to remove existing barriers and enable the uptake and efficient operationalisation of the roadmaps. These activities are addressed to local authorities and their stakeholders (system operators, service providers, consultants, citizens and communities, etc.) and could include for instance site visits, workshops, transfer of actionable approaches and templates, masterclasses, etc. A call for expert cities may be considered for the purposes of peer-to-peer/mentorship matchmaking.

Requirements regarding the awarding and management of the lump sum grants

- Lump sum grants should represent around 70% of the total budget of the proposal. The maximum value for a lump sum grant is EUR 60,000; a minimum of two calls for proposals should be organised by the awarded consortium. In accordance with the LIFE-2026-CET call conditions on financial support to third parties, applicants should clearly specify the type of activities and, in particular, the final deliverable (the scale-up roadmap), for which a third party may receive financial support. The process and criteria for allocation of financial support to third parties need to conform to EU standards concerning transparency, equal treatment, conflict of interest and confidentiality. The final award criteria for the granting of lump sums and the number of calls should be agreed with and validated by CINEA.
- Proposals should explain in detail how they intend to manage the publication and promotion of calls for proposals, the submission and evaluation of proposals, the technical monitoring of the lump-sum grants and the distribution of funds in accordance with EU funding requirements. They should demonstrate that they are able to select the most cost-efficient and appropriate applications considering, among other things, the relevance and maturity of the concept, the nature and impact of the solution/intervention considered, the need for intervention, involvement from relevant stakeholders, etc.
- Proposals should detail how they will reach out to potential applicants and support them to prepare applications.

Requirements for local authorities applying for lump sum grants

- In order to apply for a lump sum grant, local authorities should describe the smart solution(s) they intend to address, their technological readiness level, the type of financial solutions envisaged and the governance to implement the concept as per the roadmap.

- Additionally, they should clarify existing planning processes and resources and demonstrate a substantial potential for implementation of the solution in the context targeted.
- A politically approved Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP), or equivalent, is a pre-requisite to apply for funding.
- Furthermore, they need to propose a convincing strategy to engage key stakeholders in technical, financial and operational areas, as well as citizens, and commit to a monitoring of implementation for at least 1 year.
- Local authorities must be located in a LIFE eligible country.

Requirements for a scale-up roadmap

- A roadmap should focus on a specific smart solution, or a set of solutions, which should be identified in the application to the lump-sum grant.
- Smart solutions to be implemented under the scale-up roadmaps should be based on successful demonstration projects in smart, clean and energy efficient energy solutions that contribute to improving energy affordability for European citizens, amongst others by facilitating local consumption and production of renewable energy. The solutions could cover, amongst others, energy sharing, community-scale storage and other storage solutions, bi-directional EV charging infrastructure, energy management systems, heating and cooling systems, and micro-grids. Other relevant focus areas may be considered by EmpowerEUCities. The specific focus will be decided in agreement with CINEA.
- The consortium should prepare a standardised approach for the development of the scale-up roadmaps, including, inter alia, the following elements:
    - Pre-feasibility analysis for the implementation of the specific smart solution, including technical, legal and financial aspects
    - Identification of the different steps required to implement the selected solution, such as inventories, engineering, procurement, financing.
    - Detailed planning and analysis of internal resources needed for implementation
    - Detailed analysis of the role of local stakeholders.
- The roadmaps should be undersigned at executive level by the local stakeholders relevant for its implementation.
- The roadmaps should demonstrate how the supported solution(s) delivers tangible economic benefits for local residents and communities, for instance in terms of savings on the energy bills of consumers or revenues generated for citizens.

Monitoring, capitalisation and dissemination

EmpowerEUcities should establish an appropriate framework for comprehensive monitoring, analysis, capitalisation, communication and dissemination of results and success stories, notably on the monitoring of commitments signed/achieved, solutions to be implemented and expected impacts of the roadmaps (see section 'expected impacts' below).

Expectations regarding the consortium

The consortium applying to implement EmpowerEUcities should be deeply rooted in municipal sustainable energy/climate planning and investments. Applicants should demonstrate that they are able to mobilise a critical mass of cities/municipalities or their groupings and have a sound and inclusive outreach strategy to cities and municipalities across Europe, for instance through cooperation with city networks such as the EU Covenant of Mayors.

The consortium should demonstrate expertise on the implementation of smart energy solutions at local level, including on the legal, social and financial aspects, and on the implementation of funding mechanisms in line with EU requirements (call for proposals, awarding, management and monitoring).

Proposals must be submitted by at least 3 applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities) from 3 different eligible countries.

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of up to EUR 6 million would allow the specific objectives to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

Expected impact

Proposals should present the concrete results which will be delivered by the activities and demonstrate how these results will contribute to the topic-specific impacts. This demonstration should rely on a solid analysis of the current situation, realistic assumptions and baselines, and establish clear causality links between activities, results and impacts.

In terms of qualitative impact, proposals under this topic should demonstrate how they will contribute to empower local ecosystems to bring to scale smart, clean and energy efficient energy solutions that contribute to improving energy affordability for European citizens, amongst others by facilitating local consumption and production of renewable energy.

In terms of quantitative impact, proposals should quantify their results and impacts using the indicators provided for the topic, when they are relevant for the proposed activities. The results and impacts should be quantified for the end of the project and for 5 years after the end of the project. The quantitative indicators for this topic include:

- Number of scale-up roadmaps developed and finalised, in line with the requirements
- Number of smart local energy solutions (projected to be) implemented
- Number of local authorities and stakeholders supported by EmpowerEUcities
- Number of peer-to-peer/capacity building activities
- Number of local authority staff and stakeholders with increased capacity on the planning, design and implementation of smart local energy solutions
- Number of citizens involved in the activities and Scale-Up Roadmaps

Proposals should also provide indicators which are specific to their proposed activities.

Proposals should also quantify their impacts related to the following common indicators for the LIFE Clean Energy Transition sub-programme:

- Investments in sustainable energy (energy efficiency and small-scale renewables) triggered by the project (cumulative, in million Euro)

- Primary energy savings triggered by the project (GWh/year)
- Renewable energy generation triggered by the project (GWh/year)
- Reduction of greenhouse gases emissions (in tCO_2-eq/year).

Funding rate

Other Action Grants (OAGs) — 95%

Involving and empowering citizens in the clean energy transition

LIFE-2026-CET-ENERPOV: Alleviating household energy poverty in Europe

Objectives

European households continue to spend a high share of their income on energy, leading to higher rates of energy poverty[70] and negatively affecting living conditions, well-being and health. Most recent estimates suggest that 9.2% of Europeans are unable to keep their homes adequately warm[71]. Higher energy prices, combined with low incomes and poor energy efficiency of buildings and appliances, are root causes of energy poverty. Moreover, the increased occurrence of extreme summer heatwaves in recent years is further exacerbating the challenges faced by energy poor households and increasing household cooling needs, with data indicating that over 20% of European households were unable to keep their dwelling comfortably cool during the summer[72] ('summer energy poverty'[73]). In addition to its causal multidimensionality, energy poverty cuts across different policy sectors beyond energy, such as health, housing and social policy, requiring coordinated, holistic efforts at all governance levels, and involving different sectoral actors.

