



**Guide for the evaluation of
LIFE+ project proposals 2007**

This document aims at explaining to the public the criteria and procedures that will be used for the evaluation of LIFE+ proposals submitted for the 2007 round.

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1. General Remarks

The selection/evaluation/revision process is carried out by the European Commission, with the assistance of a company/consortium of independent expert evaluators, hereafter called 'the Contractor'. However, the Commission remains responsible for the rejection of the proposals during the process, the awarding of the final scores and the drawing up of the final list of proposals to be co-financed.

All proposals received by the Commission before the deadline of **15th January 2008, 17.00** via the competent national authorities are registered in the ESAP (*Evaluation and Selection Award Procedure*) database. Any information or documents submitted after that deadline will not be taken into account, unless the Commission has explicitly asked an applicant to provide this information.

Once the registration of proposals in ESAP has been completed, the individual evaluators will have access to ESAP and may enter their comments and scores.

Basic selection and evaluation principles

All evaluators, from the Commission and the Contractor alike, must base their assessment of the proposals on the provisions of this evaluation guide, using as a basis the questions established for each criterion.

Within the limits allowed for by thematic and national allocation rules of the LIFE+ Regulation, the principle of equal treatment between all proposals must be strictly applied throughout the eligibility, selection and award phases of the evaluation process. Evaluations and scores given to each proposal must be as objective and equitable as possible. Each decision (for the eligibility and selection criteria) and each score given (for the award criteria) must be clearly justified in ESAP by reasoned comments.

All comments in ESAP will be made in English. Evaluators must ensure that all their comments are concise, complete and comprehensible. All comments must make sense without any further need for explanation, and must always be directly relevant to both the proposal and the criterion applied. Evaluators must avoid vague, ambiguous assessments. Comments must be precise enough to allow the Commission to ask precise questions to the beneficiaries during the revision phase. For each evaluation criterion, evaluators must provide substantial comments under "for" and "against" justifying the score proposed.

Evaluators must introduce in ESAP detailed, unambiguous and realistic suggestions for possible amendments and improvements to the project proposal. If a project is pre-selected on the so-called "long list", these suggestions will become essential for the subsequent revision phase.

Those award criteria that are evaluated by the Contractor will always be assessed independently by at least two expert evaluators. Each expert evaluator must elaborate an assessment report in ESAP for each proposal assigned to him/her. Based on these reports, the Contractor will provide a synthesis assessment for each proposal submitted for assessment. In case the two individual expert assessments for a given award criterion significantly diverge, the Contractor will conduct a third assessment of the proposal and will elaborate a new synthesis report on this particular criterion.

2. Eligibility phase

All proposals submitted for the LIFE+ 2007 selection round will be checked for compliance with the following "eligibility criteria" (see chapter 9 of the current guide for the detailed list of questions):

- 1) The proposal has been submitted to the European Commission via the competent national authority and received by the Commission services before the deadline of **15th January 2008, 17 h 00**.
- 2) The proposal has been sent to the European Commission on CD-ROM or DVD, in an electronic pdf format that is based on a scan (minimum 300 dpi) of the original printed A4 format paper forms. The proposal must be submitted as one single "*black and white – only*" pdf document, including all technical and financial forms to be filled in. The proposal must be printable on a black-and-white printer, and in an A4 format. By way of exception, maps annexed to the proposal can be submitted as separate pdf documents that have been directly saved from their original format. These annexed map files may be submitted in format A4 or format A3, and may include colours.
- 3) The relevant standard LIFE+ 2007 application forms (downloadable from the Commission website) have been used for preparing the proposal. Depending on the objectives of the proposal, the application forms used are those for "LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity", "LIFE+ Environment and Governance" or "LIFE+ Information and Communication".
- 4) All relevant application forms are present and have been fully completed.
- 5) Except for dates and signatures, the information on the application forms is not hand-written.
- 6) The scanned application forms A2, A3 (only if there is one or more associated beneficiaries) and A6 (only if there is one or more co-financiers) carry stamped and dated signatures with the status and full name of the signatory clearly in evidence on the pdf document. If the status of associated beneficiary /co-financer commitment at this stage is 'not fully confirmed', the declarations explain the current status of the commitment. In addition, for *LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity* proposals, a complete form A8 with a stamped and dated signature is provided from the competent nature conservation authority of the Member State where the proposal is submitted (and from all participating Member States in the case of multi-national proposals). All the above signed declarations are considered very important. Failure to deliver them or to clearly indicate the financial contribution (forms A2, A3 and A6) may lead to an exclusion of the proposal from all further evaluation. Signing the forms A2 and A3 also confirms that the beneficiaries are not in one of the situations referred to in Articles 93(1) and 94 of the Financial Regulation (Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002).¹
- 7) Form B1 (Summary description of the project) is completed in English. The other application forms may however be completed in any of the other official EU languages, except Maltese or Irish.

¹ O.J. L248 of 16.10.2002

8) The three following mandatory annexes are provided for the coordinating beneficiary (only coordinating beneficiaries that are public authorities are exempt from this obligation):

- The "LIFE+ Simplified Financial Statement", provided as a separate Excel file with the LIFE+ Application Package. The financial table in this statement must be completed and annexed to the proposal as an Excel file.
- The most recent annual account balance sheet and a profit and loss account. This document must be annexed to the LIFE+ proposal as a scanned pdf file, printable in A4 format. Where the coordinating beneficiary does not yet have an annual balance sheet and profit and loss account, because the organisation has been only recently created, it must provide a management plan (for at least 12 months in the future) with the financial data prepared in accordance with the standard required under national legislation.
- Where the EU contribution requested exceeds 300.000 €, an audit report or certificate produced by an approved external auditor. This document must be signed by the auditor and provide an unqualified opinion, certifying that the coordinating beneficiary's most recent annual accounts present a true and fair view of his financial situation. This document must be annexed to the LIFE+ proposal as a scanned pdf file, printable in A4 paper format.
In the case of a newly created private organisation, the auditor's certificate provided is based on a management plan where the obligatory financial data are presented according to the relevant national provisions.

