



# **Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)**

Call for proposals

LIFE Clean Energy Transition  
(LIFE-2025-CET)

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HISTORY OF CHANGES			
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2.0	22.04.2025	Footnote with reference to the MAWP	5
3.0	05.05.2025	Addition of header "For Scopes A and B:" under Scope of topic LIFE-2025-CET-LOCAL	13
		Slight reformulation of a sentence under Area 1 of the "Scope" of topic LIFE-2025-CET-POLICY concerning permit-granting procedures	17



## 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](#))<sup>1</sup>
- the basic act (LIFE Regulation [2021/783](#))<sup>2</sup>.

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

 Please note that this call is subject to the final adoption of the 2025-2027 Work Programme. In case there are substantial changes, we may have to modify the call (or even cancel it).

The call covers the following **topics**:

- **LIFE-2025-CET-LOCAL:** Boosting the clean energy transition in cities and regions
- **LIFE-2025-CET-POLICY:** Towards an effective implementation of key legislation in the field of sustainable energy
- **LIFE-2025-CET-BETTERRENO:** Energy renovation solutions - Making buildings' renovation faster, deeper, affordable, smarter, service- and data-driven
- **LIFE-2025-CET-INDUSTRY:** Supporting the clean energy transition of European industry and businesses
- **LIFE-2025-CET-BUILDSKILLS:** National Platforms on energy efficiency skills for the clean energy transition
- **LIFE-2025-CET-DHC:** Supporting district heating and cooling networks
- **LIFE-2025-CET-PRIVAFIN:** Crowding in private finance
- **LIFE-2025-CET-OSS:** One-Stop-Shops - Integrated services for clean energy transition in buildings
- **LIFE-2025-CET-PDA:** Project Development Assistance for sustainable energy investments

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<sup>1</sup> 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).

<sup>2</sup> 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).

<sup>3</sup> 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-2025-CET-EUCF:** European City Facility – Supporting cities to develop investment plans for the clean energy transition
- **LIFE-2025-CET-ENERPOV:** Alleviating household energy poverty in Europe
- **LIFE-2025-CET-ENERCOM:** Support services for 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<sup>4</sup> 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

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<sup>4</sup> 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<sup>5</sup>

- 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<sup>6</sup> and Habitats<sup>7</sup> 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<sup>8</sup>, the Action plan for nature, people, and the economy<sup>9</sup> as well as the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030<sup>10</sup> 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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<sup>5</sup> Scientific work undertaken by members of the general public, often in collaboration with or under the direction of professional scientists and scientific institutions.

<sup>6</sup> 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)

<sup>7</sup> 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).

<sup>8</sup> 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').

<sup>9</sup> 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'.

<sup>10</sup> 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<sup>11</sup>: 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<sup>12</sup>; 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<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> 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**

### ***Capacity building in public authorities***

#### **LIFE-2025-CET-LOCAL: Boosting the clean energy transition in cities and regions**

##### **Objectives**

The topic aims to support cities and regional authorities with the necessary capacity and skills to deliver and implement decarbonisation plans and strategies for the clean energy transition, which are critical for the industries, businesses and citizens in their territories.

Municipalities and regions are essential to deliver the energy transition on the ground. Their role is central to the achievement of the EU Green Deal, as recognised in the EU 'Fit for 55' legislative package, and in particular in the Energy Efficiency and the Renewable Energy Directives (EED and RED)<sup>14</sup>. Moreover, many municipalities and regions have already set ambitious energy targets and strategies under important initiatives and frameworks, such as the EU Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy.

In view of this, proposed actions should support cities and regional authorities in developing and reinforcing the specific capacities and skills needed to deliver on the clean energy transition and to achieve the specific targets.

Proposed actions should consider complementarity and alignment with relevant initiatives, including, but not limited to the National Energy and Climate Plans, the National Building Renovation Plans and the Horizon Europe Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities Mission. In addition, other technical assistance and capacity building initiatives should also be considered.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> The topic is also contributing to the objectives of the UN Sustainable Development Goal 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities.

<sup>15</sup> For instance, ManagEnergy, the EIB's European Local Energy Assistance (ELENA) Facility, the LIFE CET Project Development Assistance (PDA), Smart Cities Marketplace and the EU City Facility.

### Scope

Proposals are expected to focus on **one** of the two scopes established below. The scope addressed should be clearly specified in the proposal.

#### **Scope A: Implementation of integrated decarbonisation plans**

Starting from existing plans and strategies, and to enhance the leading role of the public sector on energy efficiency as described for instance in the Article 5(6) of the EED, there is a clear need to accelerate and mainstream implementation of sustainable energy measures, in coordination with key stakeholders and with particular attention to vulnerable groups. Proposals should empower cities and regional authorities to develop specific skills, approaches and know-how to decide and deliver energy measures on the ground and optimise public expenditure. The proposed activities should be place-based and cross-sector, if relevant, and may include, for instance: setting-up of relevant structures; establishing peer-to-peer approaches to share knowledge and best practices; delivering in-depth, comprehensive, and ambitious capacity building programmes that address public and private funding streams of energy measures, improving the regulatory framework, deploying clean energy transition technologies.

#### **Scope B: Development of methodologies, templates, blueprints and strategies for the preparation of local heating and cooling plans**

Decarbonising the heating and cooling sector is central to achieving the energy transition. Local and regional authorities have a key role to play alongside industries, businesses and citizens. For instance, Article 25(6) of the EED sets a specific objective to prepare local heating and cooling plans for municipalities with a population higher than 45000. In order to meet existing requirements and objectives and enable future action, cities and regional authorities need specific support. Proposals should include specific activities including, for instance, building skills, facilitating access to and integration of relevant data, developing comprehensive outlooks on energy demand and supply, fostering a gradual and timely phase-out of fossil gas, engaging market participants and distribution system operators (DSOs) responsible for network decommissioning plans<sup>16</sup> accelerating administrative processes and bundling joint efforts of municipalities at regional or other appropriate governance and territorial levels.

For Scopes A and B:

Proposals should clearly identify the targeted cities and regional authorities and explain/demonstrate their involvement and political commitment, which may take multiple forms including through specific and tailored letters of support.

Proposals should develop actions and methods that can be rapidly deployed and used by cities and regional authorities and help policy makers to prioritise actions.

Proposals should also outline the scale of the financial resources needed to implement decarbonisation plans and strategies in cities and regional authorities, and by the end of the action foresee the necessary financial resources within their public budget and assess possible financing solutions to implement the clean energy transition measures.

Furthermore, proposals should foresee structured dialogues between different levels of governance and an active involvement of public and private stakeholders, including

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<sup>16</sup> See for instance Directive (EU) 2024/1788 on common rules for the internal markets for renewable gas, natural gas and hydrogen, amending Directive (EU) 2023/1791 and repealing Directive 2009/73/EC.

citizens, communities and local/regional industry, businesses and energy operators to ensure a social, just, and competitive transition.

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.

### *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.

Proposals should quantify their results and impacts using the two sets of indicators provided for the topic (below), when they are relevant for the proposed activities. They should also propose indicators which are specific to 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, the indicators for this topic include, as relevant:

- Number of clean energy transition measures implemented (or initiated) by the end of the action.
- Financial resources dedicated or earmarked within the local/regional authority's budget for the implementation of CET plans/strategies and specific CET measures.
- Number of heating and cooling methodologies, templates, blueprints and fossil-free strategies established through the action.
- Number of policy makers/public officers with improved capacity/skills.
- Number of public and private stakeholders engaged.
- Average number of training hours per participant in capacity building programmes.
- Number of organisational structures created/reinforced.
- Number of institutionalised dialogues/cooperations within and beyond public authorities, including peers, private stakeholders and/or civil society.
- Number of Memorandum of Understandings or similar agreements demonstrating political commitment from Local and Regional Authorities.

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 CO<sub>2</sub>-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%

## Supporting the enabling provisions of EU legislation and strategies

### **LIFE-2025-CET-POLICY – Towards an effective implementation of key legislation in the field of sustainable energy**

#### Objectives

Under the European Green Deal and the REPowerEU Plan, the EU has put in place a whole set of new pieces of climate and energy legislation, including the revised Energy Efficiency Directive, Renewable Energy Directive and Energy Performance of Buildings Directive. The revisions make the policy framework for sustainable energy more stringent and ambitious. While the legislative framework offers a good amount of flexibility to Member States to shape the policy measures according to their needs and framework conditions, accurate design, monitoring, projecting and evaluation are essential elements of implementation.

This topic aims to support the implementation of the main pieces of legislation in the field of sustainable energy, notably of the Energy Efficiency Directive (Scope A), the Renewable Energy Directive (Scope B) and the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (Scope C).

This topic under the LIFE-2025-CET call for proposals exclusively aims at addressing the Renewable Energy Directive (Scope B). Applicants are invited to submit proposals for actions to support national public authorities and - where applicable - regional authorities in charge of the implementation of the **Renewable Energy Directive (RED)**<sup>17</sup>. Scopes A and C under this topic are not open in call LIFE-2025-CET.

Note that actions supporting the implementation of specific provisions of the Energy Efficiency Directive and the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive are partly addressed in other vertical topics.

#### Scope

Actions under this topic 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 contextualisation and specification of requirements, in general and according to the national and regional context.
- Scope, assess and model the impact of implementation options to comply with EU legislative requirements, thereby contributing to the design of more effective policies.
- Support the monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation.
- Develop and apply methodologies to more accurately measure, calculate and account for contributions made under the specific policy measures and programmes.

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<sup>17</sup> Directive (EU) 2018/2001 as amended by Directive (EU) 2023/2413.

Actions under call 2025 are expected to support the implementation of specific provisions related to the **streamlining of permit-granting process, renewables acceleration areas, information and training of installers and designers of selected renewable energy technologies.**

### **Scope B: Support for the implementation of the Renewable Energy Directive**

Lengthy administrative permit-granting procedures are one of the key barriers to investment in renewable energy projects and their related infrastructure. Directive (EU) 2018/2001 addressed this barrier by introducing rules on the organisation and maximum duration of the administrative part of the permit-granting procedure for renewable energy projects.

To support the faster deployment of renewable energy projects, Directive (EU) 2023/2413 has introduced a requirement for Member States to carry out a coordinated mapping for the deployment of renewable energy and related infrastructure in their territory. Member States should also designate as a sub-set of those areas, the *renewables acceleration areas*, specifically for one or more types of renewable energy plants and should indicate the type or types of energy from renewable sources that are suitable to be produced in such areas. A distinction is therefore introduced between projects located in *renewables acceleration areas*, for which deadlines and permitting can be further streamlined, and projects located outside such areas.