The European Green Deal[74] sets out to ensure an energy transition that is socially just and inclusive. In accordance with the Fit for 55 package, and in particular the recast Energy Efficiency Directive (EED)[75], Member States shall take appropriate measures to empower and protect energy poor people and implement energy efficiency improvement measures as a priority among people affected by energy poverty, vulnerable customers, people in low-income households and, where applicable, people living in social housing. In addition, the revised EPBD[76] requires Member States to target the least efficient building stock first in line with the "worst first principle" and the EED (recast) underlines the need to address the split incentive dilemma and remove barriers to energy efficiency measures in multi-owner properties. The social dimension of the Energy Union is further strengthened in the Citizens Energy

[70] In line with Article 2(52) of the EED (recast), 'energy poverty' means a household's lack of access to essential energy services, where such services provide basic levels and decent standards of living and health, including adequate heating, hot water, cooling, lighting, and energy to power appliances, in the relevant national context, existing national social policy and other relevant national policies, caused by a combination of factors, including at least non-affordability, insufficient disposable income, high energy expenditure and poor energy efficiency of homes.
[71] Eurostat, June 2025.
[72] EU-SILC, 2023.
[73] For the purposes of this topic, summer energy poverty refers to the inability of households to afford or access adequate cooling to maintain thermal comfort during extreme heat.
[74] COM(2019) 640 final, including the Renovation Wave Strategy and Commission Recommendation (EU) 2020/1563 of 14 October 2020 on energy poverty.
[75] Directive (EU) 2023/1791
[76] Directive (EU) 2024/1275

Package[77] through more ambitious commitments to reduce energy poverty and build on the implementation of the Fit for 55 package. To ensure more coordinated action on energy poverty, the EC has also published guidance on the implementation of EED requirements[78], and an EC Recommendation on Energy Poverty and accompanying Staff Working Document further set out a series of measures and policies that can be adopted[79].

In this context, increasing the uptake of building renovation measures, including cooling solutions, can bring significant long-term benefits to energy poor households, and lead to lower energy bills, improved living conditions and health, as well as improving social inclusion. Efforts should focus on offering support to overcome barriers to the uptake of renovation measures in residential multi-apartment buildings requiring coordinated action amongst homeowners and tenants, as well as supporting relevant actors, including diverse public authorities, in designing longer-term strategies and coordination frameworks to mitigate energy poverty at different governance levels.

The EU is facing important increases in energy prices, driven by market volatility and exacerbated by its dependence on imported fossil fuels. A key priority for the EU is to strengthen the resilience of its energy system vis-a-vis geopolitical crises impacting the global energy market. Therefore, applicants under this topic are invited, where possible, to develop and implement long-term structural sustainable and energy efficiency measures to enhance EU energy system resilience against future crises, in coherence with short-term energy relief measures needed to respond to the current shock on the global energy markets.

Scope

Actions should contribute to actively alleviating energy poverty and build on the tools, indicators and resources of existing initiatives, such as the Energy Poverty Advisory Hub[80] and the energy poverty pillar of the Covenant of Mayors[81].

Proposals are encouraged for actions with a specific focus on summer energy poverty alleviation and/or actions focusing on geographic areas with less developed energy poverty alleviation measures and frameworks.

Proposals should cover only one of the two scopes below, either Scope A or Scope B of the topic. The scope addressed should be specified in the proposal introduction.

Scope A: Policy and coordination support to public authorities and stakeholders

Actions should support national, regional and/or local authorities and relevant stakeholders in setting up formalised, long-term, cross-sectoral coordination structures to tackle energy poverty. The coordination structures should foster cross-departmental and cross-sectoral collaboration across national, regional, and/or local government structures, and involve relevant public bodies and private/public stakeholders, such as civil society organisations, healthcare providers, economic operators or academia. The proposal should outline the organisational structure

[77] COM/2026/115 final
[78] Commission Recommendation (EU) 2024/2481
[79] Commission Recommendation (EU) 2023/2407 of 20 October 2023 on energy poverty (C/2023/4080) and Commission Staff Working Document (SWD/2023/647 final).

[80] Energy Poverty Advisory Hub
[81] Actions should also take into account the initiatives or support schemes set up under other relevant EU funding such as the Social Climate Fund or the Just Transition Mechanism.

(including the engagement strategy for participating actors), main methods of operation and key objectives (e.g. development of definitions, criteria, or indicators, data collection, advice on support methods or schemes to reduce energy poverty, etc). The proposal should also identify the specific local/regional/national challenges or gaps the coordination structure(s) aim to address. Where similar coordination structures (e.g. energy poverty observatories) already exist or are already in development[82], the proposal must clearly demonstrate the need for, and added value of, any new coordination structures and must also demonstrate the support of, or existing cooperation with, the existing structure(s).

To facilitate the set-up of such structures and build the necessary organisational expertise, proposals should also include the delivery of tailored capacity-building activities for the specific national, regional and/or local authorities and stakeholder organisations involved in the coordination structures. The capacity-building should consist of structured, in-depth training tailored to the specific needs and languages of the coordination structure members, ensuring improved skills and capacity in the long term.

The composition of the coordination structures is expected to represent all relevant sectors, including energy, social, health and housing sectors, to ensure a holistic participatory approach to the alleviation of energy poverty in the long term.

The main public authorities involved in the coordination structure(s) must be identified in the proposal. The public authorities and stakeholders, such as consumer or social organisations, the housing sector, energy companies, or healthcare providers, should be either directly involved in the consortium or their concrete commitment and involvement in the coordination structures should be demonstrated in the proposal through, for example, tailored letters of support at executive decision-making level.

The proposal should make clear whether the proposed coordination structures address the national, local and/or regional level. If several governance levels are addressed, the need for this should be justified in the proposal.

The proposal should set out a convincing plan to ensure long-term sustainability of the coordination structures beyond project duration, including the expected hosting entities.

Scope B: Facilitating residential multi-apartment building renovation

Actions under Scope B should support the energy renovation of residential multi-apartment buildings in spatially related vulnerable districts/neighbourhoods with predominantly energy poor inhabitants, with a view to reducing and optimising their heating and cooling needs and improving the health and comfort of energy poor residents.

In order to facilitate the uptake of renovation measures, proposed actions are expected to concretely support the renovation of multi-apartment buildings by implementing strategies and approaches, which may include reinforcing and/or adapting the governance and decision-making structures of building management and homeowners or tenants associations, tackling related regulatory barriers such as property/rental laws and/or condominium laws, defining appropriate financing strategies for the specific target group, addressing split incentives (where relevant), and setting up and/or coordinating relevant support or advisory services (e.g. resource centres, one-stop shops). Where such support/advisory services are already

[82] For further information, you may refer to, for example, country fiches published by the Energy Poverty Advisory Hub.

in place, proposals should demonstrate how they build on them, rather than establish new services.

The proposed actions are encouraged to consider both winter and summer energy poverty and integrate building-level measures with community or neighbourhood-level approaches, where appropriate. These approaches may include, for example, integration of sustainable active cooling solutions with passive cooling measures (e.g. nature-based solutions, urban greening), or social leasing schemes.

Regardless of the specific measures proposed, the proposal should demonstrate their affordability for energy poor residents in terms of both upfront and longer-term costs.

The renovation actions supported should also ensure the ability of residents to remain in their homes after works, thereby avoiding so-called renovictions.

It is expected that the homeowners or tenant associations and housing organisations, in particular, in addition to other relevant actors (e.g. financial institutions), are either directly involved in the consortium or their concrete commitment and involvement in the project is clearly demonstrated in the proposal through, for example, tailored letters of support.

For both Scope A and Scope B

Proposals should take into account multiple benefits from energy efficiency and renewable energy for different energy poor target groups, such as improved health, comfort, air quality, better social inclusion etc. Specific attention could be paid to particular groups which are more at risk of being affected by energy poverty or more susceptible to the adverse impacts of energy poverty, taking into account gender, where relevant. Proposals are not expected to develop new IT tools, databases or platforms, unless their added value compared to existing ones is justified, and their potential scale-up beyond the project convincingly addressed.

Proposals must be submitted by at least 3 applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities) from 3 different eligible countries.

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of up to EUR 1.75 million would allow the specific objectives to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

For proposals addressing building renovation actions without a clear focus on energy poor households, please consider applying under the topic LIFE-2026-CET-BETTERRENO.

