

Programme for the environment and climate action (LIFE) 2021–2027

2018/0209(COD) - 17/04/2019 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 578 votes to 39, with 34 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013.

The European Parliament's position adopted at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure amended the Commission proposal as follows:

Objectives

The general objective of the LIFE Programme shall be to:

- contribute to the shift towards a sustainable, circular, energy-efficient, renewable energy-based, climate-neutral and -resilient economy;
- protect, restore and improve the quality of the environment, including the air, water and soil;
- halt and reverse biodiversity loss and to tackle the degradation of ecosystems, including through supporting the implementation and management of the Natura 2000 network.

The LIFE programme is the only programme dedicated specifically to environment and climate action, and therefore plays a crucial role in supporting the implementation of Union legislation and policies in those areas. Parliament considered that the LIFE Programme should contribute to mainstream climate actions and to the achievement of an overall target of at least 25 % of the EU budget expenditures supporting climate objectives over the MFF 2021-2027 period, and an annual target of 30 % as soon as possible and at the latest by 2027.

Budget

Parliament proposed that the financial envelope for the implementation of the programme for the period 2021-2027 should be set at **EUR 6.44 billion at constant 2018 prices**, i.e. EUR 7.27 billion at current prices (compared to EUR 5.45 billion at current prices in the Commission's proposal).

The indicative breakdown of this amount shall be as follows:

- Environment: EUR 4.71 billion at 2018 prices, of which: (i) EUR 2.82 billion for the Nature and Biodiversity sub-programme and (ii) EUR 1.88 billion for the Circular Economy and Quality of Life sub-programme;
- Climate Action area: EUR 1.95 billion of which: (i) EUR 950 million for the sub-programme 'Climate change mitigation and adaptation' and (ii) EUR 1 billion for the sub-programme 'Transition to clean energy'.

At least 60 % of the budgetary resources allocated to projects supported by action grants under the 'Environment' domain shall be devoted to grants awarded for projects supporting the 'Nature and Biodiversity' sub-programme.

Projects under the new Clean Energy Transition sub-programme shall focus on capacity building and the dissemination of knowledge, skills and innovative solutions to achieve the objectives of EU legislation and policy on the transition to renewable energy and improving energy efficiency.

The LIFE Programme may finance technical and administrative assistance activities by the Commission for the implementation of the LIFE Programme, such as preparatory, monitoring, control, audit and evaluation activities including corporate information technology systems and network activities supporting the LIFE Programme's National Contact Points, including training, mutual learning activities and events to share experience.

Implementation and forms of Union funding

At least 85% of the LIFE programme budget shall be allocated to grants for projects financed by other forms of financing and financial instruments in the context of mixed financing operations.

The co-financing rates for certain strategic nature protection projects, certain integrated strategic projects, technical assistance projects and standard action projects would be a maximum of 60 % of the eligible costs and 75 % in the case of projects financed under the Nature and Biodiversity sub-programme which concern in particular priority habitats or species or bird species for which funding is considered a priority, where this is necessary to achieve the desired conservation objective.

The evaluation of projects and the award process in the LIFE programme shall be governed by the quality criterion while seeking to ensure effective geographical coverage across the Union, including by supporting Member States to increase the quality of projects through capacity building.

Technical assistance projects concerning the activities of Member States' authorities should improve effective participation in the LIFE programme, support the activities of Member States with a low effective participation rate and improve the services of the National Contact Points in the Union as well as the overall quality of the proposals submitted.

Award criteria

The Commission shall set out award criteria in the multiannual work programme referred to in Article 17 and the calls for proposals taking into account the following principles:

- projects financed by the LIFE Programme shall be of Union interest and shall promote the use of green public procurement;
- projects shall ensure a cost-effective approach and be technically and financially coherent;
- projects with the highest potential of being replicated and taken-up by the public or private sector or of mobilising the largest investments or financial resources (catalytic potential) shall benefit from a bonus in their evaluation.