Following the adoption of the plans designating *renewables acceleration areas*, Member States should monitor any significant adverse environmental effects of the implementation of plans and programmes in order, *inter alia*, to identify, at an early stage, unforeseen adverse effects and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action.

Another significant barrier slowing down the growth of renewables is the shortage of skilled professionals in some markets. In this context, the Renewable Energy Directive requires Member States to ensure that certification schemes or equivalent qualification schemes are available for installers and designers of all forms of renewable heating and cooling systems in buildings, industry and agriculture, for installers of solar photovoltaic systems, including energy storage, and for installers of recharging points enabling demand response. Those schemes need to be based on the criteria laid down in Annex IV of the Directive and each Member State is to recognise the certification awarded by other Member States in accordance with those criteria. If Member States identify a substantial gap between the available and necessary number of trained and qualified installers to achieve their renewable energy target, they will need to take measures to address that gap.

Capacity building, technical advisory services and enhanced cooperation between relevant implementing authorities can facilitate the effective implementation of the above provisions.

Proposals should clearly demonstrate the concrete interest of the competent implementation authorities, notably national authorities, to engage in, contribute to and use the results from project activities. Clear commitment can be demonstrated, for instance, through dedicated letters of support.

Actions under this topic are expected **to address only one** of the two areas below. The area addressed should be clearly specified in the introduction of the proposal.

#### 1. Permit-granting procedures and renewable acceleration areas

Proposals addressing this area shall support competent national authorities in implementing relevant articles in the RED related to speeding up and streamlining permitting procedures and/or the development of plans designating renewables

acceleration areas for one or more broad types of renewable energy sources. Within this context, and where appropriate, actions might also envisage the provision of support in defining effective strategies to mitigate potential environmental impacts and to facilitate social acceptance.

To that end, proposals are expected to strengthen the capacity, e.g. through the exchange of best practices and training/mentoring programmes and improve collaboration of implementing bodies within and across Member States. Proposals could support the development of new tools and methods or the adaptation and replication of existing effective tools and datasets that facilitate availability and access to data and improve quality of data. Proposals are also encouraged to establish an EU community of practitioners to facilitate mutual learning and support the harmonisation of legislation, where applicable.

Where appropriate, activities may also support the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of relevant policy measures.

Proposals could also address permit-granting procedures for repowering or for new exploration, testing and production, including for pilot installations and innovative renewable energy technologies.

Addressing both permit-granting procedures and *renewables acceleration areas* will not necessarily lead to a higher score but could however be carried out if duly justified, for instance if the results from the action stemming from the designation of *renewables acceleration areas* would be used and would clearly provide added value for streamlining permit-granting procedures.

## 2. Support national authorities on the implementation of Article 18 of the RED

Proposals addressing this area shall support, including through technical advice and tools, competent national authorities in charge of the implementation of a framework to ensure a sufficient number of trained and qualified installers and designers of renewable heating and cooling systems in buildings, industry and agriculture, installers of solar photovoltaic systems, including energy storage, and installers of recharging points enabling demand response pursuant to article 18 of Directive 2018/2001 as amended. Actions shall carry out one or more of the following:

- Support the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of relevant provisions at the national level.
- Support the national assessment and identification of gaps between available and necessary number of trained and qualified installers to achieve their renewable energy targets set out in the Directive.
- Promote and enable exchange of insights and best practices within and across Member States, including on the mutual recognition of certification schemes and increased cross-border mobility of workers.
- Scope, assess and model the impact of implementation options at the national level to fill possible gaps, thereby contributing to the design of more effective policies.

**Proposals covering upskilling and reskilling activities such as the development/update of qualification and training schemes are not considered eligible within this topic.**

Actions will be required to plan cooperation with the Skill4Energy Platform (planned to be launched by the European Commission in 2025 or 2026) and its governance bodies to disseminate information, promote best practices, and provide input to identify measures facilitating cross-border mobility and establish mutually recognised certifications.

- *For actions addressing technical support and capacity building for the transition towards renewable-based and efficient district heating and cooling systems, please refer to topic LIFE-2025-CET-DHC.*
- *For actions addressing support services for energy communities creation, please refer to LIFE-2025-CET-ENERCOM.*

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 result in:

- Increased understanding and 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 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 and better monitoring; use of more accurate calculation and Measurement & Verification (M&V) methodologies; improved quality of reporting; improved understanding and measurement of the impacts.
- Improved understanding of potentials and market barriers.

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.

Proposals should quantify their results and impacts using the two sets of indicators provided for the topic (below), when they are relevant for the proposed activities. They should also propose indicators which are specific to 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 indicators for this topic include:

- 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 activity.
- Number of policy measures, implementing acts and related documents improved by the activity.
- Number of monitoring and reporting tools and documents improved by the activity.
- Number of references in policy-relevant documents, such as impact assessments, guidance documents etc.

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<sub>2</sub>-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**

### ***Supporting the Renovation Wave and the energy transition in buildings***

#### **LIFE-2025-CET-BETTERRENO — Energy renovation solutions - Making buildings' renovation faster, deeper, affordable, smarter, service- and data-driven**

#### Objectives

This topic contributes to the goals of the EU Renovation Wave strategy<sup>18</sup> and aims to help implement current and future building policies, notably in view of the revised Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) but also considering aspects of the New European Bauhaus initiative<sup>19</sup>.

This topic addresses several areas that are key for the achievement of the ambitious EU targets for the decarbonisation of buildings. It aims to develop and deploy approaches that bring actors, markets, frameworks and innovative solutions together to increase the attractiveness and cost-effectiveness of building performance up-grades and to reduce the administrative, logistic and financial burden that still goes along with buildings' retrofitting. The topic also aims to address the need for qualitative data to make building policy and information instruments more reliable and meaningful, to increase the public acceptance/demand and support robust verification and financing of building renovation and up-grade. Proposals should, where appropriate, explore synergies, while linking to, building on, complementing or promoting the market uptake of results from projects funded under other EU programmes, notably Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe.

#### 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

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<sup>18</sup> Communication [A Renovation Wave for Europe - greening our buildings, creating jobs, improving lives, COM\(2020\) 662 final](#).

<sup>19</sup> [https://new-european-bauhaus.europa.eu/about/about-initiative\\_en](https://new-european-bauhaus.europa.eu/about/about-initiative_en)

proposal will be evaluated. In case a proposal addresses elements of more than one scope, this should be duly justified.

Since the topic aims to trigger transnational actions and mutual learning, the implementation of activities is expected to happen in more than one eligible country.

### **Scope A: Fostering energy renovations and competitiveness**

Under Scope A, actions should address one of the following areas/aspects:

1. Increase renovation rates and deliver progress towards achieving 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, increasing current renovation rates, and on aggregating demand to facilitate more cost-effective, affordable, simple and efficient renovations. Proposals should support the large-scale roll out of solutions, models and approaches that lead to high quality renovations with energy performance guarantees, driving market confidence and stimulating investments. Proposals should take into account all actors in the renovation value chain as relevant (e.g. demand, building owners and investors, occupants, public and decision-making authorities, financial institutions, construction sector representatives, 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.

2. Improve capacity and productivity of companies in the construction sector to deliver the ambition towards a decarbonised building stock.

Proposals should support actors and companies in the supply chain of the construction sector, notably SMEs, to deliver energy renovations faster, with high quality and reduced costs. This may require the integration of new products, materials and processes with respect to current companies' practice. Proposals should support companies move towards more industrialised processes and optimised ways of working, standardising projects and solutions (including modular and prefabricated solutions where relevant) and facilitating the uptake of digital solutions, including to increase labour productivity in the sector. Proposals can address different stages of the renovation process, including design, planning, management or execution of works, ensuring better access to information and decision making. Proposals can also facilitate the coordination of the different actors in the supply chain to reduce inefficiencies, errors and delays. Where relevant, activities to facilitate the market uptake of circular and low carbon solutions and materials in renovations can also be considered.

Proposals should ensure uptake of their activities in the sector, for example through the involvement of professional organisations/associations and/or other relevant stakeholders.

Proposals should explain and adapt the proposed activities to the context and maturity of the markets and/or countries addressed. Proposals should coordinate with

existing support, funding schemes, one stop shops or existing renovation facilitation services in their area of action.

### **Scope B: Building instruments, data and services**

Actions are expected to improve the availability, quality and accuracy of buildings data, in particular in view of enhancing the reliability and consistency of key policy instruments and information tools, such as Energy Performance Certificates (EPC), Renovation Passports (RP) and the Smart Readiness Indicator (SRI). Actions may moreover help explore and foster the use of buildings data, and in particular energy consumption data, for the development and financing of services that enhance the energy performance and comfort of buildings and the efficiency of the system.

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

Actions should address for example one or more of the following areas/aspects:

- Develop, implement and roll-out approaches that improve the availability, quality and consistency of data for Energy Performance Certificates, including by using new or different assessment methods and different integrated data sources, towards improving the accuracy and reliability of EPCs, their indicators and recommendations.
- Improve the reliability and usefulness of Energy Performance Certificates and Renovation Passports and increase the transparency of building performance and renovation needs towards enhancing the market value of energy performance and comfort and to guard against energy poverty; this includes for example actions that help link the rating of EPCs and the improvement of the rating to the value of a building in view of potential investments; this also includes methods to facilitate comparisons of energy costs, indoor environmental quality and other relevant parameters.
- Support the roll-out of Renovation Passports (RP) for buildings as introduced by the revised EPBD to provide building owners planning a staged renovation with a clear strategy for the best timing, sequencing and scope of their interventions. 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 actions need to be compatible with the Renovation Passport scheme that Member States are required to put in place and thus need to follow the policy evolutions and frameworks as appropriate; they should moreover consider the interrelation with other building related instruments, notably EPCs, SRI and digital building logbooks. Proposals should also take into account existing support and funding schemes as well as relevant renovation support services, including one-stop-shops.
- Promote and support the use of digital tools for the assessment of the energy performance of buildings and inspections, notably following constructions, renovations and implementation of single renovation measures; help coordinate the assessments for Energy Performance Certificates, Renovation Passports (RP) and Smart Readiness Indicator; support the testing of combined issuing of EPCs and RPs, in line with the respective national frameworks.
- Develop methodologies that make the collection, structuring and integration of data more robust with the aim to measure and/or estimate and/or calculate and/or

document energy performance, energy savings, comfort and other wider benefits, towards facilitating financing of energy renovations and roll-out of energy services.

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 submitted under this topic 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.

Proposals should quantify their results and impacts using the indicators provided for the topic, when they are relevant for the proposed activities. They should also propose indicators which are specific to 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.

#### **For Scope A:**

Proposals submitted under Scope A should demonstrate how they will contribute to the following impacts, depending on the area addressed:

- 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 supply side of renovation works to deliver high quality renovations with guarantees reducing costs and time.