For proposals addressing One-Stop-Shops for renovation, please consider applying under the topic LIFE-2026-CET-OSS.

For proposals addressing support services for energy communities, please consider applying under the topic LIFE-2026-CET-ENERCOM.

Expected impact

Proposals should present the concrete results which will be delivered by the activities and demonstrate how these results will contribute to the topic-specific impacts. This demonstration should rely on a solid analysis of the current situation, realistic assumptions and baselines, and establish clear causality links between activities, results and impacts.

In terms of qualitative impact, proposals under this topic should demonstrate how they will contribute to the reduction of (summer) energy poverty for the targeted households (Scope B) and the development of successful coordination structures (Scope A), which can be replicated in other regions or Member States. Prebound/rebound effects should be taken into account and factored in the quantification of impacts, where relevant.

In terms of quantitative impact, proposals should quantify their results and impacts using the indicators provided for the topic, when they are relevant for the proposed activities. Proposals are not expected to address all the listed impacts and indicators. The results and impacts should be quantified for the end of the project and for 5 years after the end of the project. The quantitative indicators for this topic include:

- Number of energy poor households with reduced energy costs (Scope A and B)
- Number of energy poor consumers benefitting from the activities (Scope A and B)
- Number of residential multi-apartment buildings renovated (or renovations triggered by project end) (Scope B)
- Number of governance and decision-making structures reinforced/adapted for residential multi-apartment buildings to facilitate energy renovation investments (Scope B)
- Number of tailored financing strategies developed for multi-apartment building renovation with energy poor residents (Scope B)
- Number of agreements concluded between homeowners and tenant associations demonstrating commitment to energy renovation investments (Scope B)
- Number of energy poverty coordination structures established or reinforced (Scope A)
- Number of legislative or implementing acts, policies or strategies created/adapted on energy poverty, including summer energy poverty where relevant (Scope A and B)
- Number of public authorities and stakeholders with increased capacity and skills (mainly Scope A)
- Number of training hours per participant in capacity-building programmes (Scope A)
- Increased energy poor household ability to maintain home below a critical heat threshold (Scope A and B)
- Quantified multiple benefits for energy poor households, such as improved physical and mental health, comfort and indoor environment, better indoor air quality, improved social inclusion, reduced public health expenditure (Scope A and B).

Proposals should also provide indicators which are specific to their proposed activities.

Proposals should also quantify their impacts related to the following common indicators for the LIFE Clean Energy Transition sub-programme:

- Primary energy savings triggered by the project in GWh/year[83]

[83] According to studies, many energy poor households already consume less energy than average households. Therefore, in this topic, energy savings triggered can be calculated based

- Final energy savings triggered by the project in GWh/year
- Renewable energy generation triggered by the project (in GWh/year)
- Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (in tCO_2-eq/year)
- Investments in sustainable energy (energy efficiency and renewable energy) triggered by the project (cumulative, in million Euro).

Funding rate

Other Action Grants (OAGs) — 95%

LIFE-2026-CET-ENERCOM: Facilitating cooperation among energy communities

Objectives

Energy communities have been widely recognised as key actors in the EU energy system for their potential contribution in achieving the Union's 2030 and 2050 energy and climate targets. As part of the Citizens Energy Package[84], the European Commission delivered guidance for Member States on measures to unleash the potential energy communities and energy self-consumption and engaged itself to publish an Energy Communities Action Plan.

Some energy communities are already providing professional services to members and other communities at scale. However, most energy communities in Europe remain relatively small and primarily focused on solar photovoltaic projects. While these initiatives have been instrumental in engaging citizens and local authorities in renewable energy generation, many face challenges when attempting to diversify or professionalise their activities, adopt new business models, or scale up their operations. Targeted support is therefore needed to help energy communities evolve beyond first-generation solar projects—for example, towards collective heating and cooling systems, flexibility and storage services, integrated local energy management or one-stop-shop services to other communities.

Energy community initiatives enable citizens, businesses and local authorities to invest directly in renewable energy and energy efficiency projects while promoting local ownership of energy assets. At the same time, energy communities can deliver additional societal benefits, including lower energy costs, local job creation, and enhanced social cohesion and inclusion. Today, more than 8,000 community energy initiatives are active across Europe, yet their development remains uneven among Member States, and several promising business models where energy communities could generate added value are still insufficiently explored.

Experience from past projects shows that mentoring, mutualisation and knowledge exchange among community actors are highly effective in overcoming development barriers and supporting scaling-up efforts. On the one hand, peer-to-peer support can unlock the potential of energy communities in complex areas such as heating systems or flexibility services, where targeted mentoring can help navigate technical and organisational challenges. On the other hand, secondary structures or federations of energy communities - often supported by public authorities - have proven effective in assisting others by pooling resources and services. These so-called "second-level communities" provide added value by, for example, offering technical

on the theoretical energy consumption that would allow to achieve the standard comfort level prior to implementation of energy efficiency measures.

[84] COM/2026/115 final

assistance, sharing operation and maintenance services, improving access to financing and innovative business models, and forming strategic partnerships to ensure that regulatory frameworks effectively reflect local needs.

The EU is facing important increases in energy prices, driven by market volatility and exacerbated by its dependence on imported fossil fuels. A key priority for the EU is to strengthen the resilience of its energy system vis-a-vis geopolitical crises impacting the global energy market. Therefore, applicants under this topic are invited, where possible, to develop and implement long-term structural sustainable and energy efficiency measures to enhance EU energy system resilience against future crises, in coherence with short-term energy relief measures needed to respond to the current shock on the global energy markets.

Scope

Proposals should address only one of the two scopes detailed below. The specific scope should be clearly mentioned in the proposal.

Scope A: Support to "second level communities"

This scope focuses on "second level communities" which are coalitions that represent, aggregate and serve multiple energy communities within a city, region or country.

Proposals may target the emergence of new second level communities AND/OR the consolidation and professionalisation of existing second level communities. The justification for creating new structures must be grounded in a thorough analysis of their national and regional context and their added value should be clearly explained.

Proposals should clearly describe governance structures, decision making processes and how member communities participate and exercise democratic control.

Proposals should define clear objectives for the second level communities to be created or reinforced. In particular, they should specify what they intend to achieve in the following areas:

- mutualising services for member communities (e.g. legal, technical, financial, communication),
- supporting the development and implementation of new energy community projects, and
- the long-term role they aim to play in their ecosystem (e.g. "one stop shop", back-office service provider for energy communities, knowledge hub, etc.).

Proposals should:

- Design a service portfolio responding to the needs of current and prospective member communities. The services selected must be clearly justified and proposals should demonstrate that there is demand for them.
- Define target numbers and types of communities to be supported by the planned activities.
- If proposals foresee structured capacity building activities for member and prospective communities, these must be clearly explained and build on existing materials.
- Where relevant, proposals may describe approaches to make energy communities more inclusive.
- Where relevant, applicants may describe how they will facilitate collaboration in financing, for example by pooling project pipelines, coordinating joint

applications to funding programmes, supporting access to finance, or developing shared investment vehicles and standardised contracts.

- Where relevant, proposals may explain how they will help initiate and incubate new energy communities in areas without existing initiatives and strengthen existing communities through training, coaching and peer learning.

Proposals should also present a financially viable economic model, including an assessment of operating costs and expected revenue for the second level communities targeted to continue beyond the project duration and explain how services and outputs will be designed for scalability and replication.

Scope B: Support for energy communities to implement projects in emerging areas

Proposals should focus on facilitating the implementation of energy projects led by energy communities in at least one of the following focus areas:

- Renewable heating and cooling[85]
- Energy efficiency measures in buildings
- Provision of flexibility services (demand response, community energy storage, smart charging, participation in dynamic tariffs, aggregation of member assets, and intra- or inter-community peer-to-peer trading)
- Electromobility services supporting the integration of renewable energy sources

The objectives of the assistance to communities provided by the project must be concrete, measurable and clearly linked to the implementation of the above-listed solutions.