9) The beneficiaries are all legally constituted in the EU.

All LIFE+ proposals that do not fully comply with all the above eligibility criteria are declared *ineligible* and are eliminated from all further evaluation, unless they fall into one or more of the following cases:

1. no more than one of the mandatory application forms is missing (eligibility question n° 4)
2. one or more of the mandatory signatures / dates of signatures / stamps are missing (eligibility question n° 6)
3. one or more mandatory annexes are missing (eligibility question n° 8)

For all LIFE+ proposals that fall into one or more of the above three situations but are otherwise complete, the Commission will send an e-mail to the coordinating beneficiary (using the e-mail address of the coordinating beneficiary contact person indicated on form A4), indicating the documents or application forms that are missing/incomplete. A copy of this e-mail will be sent to the relevant national LIFE+ contact point indicated in the LIFE+ Application guidelines. The coordinating beneficiary will have **7 working days** to reply and provide by e-mail the missing/incomplete documents/forms.

Those proposals for which all the requested missing/incomplete documents/forms have not been provided by the deadline indicated in this e-mail are declared *ineligible* and are eliminated from all further evaluation.

By the end of the eligibility phase, the applicants of all ineligible proposals will be informed by registered letter of the decision to eliminate their proposal. A copy of this letter will be sent to the relevant national LIFE+ contact point indicated in the LIFE+ Application guidelines.

Applicants of the eligible proposals will not be informed at this stage.

3. Selection phase

All proposals that were not rejected by the end of the previous eligibility phase are checked for their compliance with the following technical and financial selection criteria. Proposals which do not comply with one or several of the technical/financial selection criteria listed hereafter are declared not selected and are eliminated from all further evaluation.

A. Technical selection criteria

1) Technical reliability of the project participants

A proposal can only be rejected on the basis of this criterion if the evaluator has strong positive evidence that any of the beneficiaries has been an unreliable manager in previous LIFE- or other Community-financed projects and has given no proof that necessary initiatives have been taken to avoid similar problems in the future, or if there would be strong evidence that the beneficiaries do not have the technical competency to carry out the project.

2) Scope of the LIFE+ proposal

A proposal is rejected at this stage if it clearly falls outside the scope of LIFE+ funding, as defined by the Articles 1 and 4 of the LIFE+ Regulation.

3) Specific questions for each of the LIFE+ components

A proposal is rejected at this stage if it does not comply with all the relevant criteria that apply to its particular component:

1a) Criteria applicable to all *LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity* proposals:

1. the share of the proposal budget allocated to concrete conservation actions is at least **25%** (a "concrete conservation action" being defined here as any action that is necessary to achieve any temporary or durable improvement of the conservation status of the species, habitat types or ecosystems targeted by the proposal).²

1b) Criteria applicable to *LIFE+ Nature* proposals only:

1. the proposed actions are aimed at implementing the objectives of the EU Birds and Habitats Directives and, more specifically, they concern conservation measures for species and/or habitat types that are covered by the relevant annexes of the Habitats or Birds Directive;

² Four types of projects are however exempt from this rule:

- LIFE+ Nature projects for preparatory inventories and planning of marine Natura 2000 sites;
- LIFE+ Nature projects for the surveillance of the conservation status of natural habitats and species of the Birds and Habitats Directives (in the sense of Article 11 of the Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora);
- LIFE+ Biodiversity projects for the development of biodiversity monitoring indicators;
- LIFE+ Biodiversity projects for the development and testing of risk assessment methodologies regarding the impact of GMOs on biodiversity.

2. for site-related conservation actions, there is sufficient evidence for the long-term sustainability of the investments through an appropriate conservation status;³
3. the proposed actions are demonstration or best practice measures;
4. the proposed actions would take place on the territory of the Member States to which the Birds and Habitats Directives apply (i.e. the territory of the Member States, except the French Overseas Departments).

1c) Criteria applicable to *LIFE+ Biodiversity* proposals only:

1. the proposed actions are related to the objectives of the Communication from the Commission COM(2006) 216 final - "Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 – and beyond";
2. the proposed actions are innovative or demonstration measures;
3. the proposed actions would take place on the Member State's territory.

2) Criteria applicable to all *LIFE+ Environment and Governance* proposals:

1. the proposed actions are innovative or demonstration measures related to any of the priority "areas of action" set out in the Application Guide for *LIFE+ Environment Policy and Governance*; or it is a proposal for forest monitoring within the meaning of Article 3.2. (d) of the LIFE+ Regulation;
2. the proposed actions would take place on the Member State's territory.

3) Criteria applicable to all *LIFE+ Information and Communication* proposals:

1. the proposed actions are awareness raising campaigns on environmental, nature protection or biodiversity conservation issues that help EU environment policy decisions and/or provide information to EU citizens; or they are awareness raising campaigns for the prevention of forest fires and/or training activities for forest-fire agents;
2. the proposed actions would take place on the territory of the Member States.