The indicators for Scope A include:

- Increased number of renovations and/or renovation rates.
- Increased number of deep renovations and/or deep renovation rates.
- Reduction of renovation costs.
- Investments in building energy renovation triggered.
- Number of companies with improved capacity in relation to new products, materials and processes under the scope of the topic.
- Number of companies integrating new products, materials and processes under the scope of the topic into their practices.

#### **For Scope B:**

Proposals submitted under Scope B should demonstrate how they will contribute to the following impacts:

- Improved reliability and consistency of Energy Performance Certificates; increased up-take of EPCs in the market, including stronger consideration in the valorisation of buildings and buildings portfolios.

- Improved availability, quality and accuracy of buildings and energy performance-related data; improved use of buildings performance data by financial institutions, service providers and building owners/operators, e.g. to deploy innovative financing schemes and/ or dedicated financial products.
- Better quality and cost-effectiveness of inspections and of the assessment procedures carried out for the Energy Performance Certificate, Building Renovation Passport and Smart Readiness Indicator.
- Up-take of improved methodologies to measure and monetise primary benefits and co-benefits of energy renovation services, such as environmental and health externalities.

The indicators for Scope B include:

- Number of references evidencing the use of more accurate and reliable Energy Performance Certificates by public and/or market stakeholders, including financial institutions.
- Number of more accurate and reliable Energy Performance Certificate-schemes and assessment procedures/ tools tested and/or deployed.
- Number of innovative assessment and inspection procedures and tools developed, tested and/or deployed.
- Number of references evidencing the use of improved buildings and energy performance data by public/policy-relevant stakeholders and market stakeholders, including financial institutions and energy service companies.

Proposals under Scopes A and B 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<sub>2</sub>-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%

### **Supporting the energy transition in industry and tertiary sectors**

#### **LIFE-2025-CET-INDUSTRY — Supporting the clean energy transition of European industry and businesses**

#### Objectives

The overall objective of this topic is to support the 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.

Engaging businesses in the clean energy transition and reducing their domestic footprint is central for the European Green Deal and to deliver on the Fit-for-55 package and the REPowerEU Plan to phase-out EU dependence on Russian fossil fuels

imports. It is also important for the Green Deal Industrial Plan<sup>20</sup> and the overall competitiveness of EU enterprises.

Through the Net-Zero Industry Act, which is part of the Green Deal Industrial Plan, the European Commission is aiming at increasing the manufacturing capacity of strategic net-zero technologies to meet at least 40% of the EU's annual deployment needs by 2030.

In 2022, the industry sector made up 25,1% of the total EU-27 final energy consumption out of which energy-intensive companies account for almost 40% of the total industrial final energy consumption. For this reason, modernising and decarbonising the business sector remains a top priority to succeed in the clean energy transition as also highlighted in the Future of European competitiveness report<sup>21</sup>.

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. New business models and financial schemes are needed to be able to adapt in the current energy crisis and take the decision to invest in an energy efficiency or renewable energy project. In this context, the European Commission has recently adopted the Clean Industrial Deal communication<sup>22</sup> along with the Affordable Energy Action Plan<sup>23</sup> with the aim to foster also the decarbonisation of energy-intensive industries through the establishment of cooperation initiatives (e.g. at industrial cluster level).

### Scope

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

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

Proposals under this scope should promote a sustainable and efficient use of energy in a specific industrial sector at European level by facilitating the collaboration between industrial sectors/sub-sectors sharing similar processes and energy related needs with sustainable energy technology manufacturers and providers. Sustainable energy solutions could include among others: renewable energy, heat electrification solutions through the use of heat pumps, and energy efficiency products and processes, including recent innovations ready for market deployment and more in general the renewable energy and energy efficiency related technologies covered by the Net-Zero Industry Act.

On the user side, specific industrial sectors could survey their production processes to define a number of standard processes and optimise their operational energy needs through a closer exchange with technology suppliers in order to effectively design sustainable energy solutions. On the provider side, manufacturers and providers could optimise and standardise their existing technological offers, products and solutions to meet the needs of the industrial sector. The goal is to move from custom-built project by project approach for each specific industrial plant and process, to more streamlined, standardised, and even turn-key solutions for industrial clients operating under the same processes. This aligned cooperation for creating demand and ensuring supply can provide decisive support for the decarbonisation of the industrial sector.

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<sup>20</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_23\\_510](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_510).

<sup>21</sup> [EU competitiveness: Looking ahead - European Commission](#)

<sup>22</sup> [Clean Industrial Deal - European Commission](#)

<sup>23</sup> [Affordable Energy Action Plan - European Commission](#)

Proposals are expected to support the establishment of concrete collaboration initiatives, their initial operation and the governance structure. Activities should address the development and validation of business models for the deployment of the specific solutions explored in the sector(s) addressed and, if relevant, capacity building activities for the deployment and installation of the solutions.

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

Involvement of the relevant representative organisations at national/European level for the user sector(s) and for technology providers is expected as a central feature in order to ensure effective market acceptance and implementation. This involvement may be ensured through participation in the proposal, but also through an active engagement process throughout the project activities. Convincing letters of support are expected to demonstrate interest from the targeted industrial sectors.

Proposals should focus on technologies already available on the market and should justify the choice of the targeted sector(s), including a detailed analysis of the barriers and potential solutions. Activities aiming at technological demonstration are not in the scope of this topic. The demonstration of the proposed solutions is not in scope and potential costs for equipment will be eligible only to a very small extent and only if well justified.

### **Scope B: Energy Cooperation among industries in proximity to foster clean, affordable and sustainable energy use**

Proposals under this scope should foster the market uptake of energy efficiency measures and the use of renewable energy (and heat pumps where relevant), through industrial energy cooperation approaches among companies that are in physical proximity (region, cluster, industrial park/site).

This scope aims to support the development of green regional/local industrial area/clusters, in each participating country targeted by the action addressing, among others, energy-intensive users.

Energy cooperation can refer to the process of sharing energy related assets (e.g. renewable energy generation, energy storage), sharing energy services, implementing energy exchanges (e.g. recovery and use of waste heat from industrial and manufacturing processes) as well as incentivise industrial symbiosis and voluntary integration of industrial energy prosumers with system operators (e.g. electricity, heat, hydrogen) and/or energy communities. Clustering of companies can also facilitate better access to finance, 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), proving the relevance of a collaborative approach in terms of value creation 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 are expected to identify a pipeline of investments covering, among others, the local heat/power networks and other relevant energy infrastructure as previously mentioned, to give long term visibility on the clean energy investment opportunities. Proposals should engage with the key relevant stakeholders (businesses, public authorities, industry park managers, private operators, investors, DSOs, ESCOs etc.) to ensure endorsement of the investments and alignment with local plans and

strategies. The engagement process should be clearly outlined and ideally resulting in a mapping of present and future industrial energy needs along with a number of pre-identified sustainable energy related infrastructure and services. Applicants are expected to demonstrate a clear support of the key relevant actors for their proposed activities.

The proposed approaches should demonstrate a high degree of replicability and proposals should include a clear action plan to communicate experiences, critical success factors and results towards relevant energy cooperation actors and stakeholders across the EU.

Proposals for both scopes 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 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.

Depending on the scope (A or B) and as relevant, proposals submitted under this topic should demonstrate how they will contribute to:

- 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 products adapted to meet industrial processes demands.
- Accelerate and streamline the identification of projects to foster clean, affordable and sustainable energy use at regional/local level.

Proposals should quantify their results and impacts using the indicators provided for the topic, when they are relevant for the proposed activities. They should also propose indicators which are specific to 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 indicators for this topic include:

- Number of new installations of net-zero energy technologies triggered by the action (including commitments).
- Number of key actors along the value chains with improved skills/knowledge triggered during the action.

- Number of energy cooperation plans or investment pipelines within the identified industrial clusters endorsed by the relevant stakeholders.
- Number of companies implementing energy cooperation approaches.
- Number of relevant stakeholders approached and mobilised.
- Number of standardised technological products adapted to the needs of a specific industrial sector and installed at industrial processes level triggered from the collaboration between industrial sectors and technology providers.

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<sub>2</sub>-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%

### ***Ensuring the right skills on the market for the energy transition***

#### **LIFE-2025-CET-BUILDSKILLS: 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** (<https://build-up.ec.europa.eu/en/bup-skills>) 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. 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.<sup>24</sup> More recently, 15 Member States had the opportunity to expand their platform and update their national roadmap with a 2030 perspective.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> 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>

<sup>25</sup> 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>

In addition, supported projects piloted innovative approaches to facilitate the roll-out of skills, including qualification and training schemes addressing emerging skills needs, innovative approaches to training, or measures to increase the demand for skills.

Clear action plans based on detailed sectoral analysis are now available for replication and upscaling at national level, with a particular momentum for the 15 roadmaps recently updated and endorsed by major national stakeholders. One of the key challenges in achieving this is the division of responsibilities and lack of cooperation between public authorities, training institutions, construction sector associations and building professionals.

Under Article 28 of the revised 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 through 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.

Under Article 17(12) of the revised 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 revised Renewable Energy Directive (EU/2023/2413) also places strengthened requirements in relation to skills, qualifications and certification.

In the light of this policy framework, the topic aims to build on the 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 professions listed under Article 28(1) EED<sup>26</sup> when relevant and identified as a priority by the national platform, considering also the gaps identified by Member States in the national reports requested under Article 28(6) EED.

### Scope

Proposals submitted under this topic should focus on **only one** of the two scopes below:

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<sup>26</sup> 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.

### **Scope A: Supporting operations of existing national skills platforms**

For eligible countries where the national platform is already running<sup>27</sup>, proposals should:

- continue to operate the national platform 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, 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, running regular working groups with relevant stakeholders focused on specific issues.
- implement the measures listed in the action plan of the 2030 national roadmap recently designed. There should be a specific focus on securing funding for the large-scale roll-out of the needed qualification and training schemes, including those piloted by previous projects, with a view to achieve a measurable impact on the annual training rate of professionals in the country.
- design a large-scale national communication and awareness raising campaign
  - 1) to promote the contribution of skilled professionals for the clean energy transition,
  - 2) to make the case for the upskilling of energy efficiency professionals and
  - 3) to attract 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 Article 28(6) EED and in the national roadmap and action plan when appropriate.

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, employment agencies and 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.<sup>28</sup>

### **Scope B: (Re)establishing national skills platforms**

For other eligible countries not listed under Scope A, proposals should:

- (re)establish the national 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, but this should be expanded, also considering other energy efficiency professions listed under Article 28(1) EED<sup>29</sup>. The platform should operate as a permanent structure gathering national experts from all relevant stakeholder

<sup>27</sup> Austria; Bulgaria; Croatia; Czech Republic; France; Greece; Hungary; Italy; Ireland; Lithuania; The Netherlands; Poland; Romania; Slovakia; Spain.