Proposals should clearly identify specific energy community projects that peer-to-peer activities can support. The planned support should include peer-to-peer exchanges and, where relevant, other targeted assistance to facilitate concrete implementation. Where the support from external experts is foreseen, their role should be to support and complement peer learning, not substitute it.

Capacity building activities may focus on communities but can also include other relevant local actors (municipal officials, housing providers, DSOs, installers).

The roles of participating communities should be clearly defined. Established energy communities with experience in the proposed area(s) of intervention and energy communities willing to start developing a project or activity in those areas should be either directly involved in the consortium or their concrete commitment and involvement in the project should be clearly demonstrated in the proposal. Cross-country or cross-region peer-to-peer learning is encouraged if it can clearly add value.

Approaches that aim to promote inclusion and energy poverty alleviation are encouraged.

Proposals should demonstrate how their proposed activities are embedded in and coherent with relevant local and national strategies (e.g. local heating and cooling plans).

[85] As defined in the EPBD (Directive (EU) 2024/1275).

For both scopes A and B:

- Projects should focus on supporting renewable energy communities (RECs) according to the amending Renewable Energy Directive[86] and/or citizen energy communities (CECs) according to the EU Electricity Market Design Directive[87].
- Proposals should make use of already existing framework analyses (e.g. for the legal frameworks already made available by the European Energy Communities Facility and the Citizen Energy Advisory Hub) and not foresee additional ones unless their added value is clearly explained.
- Proposals should not develop any new tools, databases, or digital platforms unless their added value compared to existing ones is clearly justified and their potential scale-up beyond the project convincingly addressed.
- Consortia applying should demonstrate the support from stakeholders necessary to ensure the success of the project and a convincing strategy to engage other strategic stakeholders such as municipalities, regions, financial institutions, housing providers, NGOs and social services. Where relevant, actions to facilitate the collaboration with Distribution System Operators and other market participants such as commercial suppliers or aggregators can also be planned.

Proposals must be submitted by at least 3 applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities) from 3 different eligible countries.

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of up to 1.75 million EUR would allow the specific objectives to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

Expected impact

Proposals should present the concrete results which will be delivered by the activities and demonstrate how these results will contribute to the topic-specific impacts. This demonstration should rely on a solid analysis of the current situation, realistic assumptions and baselines, and establish clear causality links between proposed activities, results and impacts.

In terms of qualitative impact, proposals under this topic should demonstrate how they will contribute to the following outcomes, as relevant:

- Scope A: Creation of (or expansion) of the services delivered by second level communities to their members and other communities. The new mutualised services should be tested and operational by the end of the project and the support to new energy community projects needs to have led to some initial results in terms of project implementation.
- Scope B: Measurable progress towards the implementation of energy community projects in the focus areas listed above thanks to the provision of tailored peer-to-peer learning and targeted assistance.

In terms of quantitative impact, proposals should quantify their results and impacts using the indicators provided for the topic, when they are relevant for the proposed activities. The results and impacts should be quantified for the end of the project and

[86] (EU) 2023/2413
[87] (EU) 2024/1711

for 5 years after the end of the project. The quantitative indicators for both scopes include:

- Number of energy community projects triggered thanks to the project
- Number of energy communities benefiting from the support of the project
- Number and type of stakeholders with increased skills

For Scope A, applicants will also need to define and quantify indicators related to the set-up and expansion of second level communities including:

- Number of second-level communities created thanks to the project
- Amount of direct and personalised support made available to energy community project developers (full-time equivalent person months)

For Scope B, applicants will also need to define and quantify eventual additional indicators:

- related to the peer-to-peer process
- related to project implementation (e.g. MWth/MW of capacity installed, buildings renovated, new members engaged in the communities thanks to the project action, number of members benefiting from new/scaled activities, number of households enrolled in flexibility, energy poor or vulnerable citizens benefiting from the projects).

Proposals under both scopes should also provide indicators which are specific to their proposed activities.

All proposals should also quantify their impacts related to the following common indicators for the LIFE CET sub-programme:

- Primary energy savings triggered by the project in GWh/year
- Final energy savings triggered by the project in GWh/year
- Renewable energy generation triggered by the project (in GWh/year), specifying the type of renewable energy triggered
- Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (in tCO2-eq/year)
- Investments in sustainable energy (energy efficiency and renewable energy) triggered by the project (cumulative, in million Euro).

Funding rate

Other Action Grants (OAGs) — 95%

3. Available budget

The estimated available call budget is EUR 85 500 000.

Specific budget information per topic can be found in the table below:

Topic	Topic budget
LIFE-2026-CET-HEATCOOLPLAN	EUR 6 500 000
LIFE-2026-CET-POLICY	EUR 4 500 000
LIFE-2026-CET-RENEWHC	EUR 6 500 000

LIFE-2026-CET-BETTERRENO	EUR 6 000 000
LIFE-2026-CET-INDUSTRY	EUR 7 000 000
LIFE-2026-CET-BUILDSKILLS	EUR 3 000 000
LIFE-2026-CET-DIGITAL	EUR 10 000 000
LIFE-2026-CET-PRIVAFIN	EUR 6 000 000
LIFE-2026-CET-OSS	EUR 9 000 000
LIFE-2026-CET-PDA	EUR 8 000 000
LIFE-2026-CET-EMPOWER	EUR 6 000 000
LIFE-2026-CET-ENERPOV	EUR 6 000 000
LIFE-2026-CET-ENERCOM	EUR 7 000 000

We reserve the right not to award all available funds or to redistribute them between the call priorities, depending on the proposals received and the results of the evaluation.

4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
Call opening:	21 April 2026
Deadline for submission (full proposal):	16 September 2026 – 17:00:00 CET (Brussels)
Information on evaluation results:	February 2027
GA signature:	June 2027

5. Admissibility and documents

Proposals must be submitted before the call deadline *(see timetable section 4)*.

Proposals must be submitted electronically via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (accessible via the Topic page in the Calls for proposals section). Paper submissions are NOT possible.

Proposals (including annexes and supporting documents) must be submitted using the forms provided *inside* the Submission System (⚠ NOT the documents available on the Topic page — they are only for information).

⚠ Please note that not using the correct template or not complying with the instructions therein *(e.g. font size limit, deletion of instructions, etc)* may lead to the inadmissibility of your proposal. Furthermore, to ensure a proper evaluation of your

project the appropriate sections of the template must be filled in depending on whether the call has one or two submission stages.

Proposals must be complete and contain all the requested information and all required annexes and supporting documents:

- Application Form Part A — contains administrative information about the participants (future coordinator, beneficiaries and affiliated entities) and the summarised budget for the project *(to be filled in directly online)*

  In order to ensure a proper evaluation of your project, please click on the "?" sign appearing in each screen and carefully check the instructions to correctly fill the different sections.

- Application Form Part B — contains the technical description of the project *(template to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded)*

- Part C — contains additional project data and the project's contribution to EU programme key performance indicators *(to be filled in directly online)*

- mandatory annexes and supporting documents *(templates to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded)*:

  - detailed budget table (mandatory Excel template available in the Submission System)

  - participant information including previous projects, if any (mandatory Excel template available in the Submission System)

  - for topic LIFE-2026-CET-PDA: table of investments (mandatory template available in the Submission System)

- optional annexes: letters of support

Please note that the amounts entered into the summarised budget table (filled in directly online) must correspond to the amounts calculated in the detailed budget table. In case of discrepancies, the amounts in the online summarised budget table will prevail.