³ In LIFE+ Nature projects, any investments regarding land purchase, long-term lease, land management and/or land restoration shall normally be restricted to areas located within the existing Natura 2000 network of sites. This criterion will be strictly applied in all those cases where the areas concerned would qualify for Natura 2000 designation. The following exception may however be applied:

- Investments outside existing Natura 2000 sites may be considered as eligible for funding if a commitment to designate the sites concerned before the end of the project is provided by the competent nature conservation authority – to be provided on form A7 and at the latest by the end of the revision phase. Where such commitments are necessary, this authority must be an active participant in the project (either the beneficiary or a partner).
- Where the creation of corridors or "stepping stones" between existing Natura 2000 sites is foreseen, investments may exceptionally also be considered for co-funding on areas that will not be designated under Natura 2000. In such cases, evidence must be provided that the investments foreseen contribute (a) to an "improvement of the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network" and (b) to "maintaining or restoring the integrity of a Natura 2000 site". A guarantee must also be provided for the sustainability of these investments, in the form of a commitment for giving these sites the highest possible protection status at the national/regional level before the end of the project. Note also that any such actions will only be accepted where the national Natura 2000 network of sites is considered as sufficient for the species/habitats targeted by the project.

B. Financial selection criteria

The purpose of the financial selection is to verify the compliance of LIFE+ proposals with the provisions of Article 176 of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation (Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002). These require that: "*The applicant must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain his activity throughout the period during which the action is being carried out ... and to participate in its funding*"

On the basis of Article 176, a proposal will be rejected if the evaluator has strong evidence that it falls into any of the following situations:

- the coordinating beneficiary and /or one of its associated beneficiaries are in one of the situations referred to in art. 93(1) and 94 of the Financial Regulation n° 1605/2002 (JO L 248 of 16/10/2002).
- the results of audits carried out by Community Institutions in relation to the coordinating beneficiary and/ or one of its associated beneficiaries have clearly shown their inability to comply with the administrative rules regulating Community grants and in particular those applicable to LIFE;
- the auditor statement provided with the project proposal has not given an "unqualified opinion" about the coordinating beneficiary's financial viability.⁴
- on the basis of the financial viability test, it is concluded that the coordinating beneficiary does not have the financial capacity to cover its share of co-financing within the proposed project period
- on the basis of the financial viability test, it is concluded that the coordinating beneficiary does not have the capacity to manage the financial amounts provided for in the proposal budget within the proposed project period
- the financial contribution to the project budget of any of the beneficiaries is 0 €

The financial viability of the coordinating beneficiary and its capacity to manage large EC grants are assessed on the basis of the financial information provided with the "simplified financial statement" of the coordinating beneficiary:

1) proposals from **private commercial organisations and public bodies other than public authorities** will be rejected if less than 2 of the following criteria are respected:

1. the ratio "total grant requested divided by the number of project years" / "shareholders' equity" is lower than 1
2. the ratio "current assets" / "current liabilities" is higher than 1
3. the ratio "total debts" / "total assets" is lower than 0.8
4. there is a positive operational profit

2) proposals from **private non-commercial organisations (NGOs)** will be rejected if none of the following 3 criteria are respected:

1. the ratio "total grant requested divided by the number of project years" / "shareholders' equity" is lower than 1
2. the ratio "current assets" / "current liabilities" is higher than 1
3. the ratio "total debts" / "total assets" is lower than 0.8

The financial viability check will also be used to assess, whether a bank guarantee would be required to cover fully or partially the first EU pre-financing payment to the project.

⁴ i.e. a statement that the auditor has carried out the task in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and without restriction as to the scope of the work necessary to express his opinion, that the financial statements audited were drawn up in accordance with appropriate or generally accepted accounting principles, and that they give a true and fair view of the organisation's financial situation and the results of the operation.

4. Award phase

All proposals that were not rejected by the end of the previous selection phase are admitted to a more in-depth evaluation in the award phase. The proposal admitted to this phase will be given scores on the basis of the following seven award criteria:

Name of the award criterion	Maximum score	Minimum pass score	Significant divergence
1. Technical coherence and quality	15	8	> 3
2. Financial coherence and quality	15	8	> 3
3. Contribution to the general objectives of LIFE+	25	12	> 4
4. European added value	25	12	> 4
5. Complementarity and optimal use of the EU funding	10	5	> 2
6. Transnational character	5	-	> 1
7. National added value according to the LIFE+ national authority	5	-	> 1
Total	100		

For any given proposal, each of the above 7 criteria will be assessed and scored by two expert evaluators from the Contractor. On the basis of these two independent assessments, the Contractor will establish a synthesis report for each of the 7 criteria.

If an individual score would significantly diverge between the two individual assessments - significant divergence as defined in the above table or scores of opposite effect (pass and fail) -, the Contractor will have to conduct a third independent assessment of this criterion and elaborate a new synthesis report for this criterion.

1. Technical coherence and quality

A proposal should be clear, coherent, realistic and feasible in terms of actions, timetable, budget and value for money. The pre-operational context must be thoroughly described and there should be a clear link in the proposal between the problems and threats, the project objectives, the proposed actions and their expected results. All actions should be properly described and quantified and, if necessary, accompanied by adequate maps. The proposal must clearly describe how, where, when and by whom each action in the proposal will be undertaken.

The proposal must be drafted so as to allow the evaluators to assess to what extent the financial and technical means involved are adequate for implementing the project, and whether the project can be considered value for money.

The time planning must be realistic and any potential difficulties must have been correctly assessed in the relevant forms.

Any actions that are not directly contributing to the achievement of the project objectives may be considered as ineligible (example: preparatory actions or studies that are not related to the project implementation, any fundamental scientific research, etc.). A removal of these actions (and of their budget) from the project shall be proposed under "Revision Comments".

Proposals may receive up to 15 points for this criterion. The pass score for this criterion is 8 points. For this criterion, a proposal would receive a score below the pass score if it is poorly conceived and/or requires a considerable revision.

2. Financial coherence and quality

The proposal budget must be consistent with the actions described in the technical part of the proposal. The financial contributions of the beneficiaries/co-financiers, the proposed budget and the proposed project expenditures must comply with the rules and principles foreseen in the LIFE+ application guide, the Common Provisions for LIFE+ projects and the LIFE+ Regulation. The budget must be transparent and coherent, cost-efficient and offer best value for money, including for the management of the project.