<sup>28</sup> A good example of such roadshows can be found in the *nZEB Roadshow* project (Horizon 2020): <https://cordis.europa.eu/article/id/443072-on-the-road-with-energy-efficient-buildings>

<sup>29</sup> Key outputs can be accessed here: <https://build-up.ec.europa.eu/en/skills/skills-projects?f%5B0%5D=programme%3Aiepillar1>

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 the skills dimension of the clean energy transition and run regular thematic working groups with relevant stakeholders, focused on specific issues.

- 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.
- 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 progress 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 a large-scale national communication and awareness raising campaign
  - 1) to promote the contribution of skilled professionals for the clean energy transition,
  - 2) to make the case for the upskilling of energy efficiency professionals and
  - 3) to attract 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.

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, employment agencies and 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.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> 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>

For both scopes, 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 on existing national initiatives in the field of training on skills for the clean energy transition, including those established by the BUILD UP Skills initiative and under the EU Pact for Skills. Close cooperation with the BUILD UP Skills Community of Practice (to be launched in 2025) 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 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 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.

Depending on the scope (A or B), proposals submitted under this topic should demonstrate how they will contribute to:

#### **Scope A:**

- Number of key stakeholders involved in the platform.
- Number of meetings of the platform, including thematic working groups organised.
- Number of national policy documents resulting from the platform.
- Number of measures from the national roadmap implemented.
- 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).
- Number of trained professionals.
- Increase in the annual training rate of relevant professionals resulting from the roadmap implementation.
- Amount of funding secured (public or private) to roll out training and qualification programmes.

#### **Scope B:**

- Number of key stakeholders involved in the national platform.
- Number of meetings of the platform, including thematic working groups organised.
- Number of national policy documents resulting from the platform, including the national roadmap and action plan.
- 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).
- Projected annual training rate of relevant professionals resulting from the roadmap implementation.
- Amount of funding secured (public or private) to roll out training and qualification programmes.

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<sub>2</sub>-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%

## **Supporting the heating and cooling decarbonisation and modernisation**

### **LIFE-2025-CET-DHC: Supporting district heating and cooling networks**

#### Objectives

To advance towards carbon neutrality and to phase out EU dependence on fossil fuels imports, there is an urgent need to reduce fossil fuel consumption for heating and/or cooling purposes. In that context, in particular modern and efficient district heating systems can connect local demand with renewable and waste energy sources, as well as the wider electric and gas grids, thereby contributing to the optimisation of supply and demand across energy carriers.

The REPowerEU Plan, the revised Energy Efficiency Directive (EED) and the revised Renewable Energy Directive (RED) set out ambitious measures, including the increase of the share of renewable energy and waste heat in district heating systems. District heating and/or cooling operators/owners need to prepare and implement plans so that existing systems fulfil the criteria for “efficient district heating and cooling”, defined in the EED. This will require, among other aspects, the integration of renewable energy (e.g. from solar thermal, ambient energy and geothermal resources) and waste heat. Furthermore, district heating has been identified as a key option for the decarbonisation of the heating sector in countries and regions without a long tradition and experience in the technology.

Guidance, recommendations and technical advisory services have already been developed and tested at the EU, national and local levels. Notwithstanding, a large share of existing district heating and cooling systems still overly rely on fossil fuels. Additionally, the switch to renewable energy and waste heat and the development of new systems in emerging markets is hampered, among other factors by limited human, technical and financial capacities. Technical support and enabling frameworks are therefore needed to support the preparation of modernisation and development projects.

### Scope

Proposals should address one of the following aspects and are expected to work either:

- with operators/owners of existing district heating systems to provide them with the required technical support for the preparation of investment plans for the fuel switch of existing district heating systems to fulfil the criteria for “efficient district heating and cooling” as defined in the Energy Efficiency Directive. This can include the extension of existing district heating and cooling networks provided that they are fully based on renewable energy or waste heat and the achievement of efficient district and cooling networks criterion is assured; or
- with municipalities and the relevant key stakeholders in the development of investment plans for new district heating and/or cooling networks, provided that they are fully based on renewable energy or waste heat, and with particular attention to existing buildings.

For both aspects, the focus should be on identifying and offering concrete ways to integrate renewable energy or waste heat, assessing investments needed, and affordability with economic accessibility for residents and businesses.

The investment plans to be developed should include technical requirements and technical concepts, detailed identification of the investments and pre-feasibility studies, their timing, the internal and external resources required, the public and private funding sources, in particular for the first tranches of investments and the potential identification of alternative funding sources and models.

The proposal should clearly describe the methodology and planned activities regarding:

- the identification of local energy resources, the required infrastructure and potential investment costs.
- the assessment of the compatibility with the existing building stocks.
- the involvement of local stakeholders, as relevant, in particular potential waste heat suppliers and potential customers.
- the preparation of a business plan that includes projected revenues, operating costs, capital expenditures, and return on investment.
- the identification of funding sources (grants, loans, private investments ...), and a strategy to secure the capital for the project.
- the official endorsement process for the investment plans by relevant stakeholders, e.g. Management board of the district heating company or local authorities; this should be reflected in the deliverables.
- the compliance with local, regional, and national laws and regulations related to energy production, distribution and consumption.

The investment plans to be produced should enable the targeted district heating system to fulfil the criteria for “efficient district heating and cooling” as specified in the Energy Efficiency Directive Recast within a timeline of 10 years. Actions may also include the assessment of the potential to participate in electricity markets by providing balancing, storage and other flexibility services.

Proposals should support the development of a substantial number of investment plans in at least 3 eligible countries, and work with follower cases for which transfer of knowledge should be described and effectively provided during the project life time.

Proposals should demonstrate, in a clear and convincing way, the commitment of operators/owners of the district heating networks that will be targeted for the collaboration. Proposals should also explain the content of the support to be provided and how the consortium will deliver this support on the ground.

Additionally, actions are expected to provide an adequate risk assessment, identify barriers, provide recommendations for regulatory bodies, inputs for local administrations for the preparation of the local heating and cooling plans and promote replication through other district heating operators/owners.

Actions under this topic are not expected to finance the equipment or the development of new tools (e.g. software or the upgrade of existing ones, platforms; applicants are encouraged to make use of existing commercial software, as needed).

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 submitted under this topic should demonstrate the impact of the supplied investment plans and guidance on the transition towards “efficient district heating and cooling” networks and on integration of renewable energy and waste heat. The expected results together with a detailed analysis of the starting point, including a set of well-substantiated assumptions and clear links between the results, should be given in the proposal.

Proposals should demonstrate how they will contribute to equip district heating and/or cooling operators and/or local authorities and other key stakeholders with investment plans which are endorsed and ready to be implemented after the end of the project, as well as guidance, internal capacity and other elements which are required to either build new systems (fully based on renewable energy or waste heat) or to meet the criteria defined for “efficient district heating and cooling”, encouraging potential waste heat suppliers to consider becoming heat suppliers to district heating.

Proposals should quantify their results and impacts using the indicators provided for the topic, when they are relevant for the proposed activities. They should also propose indicators which are specific to 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 indicators for this topic include:

- Number of endorsed investment plans for existing or new district heating and/or cooling systems, allowing them to fulfil the criteria for “efficient district heating and cooling” defined in the Energy Efficiency Directive.
- Number of follower cases (DH companies) for which transfer of knowledge will be effectively provided.
- Number of local and regional authorities integrating the outcomes of the project in their energy planning.
- Investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy sources triggered by the implementation of the investment plans developed thanks to the project (cumulative, in million Euro).

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 CO<sub>2</sub>-eq/year).

### Funding rate

Other Action Grants (OAGs) — 95%

## **Attracting private finance for sustainable energy**

### ***Developing innovative financing offer for sustainable energy***

#### **LIFE-2025-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 innovative financing schemes.

Significant investments in energy efficiency and renewables need to be mobilised to achieve the ambition set by the European Green Deal<sup>31</sup> and the objective to reduce EU dependence on fossil fuel imports set out in the REPowerEU Plan<sup>32</sup>. 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<sup>33</sup>.

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 innovative financing mechanisms. National Energy and Climate Plans provide a solid framework for Member States to evaluate and report on investment 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

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<sup>31</sup> [COM\(2019\) 640 final](#)

<sup>32</sup> [COM\(2022\) 108 final](#)

<sup>33</sup> [https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/funding-and-financing/european-energy-efficiency-financing-coalition\\_en](https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/funding-and-financing/european-energy-efficiency-financing-coalition_en)

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.

### Scope

Proposals should set up an innovative 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.

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.
- Local or regional investment funds blending public grants and private finance, e.g. in the form of loans.
- Guarantees, risk-sharing, insurance or other de-risking instruments.
- Energy services such as energy performance contracting, efficiency as a service, and variants thereof, if used to finance the investments.
- 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 innovative, operational financing scheme supporting investments in energy efficiency, potentially combined with renewables and energy storage, in at least 1 eligible country. Proposals can build on and/or upscale innovative financing schemes successfully tested previously<sup>34</sup>.
- 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.
- Define the targeted region(s) and sector(s) and justify how the proposed scheme is innovative and complements available funding schemes.
- 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 of the proposed financing scheme compared to market practices.
- 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.
- 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 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.

Proposals should demonstrate how they will contribute to deliver financing schemes that are operational and ready to finance investments, with credible access to financing sources and a prospective pipeline of investments.

Proposals should quantify their results and impacts using the indicators provided for the topic, when they are relevant for the proposed activities. They should also propose indicators which are specific to the proposed activities. Proposals are not

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<sup>34</sup> Such schemes may originate outside or inside the European Union, including, for example, those developed and implemented under project development assistance (PDA) facilities under the LIFE and Horizon 2020 programmes (including LIFE/H2020 PDA or ELENA-EIB).

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 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 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<sub>2</sub>-eq/year).

#### Funding rate

Other Action Grants (OAGs) — 95%

## **Supporting the development of local and regional clean energy investment projects**

### ***Developing innovative integrated service offers***

#### **LIFE-2025-CET-OSS: One-Stop-Shops - Integrated services for clean energy transition in buildings**

#### Objectives

As highlighted in the “Renovation Wave” initiative of the European Green Deal and in the REPowerEU Plan, there is a pressing need to increase the number of ambitious building renovations across the EU and to better integrate the switch to efficient renewable-based heating and cooling as an integral part of building renovations. However, many building owners lack the skills and capacity to set up, implement and finance complex and ambitious clean energy transition projects. In addition, many project developers face high implementation costs, given the relatively small size of the investments and the lack of turnkey solutions, and have limited access to adequate and attractive financing solutions on the market.

