

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

2018/0209(COD) - 19/03/2021 - Council position

The Council adopted its position at first reading with a view to the adoption of 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 proposed Regulation aims at establishing a programme for environment and climate action (LIFE) for the duration of the multiannual financial framework (MFF) 2021-2027.

## ***Objective***

The LIFE programme aims to contribute to the implementation, updating and development of EU environment and climate policies and legislation by co-financing projects with European added value.

Its main aim is to:

- contribute to the just transition towards a sustainable, circular, energy-efficient, renewable energy-based, climate-neutral and climate-resilient economy;
- protect, restore and improve the quality of the environment, including air, water and soil, and;
- halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity and combating the degradation of ecosystems, in particular by supporting the implementation and management of the Natura 2000 network so as to contribute to sustainable development.

## ***Budget***

The financial envelope for the implementation of the programme for the period 2021-2027 should be EUR 5 432 000 000 in current prices.

The indicative distribution of the amount is:

- EUR 3 488 000 000 for the field 'Environment', of which: (i) EUR 2 143 000 000 for the subprogramme 'Nature and Biodiversity', and (ii) EUR 1 345 000 000 for the subprogramme 'Circular Economy and Quality of Life';
- EUR 1 944 000 000 for the field 'Climate Action', of which: (i) EUR 947 000 000 for the subprogramme 'Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation', and (ii) EUR 997 000 000 for the subprogramme 'Clean Energy Transition'.

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

## ***Climate mainstreaming and biodiversity ambition***

The Council's position reflects the agreement of the European Council on the MFF to increase the target for budget wide climate related spending from 25% to at least 30%. 61% of the financial envelope of LIFE is expected to contribute to the achievement of that target

Accordingly, the LIFE Programme should contribute to mainstream biodiversity action in the Union policies and to the achievement of the overall ambition of providing 7.5% of annual spending under the MFF to biodiversity objectives in 2024 and 10% of annual spending under the MFF to biodiversity objectives in 2026 and 2027, while considering the existing overlaps between climate and biodiversity goals.

### ***Implementation of funding***

The Council's position provides that at least 85% of the LIFE budget should be allocated to grants to finance, *inter alia*, strategic nature conservation projects under the Nature and Biodiversity sub-programme, strategic integrated projects under the Circular Economy and Climate Action sub-programmes and technical assistance projects.

Co-financing rates for eligible actions should be a maximum of 60% of eligible costs and 75% for 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 intended conservation objective.

### ***Award criteria and geographical balance***

The Council's position states that quality should be the general criterion for awarding projects under the LIFE programme and that the Commission should seek to ensure a real geographical coverage of the whole territory of the Union, based on the quality of the projects.

Funding should be provided for capacity building for activities by Member State authorities to improve effective participation in projects under the programme.

The maximum amount allocated to grants should be EUR 15 million, with maximum co-financing rates not exceeding 95% of eligible project costs.

### ***Multi-annual work programmes***

The Council position foresees that the first multi-annual work programme should run for four years and the second multi-annual work programme for three years.

The work programmes should be adopted by means of implementing acts and should include performance indicators for each sub-programme, as well as indicative timetables for calls for proposals, the selection procedure and award criteria for the submission of projects.

The Commission should ensure consultation of stakeholders during the preparation of the work programmes.