At proposal submission, you will have to confirm that you have the mandate to act for all applicants. Moreover, you will have to confirm that the information in the application is correct and complete and that all participants comply with the conditions for receiving EU funding *(especially eligibility, financial and operational capacity, exclusion, etc.)*. Before signing the grant, each beneficiary and affiliated entity will have to confirm this again by signing a declaration of honour (DoH). Proposals without full support will be rejected.

Your application must be readable, accessible and printable (please check carefully the layout of the documents uploaded).

Proposals are limited to maximum 65 pages (Part B). Evaluators will not consider any additional pages.

You may be asked at a later stage for further documents *(for legal entity validation, financial capacity check, bank account validation, etc.)*.

For more information about the submission process (including IT aspects), consult the Online Manual.

⚠ Please be aware that some proposal information may be shared with the LIFE programme committee established under Regulation No 182/2011[88], i.e. name and country of all applicants (coordinating organisation and partners), project title, total eligible costs, LIFE funding requested, result of the assessment of the admissibility and eligibility of the proposal, and scores by criterion for eligible proposals.

6. Eligibility

Eligible participants (eligible countries)

In order to be eligible, the applicants (beneficiaries and affiliated entities) must:

- be legal entities (public or private bodies)
- be established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
  - EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs))
  - non-EU countries:
    - listed EEA countries and countries associated to the LIFE Programme (list of participating countries)[89]
- the coordinator must be established in an eligible country

Beneficiaries and affiliated entities must register in the Participant Register — before submitting the proposal — and will have to be validated by the Central Validation Service (REA Validation). For the validation, they will be requested to upload documents showing legal status and origin.

Other entities may participate in other consortium roles, such as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions, etc. *(see section 13)*.

Specific cases and definitions

Exceptional funding — Entities from other countries (not listed above) are exceptionally eligible, if the granting authority considers their participation essential for the implementation of the action *(see work programme).*

Natural persons — Natural persons are NOT eligible (with the exception of self-employed persons, i.e. sole traders, where the company does not have legal personality separate from that of the natural person).

International organisations — International organisations are eligible. The rules on eligible countries do not apply to them.

Entities without legal personality — Entities which do not have legal personality under their national law may exceptionally participate, provided that their representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf, and offer guarantees for the protection of the EU financial interests equivalent to that offered by legal persons[90].

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[88] Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 2011 laying down the rules and general principles concerning mechanisms for control by Member States of the Commission's exercise of implementing powers (OJ L 55, 28.2.2011, p. 13).

[89] Applicants from countries which have requested to be associated to the LIFE Programme may participate in this call for proposals. However, no grant agreement will be signed if the association agreement is not entered into force by the end of the selection procedure.

[90] See Article 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation 2024/2509.

EU bodies — EU bodies (with the exception of the European Commission Joint Research Centre) can NOT be part of the consortium.

Associations and interest groupings — Entities composed of members may participate as 'sole beneficiaries' or 'beneficiaries without legal personality'[91]. Please note that if the action will be implemented by the members, they should also participate (either as beneficiaries or as affiliated entities, otherwise their costs will NOT be eligible).

Countries currently negotiating association agreements — Beneficiaries from countries with ongoing negotiations for participating in the programme *(see list of participating countries above)* may participate in the call and can sign grants if the negotiations are concluded before grant signature and if the association covers the call (i.e. is retroactive and covers both the part of the programme and the year when the call was launched).

EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for entities subject to EU restrictive measures under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)[92]. Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).

EU conditionality measures — Special rules apply for entities subject to measures adopted on the basis of EU Regulation 2020/2092[93]. Such entities are not eligible to participate in any funded role (beneficiaries, affiliated entities, subcontractors, recipients of financial support to third parties, etc.). Currently such measures are in place for Hungarian public interest trusts established under the Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity they maintain (see Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/2506, as of 16 December 2022).

For more information, *see Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment*.

Consortium composition

For topics LIFE-2026-CET-HEATCOOLPLAN, LIFE-2026-CET-POLICY, LIFE-2026-CET-RENEWHC, LIFE-2026-CET-BETTERRENO, LIFE-2026-CET-INDUSTRY, LIFE-2026-CET-DIGITAL, LIFE-2026-CET-EMPOWER, LIFE-2026-CET-ENERPOV and LIFE-2026-CET-ENERCOM: proposals must be submitted by at least 3 applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities) from 3 different eligible countries.

For topics LIFE-2026-CET-BUILDSKILLS, LIFE-2026-CET-PRIVAFIN, LIFE-2026-CET-OSS and LIFE-2026-CET-PDA: proposals must be submitted by at least one applicant from an eligible country.

For all topics, the coordinator must be established in an eligible country *(see above)*.

Eligible activities

Applications will only be considered eligible if their content corresponds wholly (or at least in part) to the topic description for which they are submitted.

Eligible activities are the ones set out in section 2 above.

[91] For the definitions, see Articles 190(2) and 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation 2024/2509.

[92] Please note that the EU Official Journal contains the official list and, in case of conflict, its content prevails over that of the EU Sanctions Map.

[93] Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2092 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2020 on a general regime of conditionality for the protection of the Union budget (OJ L 325, 20.12.2022, p. 94).

Projects must comply with EU policy interests and priorities *(such as environment, social, security, industrial and trade policy, etc.)*. Projects must also respect EU values and European Commission policy regarding reputational matters (*e.g. activities involving capacity building, policy support, awareness raising, communication, dissemination, etc.*)[94].

Financial support to third parties is not allowed for Call LIFE-2026-CET except for topic LIFE-2026-CET-EMPOWER.

Financial support to third parties is allowed for topic LIFE-2026-CET-EMPOWER for grants under the following conditions:

- the calls must be open, published widely and conform to EU standards concerning transparency, equal treatment, conflict of interest and confidentiality
- the calls must remain open for at least two months
- the outcome of the call must be published on the participants' websites, including a description of the selected projects, award dates, project durations, and final recipient legal names and countries
- the calls must have a clear European dimension.

Financial support to third parties will be accepted in projects which aim to assist entities outside the project partnership *(e.g. non-profit organisations, local authorities or citizens groups)* in the implementation or development of local initiatives that will contribute to the project's objectives.

Your project application must clearly specify why financial support to third parties is needed, how it will be managed and provide a list of the different types of activities for which a third party may receive financial support. The proposal must also clearly describe the results to be obtained.

Geographic location (target countries)

Proposals must relate to activities taking place in the eligible countries *(see above)*. Activities outside the eligible countries must be necessary to achieve the EU environmental and climate objectives and ensure the effectiveness of interventions carried within the eligible countries (e.g. actions aimed at the conservation of migratory birds in wintering areas, actions implemented on a trans boundary river, or projects aimed to address environmental problems that cannot be solved successfully or efficiently unless actions are carried out also in non-eligible countries).

7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion

Financial capacity

Applicants must have stable and sufficient resources to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share. Organisations participating in several projects must have sufficient capacity to implement all projects.

[94] See, for instance, Guidance on funding for activities related to the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of Union legislation and policy.

The financial capacity check will be carried out on the basis of the documents you will be requested to upload in the Participant Register during grant preparation *(e.g. profit and loss account and balance sheet, business plan, audit report produced by an approved external auditor, certifying the accounts for the last closed financial year, etc.)*. The analysis will be based on neutral financial indicators, but will also take into account other aspects, such as dependency on EU funding and deficit and revenue in previous years.

The check will normally be done for coordinators, except:

- public bodies (entities established as public body under national law, including local, regional or national authorities) or international organisations
- if the project requested grant amount is not more than EUR 60 000.

If needed, it may also be done for affiliated entities.

If we consider that your financial capacity is not satisfactory, we may require:

- further information
- an enhanced financial responsibility regime, i.e. joint and several responsibility for all beneficiaries or joint and several liability of affiliated entities *(see below, section 10)*
- prefinancing paid in instalments
- (one or more) prefinancing guarantees *(see below, section 10)*

or

- propose no prefinancing
- request that you are replaced or, if needed, reject the entire proposal.