This topic aims at supporting the creation or replication of One-Stop-Shops (OSS), offering integrated services for clean energy transition in private residential buildings, in line with the Energy Efficiency Directive (art. 22) and the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (art. 18).

Proposals submitted under this topic (depending on the specific scope) are expected to set up integrated renovation services to tackle the following aspects:

1. Improve market conditions and develop integrated building renovation service offers to:
  - Reduce complexity, simplify decision making and stimulate demand for investment in energy performance improvements and decarbonisation.
  - Connect all relevant actors in the value chain (e.g. construction companies, architects, engineers, urban planners, financiers, etc.).
  - Streamline access to various support measures, especially where there is support for specific target groups (e.g. energy poor households).
  - Improve awareness and trust towards such integrated services, through an adequate mix of online and in-person support, clear accountability, quality assurance and/or dedicated consumer protection policies.
  - Develop a robust pipeline of investments in building renovations, able to increase interest and participation from financial institutions and exploit synergies on the market, for instance via the development of dedicated financial products for building renovations facilitated through One-Stop-Shops.
2. Provide methods and support to:
  - Implement and operationalise integrated services, and test them in a pilot phase, triggering the first investments that validate the proposed concept.
  - Build expertise and organisational innovations needed for project development.
  - Reduce costs and time for all actors of the value chain through standardised approaches (e.g. optimised business processes, standardised contractual arrangements or technical measures, branding of the proposed services, district approaches, etc.).
  - Ensure cost effectiveness and price transparency of services provided to final beneficiaries.
  - Operationalise a focus on low energy renovation, either all at once or in a planned staged approach, using tools such as Building Renovation Passports.
3. Aim at a sustainable business model of the integrated service taking into account that:
  - Integration of services can be developed through dedicated operators and/or through an improved co-ordination between existing local actors.
  - The approach should minimise reliance on public subsidies to cover operating costs, having the prospect of economically viable business models in the medium to long term.
4. Communicate results:
  - Disseminate innovative solutions (e.g. organisational and contractual), suited to the targeted contexts.
  - Help improve legal and regulatory environments by communicating project results to relevant public authorities and bodies.
  - Demonstrate a high degree of replicability and include a clear action plan to communicate experiences and results towards potential replicators across the EU.

Proposals should provide a precise description of their starting point and clearly demonstrate a nuanced understanding of comparable initiatives, especially within their national context.

Proposals should demonstrate that the proposed services build concretely on existing work, ensuring they are well integrated in their local context. This includes making

best use of what is locally available, notably in terms of local market conditions and public support schemes. Additionally, proposals should show how they contribute to developing partnerships between local authorities and the relevant market players, in the construction, heating and cooling, and wider energy sectors, as well as in the financial sector. The targeted territories and/or sector should be clearly identified and justified, notably segmenting and quantifying the potential target users, and a first detailed concept of the services should be presented in the proposal.

Applicants are encouraged to build on the existing information and material under EU-PEERS<sup>35</sup>. Proposals should foresee to cooperate with the EU-PEERS community and to communicate relevant information and data including practical challenges and good practices.

### Scope

Based on the generic approach and common objectives presented above, proposals submitted under this topic are expected to focus on one of the specific scopes below. The scope addressed should be specified in the introduction of the proposal. Although this does not exclude the possibility of addressing, in addition, some aspects of the other scope, proposals must be fully clear on what the core focus of the approach is, and who the main final beneficiaries will be.

#### **Scope A: Integrated Home Renovation Services**

Under Scope A, actions should clearly focus on the energy renovation of existing single or multi-family buildings in the private residential sector. Actions in “complex buildings” (e.g. coexistence of owner-occupied and rented housing; coexistence of private and social housing; coexistence of housing and business premises, typically on the ground floor; etc.) may be included in this scope. Specific approaches to deal with subsets of the residential sector (e.g. focus on condominiums, focus on energy poor households, etc.) are also welcome, as long as the main focus is on private non-professional homeowners (including homeowners’ associations in the condominium sector, but excluding public/social housing organisations).

Beyond the common objectives presented in the "Objective" section, the proposals presented under this scope should meet the following specific objectives:

The services developed under Scope A should cover the whole “customer journey” of the homeowners aiming to renovate their home. Dedicated structures (legal entities or consortia of organisations) should provide integrated home renovation services, with the explicit intention of delivering services that belong in the competitive sector. In particular, proposals are expected to provide proactive support to homeowners ranging from technical design, obtention of permits, selection of qualified professionals, contracting of works, structuring and/or provision of finance (e.g. loans), to the supervision of contractors to carry out the renovation works and quality assurance.

Those services can be implemented by public or private entities, either on a not-for-profit or for-profit basis.

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<sup>35</sup> The EU-PEERS project (see <https://eu-peers.eu>) is organising a community of practitioners gathering different European initiatives of integrated home renovation services; this platform provides support for the establishment of integrated home renovation services, including operational guidance, best practice insights, strategic analysis, and capacity-building resources.

Proposals addressing only the provision of generic information and diagnosis, and/or limited to Internet platforms without on-site interaction are not within the scope.

Proposals that showcase innovative approaches to effectively address the objectives, and/or that originate from regions where integrated home renovation services remain underdeveloped, will be prioritised.

### **Scope B: Integrated services for rental housing energy upgrade**

Under Scope B, actions should clearly focus on energy renovations of existing rental housing owned by professional entities. Examples of stakeholders that could be targeted by the services developed under Scope B are, among others: private housing companies, housing cooperatives, social housing operators, real-estate investors, property managers (on behalf of multi-owner households or real estate investors), building administrators, non-profit organisations, etc.

Beyond the common objectives presented in the "Objective" section, the proposals presented under this scope should meet the following specific objectives:

The type of integrated solutions developed must be particularly tailored to the specificities of rental housing in the local context. Services developed under Scope B should go beyond merely providing first-level information and generic diagnoses. They must also address key objectives such as the development of strategic partnerships, particularly with construction companies and/or financial institutions; the development of tailored financial and/or fiscal schemes specific to rental housing, and the practical implementation of sustainable business models, leveraging property values, optimising market dynamics and ensuring consistent investment returns. Proposals should also pay particular attention to governance issues, e.g. developing a framework to facilitate decisions and conflict resolution among co-owners, or developing a framework so that tenants can participate in decisions and partly share risks and benefits, etc. Proposals addressing only the provision of generic information and diagnosis, and/or limited to Internet platforms without on-site interaction are not within the scope.

- *For actions addressing mostly the development of a financing offer for home renovation, please refer to LIFE-2025-CET-PRIVAFIN.*
- *For actions primarily addressing energy poor households that require support beyond One-Stop Shop approaches, please refer to LIFE-2025-CET-ENERPOV.*

Proposals under Scopes A and B may be submitted by a **single applicant or by applicants from a single eligible country**.

For Scopes A and B, 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.

### **Scope C: EU community of "Integrated Home Renovation Services" practitioners**

Proposals under Scope C should build on the foundations established by the EU-PEERS project<sup>36</sup>, fostering a network of skilled practitioners and bringing together

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<sup>36</sup> see <https://eu-peers.eu>

European initiatives focused on integrated home renovation services. By connecting local and regional initiatives, this community will foster international collaboration and share best practices.

The community should serve as a reference knowledge hub, gathering and consolidating information on existing and emerging home renovation approaches and models across the EU to enhance their replication potential. Participants should notably aim to actively collaborate with public authorities to support the transposition of the Energy Efficiency Directive (EED) and the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD).

Proposals under Scope C should consolidate findings, facilitate dialogue, and support emerging initiatives to expand local projects and enable cross-border replication. Proposals should aim to extend activities to Member States not yet covered by the EU-PEERS project. Special attention should be given to mentorship and outreach initiatives, particularly in regions where integrated home renovation services are limited or emerging.

Knowledge exchange activities should take place at both national and EU levels, with notably appropriate resources allocated to facilitating exchanges among one-stop-shop projects supported by the LIFE Clean Energy Transition programme.

Capacity-building activities, such as training national trainers and engaging local authorities, will strengthen renovation programmes. Effective communication will highlight successful home renovation strategies and renovation packages that effectively trigger ambitious renovations.

Proposals should align with relevant EU initiatives, leveraging existing results to maximise impact. In particular, efforts should be made to coordinate with national hubs of the European Energy Efficiency Financing Coalition, where relevant.

Regarding thematic areas of focus, this community is expected to provide consolidated findings and recommendations for emerging and developing initiatives, as well as for national/local regulators working to facilitate the deployment of one-stop shops. Key areas of work include:

- Strategic positioning: Identifying market gaps, crafting attractive service offerings, and exploring scalable business models.
- Tools and methodologies: Streamlining renovation processes and developing innovative tools.
- Skills development: Identifying emerging professions and training needs.
- Partnerships: Establishing strong collaborations with market actors to ensure high-quality services.
- Quality assurance and consumer protection: Ensuring reliability and consumer trust in home renovation services

For Scope C, the Commission considers relevant that consortia gather a minimum of **3 applicants from 3 different eligible countries**; and proposals submitted by a single applicant or proposals covering a single eligible country are not considered appropriate under scope C.

The Commission intends to select **one single proposal under Scope C**.

For Scope C, the Commission considers that a proposal requesting a contribution from the EU of a range of EUR 2 million to EUR 2.5 million would allow the specific

objectives to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting another amount.

### Expected impact

#### **Expected impacts - Scope A and Scope B:**

Proposals submitted under Scope A and Scope B should clearly present the concrete results to be delivered through the proposed 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 baselines and establish clear causality links between the results and the expected impact.

Proposals should demonstrate how they will contribute (depending on the specific scope) to:

- Integrated services fully implemented, operational and tested before the end of the action: projects must necessarily set up the core infrastructure and launch the services before the project end; in addition, in a pilot phase, they must trigger the first investments that validate their concept, with the understanding that actual delivery at the worksites, comprehensive scaling of activities and subsequent investments will continue beyond the project's completion.
- Upgrade of the services offer compared to the existing situation in the area and in relation to the overall advancement of the OSS offer at national level.
- Strong and trustworthy partnerships with local actors (e.g. SMEs, architects, engineers, ESCOs, financial institutions, chambers of commerce, professional federations and networks, local and regional authorities, energy agencies, NGOs) evidenced, for example, by the signature of commitment charters, collaboration agreements and/or framework contracts.
- Prospect of economically viable business models that minimise reliance on public subsidies to cover operating costs, identifying robust revenue streams and implementing strategic actions to approach long-term financial independence.
- Increased awareness and trust of end-users through clear accountability evidenced, for example, by comprehensive quality assurance mechanisms and/or dedicated consumer protection policies.
- Public provision of data (e.g. average time required for support at each stage of the renovation journey, average conversion rates, typical profiles of the professionals involved, etc.) and guidance in order to facilitate replication of the approach by other market actors.
- Evidence that the value of the services offered is recognised by the market (e.g. through growth in the number of contacts, in the conversion rates leading to investment, in the willingness of final beneficiaries to pay for the services provided, etc.).