Proposals may receive up to 15 points for this criterion. The pass score for this criterion is 8 points. A proposal would receive a score below the pass score if its financial part is poorly conceived and/or requires a considerable revision.

3. Contribution to the general objectives of LIFE+

Under this criterion, a proposal may be considered for a higher scoring if the problem targeted is relatively important at the European level, if the proposal is expected to provide a significant contribution to solving the problem targeted, and/or if the project is expected to generate findings that are widely applicable.

Proposals contributing to the updating or development of Community environmental legislation may be considered for higher scoring, particularly if they contribute to the integration of the environment into other policies and/or if they contribute to sustainable development.

Proposals should be designed so as to ensure that the proposed actions are sustainable and that continuity and permanence of the project results are ensured.

Proposals may receive up to 25 points for this criterion. The pass score for this criterion is 12 points. A proposal may only be given a score below the pass score if the potential contribution of the proposal to the objectives of LIFE+ is low and if its improvement would either be impossible or require a considerable revision.

4. European added value

According to Article 3 paragraph 2 of the LIFE+ Regulation, there are different minimum requirements for different types of LIFE+ projects:

- 1) under *LIFE+ Nature*, best practice or demonstration actions must be proposed;
- 2) under *LIFE+ Biodiversity*, *LIFE+ Environmental Policy and Governance* and *LIFE+ Information and Communication*, demonstration or innovative actions must be proposed, except for the following 3 types of projects:

- a) projects for awareness-raising campaigns (*LIFE+ Information and Communication*),
- b) projects for the training of forest fire agents (*LIFE+ Information and Communication*)
- c) projects for the long-term monitoring of forests (*LIFE+ Environmental Policy and Governance*)

In addition to the above minimum requirements as outlined in Article 3.2 of the LIFE+ Regulation, LIFE+ proposals should also foresee the development and dissemination of lessons learnt. Monitoring, assessment, evaluation must therefore be specifically foreseen in the proposals, as is the case for communication, networking and dissemination activities.

The involvement or consultation of stakeholders in the project implementation process will also be positively considered under this criterion, as would be any other positive governance element included in the proposal.

Combating climate change is currently a high priority of European environmental policy. Therefore, projects that have specifically foreseen actions or management approaches for limiting their "carbon footprint", may also receive a higher scoring.

Proposals may receive up to 25 points for this criterion. The pass score for this criterion is 12 points. A proposal may only be given a score below the pass score if the minimum requirements in terms of added value are clearly not fulfilled and where an improvement of this aspect of the proposal during revision would either be impossible or require a considerable revision effort.

5. Complementarity and optimal use of the EU funding

Article 9 of the LIFE+ Regulation specifies that measures shall not be financed under LIFE+ if they fall in the eligibility criteria and main scope of, or receive assistance for the same purpose from, other Community financial instruments, including the ERDF, ESF, CIP, EFF and FP7. The beneficiaries must therefore justify in the proposal why the proposed actions do not fall into the main scope of other Community programmes. In addition, care should also be taken to avoid the financing of recurring activities (unless these activities would be innovative and/or be included in the proposal for clear demonstration purposes).

Proposals that develop synergies with other Community financial instruments and/or focus on the financing of those actions that cannot be financed through these other funds may be considered for a higher scoring.

Proposals may receive up to 10 points for this criterion. The pass score for this criterion is 5 points. A proposal may only be considered for a scoring below the pass score if there is evidence that it falls into one or more of the 4 following situations:

1. LIFE+ is not the most suitable programme for financing the proposed actions.
2. The proposal includes recurring activities, which are neither innovative nor of demonstration character.
3. The proposal includes compensation measures which are obligatory according to national legislation and/or there is evidence that the financial

contributions to the proposal budget include a substantial share of funds that are earmarked for compensation measures.

4. There is evidence that a substantial share of the project budget is earmarked for actions that are financially secure without LIFE+ funding and would therefore anyway be carried out in the near future.

6. *Transnational character*

According to Article 6 of the LIFE+ Regulation, transnational proposals shall be favoured under LIFE+ when the transnational cooperation is essential to guarantee the achievement of the project objectives. On the basis of this criterion, additional points may only be given to a proposal if there is sufficient evidence for an added value of the transnational approach.

Proposals may receive up to 5 points for this criterion. There is no minimum pass score for this criterion.

7. *National added value according to the LIFE+ national authority*

According to Article 6 of the LIFE+ Regulation, Member States may provide written comments on individual project proposals. Such comments may indicate, for example, that the proposed actions are supported by national programmes, official management plans, or by any other legal framework at the national or sub-national level. Any such comments by the relevant national authority can only be taken into account if they have been sent to the Commission by the deadline of 15 January 2008. In addition, they must at least comment on:

- the project;
- the national authority's relationship with the project.

Proposals may only be considered for a higher score under this criterion if the Member State comments provide additional positive elements that have not been considered so far in any of the other award criteria.

Proposals may receive up to 5 points for this criterion. There is no minimum pass score for this criterion.

Member States should be aware that their comments will be forwarded to the concerned applicants of the proposals that are not retained for co-financing.

Conclusion of the award phase

On the basis of the synthesis reports and scores provided by the Contractor, the final approval on the scores to be awarded to each proposal will be taken during a meeting chaired by the Commission and attended by the Contractor and its expert evaluators. Each proposal will fall into one of the following situations:

- Any proposal that receives a final score below the pass score for any of the award criteria 1 to 5 will be declared "rejected at the award phase".
- For all proposals not falling into the above situation, the total score to be awarded is calculated by summing up the final synthesis scores for the 7 award criteria.