For more information, *see Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment*.

Operational capacity

Applicants must have the know-how, qualifications and resources to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share (including sufficient experience in projects of comparable size and nature).

This capacity will be assessed together with the 'Resources' award criterion, on the basis of the competence and experience of the applicants and their project teams, including operational resources (human, technical and other) or, exceptionally, the measures proposed to obtain it by the time the task implementation starts.

If the evaluation of the award criterion is positive, the applicants are considered to have sufficient operational capacity.

Applicants will have to show their capacity via the following:

- general profiles (qualifications and experiences) of the staff responsible for managing and implementing the project
- description of the consortium participants (and previous projects, if any)

Additional supporting documents may be requested, if needed to confirm the operational capacity of any applicant.

Exclusion

Applicants which are subject to an EU exclusion decision or in one of the following exclusion situations that bar them from receiving EU funding can NOT participate[95]:

- bankruptcy, winding up, affairs administered by the courts, arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or other similar procedures (including procedures for persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- in breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- guilty of grave professional misconduct[96] (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of EU Regulation 2988/95 (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- intentionally and without proper justification resisted[97] an investigation, check or audit carried out by an EU authorising officer (or their representative or auditor), OLAF, the EPPO, or the European Court of Auditors.

Applicants will also be rejected if it turns out that[98]:

- during the award procedure they misrepresented information required as a condition for participating or failed to supply that information

[95] See Articles 138 and 143 of EU Financial Regulation 2024/2509.

[96] 'Professional misconduct' includes, in particular, the following: violation of ethical standards of the profession; wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility; breach of generally accepted professional ethical standards; false declarations/misrepresentation of information; participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition; violation of IPR; attempting to influence decision-making processes by taking advantage, through misrepresentation, of a conflict of interests, or to obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain an advantage; incitement to discrimination, hatred or violence or similar activities contrary to the EU values where negatively affecting or risking to affect the performance of a legal commitment.

[97] 'Resisting an investigation, check or audit' means carrying out actions with the goal or effect of preventing, hindering or delaying the conduct of any of the activities needed to perform the investigation, check or audit, such as refusing to grant the necessary access to its premises or any other areas used for business purposes, concealing or refusing to disclose information or providing false information.

[98] See Article 143 EU Financial Regulation 2024/2509.

- they were previously involved in the preparation of the call and this entails a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise (conflict of interest).

8. Evaluation and award procedure

The proposals will have to follow the standard submission and evaluation procedure (one-stage submission + one-step evaluation).

An evaluation committee (assisted by independent outside experts) will assess all applications. Proposals will first be checked for formal requirements (admissibility, and eligibility, *see sections 5 and 6*). Proposals found admissible and eligible will be evaluated (for each topic) against the operational capacity and award criteria *(see sections 7 and 9)* and then ranked according to their scores.

For proposals with the same score (within a topic or budget envelope) a priority order will be determined according to the following approach:

> Successively for every group of *ex aequo* proposals, starting with the highest scored group, and continuing in descending order, the ex aequo proposals will be prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for the award criterion 'Impact'. If these scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion 'Relevance', then 'Quality', then 'Resources'.

All proposals will be informed about the evaluation result (evaluation result letter). Successful proposals will be invited for grant preparation; the other ones will be put on the reserve list or rejected.

⚠ No commitment for funding — Invitation to grant preparation does NOT constitute a formal commitment for funding. We will still need to make various legal checks before grant award: *legal entity validation, financial capacity, exclusion check, etc*.

Grant preparation will involve a dialogue in order to fine-tune technical or financial aspects of the project and may require extra information from your side. It may also include adjustments to the proposal to address recommendations of the evaluation committee or other concerns. Full compliance will be a pre-condition for signing the grant.

If you believe that the evaluation procedure was flawed, you can submit a complaint (following the deadlines and procedures set out in the evaluation result letter). Please note that notifications which have not been opened within 10 days after sending will be considered to have been accessed and that deadlines will be counted from opening/access *(see also Funding & Tenders Portal Terms and Conditions)*. Please also be aware that for complaints submitted electronically, there may be character limitations.

9. Award criteria

The award criteria for this call are as follows:

1. Relevance (0-20 points)

- Relevance to the objectives of the targeted LIFE sub-programme and to the specific priorities of the call for proposals and, when relevant, topic description.

- Concept and methodology: soundness of the overall intervention logic.
- Extent to which the proposal offers co-benefits and promotes synergies with other policy areas relevant for achieving environment and climate policy objectives.

2. Impact (0-20 points)

- Ambition and credibility of impacts expected during and/or after the project due to the activities, including ensuring that no substantial harm is done to the other specific objectives of the LIFE Programme.
- Sustainability of the project results after the end of the project and quality of the measures for the exploitation of project results.
- Potential for the project results to be replicated in the same or other sectors or places, or to be up-scaled by public or private actors or through mobilising larger investments or financial resources (catalytic potential).

3. Quality (0-20 points)

- Clarity, relevance and feasibility of the work plan. Appropriate geographic focus of the activities.
- Identification and mobilisation of the relevant stakeholders.
- Quality of the plan to monitor and report impacts.
- Appropriateness and quality of the measures to communicate and disseminate the project and its results to different target groups.

4. Resources (0-20 points)

- Composition of the project team - in terms of expertise, skills and responsibilities and appropriateness of the management structure.
- Appropriateness of the budget and resources and their consistency with the work plan.
- Transparency of the budget, i.e. the cost items should be sufficiently described.
- Extent to which the project environmental impact is considered and mitigated, including through the use of green procurement. The use of recognised methods for the calculation of the project environmental footprint *(e.g.* Project Environmental Footprint (*PEF) or* Organizational Environmental Footprint (*OEF) methods or similar ones*[99]*)* or environmental management systems *(e.g. Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS))* would be an asset.
- Value for money of the proposal.

[99] *See list on https://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/PEFCR_OEFSR_en.htm.*

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score	Weighting
Relevance	10	20	1
Impact	10	20	1.5
Quality	10	20	1
Resources	10	20	1
Overall weighted (pass) scores (without bonus)	55	90	N/A

Maximum points (full proposals): 90 points.

Individual thresholds per criterion (full proposals): 10/20, 10/20, 10/20 and 10/20 points (before weighting).

Overall threshold (full proposals): 55 points (after weighting).

Proposals that pass the individual thresholds AND the overall threshold will be considered for funding — within the limits of the available budget (i.e. up to the budget ceiling). Other proposals will be rejected.

10. Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements

If you pass evaluation, your project will be invited for grant preparation, where you will be asked to prepare the Grant Agreement together with the EU Project Officer.

This Grant Agreement will set the framework for your grant and its terms and conditions, in particular concerning deliverables, reporting and payments.

The Model Grant Agreement that will be used (and all other relevant templates and guidance documents) can be found on Portal Reference Documents.

Starting date and project duration

The project starting date and duration will be fixed in the Grant Agreement *(Data Sheet, point 1)*. Normally the starting date will be after grant signature. A retroactive starting date can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons — but never earlier than the proposal submission date.

Project duration: *see section 3 above*.

Extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment.

Milestones and deliverables

The milestones and deliverables for each project will be managed through the Portal Grant Management System and will be reflected in Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement.

Form of grant, funding rate and maximum grant amount

The grant parameters *(maximum grant amount, funding rate, total eligible costs, etc.)* will be fixed in the Grant Agreement *(Data Sheet, point 3 and art 5)*.

Project budget (requested grant amount): *see section 3 above*.

The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

The grant will be a budget-based mixed actual cost grant (actual costs, with unit cost and flat-rate elements). This means that it will reimburse ONLY certain types of costs (eligible costs) and costs that were *actually* incurred for your project (NOT the *budgeted* costs). For unit costs and flat-rates, you can charge the amounts calculated as explained in the Grant Agreement *(see art 6 and Annex 2 and 2a)*.