Proposals should quantify their results and impacts using all the impacts indicators listed below. They may also propose additional indicators which are specific to 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 indicators for this topic include:

- Amount of in-person support made available to building owners (quantified in full-time equivalent). The conditions for accessing support should also be specified (a permanent physical presence is not mandatory, and support mechanisms can also take other forms such as, for example, temporary counters, fleeting services, or direct on-site consultations).
- Number of dwellings credibly benefiting from the One-Stop Shop services, based on the territorial scope and justified availability of the services.
- Number of initial contacts (in number of households and/or private companies) made by the One-Stop Shop.
- Number of on-site visits conducted (only for scope A, in number of housing units, differentiated per housing type if relevant)
- Number of investment projects effectively implemented (in number of housing units, differentiated per housing type if relevant).
- Average global conversion rate (in %) of initial contacts into effective investments, demonstrating the value of the services offered.
- Investments in building energy renovation triggered by the project (cumulative, in million Euro, differentiated per housing type if relevant).
- Average percentage of energy savings per investment project (in %, differentiated per housing type if relevant).

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 t CO<sub>2</sub>-eq/year).
- Investments in sustainable energy (energy efficiency and renewable energy) triggered by the project (cumulative, in million Euro).

### **Expected impacts - Scope C:**

Proposals submitted under Scope C should result in:

- Expansion of a European community of practice gathering relevant stakeholders, deeply rooted in their ecosystem and actively involved in ongoing local implementation of "integrated home renovation services".
- Data and guidance made publicly available in order to facilitate the uptake of "integrated home renovation services" across Europe. Evidence that the value of such integrated services is recognised by the market.

The impacts of the proposals should be demonstrated during the project and within 5 years after the project lifetime.

Proposals submitted under Scope C should quantify their impacts using the indicators listed below, where relevant, as well as other project-specific performance indicators:

- Number, diversity and quality of stakeholders actively involved in the community. This could include, but not be limited to, public authorities, consultants, architect associations, craftsmen associations, homeowner associations, citizens associations, universities, training centres, financial institutions, etc.
- Number, nature and quality of planned collective outputs, distributed between the main categories outlined in the Scope section above. In particular, guidance and support proposed to emerging initiatives.
- Number and nature of planned contributions to legislative and regulatory processes.
- Number and nature of national capacity building programmes put in place.
- Number, nature and target audience of communication materials.

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

- Investments in sustainable energy triggered by the project (cumulative, in million Euro).
- 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 CO<sub>2</sub>-eq/year).

#### Funding rate

Other Action Grants (OAGs) — 95%

### ***Delivering public and private sector investments***

#### **LIFE-2025-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. 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 European Green Deal goals<sup>37</sup> and will help pave the way for a decarbonised and clean energy system. In the next years, PDA actions are expected to significantly contribute to accelerating the clean energy transition, as pointed out in the REPowerEU plan<sup>38</sup> to phase out EU

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<sup>37</sup> [Energy and the Green Deal \(europa.eu\)](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/en/press-communications/infographic/infographic-energy-and-the-green-deal-2022-01-11-1000x500px.pdf).

<sup>38</sup> [Communication from the Commission of 18.5.2022 to the European Parliament, the European Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, REPowerEU Plan, COM\(2022\) 230 final.](https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/press-communications/communication-commission-18-5-2022-to-european-parliament-european-council-european-economic-social-committee-and-committee-regions-repowerEU-plan-com(2022)230-final)

dependence on fossil fuel imports, and the Green Deal Investment Plan<sup>39</sup>, by stimulating market demand for Net-Zero technologies and assisting in their uptake, thereby also increasing the competitiveness of European economy.

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 are expected to mobilise private investments and increase cost-effectiveness of EU and national public budgetary resources by developing ready-to-finance and bankable projects.

PDA projects can also aim to implement investment concepts developed under the European City Facility (EUCF)<sup>40</sup>, or developed under the LIFE CET support to heating & cooling networks and industrial clusters, amongst other.

### *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. The call 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 (at least 10 for exclusive investments in residential buildings). In this context, proposals need to identify the initially envisaged investment pipeline.

Proposals could target sectors including:

#### **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.

#### **District heating/cooling networks**

- 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.

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<sup>39</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda\\_20\\_24](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_20_24).

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.eucityfacility.eu/>

### **Infrastructure**

- Existing public infrastructure such as water/wastewater services or lighting.

### **Industry**

- Industry, businesses and services, including SMEs or industrial clusters, clearly advancing beyond business-as-usual approaches.

### **Renewables**

- Renewable energy production by energy communities and other citizen-led initiatives, clearly advancing beyond business-as-usual approaches.

### **Mobility**

- Clean and energy efficient urban transport infrastructure.
- Low emission urban mobility solutions including conversion of urban areas for soft mobility or non-motorised transport.
- Integration of smart recharging infrastructures in buildings, including in multi-family buildings.

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 with a particular focus on leveraging private investment including blending public with private financing or improved combination of existing funds. This could include Energy Performance Contracting (EPC), dedicated financial instruments, innovative on-bill and on-tax payment schemes, community-based financing schemes etc.

Proposals should aim for high ambition levels, in particular regarding energy savings and decarbonisation, e.g. 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 also specify the needs to be addressed including e.g. a related market/barrier analysis, the financial and organisational approaches/options to be 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 of a range of EUR 1 million 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 actions that support the establishment of investment plans developed on the basis of the criteria for "efficient district heating and cooling" as set out in the revised Energy Efficiency Directive (EED), please refer to the topic LIFE-2025-CET-DHC.*
- *For actions supporting cities and regional authorities in implementing decarbonisation plans or local heating and cooling plans, please refer to the topic LIFE-2025-CET-LOCAL.*
- *For the development of one-stop-shops for the renovation of residential buildings, please refer to topic LIFE-2025-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 (facilitation) approach and/or financing solution for sustainable energy investment projects with a particular emphasis on private sector funds. 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 (at least EUR 10 million for exclusive investments in residential buildings). The evidence in form of signed work or investment contracts, or a similar convincing proof, needs to be planned and indicated in the proposal, and submitted during the project duration. 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. They should also propose indicators which are specific to 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 indicators for this topic include:

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

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<sub>2</sub>-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-2025-CET-EUCF: European City Facility – Supporting cities to develop investment plans for the clean energy transition**

### Objectives

Under this topic, a 'European City Facility' shall be run under the LIFE CET programme. This facility should build on the experiences of the current European City Facility<sup>41</sup> (EUCF) and envisage an appropriate follow-up and scaling up of its fundamental approach.

To achieve the ambitious objectives of the EU climate and energy policy, significant investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy are needed to reach the energy transition goals established in the EU energy transition legislative framework (Energy Efficiency Directive - EED, Renewable Energy Directive - RED, Energy Performance of Buildings Directive - EPBD). This is particularly important to meet the specific climate and energy targets set for 2030 and climate neutrality by 2050 and contribute to the Affordable Energy Action Plan<sup>42</sup> objective of lowering energy costs, particularly with regard to delivering energy savings and renewable electricity supply.

In this context, the revised EED and EPBD aim to increase the cost-effectiveness of public funding and the mobilisation of private investments in energy efficiency measures. In addition, the EU legislative framework establishes important obligations for local authorities and public bodies, such as Article 25 EED on local heating and cooling plans, Article 26 EED on district heating and cooling transition, Article 6 EED on public building renovations, as well as Article 10 EPBD on solar energy in buildings, including for existing public buildings.

European cities and municipalities play a key role in aggregating smaller projects into sizable packages and have a significant potential in the mobilisation of the substantial amount of finance needed for the energy transition. For instance, the current European City Facility has so far supported the development of more than 400 investment concepts for energy efficiency and renewable energy investments.

However, the significant challenges ahead demand further contributions from European cities and municipalities in developing and scaling up investment packages. An important and still persisting gap is the lack of capacity and/or resources of public authorities, especially in small and medium-sized municipalities, to transform their long-term climate and energy strategies, for instance Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAPs) or local heating and cooling plans<sup>43</sup>, into mature investment concepts which can enable access to different finance sources. Public authorities in many cases lack (access to) financial, technical and legal expertise needed to collect relevant data, develop an investment programme of scale which, for instance, bundles projects with neighbouring constituencies, or design sufficiently mature finance strategies.

Such investment concepts should allow a larger number of European cities and municipalities to start or intensify the process of mobilising investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy in a tailored and target-oriented way. Depending on the underlying investment portfolio and structure, such concepts can be used to directly approach investors and/or financiers for more in-depth investment

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<sup>41</sup> <https://www.eucityfacility.eu/>

<sup>42</sup> [https://energy.ec.europa.eu/strategy/affordable-energy\\_en](https://energy.ec.europa.eu/strategy/affordable-energy_en)

<sup>43</sup> In case of district heating and cooling, plans referred to in Article 26.5 EED should be taken into account.

discussions and negotiations, and/or, where relevant, envisage combination/blending with other EU financing streams and services to trigger the expected investment<sup>44</sup>.

### *Scope*

Proposals should take into account the experience of the ongoing EUCF in addressing the above issues and envisage an appropriate follow-up and scaling up of its fundamental approach.

In this context, proposals are expected to run a 'European City Facility' which offers financial support and related services to European cities, municipalities or their groupings to develop investment concepts for energy efficiency and integrated energy transition investments combining energy efficiency and renewables.

These concepts should be developed within a limited period of time and cover, among the others, a clear identification of the potential project pipeline, a legal analysis, a governance analysis, a description of how the investments will be financed and a design of the process to launch the investments.

In particular:

- proposals are expected to deliver financial support to third parties, in the form of lump sum grants to cities, municipalities or their groupings which should represent 70-75% of the budget.
- in accordance with the general call conditions on financial support to third parties, applicants should clearly specify why financial support to third parties is needed and 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 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 proposal must also clearly describe the results to be obtained and include the possibility of organising calls with a regional/sectorial focus;
- applicants should demonstrate the capacity to run a financial support scheme at large scale in accordance with LIFE CET standards and that they are able to select the most cost-efficient and appropriate applications considering, among other things, the scale of the potential investment and energy savings, as well as the number of inhabitants covered in the specific context targeted;
- the European City Facility should offer services at the national level to support cities and municipalities in call applications, investment concept development, identification of financing streams and investment implementation processes.
- the European City Facility should also implement appropriate capacity building schemes, in particular to help beneficiaries of the lump sum grants to use the financial support in the most effective manner and guide them in the post-investment concept phase;
- additionally, the European City Facility should offer opportunities for exchange of best practices among cities and municipalities, including at national level, with a view to remove existing barriers and enable the uptake and efficient operationalisation of the investment concepts;

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<sup>44</sup> For instance, Cohesion Policy Funds, InvestEU Fund, National Recovery and Resilience Plans, Project Development Assistance Facilities such as LIFE CET PDA or EIB ELENA and National Investment Platforms.