5. Drawing-up of the long and reserve lists of proposals to be admitted to the revision phase

Once the final approval on the scores to be awarded to each proposal has taken place, the Commission will establish the long list of proposals to be admitted to revision. Besides being based on the scores given to each proposal as a result of the previous award phase, this list must take into account the three following conditions set out in the LIFE+ Regulation:

- *"At least 50% of the budgetary resources for LIFE+ dedicated to project action grants shall be allocated to support the conservation of nature and biodiversity." (Article 11)*
- *"The Commission shall ensure a proportionate distribution of projects by establishing annual national allocations for the periods 2007-2010 and 2011-2013." (Article 6.2)*
- *"The Commission shall endeavour to ensure that at least 15% of the budget dedicated to project actions grants is allocated to transnational projects." (Article 6.6b)*

The following table summarises the indicative national allocation (in Euro) per Member state for the LIFE+ application round 2007:

Member State	Allocation 2007	Member State	Allocation 2007
Austria	3,509,477	Latvia	2,500,000
Belgium	3,858,224	Lithuania	2,573,906
Bulgaria	4,025,421	Luxembourg	2,043,706
Cyprus	2,000,000	Malta	2,148,013
Czech Republic	3,709,840	Netherlands	5,995,704
Denmark	4,591,295	Poland	8,857,722
Estonia	3,097,831	Portugal	5,235,682
Finland	6,695,668	Romania	8,139,185
France	16,357,347	Slovakia	2,856,672
Germany	21,761,838	Slovenia	4,028,858
Greece	6,355,645	Spain	20,027,742
Hungary	4,673,225	Sweden	7,684,662
Ireland	2,943,617	United Kingdom	14,871,447
Italy	16,457,273	TOTAL	187,000,000

For setting up a long list of LIFE+ proposals, the following additional rules will be applied:

- Any proposal specifically supporting the conservation of nature and biodiversity objectives will be taken into account for the 50% threshold for "nature and biodiversity". Therefore, this threshold will not necessarily encompass those projects submitted under LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity alone, but may also include any proposal submitted under LIFE+

Information and Communication that would primarily target a nature or biodiversity issue. These proposals will be labelled NAT/BDV proposals, as opposed to ENV/INF proposals.

- For each proposal, the Member States to which the EC financial contribution will be allocated must be clearly identifiable in the proposal. This EC financial contribution is either allocated to the Member State in which the coordinating beneficiary is registered, or, in case of a transnational proposal, to more than one Member State. In the latter case, the proportion of the EC financial contribution that needs to be allocated to a particular Member State is equivalent to the amount of the EC contribution requested by the partner(s) in that Member State.
- In the process described hereafter, the EC financial contribution for a given LIFE+ proposal would normally be based on the EC co-financing amount requested for the project. However if the requested EC co-financing rate (in %) is higher than the allowed maximum rate according to the rules set in the LIFE+ Regulation and in the LIFE+ Application Guide, the EC financial contribution to the project will be re-calculated on the basis of the maximum allowed EC co-financing rate.
- The score applied to each proposal for its selection within the budgetary limits of the national allocations will be based on the pooled score for the award criteria 1 to 7. This score can be up to maximum 100 points. However, where proposals would need to be selected for funding outside of the budgetary limits as set by the national allocations (see notably Article 6 paragraph 8 of the LIFE+ Regulation), the score applied to each proposal will be based on the pooled score for the award criteria 1 to 6 only, i.e. not taking into account the award criterion 7. This score can thus only be up to 95 points.

The preliminary long list of proposals to be retained for LIFE+ funding will be set up according to the following procedure:

STEP 1: the highest-scored NAT/BDV proposals that fit into any of the 27 national allocations will be retained for funding until the 50% threshold for "Nature and Biodiversity proposals" is achieved;

STEP 2: if the proposals retained in step 1 are insufficient to cover the 50% budget threshold for nature and biodiversity, additional NAT/BDV proposals will be retained for funding outside of the limits of the national allocations, either until (1) the 50% threshold is achieved or, alternatively, until (2) there is no further NAT/BDV project left for funding (again, priority will be given to the highest-scored proposals).

STEP 3: starting with the highest-scored proposal, the remaining proposals are allocated to the remaining budgets within the national allocations, either until (1) there is no funding left for retaining a further proposal in any of the national allocations, or until (2) there are no further projects left for funding after the award phase.

STEP 4: if the projects retained in step 1-3 are insufficient to cover 100% of the LIFE funding available for project co-financing and if there are still project proposals left for funding, the highest-scored remaining proposals will be retained for funding, until there is no further funding available for additional proposal.

STEP 5: two reserve lists will be set up, one for NAT/BDV and one for ENV/INF proposals. In case there are still enough proposals available, these lists will each cover proposal for an amount equivalent to up to 20% of the total available LIFE+ funding.

A more detailed description of this procedure is provided on the following pages:

A. Compliance with the 50% minimum allocation threshold for *LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity*:

- STEP 1: Allocation of the highest-ranked NAT/BDV proposals up to the 50% threshold to their "national boxes":** starting with the highest-scored proposal, NAT/BDV proposals are allocated to their respective national budget envelopes (hereafter called "*national boxes*"). Unless enough NAT/BDV proposals would be allocated to the national boxes to fulfil the 50% minimum allocation threshold for *LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity*, this allocation process is considered to be complete once the two following conditions are fulfilled: (1) for any of the 27 national boxes, the next-highest-scored NAT/BDV proposal requires an EC financial contribution that is higher than the remaining amount left in this *national box* and (2) there is no lower-scored NAT/BDV proposal with a smaller co-financing request left that could be retained for co-financing in this national box. At this stage, a trans-national NAT/BDV proposal could only be allocated to its respective national boxes if its score allows it to be listed in all of the *national boxes* to which it should be allocated – otherwise, it will be recycled to the next step.
- STEP 2: Allocation of the remaining NAT/BDV proposals up to the 50% threshold to a " NAT/BDV residual box":** If, by the end of STEP 1, the NAT proposals allocated to the national boxes were not sufficient to cover the 50% minimum allocation threshold for *LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity*, additional NAT/BDV proposals will have to be retained by allocating them to a so-called "NAT/BDV residual box". This allocation process will start with the highest-scored proposals according to their pooled score based on the award criterion 1-6 (i.e. not taking into account the score for criterion 7, on national added value). Step 2 is considered to be complete as soon as the 50% threshold for *LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity* is achieved (or once no further NAT/BDV projects are left to be allocated to the "NAT/BDV residual box").