The costs will be reimbursed at the funding rate fixed in the Grant Agreement (95%).

Grants may NOT produce a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). For-profit organisations must declare their revenues and, if there is a profit, we will deduct it from the final grant amount *(see art 22.3)*.

Please note that the maximum grant amount for each beneficiary will be fixed in the Grant Agreement. The beneficiaries can however decide to distribute the grant money differently in accordance with what they have agreed in the consortium agreement *(see also section 13)*.

Moreover, please be aware that the final grant amount may be reduced in case of non-compliance with the Grant Agreement *(e.g. improper implementation, breach of obligations, etc.)*.

Budget categories and cost eligibility rules

The budget categories and cost eligibility rules are fixed in the Grant Agreement *(Data Sheet, point 3, art 6 and Annex 2)*.

⚠ When filling in the summarised budget table (directly online in Application Form Part A), please click on the "?" sign appearing in each screen and carefully check the instructions to correctly fill the different sections.

Budget categories:

- A. Personnel costs
  - A.1 Employees, A.2 Natural persons under direct contract, A.3 Seconded persons
  - A.4 SME owners and natural person beneficiaries
  - A.5 Volunteers
- B. Subcontracting costs
- C. Purchase costs
  - C.1 Travel and subsistence
  - C.2 Equipment
  - C.3 Other goods, works and services
- D. Other cost categories only for topic LIFE-2026-CET-EMPOWER
  - D.1 Financial support to third parties
- E. Indirect costs

Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:

- personnel costs:

    - SME owner/natural person unit cost[100]: Yes
    - volunteers unit cost[101]: Yes (without indirect costs)
- travel and subsistence unit cost[102]: No (only actual costs)
- equipment costs: depreciation
- other cost categories:
    - costs for financial support to third parties for all LIFE-2026-CET topics except for topic LIFE-2026-CET-EMPOWER: not allowed
    - costs for financial support to third parties for topic LIFE-2026-CET-EMPOWER: allowed for grants or similar; maximum amount per third party EUR 60 000, unless a higher amount is required because the objective of the action would otherwise be impossible or overly difficult to achieve and this is duly justified in the Application Form
    - land purchase costs: not applicable
- indirect cost flat-rate: 7% of the eligible direct costs (categories A-D, except volunteers costs and exempted specific cost categories, if any)
- VAT: non-deductible VAT is eligible (but please note that since 2013 VAT paid by beneficiaries that are public bodies acting as public authority is NOT eligible)
- other:
    - in-kind contributions for free are allowed, but cost-neutral, i.e. they cannot be declared as cost
    - project websites: communication costs for presenting the project on the participants' websites or social media accounts are eligible; costs for *separate* project websites are not eligible unless duly justified by the project objectives
    - common information and dissemination activities: foresee resources to increase synergies between, and the visibility of LIFE and EU supported actions (for example 1 travel/year, 5 days)
    - other ineligible costs:
        - land purchase costs are not eligible

⚠ Volunteers costs — Volunteers costs are not a classic cost category. There are no costs because volunteers work for free, but they may nonetheless be added to the budget in the form of a prefixed unit cost (per volunteer) and thus allow you to benefit from the volunteers' work for the grant (by increasing the amount of reimbursement up to 100% of the normal costs, i.e. cost categories other than volunteers). More information is available in the AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6.2.A.5.

[100] Commission Decision of 20 October 2020 authorising the use of unit costs for the personnel costs of the owners of small and medium-sized enterprises and beneficiaries that are natural persons not receiving a salary for the work carried out by themselves under an action or work programme (C(2020)7115).

[101] Commission Decision of 10 April 2019 authorising the use of unit costs for declaring personnel costs for the work carried out by volunteers under an action or a work programme (C(2019)2646).

[102] Commission Decision of 12 January 2021 authorising the use of unit costs for travel, accommodation and subsistence costs under an action or work programme under the 2021-2027 multi-annual financial framework (C(2021)35).

Reporting and payment arrangements

The reporting and payment arrangements are fixed in the Grant Agreement *(Data Sheet, point 4 and art 21 and 22)*.

After grant signature, you will normally receive a prefinancing to start working on the project (float of normally 30 % of the maximum grant amount; exceptionally less or no prefinancing). The prefinancing will be paid 30 days from entry into force/financial guarantee (if required)— whichever is the latest.

For all LIFE-2026-CET topics except for topic LIFE-2026-CET-EMPOWER: there will be no interim payments. There will be one or more additional prefinancing payments linked to a prefinancing report.

For topic LIFE-2026-CET-EMPOWER: there will be one or more interim payments with cost reporting through the use of resources report.

In addition, for longer or more complex projects, you may be expected to submit one or more progress reports not linked to payments.

Payment of the balance: At the end of the project, we will calculate your final grant amount. If the total of earlier payments is higher than the final grant amount, we will ask you (your coordinator) to pay back the difference (recovery).

All payments will be made to the coordinator.

⚠ Please be aware that payments will be automatically lowered if you or one of your consortium members has outstanding debts towards the EU (granting authority or other EU bodies). Such debts will be offset by us — in line with the conditions set out in the Grant Agreement *(see art 22)*.

Please also note that you are responsible for keeping records on all the work done and the costs declared. The Grant Agreement contains additional record-keeping rules *(Data Sheet, point 3 and art 20)*.

Prefinancing guarantees

If a prefinancing guarantee is required, it will be fixed in the Grant Agreement *(Data Sheet, point 4)*. The amount will be set during grant preparation and it will normally be equal or lower than the prefinancing for your grant.

The guarantee should be in euro and issued by an approved bank/financial institution established in an EU Member State. If you are established in a non-EU country and would like to provide a guarantee from a bank/financial institution in your country, please contact us (this may be exceptionally accepted, if it offers equivalent security).

Amounts blocked in bank accounts will NOT be accepted as financial guarantees.

Prefinancing guarantees are normally requested from the coordinator, for the consortium. They must be provided during grant preparation, in time to make the prefinancing (scanned copy via Portal AND original by post).

If agreed with us, the bank guarantee may be replaced by a guarantee from a third party.

The guarantee will be released at the end of the grant, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Grant Agreement *(art 23)*.

Certificates

Depending on the type of action, size of grant amount and type of beneficiaries, you may be requested to submit different certificates. The types, schedules and thresholds for each certificate are fixed in the Grant Agreement *(Data Sheet, point 4 and art 24)*.

Liability regime for recoveries

The liability regime for recoveries will be fixed in the Grant Agreement *(Data Sheet, point 4.4 and art 22).*

For beneficiaries, it is one of the following:

- limited joint and several liability with individual ceilings — *each beneficiary up* to their maximum grant amount
- unconditional joint and several liability — *each beneficiary up to the maximum grant amount for the action*

or

- individual financial responsibility — *each beneficiary only for their own debts*.

In addition, the granting authority may require joint and several liability of affiliated entities (with their beneficiary).

Provisions concerning the project implementation

IPR rules: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 16 and Annex 5):*

- rights of use on results: Yes

Communication, dissemination and visibility of funding: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 17 and Annex 5):*

- communication and dissemination plan: Yes
- additional communication and dissemination activities: Yes
- special logos: Yes

Specific rules for carrying out the action: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 18 and Annex 5):*

- durability: No
- specific rules for blending operations: No

Other specificities

Consortium agreement: Yes

Non-compliance and breach of contract

The Grant Agreement (chapter 5) provides for the measures we may take in case of breach of contract (and other non-compliance issues).

- For more information, *see* *AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement*.

11. How to submit an application

All proposals must be submitted directly online via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System. Paper applications are NOT accepted.