- furthermore, the European City Facility should establish an appropriate framework for comprehensive monitoring, analysis, capitalisation, communication and dissemination of results and success stories, notably the monitoring of the investment potential represented by the investment concepts, as well as the investment volumes secured and actually implemented after the end of the lump sum grant; this should include the targeted investment sectors and the related source(s) of funding/financing.

Applicants should be deeply rooted in municipal sustainable energy/climate planning and financial engineering of energy efficiency investments and integrated energy transition investments combining energy efficiency and renewables.

Applicants should also demonstrate a deep understanding of the strategic nature of this initiative, including the different challenges for upscaling finance and, in particular, for mobilising private financing sources.

In addition, applicants should also 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.

In order to qualify for support through the European City Facility, cities and municipalities or their groupings should, among other things, provide proofs of political commitment, clarify existing planning processes and resources, demonstrate - on the basis of politically approved SECAPs, local heating and cooling plans, or plans of similar ambition - a substantial potential of investment and energy savings in the context targeted. Additionally, they should describe the investment sectors addressed, the type of financial solutions envisaged and the governance to develop the investment concept. Furthermore, they need to develop a convincing strategy to engage key stakeholders in technical and financial areas, as well as citizens, plan long-term capacity building actions within the public administration, and commit to a monitoring of investment implementation for at least 1 year.

The EUCF should work hand in hand with existing DG Energy initiatives, such as the Smart Cities Marketplace<sup>45</sup> and the Covenant of Mayors<sup>46</sup>, ensuring integrated approaches, exploring synergies on tools and services offered, and pursuing complementarity when facilitating the financing and implementation of the developed investment concepts.

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

The Commission intends to select **one single proposal** under topic LIFE-2025-CET-EUCF.

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of up to EUR 15 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.

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<sup>45</sup> <https://smart-cities-marketplace.ec.europa.eu>

<sup>46</sup> <https://eu-mayors.ec.europa.eu/en/home>

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 impacts.

Proposals should demonstrate how they will contribute to the follow-up and scaling up of the fundamental approach of the current European City Facility.

Proposals should quantify their results and impacts using the indicators provided for the topic, when they are relevant for the proposed activities. They should also propose indicators specific to 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 indicators for this topic include:

- Number of investment concepts delivered, and in particular number of investment concepts delivered to implement local heating and cooling plans.
- Number of investment concepts transformed into ambitious tangible investments as a result of the action.
- Number of public authority staff with increased capacity for developing investment concepts for energy efficiency, and integrated energy transition investments combining energy efficiency and renewables.

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<sub>2</sub>-eq/year).

### Funding rate

Other Action Grants (OAGs) — 95%

## **Involving and empowering citizens in the clean energy transition**

### ***Addressing energy poverty***

#### **LIFE-2025-CET-ENERPOV: Alleviating household energy poverty in Europe**

### Objectives

In recent years, European households have continued to spend an increasing share of income on energy, leading to higher rates of energy poverty<sup>47</sup> and negatively

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<sup>47</sup> 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

affecting living conditions, well-being and health. Most recent estimates suggest that 10.6% of Europeans are unable to keep their homes adequately warm<sup>48</sup>. Following surges in energy prices, the number of energy poor households overburdened by their energy costs is on the rise. These higher 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. In addition to its causal multidimensionality, the phenomenon 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<sup>49</sup> 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)<sup>50</sup>, 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 EED (recast) underlines the need to address the split incentive dilemma and remove barriers to energy efficiency measures in multi-owner properties. To ensure more coordinated action on energy poverty, an EC Recommendation on Energy Poverty and accompanying Staff Working Document further set out a series of measures and policies that can be adopted<sup>51</sup>.

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 and improved living conditions. 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 public authorities, in designing longer-term strategies and coordination frameworks to mitigate energy poverty at different governance levels, including dedicated financing schemes specifically addressing energy performance improvements for energy poor households.

### *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<sup>52</sup> and the energy poverty pillar of Covenant of Mayors<sup>53</sup>.

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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.

<sup>48</sup> Eurostat, June 2024.

<sup>49</sup> [COM\(2019\) 640 final, including the Renovation Wave Strategy and Commission Recommendation \(EU\) 2020/1563 of 14 October 2020 on energy poverty.](#)

<sup>50</sup> [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 \(recast\).](#)

<sup>51</sup> [Commission Recommendation \(EU\) 2023/2407 of 20 October 2023 on energy poverty \(C/2023/4080\) and Commission Staff Working Document \(SWD/2023/647 final\).](#)

<sup>52</sup> Results of the predecessor of the Energy Poverty Advisory Hub, the European Energy Poverty Observatory, should also be considered, where relevant.

<sup>53</sup> 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.

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

The proposed action 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. In case of Scope A, actions can address one or both sub-scopes.

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

- Actions should support national, regional and/or local authorities and societal intermediaries in **setting up long-term, cross-sectoral coordination structures to tackle energy poverty**. The coordination structures should foster cross-departmental and vertical collaboration across national, regional, and local government structures and social intermediaries, and could include setting up long-term national energy poverty observatories<sup>54</sup>. Where national coordination structures or observatories already exist, the proposal should clearly demonstrate the need for, and added value of, any new coordination structures. To facilitate the set-up of such structures and build the necessary organisational expertise, the proposed action should also include the delivery of capacity-building activities for the national, regional and/or local authorities and societal intermediaries involved in the coordination structures. The actors involved are expected to represent all relevant sectors (e.g. energy, social, health and housing) to ensure a holistic participatory approach to the alleviation of energy poverty in the long term and to improve social cohesion.
- **Deliver tailored policy support to national authorities on the implementation of relevant provisions of the EED (recast)**<sup>55</sup> to allow authorities to design and take concrete policy level actions to empower and protect energy poor households. The proposed action should provide public authorities with support and advice on e.g. regulatory, funding and technical aspects to help analyse their national policy mix, and to combine, contextualise and pull the different energy poverty-related provisions together to allow for the effective and coherent planning, design and improvement of energy poverty alleviation strategies and measures at the national level. In doing so, the action should ensure the involvement and mobilisation of national authorities across different sectors and support these authorities to map out and evaluate the impact of different implementation options, taking into account the specific national needs and context on energy poverty.

It is expected that the relevant national/regional/local authorities and stakeholders such as consumer or social organisations, the housing sector, or healthcare providers are either directly involved or their concrete support and involvement is demonstrated in the proposal.

### **Scope B: Support for residential multi-apartment building renovation**

Actions under Scope B should support the energy renovation of residential multi-apartment buildings with energy poor inhabitants, with a particular focus on reinforcing and adapting the governance and decision-making structures of building management and homeowners or tenants associations, tackling related regulatory framework barriers (e.g. property and/or rental laws), split incentives, and setting

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<sup>54</sup> Commission Recommendation (EU) 2023/2407 of 20 October 2023 on energy poverty (C/2023/4080). A key element of such observatories should be the inclusion of a strategy ensuring that the observatories will be sustained after the end of the project.

<sup>55</sup> In particular Articles 2(52), 8-9, 22 and 24 of the EED (recast)

up and coordinating relevant support services. The renovation actions supported should take into account the ability of residents to remain in their homes after works, thereby avoiding so-called renovictions, and may also include renewable energy solutions.

It is expected that the homeowners or tenant associations and housing organisations, in particular, are either directly involved in the consortium or their concrete support and involvement is clearly demonstrated in the proposal.

The proposed actions should take into account multiple benefits from the energy efficiency and renewable energy measures for the 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 actions addressing building renovation actions without a clear focus on energy poor households, please refer to LIFE-2025-CET-BETTERRENO.*
- *For actions addressing One-Stop-Shops for renovation, please refer to LIFE-2025-CET-OSS.*
- *For actions addressing support services for energy communities' creation, please refer to LIFE-2025-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 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.

Proposals submitted under this topic should demonstrate how they will contribute to the reduction of energy poverty for the targeted households (Scope B) and the effective implementation of the regulatory framework and 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 reported on, where relevant.

Depending on the scope and as relevant, proposals should demonstrate how they will contribute to:

- Improved collaboration and knowledge exchange between different levels of public authorities and of social intermediaries involved in the coordination structures.
- Increased understanding and expertise in the public authorities in charge of implementing relevant EED (recast) provisions.

- More effective and coherent implementation of provisions, including better planning, design and evaluation of energy poverty related policy measures.

Proposals should quantify their results and impacts using the indicators provided for the topic, when they are relevant for the proposed activities. They should also propose indicators which are specific to 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 indicators for this topic include:

- Number of energy poor households with reduced energy costs.
- Number of residential multi-apartment buildings renovated.
- Number of governance and decision-making structures adapted for residential multi-apartment buildings to facilitate energy renovation investments.
- Number of agreements concluded between homeowners and tenant associations demonstrating commitment to energy renovation investments.
- Number of energy poverty observatories and coordination structures established.
- Quantified multiple benefits, where relevant, 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.
- Number of energy poor consumers benefitting from the activities.
- Number of legislative or implementing acts, policies or strategies created/adapted on energy poverty.
- Other environmental impacts such as reduction of the production of harmful substances.

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<sup>56</sup>.
- 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<sub>2</sub>-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-2025-CET-ENERCOM: Support services for energy communities**

#### Objectives

This topic aims to establish or expand services supporting the set-up and growth of energy communities.

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<sup>56</sup> According to studies, many energy poor households already consume less energy than average households. Therefore, in this topic, energy savings triggered could result from increased energy *efficiency* to achieve a minimum comfort level.

Energy communities have been recognised as key players in the EU energy system for their potential role in meeting the 2030 and 2050 energy and climate objectives. Moreover, the European Commission is working on a Citizen Energy Package that, among other models of citizen engagement in the energy transition, will propose support mechanisms for the emergence and growth of energy communities in Europe.

Energy community projects can channel citizens' and local authorities' investment into renewables and energy efficiency while ensuring local ownership of energy assets. At the same time, energy communities have the potential to deliver other community benefits ranging from lower energy prices or local employment to social cohesion and inclusion. However, developing and realising energy community projects can be complex. In some cases, this is due to the regulatory and policy context (e.g. changing national support schemes for renewables, burdensome permitting, heavy administrative procedures, etc.). In others, challenges are linked to the lack of information and knowledge, limited access to finance, or difficulties in engaging citizens and establishing effective governance and decision-making structures. These hurdles prevent energy communities around Europe from reaching their full potential.

Beyond the work being done by Member States to define enabling frameworks for energy communities, an increasing number of local and regional authorities are creating services to support the emergence and development of energy communities and collective energy projects in their territories. In addition, in some contexts, energy community stakeholders are getting together to help each other by mutualising services and supporting other communities in project development. They do so by, for example, offering technical assistance, mutualising operation and maintenance activities, expanding access to financial instruments and new business models, or establishing partnerships to make sure enabling frameworks for energy communities adapt to the needs on the ground. These groupings have first-hand experience of the hurdles projects can face and can deliver effective assistance to stimulate community projects. In coordination with local and regional governments, they are emerging as new actors who could deliver effective support services for energy communities.

### Scope

Proposed actions should focus on establishing or expanding support services aimed at facilitating the set-up of new energy communities and the growth of existing ones.

The entity (or entities) in charge of delivering the support services should be clearly identified and justified. The support services can be provided by relevant local actors such as local or regional governments, energy agencies or umbrella energy community organisations (e.g. federations, associations of energy cooperatives). Proposals involving the mutualisation or sharing of services by umbrella energy community organisations or groupings of energy communities are encouraged.

Services should focus on supporting renewable energy communities (RECs) according to the revised Renewable Energy Directive ((EU) 2018/2001)<sup>57</sup> and/or citizen energy communities (CECs) according to the Directive on common rules for the internal

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<sup>57</sup> [Directive \(EU\) 2018/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources.](#)

electricity market ((EU) 2019/944)<sup>58</sup>. Proposals should indicate which types of energy communities are targeted.

The services delivered to energy community projects must involve direct technical support with personalised advice through the different phases of project development (e.g. access to finance, business model definition support, legal advice, energy commercialisation, assistance for the operational phase). Services could also aim at scaling-up and professionalising energy communities using approaches such as peer-to-peer support and twinning programmes among communities with different levels of experience.

Proposals should specify the type of support provided and the way in which it will be implemented including staffing and communication channels. A constant physical presence is not mandatory (as support can also be provided in other settings such as temporary counters or regular meetings with project promoters). Approaches including mainly the provision of generic information and advice, access to guidance materials, and/or focusing on on-line platforms and tools without or with limited direct human interaction are not considered relevant to the scope of this topic.

The service design is to be detailed and justified considering the specific local/regional challenges to be addressed. Some of those obstacles may be linked to energy community project development (e.g. cooperation with Distribution System Operators), but proposals can also aim at tackling other local challenges (e.g. rural depopulation, the need to speed up renovations, tackling energy vulnerability, facilitating cooperation between citizens and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises).

Beyond the above, all proposals should:

- Demonstrate the support of the stakeholders who are necessary to ensure the success of the action through direct participation in the Consortium or a convincing strategy for their involvement (in particular, for local or regional authorities).
- Provide a credible approach regarding the way in which the service will reach and engage energy community project developers. This approach should be adapted to the specificities of the territories targeted and consider how to include diverse types of members.
- Foresee adequate training and capacity building for the staff delivering the services or actors needed for project implementation including (where relevant) local and regional authority staff, community members and installers. The objectives and content of training activities should be outlined in the proposal.
- Outline a compelling plan to ensure the continuity of the support beyond the lifetime of the project.

Proposals should include an explanation of the degree of development of communities in the areas targeted. Priority will be given to proposals focusing on geographic areas in which energy communities are less developed or on types of activities where fewer community experiences exist (e.g. community heating and cooling, citizen-led renovation, flexibility).

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<sup>58</sup> [Directive \(EU\) 2019/944 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 June 2019 on common rules for the internal market for electricity and amending Directive 2012/27/EU.](#)

Proposals must ensure their complementarity to existing national enabling frameworks and local support for energy communities. They should also complement and make use of existing resources and networks as relevant (e.g. the European Energy Communities Facility, the Citizen Energy Advisory Hub).

Proposals are not expected to develop any new tools<sup>59</sup>, 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.

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

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

### Expected impact

Proposals submitted under this topic should present the concrete impacts that will be achieved by the planned activities.

Proposals should quantify the topic specific impacts (where relevant), the LIFE CET common indicators and any other project-specific performance indicators which they consider relevant for their action.

The impacts should be quantified for the end of the project and for 5 years after its end. Figures reported will be assessed considering the context in which they are generated and should be credibly linked to the foreseen activities.

The indicators for this topic include:

- Number of energy community services fully implemented, operational and tested before the end of the action. Their testing must trigger the first energy community project investments.
- Number of energy communities benefitting from the support (including new and existing entities).
- Amount of in-person support made available to energy community project developers (full-time equivalent person months).
- Number of energy communities established thanks to the services (detailing if they are RECs or CECs).
- Number of members (citizens or organisations) who have joined the energy communities because of the support provided.
- Number and type of stakeholders with increased skills.
- Number of local and regional authorities committed to replicate best practice experiences.
- (Where relevant) Number of groupings of energy communities mutualizing services.

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<sup>59</sup> Please consider, among other sources, the tools listed under the Toolbox of the European Energy Communities Repository before proposing the development of new tools: [https://energy-communities-repository.ec.europa.eu/energy-communities-repository-support/energy-communities-repository-toolbox-0\\_en](https://energy-communities-repository.ec.europa.eu/energy-communities-repository-support/energy-communities-repository-toolbox-0_en)

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 tCO<sub>2</sub>-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 91 400 000**.

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

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Topic budget</b>
LIFE-2025-CET-LOCAL	<b>EUR 7 000 000</b>
LIFE-2025-CET-POLICY	<b>EUR 4 000 000</b>
LIFE-2025-CET-BETTERRENO	<b>EUR 6 000 000</b>
LIFE-2025-CET INDUSTRY	<b>EUR 9 000 000</b>
LIFE-2025-CET-BUILDSKILLS	<b>EUR 6 000 000</b>
LIFE-2025-CET-DHC	<b>EUR 6 000 000</b>
LIFE-2025-CET-PRIVAFIN	<b>EUR 7 000 000</b>
LIFE-2025-CET-OSS	<b>EUR 10 000 000</b>
LIFE-2025-CET-PDA	<b>EUR 8 400 000</b>
LIFE-2025-CET-EUCF	<b>EUR 15 000 000</b>
LIFE-2025-CET-ENERPOV	<b>EUR 6 000 000</b>
LIFE-2025-CET-ENERCOM	<b>EUR 7 000 000</b>

The availability of the call budget still depends on the final adoption of the 2025-2027 Work Programme.

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:	24 April 2025
<u>Deadline for submission (full proposal):</u>	<b><u>23 September 2025 – 17:00:00 CET</u></b> <b><u>(Brussels)</u></b>
Information on evaluation results:	February 2026
GA signature:	June 2026

#### 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/calculator (mandatory Excel template available in the Submission System)
  - participant information including previous projects, if any (mandatory template available in the Submission System)
  - for topic LIFE-2025-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](#)<sup>60</sup>, 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))

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<sup>60</sup> 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).

- non-EU countries:
  - listed EEA countries and countries associated to the LIFE Programme ([list of participating countries](#))<sup>61</sup>
- 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<sup>62</sup>.

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'<sup>63</sup>. ⚠ 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)<sup>64</sup>. Such entities are not eligible to

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<sup>61</sup> 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.

<sup>62</sup> See Article 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

<sup>63</sup> For the definitions, see Articles 190(2) and 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

<sup>64</sup> 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](#).

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<sup>65</sup>. 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-2025-CET-LOCAL](#), [LIFE-2025-CET-POLICY](#), [LIFE-2025-CET-BETTERENO](#), [LIFE-2025-CET-INDUSTRY](#), [LIFE-2025-CET-DHC](#), [LIFE-2025-CET-EUCF](#), [LIFE-2025-CET-ENERPOV](#) and [LIFE-2025-CET-ENERCOM](#): proposals must be submitted by at least 3 applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities) from 3 different eligible countries.

For topics [LIFE-2025-CET-BUILDSKILLS](#), [LIFE-2025-CET-PRIVAFIN](#), [LIFE-2025-CET-OSS](#) and [LIFE-2025-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).

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.

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*)<sup>66</sup>.

Financial support to third parties is not allowed for Call LIFE-2025-CET except for topic LIFE-2025-CET-EUCF.

Financial support to third parties is allowed in topic [LIFE-2025-CET-EUCF](#) 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

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<sup>65</sup> 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).

<sup>66</sup> See, for instance, [Guidance on funding for activities related to the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of Union legislation and policy](#).

– 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.

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<sup>67</sup>:

- 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<sup>68</sup> (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)

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<sup>67</sup> See Articles 138 and 143 of EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

<sup>68</sup> '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.

- 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<sup>69</sup> 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<sup>70</sup>:

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


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<sup>69</sup> '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.

<sup>70</sup> See Article 143 EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

'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<sup>71</sup>) or environmental management systems (*e.g.* Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS)) would be an asset.
- Value for money of the proposal.

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
<b>Overall weighted (pass) scores (without bonus)</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>90</b>	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.

<sup>71</sup> See list on [https://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smqp/PEFCR\\_OEFSR\\_en.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smqp/PEFCR_OEFSR_en.htm).

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*). The starting date should be after grant signature. A retroactive starting date can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons - but never earlier than the proposal submission date.

### 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 for this call:*

- 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-2025-CET-EUCF**
  - 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<sup>72</sup>: Yes
  - volunteers unit cost<sup>73</sup>: Yes (without indirect costs)
- travel and subsistence unit cost<sup>74</sup>: No (only actual costs)
- equipment costs: depreciation
- other cost categories:
  - costs for financial support to third parties for **all LIFE-2025-CET topics except for topic LIFE-2025-CET-EUCF**: not allowed
  - costs for financial support to third parties for topic **LIFE-2025-CET-EUCF**: allowed for grants or similar; maximum amount per third party EUR 60000, 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

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<sup>72</sup> 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).

<sup>73</sup> 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).

<sup>74</sup> 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).

*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 get 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](#).

### 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). The prefinancing will be paid 30 days from entry into force/financial guarantee if required— whichever is the latest.


For **all LIFE-2025-CET topics except for topic LIFE-2025-CET-EUCF**: there will be no interim payments. There will be one or more **additional prefinancing payments** linked to a prefinancing report.

For topic **LIFE-2025-CET-EUCF**: 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 EU Login 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)
- FAQs on the Topic page
- [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](mailto: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 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](#).