B. Compliance with indicative annual national allocations:

- STEP 3: Allocation of the remaining LIFE+ proposals to the national boxes:** All remaining LIFE+ proposals, whether NAT/BDV or ENV/INF, retained by the end of the award phase but not allocated so far to any of the national boxes or to the residual NAT/BDV box are ranked on the basis of their final award scores. Starting with the highest-scored one, these proposals will be added to their respective *national boxes*. For any given national box, this allocation process is considered to be complete as soon as the following conditions are fulfilled: (1) for any given *national box*, the next-highest-scored proposal requires an EU financial contribution that is higher than the still available amount left in this *national box* and (2) there is no lower-scored proposal with a smaller co-financing request left that could still be allocated to this national box.
- STEP 4: Allocation of the remaining LIFE+ proposals to the residual box:** If, by the end of STEP 3, still not all the budget available for LIFE+ 2007 project funding has been allocated to projects, the residual budget will be used for co-financing the highest-scored remaining proposals. As in Step 2, the allocation process in Step 4 will be based

on the pooled scores for the award criterion 1-6 only (i.e. on a basis of a maximum of 95 points). This process is considered to be complete as soon as the following conditions are fulfilled: (1) the next-highest-scored proposal requires an EU financial contribution higher than the free amount left and (2) there is no lower-scored LIFE+ proposal left with a smaller EU co-financing request that could be retained.

C. Set-up of two separate reserve lists for NAT/BDV and ENV/INF:

STEP 5: Two separate reserve list of projects will be drawn up: (a) a list of the highest-scored NAT/BDV proposals not on the long list and (b) a list of the highest-scored ENV/INF proposals not on the long list. The reserve list of NAT/BDV proposals will encompass proposals for up to an additional **10%** of the total available budget, and the reserve list of ENV/INF proposals will encompass proposals for up to an additional **10%** of the total available budget. The allocation of projects into any of the two reserve lists is considered to be completed as soon as the above 10% limit is surpassed for each of these two lists.

Only those proposals that are listed on the long and reserve list by the end of this process will be admitted to the subsequent revision phase.

6. Revision phase

The aim of the revision phase is to clarify, for all proposals listed on the preliminary long and reserve lists, all open questions regarding feasibility, cost-effectiveness and eligibility of individual actions, compliance with the LIFE+ Regulation and Common Provisions, etc.

During the revision phase, the Commission may ask the applicant to provide further details about particular aspects of the proposal and/or to introduce modifications or improvements to the original proposal. The coordinating beneficiary may also be asked to delete certain actions and/or to reduce the project budget, the EC financial contribution and/or the EC co-financing rate to the project.

The applicant will have 15 calendar days to reply to the questions and/or to introduce the requested modifications or improvement to its proposal.

It should be noted here that a revision letter sent out to an applicant with questions or requests for modifying the proposal does not entail, on behalf of the European Commission, any commitment to a definitive funding of the proposal. Furthermore, on the basis of the replies received, the Commission may still decide to reduce the project budget or even exclude a project from financing.

By the end of the revision phase, all projects retained are expected to be fully coherent and transparent, and in line with all technical and financial requirements of the LIFE+ Regulation and the Common Provisions for LIFE+. The applicants of the short-listed proposals will then be informed about the outcome of the revision phase and will be asked to provide 3 identical paper copies of the final revised proposals. At this stage, all commitments from associated beneficiaries/co-financers must be fully confirmed in the revised forms.

7. Set up of the final short and reserve list of proposals to be submitted to the LIFE+ committee

Once the revision of proposals has been concluded, a final short list of LIFE+ proposals to be funded and a final reserve list of proposals will be set up. These short and reserve lists will take into account possible budget reductions and/or the removal of proposals from the previous long and reserve lists as a result of the revision. It is therefore possible that one or more projects that were previously reserve-listed might be taken on board in the final short list.

The procedure applied is identical to the steps 1-5 described in chapter 5, except that the 2 reserve lists for NAT and ENV/INF only encompass each an additional **5%** of the available LIFE+ budget.

If there would not at this stage remain enough projects under nature and biodiversity to cover 50% of the available budget for project co-financing, the value of ENV/INF proposals to be co-financed is, in any case, limited to 50% of the available budget.

8. LIFE+ Committee meeting

The LIFE+ Committee will be asked to decide on the final short list of the proposals that are retained for funding by the end of the revision phase, as well as on the final reserve list of proposals. The following documents will therefore be submitted to the LIFE+ Committee:

1. the list of all the proposals received, indicating, for each proposal, the results of the eligibility, technical and financial selection (if evaluated) and the final scores for the 7 award criteria (if evaluated)
2. the short-list of proposals proposed for funding (proposal name, name of the coordinating beneficiary, requested EC funding, and national allocation of the EC funding)
3. a reserve list of proposals (proposal name, name of the coordinating beneficiary, requested EC funding, and national allocation of the EC funding)
4. a written explanation on how the Commission had regard to the allocation criteria established in accordance with Article 6 paragraph 2 of the LIFE+ Regulation, and comments submitted in accordance with Article 6 paragraphs 6 of the LIFE+ Regulation, while respecting the objectives and criteria set out in Articles 1, 3 and 4 of the LIFE+ Regulation

Once the LIFE+ Committee has approved the final short and reserve list, applicants will be informed by letter about the results of the evaluation of their proposals and, where appropriate, about the reasons for rejection. A copy of this letter will be sent to the relevant national LIFE+ contact point indicated in the LIFE+ Application guidelines.