Submission is a 2-step process:

a) create a user account and register your organisation

To use the Submission System (the only way to apply), all participants need to create an EU Login user account.

Once you have an EULogin account, you can register your organisation in the Participant Register. When your registration is finalised, you will receive a 9-digit participant identification code (PIC).

b) submit the proposal

Access the Electronic Submission System via the Topic page in the Calls for proposals section (or, for calls sent by invitation to submit a proposal, through the link provided in the invitation letter).

Submit your proposal in 4 parts, as follows:

- Part A includes administrative information about the applicant organisations (future coordinator, beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners) and the summarised budget for the proposal. Fill it in directly online
- Part B (description of the action) covers the technical content of the proposal. Download the mandatory word template from the Submission System, fill it in and upload it as a PDF file
- Part C containing additional project data. To be filled in directly online.
- Annexes (*see section 5*). Upload them as PDF file (single or multiple depending on the slots). Excel upload is sometimes possible, depending on the file type.

The proposal must keep to the page limits *(see section 5)*; excess pages will be disregarded.

Documents must be uploaded to the right category in the Submission System, otherwise the proposal may be considered incomplete and thus inadmissible.

The proposal must be submitted before the call deadline (*see section 4*). After this deadline, the system is closed and proposals can no longer be submitted.

Once the proposal is submitted, you will receive a confirmation e-mail (with date and time of your application). If you do not receive this confirmation e-mail, it means your proposal has NOT been submitted. If you believe this is due to a fault in the Submission System, you should immediately file a complaint via the IT Helpdesk webform, explaining the circumstances and attaching a copy of the proposal (and, if possible, screenshots to show what happened).

Details on processes and procedures are described in the Online Manual. The Online Manual also contains the links to FAQs and detailed instructions regarding the Portal Electronic Exchange System.

12. Help

As far as possible, *please try to find the answers you need yourself*, in this and the other documentation (we have limited resources for handling direct enquiries):

- Online Manual
- Portal FAQ (for general questions)
- LIFE website FAQs
- LIFE Info Days

Please also consult the Topic page regularly, since we will use it to publish call updates.

Contact

Only in case you did not find an answer in the above links, you may contact:

- for individual questions on the Portal Submission System: IT Helpdesk
- for non-IT related questions: CINEA-LIFE-CET@ec.europa.eu.

⚠ Please send your questions at the latest 7 days before the submission deadline (*see section 4*) AND indicate clearly the reference of the call and topic to which your question relates *(see cover page)*.

13. Important

IMPORTANT

- **Don't wait** until the end — Complete your application sufficiently in advance of the deadline to avoid any last minute technical problems. Problems due to last minute submissions *(e.g. congestion, etc.)* will be entirely at your risk. Call deadlines can NOT be extended.
- Consult the Portal Topic page regularly. We will use it to publish updates and additional information on the call (call and topic updates).
- Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Exchange System — By submitting the application, all participants accept to use the electronic exchange system in accordance with the Portal Terms & Conditions.
- Registration — Before submitting the application, all beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners must be registered in the Participant Register. The participant identification code (PIC) (one per participant) is mandatory for the Application Form.
- Consortium roles — When setting up your consortium, you should think of organisations that help you reach objectives and solve problems.

  The roles should be attributed according to the level of participation in the project. Main participants should participate as beneficiaries or affiliated entities; other entities can participate as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions. Associated partners and third parties giving in-kind contributions should bear their own costs (they will not become formal recipients of EU funding). Subcontracting should normally constitute a limited part and must be performed by third parties (not by one of the beneficiaries/affiliated entities). Subcontracting going beyond 30% of the total eligible costs must be justified in the application.
- Coordinator — In multi-beneficiary grants, the beneficiaries participate as consortium (group of beneficiaries). They will have to choose a coordinator, who will take care of the project management and coordination and will represent the consortium towards the granting authority. In mono-beneficiary grants, the single beneficiary will automatically be coordinator.
- Affiliated entities — Applicants may participate with affiliated entities (i.e. entities linked to a beneficiary which participate in the action with similar rights and obligations as the beneficiaries, but do not sign the grant and therefore do not become beneficiaries themselves). They will get a part of the grant money and must therefore comply with all the call conditions and be validated (just like beneficiaries); but they do not count towards the minimum eligibility criteria for consortium composition (if any). If affiliated entities participate in your project, please do not forget to provide documents demonstrating their affiliation link to your organisation as part of your application.
- Associated partners — Applicants may participate with associated partners (i.e. partner organisations which participate in the action but without the right to get grant money). They participate without funding and therefore do not need to be validated.
- Consortium agreement — For practical and legal reasons it is recommended to set up internal arrangements that allow you to deal with exceptional or unforeseen circumstances (in all cases, even if not mandatory under the Grant Agreement). The consortium agreement also gives you the possibility to redistribute the grant money according to your own consortium-internal principles and parameters (for instance, one beneficiary can reattribute its grant money to another beneficiary). The consortium agreement thus allows you to customise the EU grant to the needs inside your consortium and can also help to protect you in case of disputes.

- Balanced project budget — Grant applications must ensure a balanced project budget and sufficient other resources to implement the project successfully *(e.g. own contributions, income generated by the action, financial contributions from third parties, etc.)*. You may be requested to lower your estimated costs, if they are ineligible (including excessive).

- Completed/ongoing projects — Proposals for projects that have already been completed will be rejected; proposals for projects that have already started will be assessed on a case-by-case basis (in this case, no costs can be reimbursed for activities that took place before the project starting date/proposal submission).

- No-profit rule — Grants may NOT give a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). This will be checked by us at the end of the project.

- No cumulation of funding/no double funding — It is strictly prohibited to cumulate funding from the EU budget (except under 'EU Synergies actions'). Outside such Synergies actions, any given action may receive only ONE grant from the EU budget and cost items may under NO circumstances be declared under two EU grants; projects must be designed as different actions, clearly delineated and separated for each grant (without overlaps).

- Combination with EU operating grants — Combination with EU operating grants is possible, if the project remains outside the operating grant work programme and you make sure that cost items are clearly separated in your accounting and NOT declared twice *(see AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6.2.E)*.

- Multiple proposals — Applicants may submit more than one proposal for *different* projects under the same call (and be awarded funding for them).

  Organisations may participate in several proposals.

  BUT: if there are several proposals for *very similar* projects, only one application will be accepted and evaluated; the applicants will be asked to withdraw the others (or they will be rejected).

- Resubmission — Proposals may be changed and re-submitted until the deadline for submission.

- Rejection — By submitting the application, all applicants accept the call conditions set out in this this Call document (and the documents it refers to). Proposals that do not comply with all the call conditions will be rejected. This applies also to applicants: All applicants need to fulfil the criteria; if any one of them doesn't, they must be replaced or the entire proposal will be rejected.

- Cancellation — There may be circumstances which may require the cancellation of the call. In this case, you will be informed via a call or topic update. Please note that cancellations are without entitlement to compensation.

- Language — You can submit your proposal in any official EU language (project abstract/summary should however always be in English). For reasons of efficiency, we strongly advise you to use English for the entire application.

- Transparency — In accordance with Article 38 of the EU Financial Regulation, information about EU grants awarded is published each year on the Europa website.

  This includes:

  - beneficiary names
  - beneficiary addresses
  - the purpose for which the grant was awarded
  - the maximum amount awarded.

  The publication can exceptionally be waived (on reasoned and duly substantiated request), if there is a risk that the disclosure could jeopardise your rights and freedoms under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights or harm your commercial interests.

- Data protection — The submission of a proposal under this call involves the collection, use and processing of personal data. This data will be processed in accordance with the applicable legal framework. It will be processed solely for the purpose of evaluating your proposal, subsequent management of your grant and, if needed, programme monitoring, evaluation and communication. Details are explained in the Funding & Tenders Portal Privacy Statement.