Projects on the reserve list may only be retained for co-financing if there would be an unexpected withdrawal of a proposal, between the date of the Committee meeting and the time when the individual grant agreements are signed. Applicants of the reserve-listed proposals can therefore only be informed about the final fate of their proposal by the end of 2008.

After the approval by the LIFE+ Committee, the short and reserve list is also subject to the approval of the European Parliament, before it can be finalised and grant agreements be issued.

9. Detailed evaluation forms

Eligibility phase	
Eligibility criteria	
1. Was the proposal sent to the European Commission via the competent national authority and has it been received by the Commission before the submission deadline?	Yes/No
2. Has the proposal been submitted on CD ROM or DVD, and in the required electronic format?	Yes/No
3. Have the relevant standard LIFE+ 2007 application forms (downloadable from the Commission website) been used?	Yes/No
4. Are all relevant LIFE+ 2007 application forms present and fully completed?	Yes/No
5. Are the LIFE+ 2007 application forms typed (i.e. they are NOT hand-written)?	Yes/No
6. Are the application forms A2, A3, A6 and A8 (where relevant) provided with stamped and dated signatures, with the status and full name of the signatory clearly in evidence?	Yes/No
7. Has a summary in English of the proposal been provided on form B1 and have the proposal forms been completed in one of the official EU languages other than Maltese or Irish?	Yes/No
8. Have the following mandatory annexes been submitted in the requested electronic format? (only public authorities are exempt from this obligation): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the "LIFE+ Simplified Financial Statement" (Excel file) • the profit and loss account (pdf file) • where the EU contribution requested exceeds 300.000 €, an auditor's certificate (pdf file) 	Yes/No
9. Are all beneficiaries legally constituted in the EU?	Yes/No
10. Have all beneficiaries completed the declaration that they are not in one of the situations listed in Articles 93(1) and 94 of the Financial Regulation?	Yes/No
Project is eligible? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Comments:	

Selection phase	
<i>Technical selection</i>	
Technical reliability of the project participants	
1. Are all beneficiaries technically reliable?	Yes / No
Scope of the LIFE+ proposal	
1. Does the proposal fall within the scope of the Articles 1 and 4 of the LIFE+ Regulation?	Yes / No
Specific questions for each of the LIFE+ components	
<i>1a. Criteria applicable to all LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity proposals</i>	
1. Is at least 25% of the proposal budget allocated to concrete conservation actions (or, alternatively, does the proposal fall into any of the 4 exceptions as indicated on page 6 of the Evaluation Guide for LIFE+ project proposals 2007)?	Yes / No
<i>1b. Criteria applicable to LIFE+ Nature proposals only</i>	
1. Are the proposed actions aimed at implementing the objectives of the EU Birds and Habitats Directives and, more specifically, do they concern conservation measures for species and/or habitat types that are covered by the relevant annexes of the Habitats or Birds Directive?	Yes / No
2. For site-related actions, is the long-term sustainability of the project investments ensured through an appropriate conservation status?	Yes / No / n.a.
3. Are the proposed actions best practice or demonstration measures?	Yes / No
4. Are the proposed actions taking place on the territory of the EU Member states to which the EU Birds and Habitats Directives apply?	Yes / No
<i>1c. Criteria applicable to LIFE+ Biodiversity proposals only</i>	
1. Are the proposed actions related to the objectives of the Communication COM(2006) 216 final - "Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 – and beyond"?	Yes / No
2. Are the proposed actions innovative or demonstration measures?	Yes / No
3. Are the actions taking place on the EU Member states territory?	Yes / No
<i>2. Criteria applicable to all LIFE+ Environmental policy and governance proposals</i>	
1. Are the proposed actions innovative or demonstration measures related to any of the "priority areas of action" set out in the Application guide for LIFE+ Environment Policy and Governance, or is it an action "... for the development and implementation of ... broad-based, harmonised, comprehensive and long-term monitoring of forests and environmental interactions" (LIFE+ Regulation, Article 3.2.(d))?	Yes / No
2. Are the actions taking place on the EU Member states territory?	Yes / No
<i>3. Criteria applicable to all LIFE+ Information and Communication proposals</i>	
1. Are the proposed actions awareness raising campaigns on environmental, nature protection or biodiversity conservation issues, that help EU environment policy decisions and/or provide information to EU citizens; or are they awareness raising campaigns for the prevention of forest fires and/or training activities for forest-fire prevention agents?	Yes / No
2. Are the actions taking place on the EU Member states territory?	Yes / No
<u>Project selected?</u>	
<u>Revision comments:</u>	

Selection phase

Financial selection

Financial selection criteria	
1. Is the information available consistent with the beneficiaries' declarations in relation to question n°10 of the Eligibility phase?	Yes / No
2. According to the information available, is the coordinating beneficiary financially sound (based on profit and loss account, balance sheet, audit report) – where applicable?	Yes / No
3. According to the information available, does the coordinating beneficiary have the capacity to finance the project and/or to manage the financial amounts provided for in the proposed budget, within the proposed project period?	Yes / No
4. Do all beneficiaries contribute financially to the proposal budget?	Yes / No
5. Are all beneficiaries absent from the Commission's Early Warning System?	Yes / No

Project selected?

Revision comments:

Award phase

1. Technical coherence and quality

1. Is the pre-operational context well described (problems and threats, status of preparatory activities, authorisations, permits, etc.)?
2. Is there a clear logical link between threats and problems, objectives, actions and expected results?
3. Do the actions clearly state how, where, when and by whom they will be undertaken? Are they properly described and quantified, and is there sufficient information to assess their eligibility? Are adequate maps provided, if relevant?
4. Are the expected results of the project properly described and quantified? Are indicators included to assess the progress of the project?
5. Is the budget justified and coherent and are costs adequate to the actions and means proposed (i.e. is the project cost-efficient)?
6. Does the amount of the grant being awarded represent value for money, considering the management costs involved?
7. Are the project operational and management structures well organised and controlled by the beneficiary? Are the necessary means proposed (equipment, personnel, etc.) for a correct implementation?
8. Are the lists of deliverable products and milestones comprehensive and coherent with the expected results?
9. Is the time planning realistic (duration of preparatory actions and permit procedures; unfavourable weather conditions, etc.)?
10. Are potential difficulties correctly assessed (feasibility of the actions, potential risks, etc.) and has sufficient preparation been undertaken to pre-empt these, for example through prior stakeholder consultation, a contingency plan, etc.? Are there still any permits, authorisations or EIAs required prior to the project implementation, or are they already available?
11. In case land purchase is foreseen in the proposal, does it respect the land purchase criteria mentioned in the LIFE+ Application guide?
12. Can the project be approved with a minimal effort of technical revision?

Positive points:

Negative points:

Score:

Revision comments:

Award phase

2. Financial coherence and quality

1. Do all beneficiaries provide an adequate financial contribution to the project budget?
2. Is the financial information on forms FA and FC consistent with individual financing commitments of the beneficiaries/co-financiers?
3. Is the financial information on the expenses forms FA to FC and F1 to F7 consistent?
4. Is the budget balanced (income – excluding any in kind contribution – equals expenditure)?
5. Is the requested EU-co-financing rate consistent with the rules for maximum co-financing rates, as indicated in Article 5.3 of the LIFE+ Regulation?
6. Are the personnel costs proposed on form F1 reasonable and sufficiently detailed?
7. Are the travel and subsistence costs on form F2 reasonable, sufficiently detailed and correctly allocated?
8. Are the costs for external assistance on form F3 reasonable, sufficiently detailed and correctly allocated? If relevant, is the information provided consistent with rules for public tendering?
9. Where costs for external assistance exceed 35% of the total project budget, has a coherent explanation been provided to justify this high level of sub-contracting?
10. Where relevant, are the costs for durable goods on form F4a, F4b and F4c reasonable, sufficiently detailed and correctly allocated? If relevant, are the depreciation rules correctly applied?
11. Where relevant, are the costs for land purchase, lease and one off compensation payments on form F5 reasonable and sufficiently detailed? In case of land purchase, has a letter been added from the competent authority or from a registered notary, confirming that the price per hectare is not above the average for this type of land and location? (if not, such a document needs to be provided during revision)
12. Are the costs for Consumables on form F6 reasonable, sufficiently detailed and correctly allocated?
13. Are the “other costs” on form F7 reasonable, sufficiently detailed and correctly allocated?
14. Are the overhead costs on Form FA consistent with the maximum threshold of 7% of total eligible direct costs (excluding land purchase costs)?
15. Does the proposed budget exclude ineligible costs as contained in the Common Provisions?
16. Does the project represent value for money? Will costs be tendered wherever possible? Are costs reasonable with respect to national conditions? Are the project management costs (both for the beneficiaries and for the Commission) reasonable given the project's size and ambitions?

Positive points:

Negative points:

Score:

Revision comments:

Award phase

3. Contribution to the general objectives of LIFE+

1. To what extent is the problem targeted by the proposal of European importance, taking into account the objectives of European environmental policy and legislation?

2. To what extent is the proposal expected to provide a significant contribution to solving the problem targeted?

3. To what extent does the proposal contribute to the implementation, updating and development of Community Environmental policy and legislation, including the integration of the environment into other policies?

4. To what extent are continuity and permanence of the project results ensured in the long term?

5. To what extent is the proposal expected to provide a sustainable contribution to solving the problem targeted?

Positive points:

Negative points:

Score:

Revision comments:

Award phase

4. European added value

1. To what extent does the proposal satisfy the criteria (a), (b), (c) or (d) of Article 3. 2. of the LIFE+ Regulation?

2. To what extent does the proposal include monitoring, assessment and evaluation measures for the proposed actions, for the purpose of disseminating the project results and lessons learnt? Are monitoring and assessment activities appropriate and well-designed for this purpose?

3. To what extent does the proposal include communication, experience-sharing, networking and dissemination activities? Are all obligatory communication requirements covered? Are these activities appropriate and well-designed for the purpose of communicating and disseminating the results and lessons learnt?

4. To what extent are stakeholders consulted or involved in the project?

5. To what extent is the project's "carbon footprint" taken into account in its implementation and management?

Positive points:

Negative points:

Score:

Revision comments:

Award phase

5. Complementarity and optimal use of the EU funding

1. To what extent does the proposal show that other EU funding sources have been considered in the preparation of the proposal?

2. Has the proposal considered using LIFE+ funding to make the project results sustainable and, where relevant, to obtain other funding sources in the future?

3. Has sufficient care been taken to avoid financing obligatory compensation measures? Has sufficient evidence been provided that the non-EC part of the financial contribution to the project budget excludes any compensation money?

4. Is there any indication that the proposal includes actions that would be financed anyway, i.e. even in case no LIFE+ funding would be made available for these actions?

Positive points:

Negative points:

Score:

Revision comments:

Award phase

6. Transnational character

1. If relevant, what is the added value of the transnational approach of the proposal?

Positive points:

Negative points:

Score:

Revision comments:

Award phase

7. National added value according to the LIFE+ national authority

1. To what extent do the comments on the project by the national authority add arguments regarding the proposal that are not already addressed in the other award criteria?

Justification:

Score:

Revision comments: