



Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)

Call for proposals

Life Clean Energy Transition

(LIFE-2023-CET)

Version 1.0
11 May 2023



HISTORY OF CHANGES			
Version	Publication Date	Change	Page
1.0	11.05.2023	▪ Initial version	



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

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

0. Introduction	5
1. Background.....	6
What is the LIFE Programme?	6
Nature and Biodiversity	7
Circular Economy and Quality of Life	8
Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation	9
Clean Energy Transition.....	9
2. Type of action — Objectives — Themes and priorities — Activities that can be funded — Expected impact	10
Type of action	10
<i>Building a national, regional and local policy framework supporting the clean energy transition</i>	11
Capacity building in public authorities.....	11
LIFE-2023-CET-LOCAL: Technical support to clean energy transition plans and strategies in municipalities and regions.....	11
Supporting the enabling provisions of EU legislation and support to EU policy making	14
LIFE-2023-CET-POLICY: Towards an effective implementation of key legislation in the field of sustainable energy	14
LIFE-2023-CET-EPREL: Maximising use of and valorising EPREL data through innovative applications.....	19
<i>Accelerating technology roll-out, digitalisation, new services and business models and enhancement of the related professional skills on the market</i>	21
Supporting the Renovation Wave and the energy transition in buildings.....	21
LIFE-2023-CET-BETTERRENO: Energy Performance of Buildings - Creating the conditions to make renovation faster, deeper, smarter, service- and data-driven.....	21
Supporting the energy transition in industry and tertiary sectors	27
LIFE-2023-CET-BUSINESS: Supporting the clean energy transition of European businesses	27
Ensuring the right skills on the market for the energy transition	31
LIFE-2023-CET-BUILDSKILLS: BUILD UP Skills – Upskilling and reskilling interventions enabling a decarbonised building stock and energy system integration	31
Supporting the decarbonisation of heating and cooling	35
LIFE-2023-CET-HEATPUMPS: Boosting heat pump deployment through alternative models and skilled installers.....	35

LIFE-2023-CET-DHC: District heating and cooling: Enabling modernisation and fuel switch through support for investment plans and skills development	39
Attracting private finance for sustainable energy	43
LIFE-2023-CET-PRIVAFIN: Crowding in private finance	43
Supporting the development of local and regional investment projects.....	47
Developing innovative integrated service offers	47
LIFE-2023-CET-OSS: Integrated services for clean energy transition in buildings and businesses	47
Delivering public sector investments	52
LIFE-2023-CET-PDA: Project Development Assistance for sustainable energy investments	52
Involving and empowering citizens in the clean energy transition	55
Addressing energy poverty	55
LIFE-2023-CET-ENERPOV: Alleviating household energy poverty and vulnerability in Europe	55
Sustainable Energy communities and other citizen-led initiatives	58
LIFE-2023-CET-ENERCOMFACILITY: European Energy Communities Facility	58
3. Available budget	62
4. Timetable and deadlines	63
5. Admissibility and documents	63
6. Eligibility	65
Eligible participants (eligible countries)	65
Consortium composition	66
Eligible activities	66
Geographic location (target countries)	67
7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion	67
Financial capacity	67
Operational capacity	68
Exclusion	68
8. Evaluation and award procedure	69
9. Award criteria	70
10. Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	71
Starting date and project duration	71
Milestones and deliverables	71
Form of grant, funding rate and maximum grant amount	72
Budget categories and cost eligibility rules	72
Reporting and payment arrangements	74
Prefinancing guarantees	74
Certificates	75
Liability regime for recoveries	75
Provisions concerning the project implementation	75
Other specificities	75
Non-compliance and breach of contract	75
11. How to submit an application	76
12. Help	77
13. Important	78

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 2018/1046 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))
- The basic act (LIFE Regulation [2021/783](#)¹).

The call is launched in accordance with the 2021-2024 Multiannual Work Programme² and will be managed by the **European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA)** ('Agency').

The call covers the following **topics**:

- **LIFE-2023-CET-LOCAL:** Technical support to clean energy transition plans and strategies in municipalities and regions
- **LIFE-2023-CET-POLICY:** Towards an effective implementation of key legislation in the field of sustainable energy
- **LIFE-2023-CET-EPREL:** Maximising use of and valorising EPREL data through innovative applications
- **LIFE-2023-CET-BETTERRENO:** Energy Performance of Buildings - Creating the conditions to make renovation faster, deeper, smarter, service- and data-driven
- **LIFE-2023-CET-BUSINESS:** Supporting the clean energy transition of European businesses
- **LIFE-2023-CET-BUILDSKILLS:** BUILD UP Skills – Upskilling and reskilling interventions enabling a decarbonised building stock and energy system integration
- **LIFE-2023-CET-HEATPUMPS:** Boosting heat pump deployment through alternative models and skilled installers
- **LIFE-2023-CET-DHC:** District heating and cooling: Enabling modernisation and fuel switch through support for investment plans and skills development
- **LIFE-2023-CET-PRIVAFIN:** Crowding in private finance
- **LIFE-2023-CET-OSS:** Integrated services for clean energy transition in buildings and businesses
- **LIFE-2023-CET-PDA:** Project Development Assistance for sustainable energy investments
- **LIFE-2023-CET-ENERPOV:** Alleviating household energy poverty and vulnerability in Europe

¹ 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).

² Commission Implementing Decision C(2021)4997 final of 9 July 2021 on the financing of the LIFE Programme and the adoption of the work programme for the years 2021 to 2024.

– **LIFE-2023-CET-ENERCOMFACILITY: European Energy Communities Facility**

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 Deal³ 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

The specific objectives of the sub-programme 'Nature and Biodiversity' are the following:

- to develop, demonstrate, promote and stimulate scale up of innovative techniques, methods and approaches (including nature-based solutions and ecosystem approach) for reaching the objectives of the EU legislation and policy on 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
- to support the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of EU legislation and policy on nature and biodiversity, including by improving governance at all levels, in particular through enhancing capacities of public

³ 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).

and private actors and the involvement of civil society, also taking into due consideration the possible contributions provided by citizen science

- to catalyse the large-scale deployment of successful solutions/approaches for implementing EU 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.

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 the EU 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 the EU 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 the EU legislation and policy on environment, 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 aims at facilitating the transition toward a sustainable, circular, toxic-free, energy-efficient and climate-resilient economy and at protecting, restoring and improving the quality of the environment.

It will contribute to the EU priorities by:

- reducing resource consumption and facilitating the transition toward a sustainable, circular, toxic-free, energy-efficient and climate-resilient economy
- developing circular systems, in line with the new Circular Economy Action Plan and reflecting its focus on sustainable products, material and energy intensive sectors and circular business models for value retention
- bringing down waste generation in line with the Waste Framework Directive [2019/1004](#)⁴ and the reduction of hazardous waste in view of the EU's commitment under the [Basel Convention](#)⁵.
- improving waste management with respect to collection and storage of waste, recovery options and end-of-life disposal, including in islands where waste management has to face specific challenges
- reducing emissions of pollutants to air and ensuring clean air for EU citizens in line with the EU legislation and the objectives of the Zero Pollution Action Plan
- achieving and maintaining a good status of the EU water bodies
- ensuring clean surface water and ground-water, in sufficient quantities for human and other species, including by increasing efficiency of water use

⁴ Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2019/1004 of 7 June 2019 laying down rules for the calculation, verification and reporting of data on waste in accordance with Directive 2008/98/EC (OJ L 163, 20.6.2019, p. 66).

⁵ Basel Convention on the control of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal

- reducing production, use and emissions of hazardous chemicals as well as reducing the exposure of humans and the environment to those chemicals
- promoting the development, commercialisation and uptake of safe and sustainable-by-design substances, materials and products
- diminishing exposure to harmful noise levels
- protecting the quality of EU soil, preventing soil degradation through sustainable practices of soil and land management, remediating from soil pollution and enhancing the capacity to improve water quality through reduced nitrate leakage and to reduce emissions through carbon storage.

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 the EU legislation and policy on climate action and to contribute to the knowledge base and to the application of best practice
- to support the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of the EU 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 the EU 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 contribute to the transformation of the EU into a climate-neutral and -resilient society, by supporting the implementation of the EU's climate policy and preparing the EU for the climate action challenges in the coming years and decades.

Clean Energy Transition

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

- to develop, demonstrate and promote innovative techniques, methods and approaches for reaching the objectives of the EU legislation and policy on the transition to sustainable renewable energy and increased energy efficiency, and to contribute to the knowledge base and to the application of best practice
- to support the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of the EU legislation and policy on the transition to sustainable renewable energy or increased energy efficiency, 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 the EU legislation on the transition to renewable energy or increased energy efficiency 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 aims at facilitating the transition toward an energy-efficient, renewable energy-based, climate-neutral and -resilient economy by funding

coordination and support actions across Europe. These actions, of high EU added-value, aim at breaking market barriers that hamper the socio-economic transition to sustainable energy, typically engaging multiple small and medium-size stakeholders, multiple actors including local and regional public authorities and non-profit organisations, and involving consumers.

The sub-programme will contribute to the implementation of the energy-related actions of the Green Deal, including the 'Renovation wave' initiative for the building sector, and will give due consideration to territories not connected to the European grids such as the EU outermost regions. It will contribute to the Just Transition objectives by accompanying the territories and the groups of citizens negatively affected by the transition from fossil fuels to clean energy, by building capacity of actors and fostering clean energy investments, mainly in energy efficiency and locally available, sustainable, renewable energy sources. Activities related to biofuels will not be included.

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 Action Grants (OAGs) include:

- Coordination and Support Actions (CSA) for projects focusing on the transition to renewable energy and increased energy efficiency by breaking market barriers, through activities including capacity building, dissemination of information and knowledge, and awareness raising; they may include directly awarded grants to bodies designated by Member States.
- A Small Grant Facility on Biodiversity (BEST). Small grants (max 100 000 EUR) for projects in the EU Outermost Regions and the Overseas Countries and Territories on biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and sustainable use of ecosystem services, including ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and mitigation
- Projects developed in the framework of the EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs), which contribute to the objectives and implementation of the EU Circular Economy Action Plan
- Pilot projects in the framework of the 'New European Bauhaus' to identify and address some key challenges helping Europe's transformation into the first climate-neutral continent in view of having better spaces in which form not only follows function, such as in the historical Bauhaus movement, but also contributes to preserve the resources of the planet.
- Action grants benefitting the organisations mentioned in Annex I of the LIFE Regulation
- Additional projects responding to the EU legislative and policy priorities determined following a consultation with Member States (PLP)
- Other specific projects to identified beneficiaries (Article 195 EU Financial Regulation).

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

Capacity building in public authorities

LIFE-2023-CET-LOCAL: Technical support to clean energy transition plans and strategies in municipalities and regions

Objectives

The topic aims to provide local and regional authorities with the necessary capacity, skills and organisational structures to deliver and implement plans and strategies for the clean energy transition (CET).

Local and regional authorities (LRAs) are a decisive lever for achieving the EU Green Deal objectives, such as the 2030 climate and energy targets as set out in the European Climate Law and the relevant 'Fit for 55'⁶ legislative revisions, in particular the recast of the Energy Efficiency⁷ (EE) and the Renewable Energy⁸ (RES) Directives, as well as the climate neutrality objective by 2050. In this context, many municipalities and other public bodies have already committed to such ambitious targets, for instance through the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy initiative⁹.

LRAs also have a very relevant role to play in phasing out EU dependence on fossil fuel imports, within the framework of the REPowerEU Plan¹⁰, and are well-placed to accelerate the implementation of respective/specific initiatives such as the preparation and implementation of National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs) and their updates; the Renovation Wave¹¹ and mobilisation of investment in clean energy; the Just Transition Mechanism¹²; the preparation of local Heating and Cooling Plans in municipalities¹³; the speed-up of RES permitting processes¹⁴ and the implementation of the EU solar strategy¹⁵, among others.

In view of this, LRAs need to commit to and effectively plan and implement the clean energy transition in their territories at an unprecedented level of ambition and pace, tailored to the specific geographical, societal or political context. Local and regional planning should focus on measures in the short, medium and longer term that accelerate the clean energy transition in a just manner, ensuring full alignment with relevant EU and national energy and climate legislation, and contributing to the goals that are set in the specific National Energy and Climate Plans.

Therefore, it is important that LRAs develop and reinforce capacities and skills to deliver and implement CET plans and strategies, such as Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans¹⁶ (SECAPs) or similar. This is particularly relevant for small municipalities, rural and isolated areas and carbon-intensive regions which might be

⁶ [COM\(2021\) 550 final](#).

⁷ [COM\(2021\) 558 final](#).

⁸ [EUR-Lex - 52021PC0557 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#).

⁹ <https://eu-mayors.ec.europa.eu/en/home>.

¹⁰ [COM\(2022\) 108 final](#)

¹¹ [EUR-Lex - 52020DC0662 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#).

¹² [The Just Transition Mechanism \(europa.eu\)](#).

¹³ As proposed in the recast of the EE Directive for municipalities with a population of over 45000 inhabitants.

¹⁴ As proposed in the revision of the RES Directive.

¹⁵ [EUR-Lex - 52022DC0221 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#).

¹⁶ <https://eu-mayors.ec.europa.eu/en/FAQs> - What is a Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan?

lagging behind in the clean energy transition, despite the significant potential to have a high impact in reducing their fossil fuels consumption.

Implementing the energy transition in a holistic manner also requires LRAs to put in place an integrated approach in planning and implementing sustainable energy actions. This should be supported by robust and long-lasting organisational structures, with the aim of mainstreaming the carbon neutrality goal within all relevant sectors (energy production and consumption, buildings, district heating and cooling, mobility and transport, land-use, waste, water, health, etc.), mutually reinforcing sectoral policies and improving the efficiency of the planning processes.

Actions should consider potential synergies and cooperation with complementary EU initiatives addressing the role of LRAs in the clean energy transition, notably the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy and other initiatives, such as the Clean Energy for EU Islands Initiative¹⁷, the Horizon Europe Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities Mission¹⁸, ManagEnergy¹⁹, BUILD UP Skills²⁰ and the new LIFE CET topic *LIFE-2023-CET-ENERCOMFACILITY*. Existing technical assistance and private financing support initiatives such as the European Local Energy Assistance (ELENA) Facility²¹, Smart Cities Marketplace²², the EU City Facility²³ and the LIFE CET topic *LIFE-2023-CET-PDA* should also be taken into account in view of accessing dedicated support for the implementation of sustainable energy investments.

Scope

Proposals should address one or both of the following areas/aspects:

- Actions should provide technical support to LRAs and build their capacities to deliver ambitious short and medium-term CET plans and strategies for 2030 – with a potential to pave the way for the 2050 carbon neutrality goal – in coherence with the EU energy and climate targets, the Fit-for-55 package, the REPowerEU legislative framework and the National Energy and Climate Plans. Actions should focus on implementing the right mix of activities that will build/increase lasting technical, legal, financial, administrative and social skills among LRAs; for instance, through training programmes for policy-makers and public officers which could be tailored to their specific needs; through the application of innovative solutions for the implementation of integrated CET planning at local and district level, through replication and rollout of best practices and information tools, etc.
- Actions should aim at creating/reinforcing appropriate organisational structures to support and coordinate the implementation and monitoring of integrated CET plans and strategies within and beyond the administrations. This should include, for instance, the creation of multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral teams within the LRAs, and/or strengthening the capacity and mandate of associated technical entities such as local and regional energy agencies. Actions should focus on integrated planning processes and strive to include important enabling elements for their implementation, such as: clear political commitment, identification of appropriate resources and financing

¹⁷ <https://clean-energy-islands.ec.europa.eu>.

¹⁸ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/eu-missions-horizon-europe/climate-neutral-and-smart-cities_en.

¹⁹ <https://www.managenergy.eu/>.

²⁰ <https://buildup.eu/en>.

²¹ <https://www.eib.org/en/products/advisory-services/elena/index.htm>.

²² <https://smart-cities-marketplace.ec.europa.eu/>

²³ <https://www.eucityfacility.eu>.

opportunities, accurate and timely access to relevant data, effective dialogue among different governance levels as well as active engagement of public and private stakeholders, including citizens and/or communities.

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 impacts.

Proposals submitted under this topic should demonstrate how they will contribute to providing capacity, skills and appropriate structures to local and regional authorities for delivering and implementing plans and strategies for the clean energy transition.

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 policies/plans/strategies established through the action.
- Number of policy-makers/public officers with improved capacity/skills.
- 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 public and private stakeholders engaged.
- Secured political commitment and resources.

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

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

Funding rate

Other Action Grants (OAGs) — 95%

Supporting the enabling provisions of EU legislation and support to EU policy making

LIFE-2023-CET-POLICY: Towards an effective implementation of key legislation in the field of sustainable energy

Objectives

Under the Fit for 55 Package to implement the European Green Deal, the Commission proposed a whole set of new measures to revise the main pieces of climate and energy legislation, notably the Energy Efficiency Directive, the Renewable Energy Directive and the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive. The revisions will 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 design the policy measures according to their needs and framework conditions, accurate monitoring, projecting and evaluation are essential elements of implementation. Importantly, the legislation is strongly interrelated and needs to be implemented and reported in an integrated, consistent way, including through the updates and implementation of the National Energy and Climate Plans, and their biannual integrated progress reports.

With these challenges in mind, the 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).

Under the call 2023, proposals are invited for the Scopes A, B and C, i.e. proposals for actions to support the implementation of:

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

Proposals are expected to focus on one of the 3 scopes established below. The scope addressed should be specified in the proposal's introduction. In case a proposal addresses elements of more than one scope, the added-value of a cross-cutting approach should be adequately explained.

Scope

Actions under this topic are expected to:

- Promote and enable exchange of insights and sharing of best practices within and 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.
- Develop and support integrated methodologies for areas and sectors that are addressed by different policies and pieces of legislation, notably approaches for integrated collection of data, calculation/accounting, verification, monitoring, evaluation and reporting.
- Monitor and model energy and non-energy impacts of integrated solutions; gather data for the energy and buildings sector.

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

Actions under Scope A are expected to address core provisions and aspects of the Energy Efficiency Directive, in particular those that are reinforced or newly introduced under the Fit for 55 proposal for the revision of the Energy Efficiency Directive, notably:

- the Energy Efficiency First Principle, supporting Member States in the operational implementation of the provisions and helping develop related assessment methodologies, tools and benchmarks, including for the application of the principle in planning and investment decisions in energy networks.
 - the Energy Efficiency targets, including new methods to collect and integrate different sources of data, to forecast trends and to evaluate policies and measures.
 - the role of the public sector in delivering energy efficiency, supporting Member States in gathering and calculating data from public bodies for the final energy consumption reduction targets.
 - the Energy Savings Obligations and Energy Efficiency Obligation Schemes, supporting Member States in the design and implementation of the schemes and in the calculation of contributions and evaluation of measures.
 - Contractual Rights of consumers in the area of heating and cooling, supporting Member States and regulatory bodies in putting in place provisions and standards matching the requirements and information needs of consumers and complementing the implementation of the respective articles.
 - Energy Services, supporting Member States in putting in place standard contracts and quality control schemes, moreover platforms/databases that facilitate access to qualified and certified energy services providers.
- *For Policy Support actions addressing energy audits and energy management systems, please refer to call topic LIFE-2023-CET-BUSINESS.*
 - *For Policy Support actions addressing specifically energy poverty, please refer to call topic LIFE-CET-2023-ENERPOV.*
 - *For Policy Support actions addressing private finance for sustainable energy, please refer to call topic LIFE-CET-2023-PRIVAFIN.*
 - *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-2023-CET-DHC.*

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

Actions under Scope B are expected to address core provisions and aspects of the Renewable Energy Directive (RED), in particular those measures that have been newly introduced or reinforced under the Fit for 55 Package and REPowerEU Plan, including but not limited to one of the following:

- Provisions related to the permit-granting process as established in the revision of the RED, notably to support the joint development of new tools, sharing of best practices, and training programmes for speeding up and streamlining permitting procedures through an EU community of practitioners in RES permitting consisting of the contact points established under Art 16 of the RED and other permit-granting authorities, including at regional and local level.
 - other provisions related to the permit-granting process or to administrative procedures, regulations and codes, including the exchange of insights and good practice between relevant authorities for the identification of the land and sea areas necessary for the installation of plants for the production of energy from renewable sources, development of plans designating renewables go-to areas / acceleration areas for one or more types of renewable energy sources, including effective environmental impact mitigation measures.
 - provisions related to the development of enabling frameworks to promote and facilitate the development of renewables self-consumption and energy sharing e.g. in multi-apartment blocks.
 - provisions related to renewable energy communities (RECs) and potential interactions with Citizen Energy Communities, in particular, their implementation in sectors where energy community models are less prevalent (e.g. heating, flexibility services).
 - different governance models and principles compliant with the definition of renewable energy communities.
-
- *For actions related to enabling services and financial support for the early stages of specific energy community projects, please refer to topic LIFE-2023-CET-ENERCOMFACILITY.*
 - *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-2023-CET-DHC.*
 - *For actions supporting the roll-out of heat pumps, please refer to topic LIFE-2023-CET-HEATPUMPS.*

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

Actions under Scope C are expected to address core provisions and aspects of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive, in particular those that are likely to be subject to major changes newly introduced under the Fit for 55 proposal for revision of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive.

Actions should address in particular aspects in one of the two main focus areas as established below, even if not limited to these:

1. Actions to enhance the effectiveness and coherence of instruments designed to improve the energy performance of buildings, notably:

- as regards Minimum Energy Performance Standards, support for developing the standards at Member State level and for developing the necessary monitoring tools; support for developing an enabling framework including technical assistance and financial measures that accompanies the introduction of Minimum Energy Performance Standards as part of the national Building Renovation Plans.
- as regards information tools, support for the re-scaling of EPCs including for the identification of the worst-performing buildings; refining and up-dating the methodologies to calculate the energy performance classes and to provide the other mandatory and voluntary indicators to be included in EPCs; integration and methodological coordination of EPCs with the Smart Readiness Indicator (SRI) and other disclosure and planning tools like Building Renovation passports.
- as regards buildings data, improvement of the methodologies to collect, aggregate and report data; support for national authorities for questions of data governance; support for the design and definition of functionalities for national databases as established in the proposal for a revision of the EPBD, including methodologies to collect and integrate data from different sources, such as EPCs, inspections, building renovation passports, SRI and calculated or metered energy consumption; moreover, the link of national databases with the European Buildings Stock Observatory.

2. Actions to support the transition to a climate-neutral building stock, notably:

- as regards Zero Emission Buildings (ZEB), support for Member States to define benchmarks and refine and implement the concept against the national context, for instance by identifying criteria, thresholds and other parameters and framework conditions relevant for the definition and implementation of ZEB-standards at national level for new and existing buildings.
 - as regards the Global Warming Potential of buildings, support for the setting up and implementation of the life-cycle Global Warming Potential (GWP) calculations with a view to setting up a European framework for whole life carbon reduction, notably by building on existing initiatives at national level and seeking to replicate most effective practices, and by helping integrate the calculations in the national policy frameworks and fostering the cross-policy exchanges.
 - as regards Minimum Energy Performance Requirements and towards Zero-Emission Buildings, support for the up-dating of calculations and cost-optimality methodologies including up-dating of the software.
- *For actions supporting specifically the market up-take of Energy Performance Certificates and the Building Renovation passport, please refer to topic LIFE-2023-CET-BETTERRENO.*
 - *For actions supporting specifically the accessibility of buildings data to building owners, operators and to third parties and the harmonisation of data models and standards, please refer to topic LIFE-2023-CET-BETTERRENO.*
 - *For actions supporting the implementation of provisions related to heat pumps, please refer to topic LIFE-2023-CET-HEATPUMPS.*

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

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of up to EUR 2 million would allow the specific objectives to be addressed appropriately.

Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

Expected impact

Proposals should present the concrete results which will be delivered by the activities, and demonstrate how these results will contribute to the topic-specific impacts. This demonstration should 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 submitted under this topic should demonstrate how they will contribute to:

- 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, including for cross-sector use of energy; improved quality of reporting; improved understanding and measurement of the impacts and non-energy benefits, also in view of the circular economy.
- Improved understanding of potentials and market barriers.

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 public authorities with increased capacities 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 subprogramme:

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

Funding rate

Other Action Grants (OAGs) — 95%

LIFE-2023-CET-EPREL: Maximising use of and valorising EPREL data through innovative applications

Objectives

Since April 2022, products with an energy label can be publicly consulted in the European Product Registry for Energy Labelling (EPREL). EPREL provides information on products placed on the market and their energy labels, as well as information on other aspects than a product's energy use (e.g. water consumption, availability of spare parts), with over 1.5 million models estimated to have been registered. This significant and increasing amount of data represents a dual challenge: on the one hand, it necessitates a systematic quality check for it to serve its intended purpose, while on the other it is a significant resource that should be further valorised.

Scope

To address this, the proposed action should cover one or more of the following areas:

1. Systematically checking and improving EPREL data (e.g. plausibility check of data not used to determine the energy classes, such as noise and water use, missing information), and reporting issues identified (e.g. errors in label/product parameters values, wrong/missing supplier contact), including via the EPREL's missing or erroneous model reporting features ("missing model" reporting feature expected to be implemented in 2023).
2. Promoting further EPREL's use as well as its innovative utilisation for new applications (e.g. assessing the highest, significantly populated efficiency class for Green Public Procurement, setting reduced VAT or other subsidies, assessing savings for energy saving obligations, assessing a dwelling's overall appliance efficiency, multivariate data analysis supporting policy making etc.). These activities should complement EPREL with additional data, such as Global Trade Item Number (GTIN) identifier etc., including key information for consumers (e.g. retail prices, availability/points of sale etc.), allowing an easier retrieval of models, by developing new user-friendly tools/ services or combining such data with existing software e.g. shopping/price comparison applications using an Application Programming Interface (API).
3. Crowd-sourced compliance control of the publicly available data, with input from consumers and economic operators, to boost compliance, completeness and reliability of the data.

Proposed actions are encouraged to develop appropriate software to automate and facilitate this work, including harvesting of crowd-sourced data (e.g. on price, availability of products, compliance aspects), foreseeing possible use of artificial intelligence and machine learning. Proposals should target the self-sustainability of such software after the action's completion. Synergies should be sought with related activities in the field, potentially building on existing work (e.g. webcrawlers, other relevant tools developed under EU funded projects or international initiatives²⁴).

²⁴ <https://www.energyrating.gov.au/calculator>.

In doing so, policy recommendations could also be elaborated for possible improvements to EPREL (e.g. more immediate search and display functionalities), as well as options for improving the legislative framework (e.g. avoiding redundant registrations, improving transparency on markets where a product is placed, equivalence of products, etc.). Such recommendations should include structured feedback from different target user groups (e.g. consumers, public authorities, suppliers and retailers).

In addition, proposals should undertake communication activities and actively promote the EPREL, to raise retailers' awareness on its existence and stimulating their potential role as multipliers. Attention should be given in particular to reaching small and medium size retailers (e.g. those not engaged in trade associations and/or located in remote areas).

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 2.5 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 impacts.

Proposals submitted under this topic should demonstrate how they will contribute to an increased use of EPREL and valorisation of its data, which is expected to increase uptake of more energy efficient products. In addition, the use of EPREL can further streamline and support activities in related fields, such as public procurement and policy making.

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 models in (or outside) EPREL checked and related improvements proposed.
- Administrative savings from the use of EPREL in public procurement or policy making, in EUR.
- Number of users utilising the new applications.

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

- Investments in sustainable energy (energy efficiency and renewables) triggered by the project (cumulative, in million Euro).
- Primary energy savings triggered by the project (in GWh/year).

- Renewable energy generation triggered by the project (in GWh/year).
- Reduction of greenhouse gases emissions (in tCO₂-eq/year).

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

Supporting the Renovation Wave and the energy transition in buildings

LIFE-2023-CET-BETTERRENO: Energy Performance of Buildings - Creating the conditions to make renovation faster, deeper, smarter, service- and data-driven

Objectives

This topic contributes to the goals of the EU Renovation Wave strategy²⁵ and aims to help implement current and future buildings policies, notably in view of the revised Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD)²⁶, but considering as well aspects of the New European Bauhaus initiative²⁷.

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 of building performance up-grades and to reduce the administrative, logistic and financial burden that still goes along with (deep) retrofitting of buildings. The topic also aims to address the need for quality data to make verification and financing more robust and to help deploy services that valorise building energy efficiency and smartness. 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.

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

Scope

Scope A: Facilitating large-scale deep renovation

Proposals should stimulate volume and demand of deep renovation, by aggregating demand, linking demand and supply, by incentivising uptake of industrialised prefabrication solutions with reduced on-site construction time, by rolling out tools

²⁵ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions, A Renovation Wave for Europe - greening our buildings, creating jobs, improving lives, [COM\(2020\) 662 final](#).

²⁶ Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the energy performance of buildings (recast), COM(2021) 802 final.

²⁷ https://new-european-bauhaus.europa.eu/index_en.

such as building renovation passports or by improving coordination of the supply chain. The topic welcomes action in all markets regardless of their readiness or maturity, and in particular in less mature markets. Proposals should explain and adapt the proposed activities to the context in which they will be acting.

Applicants are referred to the proposal for a recast of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive²⁸ which provides legal definitions for concepts such as “deep renovation”, “staged deep renovation” or “zero emissions building”.

Proposals should address one of the following areas/aspects:

1. Remove market barriers and stimulate the development of business models for the implementation of large-scale deep renovation projects, e.g. at district or neighbourhood level, and including the roll out of industrialised prefabrication solutions, where relevant, to reduce construction costs, time, material use and potential supply-side disruptions. Proposals should make the whole renovation process easier and more attractive for all those involved, from construction stakeholders and investors to building owners and occupants. Proposals should facilitate demand mobilisation and aggregation and the links between supply and demand, e.g. interaction between building owners managers and suppliers. Proposals should not focus on technology development, but on rolling-out market-ready technology and packages and target specific building typologies that allow for a fast and large-scale deployment. Proposals can also address standardisation of building renovation solutions and circularity-related aspects where relevant. On top of technical solutions, business models, financing solutions, performance guarantees, design and procurement processes should be taken into account.
2. Roll out renovation passports for buildings (recast EPBD), providing a clear strategy for staged renovation with the objective to transform the building into a zero-emission building by 2050, helping owners and investors plan the best timing and scope for the interventions, and linking to finance and funding schemes. Proposals should align with the EU and national frameworks and address the interrelation with Energy Performance Certificates. Proposals should also coordinate with existing support and funding schemes and one-stop-shops or renovation support services for homeowners.
3. Remove barriers linked to the lack of coordination between the different actors and trades involved in the supply side of renovation works (in particular SMEs and individual craftspeople), and the capacity needed in the sector to deliver the renovation wave objectives. Actions should incentivise collaboration and result in the establishment of partnerships and consortia able to deliver business models and long-lasting collaboration models between MSMEs (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) which effectively reach the building and homeowners and enable deep renovations with guarantees (including the switch to efficient renewable-based heating and cooling), reducing risks and transaction costs for companies. This could include standardising contractual aspects, e.g. liabilities in case of low quality work, training different trades to deliver joint quotes and projects for deep renovation, ensuring a more robust information sharing between companies, showcasing integrated offers for deep renovations to potential customers, etc. Proposals should also integrate aspects related to quality and guarantees, giving confidence to present and future customers, including for example potential linkage of performance guarantees to payments and procedures for post-completion evaluation of

²⁸ COM(2021) 802 final.

works to integrate lessons learnt. Proposals should ensure uptake of the results in the targeted local, regional and/or national markets, and for the sub-sector of the building stock tackled, for example through the involvement of professional organisations and/or other relevant stakeholders.

Scope B: Regulatory and administrative frameworks

Actions are expected to promote evolutions in order to remove barriers to building energy renovation and to stimulate more ambitious levels of energy savings and integration of on-site renewable energy in renovations, in order to reach the target of a carbon-neutral building stock by 2050.

Proposals should address barriers linked to the legal and regulatory framework in particular at local and regional level, and in the spirit of the recast as proposed for the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD). This could include adapting these frameworks; adapting administrative procedures; adapting procurement rules, adapting existing support schemes and funding frameworks etc. in order to deliver the 2030 and 2050 targets on building renovation.

Proposals should clearly identify the specific barriers and the governance level which will be addressed, the expected outcome and provide an indication of the feasibility and timeline for implementation. The relevant public authorities should be involved in the project activities (not necessarily as consortium members) in order to ensure implementation of the proposed changes, with an indication of the necessary conditions/likelihood for implementing changes. Proposals should support public authorities in estimating the effectiveness of the frameworks and identifying changes to be introduced. Proposals should seek to exchange on examples and best practices with other regions and/or countries.

Wherever possible, proposals should prioritise multi-ownership and multi-apartment buildings.

More specific (non-exclusive) examples of aspects that proposals could address are:

- Adapting the legal framework, permitting rules and administrative procedures to ease the implementation of energy efficiency and on-site integrated renewable energy measures in buildings. Proposals could consider as well aspects related to the modernisation of buildings, including demand-response and infrastructure for sustainable mobility (e.g. EV charging).
 - Addressing governance, decision-making and financing in/of co-ownership structures (e.g. building management, homeowners associations and structural barriers in relation to landlord-tenant split incentives, access of co-owners associations as legal entity to loans and contracts, etc.).²⁹
 - Adapting public grants, loan, guarantees and technical assistance schemes to support deep renovation (in one go or staged) and avoid lock-in effects.
- *For actions specifically providing support for the implementation of EU provisions at Member State level and/ or through national authorities, please refer to topic LIFE-2023-CET-POLICY.*

²⁹ In case the action specifically focuses on vulnerable consumers, applicants are referred to topic LIFE-2023-CET-ENERPOV.

Scope C: Buildings energy data and services

Actions are expected to improve the availability, quality and accuracy of buildings data and the access to these for multiple usages and parties including financial institutions; they are moreover expected to explore and foster the use of data for the development and financing of services that enhance the energy performance of buildings and the efficiency of the system. Actions may also develop and deploy approaches for use of better data to improve the reliability and consistency of key instruments, such as Energy Performance Certificates.

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 methodologies that make the collection and structuring of data more robust and contribute to the systematic integration and use of conventional and metered including, where relevant, big data. This includes innovative methods and tools to measure and/or estimate and/or calculate energy performance and energy savings, facilitate financing of energy renovation and roll-out of energy services³⁰. This could also address specifically flexibility, including demand response, and non-energy benefits.
- As established in the proposal for a recast of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD), help improve the access of building owners, tenants and building managers to buildings data; help improve access of third parties, notably financial institutions, and service providers such as ESCOs and aggregators, to buildings data, e.g. by supporting evolutions of national regulations related to energy data access or developing data platforms.
- Develop, implement and roll-out approaches that use metered data and integrated data collection/processing for Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) towards a) improving the accuracy and reliability of EPCs and/or b) enhancing the market uptake of EPCs; 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.
- Promote and support the use of innovative technologies and digital tools for inspections, notably following constructions and renovations.
- Develop/connect/integrate tools and platforms that would contribute to the coordination and harmonisation of data models, methodologies and standards for the energy performance of buildings.
- Develop services that make use of actual energy consumption data, metered savings and flexibility of active buildings and explore the contribution of active buildings to the efficiency and stability of the energy system.

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.

³⁰ Activities related more specifically to benchmarking, tagging, monitoring and disclosure of data on energy efficiency investments and financial performance thereof are addressed more specifically under the topic *LIFE-2023-CET-PRIVAFIN*.

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 impacts.

For Scope A:

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

- Development of business models for the implementation of large-scale deep renovation projects allowing to reduce costs.
- Roll out of renovation passports for buildings.
- Improved coordination between the different actors and trades involved in the supply side of renovation works (in particular SMEs and individual craftspeople).
- Effective and replicable solutions leading to increased rates of renovation.

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 scope A include:

- Increased renovation rates.
- Increased deep renovation rates.
- Number of deep renovations with reduced costs.
- Number of buildings equipped with a renovation passport.
- Number of companies benefiting from improved coordination for deep renovation projects.

For Scope B:

Proposals submitted under scope B should demonstrate how they will contribute to the following impacts, depending on the aspects addressed:

- Adapted legal frameworks, permitting rules and administrative procedures to ease the implementation of energy efficiency and on-site integrated renewable energy measures in buildings.
- Improved governance, decision-making and financing in/of co-ownership structures.
- Adapting existing support schemes and funding frameworks to deliver large-scale deep renovation.

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 scope B include:

- Increased renovation rates.
- Increased deep renovation rates.
- Number of legislations, policies, frameworks or strategies created/adapted.
- Number of public authorities adapting their policy and/or legal and administrative frameworks, and associated population.
- Number of public authorities adapting their funding frameworks, and associated population.
- Number of co-ownerships supported by the activity, where relevant.

For Scope C:

Proposals submitted under scope C should demonstrate how they will contribute to the following impacts:

- Improved availability, quality and accuracy of buildings data.
- Improved access to and 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.
- 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.
- Better quality and cost-effectiveness of inspections and of the assessment procedures carried out for the Energy Performance Certificate.
- Up-take of improved methodologies to measure and monetise primary benefits and co-benefits of innovative services, such as environmental and health externalities.

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 scope C include:

- Number of methodologies and interoperable data models taken up by stakeholders, including market and public/ policy-relevant stakeholders.
- Number of references evidencing the use of improved buildings data by market and public/policy-relevant stakeholders.
- Number of third parties, including financial institutions and energy service companies, benefitting from access to building performance data.
- Number of more accurate and reliable Energy Performance Certificate-schemes and assessment procedures/ tools tested and/or deployed.
- 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 stakeholders, notably public, using and feeding into platforms designed to host and integrate data models and standards in the area of energy performance of buildings.
- Number of innovative inspection procedures and tools developed, tested and/or deployed.
- Number of consumers (residential, commercial, public) offering or benefitting from new and smart service offers.

Proposals under scopes A, B and C should also quantify their impacts related to the following common indicators for the LIFE Clean Energy Transition subprogramme:

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

Funding rate

Other Action Grants (OAGs) — 95%

Supporting the energy transition in industry and tertiary sectors

LIFE-2023-CET-BUSINESS: Supporting the clean energy transition of European businesses

Objectives

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 Plan³¹ and the overall competitiveness of EU enterprises. Energy policy instruments such as the Energy Efficiency Directive (EED)³² and the Renewable Energy Directive (RED)³³ recognise the role that businesses, especially small and medium-sized, can have at local and national level in accelerating the transition.

As highlighted in the Green Deal Industrial Plan, the achievement of climate-neutrality by 2050 will require a full mobilisation and deeper cooperation among all players operating across the different value chains of Europe's net-zero industry. 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.

The REPowerEU Plan strengthens the need to act fast. Energy management systems and energy audits are instruments that the European Commission is encouraging

³¹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_510.

³² Directive 2012/27/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on energy efficiency.

³³ 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.

Member States to roll out in the framework of the EU Save Energy Communication and the recast Energy Efficiency Directive. In fact, recommendations of high-quality energy audits, already performed but not implemented or to be performed in the future, can on one side generate savings and reduction of energy demand in the short period, and on the other contribute to the competitiveness of the EU economy by optimising energy use for industrial, manufacturing and commercial purposes. Energy audits recommendations can also increase the self-generation and self-consumption of renewable energy e.g. with solar panels and heat pumps, amongst companies. Enabling factors such as geographical proximity and value chain relations can also make businesses decide to make investments in energy efficiency or renewable energy and engage in energy related collaborations.

The overall objective of this topic is to support the clean energy transition and decarbonisation of businesses by strengthening national and regional ecosystems for energy management systems and energy audits and by fostering collaborative approaches between companies. Synergies with relevant EU projects³⁴ and initiatives such as the Covenant of Companies for Climate and Energy (CCCE) and/or the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) are encouraged.

Scope

Proposals are expected to focus on one of the two scopes below. The scope addressed should be specified in the proposal's introduction. In case a proposal addresses elements of more than one scope, this should be justified.

Scope A: Strengthening a favourable ecosystem for energy audits and energy management systems

Proposals under this scope should support the participating countries in strengthening their ecosystem for energy audits and energy management systems, thereby ensuring high-quality energy audits and increasing the implementation of cost-effective measures, especially by small and medium-sized energy-intensive businesses.

Applicants should primarily address the quality of energy audits, by taking into account the following elements: measures that could encourage a higher uptake of energy audit recommendations by companies, application of international and European standards in energy audits, use of Life-Cycle Cost Analysis versus simple payback periods, content and structure of the audit report including a concrete and feasible Action Plan for the recommended measures, valorisation and quantification of non-energy benefits, follow-up systems for checks on the implementation of measures and data management. Proposals should also explore the potentials of energy management systems based on performance improvement as well as measures for the cost-effective use or production of renewable energy in businesses. Activities can be developed as support to relevant national /regional authorities and/or as services to companies.

In addition to the above, proposals could address barriers at national/regional level that hinder the implementation of energy efficiency projects and the increase of renewable energy in businesses, for example administrative (permitting, support schemes, etc), financial (access to finance, risk) or informative (knowledge gap, skills, etc). Information campaigns, obligations linked with performance incentives, fiscal and financial instruments that increase access to finance and embed risk

³⁴ E.g. projects related to the clean energy transition of companies funded under Horizon 2020 Energy Efficiency (Coordination and Support Actions) and LIFE-CET.

reduction options, mechanisms such as energy audit centres for SMEs, energy efficiency roadmaps and energy efficiency networks for SMEs are relevant tools whose best practices can be shared and replicated by the participating countries. Consultation and engagement activities should be foreseen with the relevant stakeholders, for example national/local energy agencies, managing authorities, industry associations and financial institutions.

Finally, where relevant and instrumental to facilitate the uptake of energy audits recommendations and subsequent measures by businesses, proposals could address the enhancement of corporate energy culture.

Scope B: Fostering energy cooperation among companies

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 the establishment of collaborative approaches among companies. Applicants can focus on developing collaborative approaches, namely between large and small companies operating in the same value chain, or on energy cooperation among companies in proximity (region, cluster, industrial park/site).

Energy cooperation and collaborative approaches refers to, for example, companies working in the same value chain and holding business relations. The value chains addressed can operate at any level (from local to European, and international when relevant). It can also refer to companies in proximity (region, cluster, industrial park/site) sharing energy related assets (e.g. renewable energy generation, energy networks, energy storage), sharing energy services, implementing energy exchanges (e.g. recovery and use of waste heat from industrial and manufacturing processes) or being involved in energy communities. Clustering of companies can also facilitate better access to finance, ESCO contracts and power purchase agreements (e.g. aggregators).

Proposals are expected to carry out activities aiming at triggering interest, awareness, knowledge and know-how (e.g. through the organisation of roundtables at sector or territorial level) on the multiple benefits achievable from collaborative approaches. Some examples of these benefits are operating costs reduction, mitigation of energy-related risks, easier access to finance or stronger value proposition. Proposals should also work on removing barriers that hinder energy cooperation, e.g. organisational (coordination, trust, responsibilities, data management, risk sharing), legal or social.

Furthermore, proposals should facilitate the establishment of concrete cooperation initiatives, 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) as well as in addressing the untapped potential of energy efficiency and renewables at each step of the process (e.g. upstream to downstream in the case of value chains).

The proposed activities should be focused on engaging businesses in energy cooperation activities; the involvement of additional relevant stakeholders (e.g. industrial organisations, multipliers, financial players, ESCOs, public authorities) should be envisaged to ensure the success and the sustainability of the developed collaborative approach.

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.

Additionally, benchmarking and monitoring mechanisms, focusing on the energy use at value chain, or at cluster or industrial park/site level, could be developed to support the formulation of policy/regulatory recommendations aiming at speeding up the clean energy transition of the business sector towards the EU's 2030 and 2050 climate and energy objectives.

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 impacts.

Proposals submitted under this topic should demonstrate how they will contribute to, depending on the scope:

- Improved quality of energy audits.
- Harmonisation of energy audit frameworks and replication of best practices across participating countries.
- Improved uptake of the recommendations of energy audits.
- Implementation of EU legislation (in particular Energy Efficiency Directive and Renewable Energy Directive) addressing the business sector.
- Viable business models for energy cooperation between companies ready to be rolled out on the market.
- Deployment of energy related infrastructure, energy services, and/or energy exchanges contributing to the clean energy transition of businesses.

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 companies benefitting from direct support.
- Implementation rate of energy audit recommendations resulting from the proposed activities.
- Number of energy auditors using improved energy audit methodologies.
- Number of national/regional ecosystems supported for energy management systems and energy audits.
- Number of companies implementing energy cooperation approaches.

- Number of relevant stakeholders approached and trained on energy cooperation approaches between companies.

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

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

Funding rate

Other Action Grants (OAGs) — 95%

Ensuring the right skills on the market for the energy transition

LIFE-2023-CET-BUILDSKILLS: BUILD UP Skills – Upskilling and reskilling interventions enabling a decarbonised building stock and energy system integration

Objectives

Launched in 2011, the BUILD UP Skills initiative³⁵ is supporting the upskilling of building professionals across Europe, to deliver building renovations offering high energy performance as well as new nearly Zero-Energy Buildings (nZEBs). This effort needs to be sustained through the rollout of ambitious training and qualification interventions aligned with the EU Green Deal, the EU's 2030 climate objectives as well as the EU's long-term strategy of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.

The main objective is to increase the number of skilled building professionals at all levels of the building design, operation and maintenance value chain. The focus is on the skills needed to enable the Clean Energy Transition, in particular the EU Renovation Wave, the EU Solar Energy Strategy³⁶, the Communication on Digitalising the Energy System – EU action plan³⁷, as well as the implementation of the provisions on skills as part of the Fit-for-55 package³⁸.

The topic is in line with the Pact for Skills in construction which plans to upskill and reskill overall at least 25% of the workforce of the construction industry in the next 5 years, to reach the target of 3 million workers.³⁹ In addition, the topic aims to leverage synergies with the upcoming initiatives on digital skills for the energy transition addressed in the framework of the Communication on Digitalising the Energy System.

³⁵ <https://www.buildup.eu/en/skills/about-build-skills>

³⁶ COM(2022) 221 final.

³⁷ COM(2022) 552 final.

³⁸ Proposal for a Directive on energy efficiency (recast) COM(2021) 558 final; Proposal for a Directive amending Directive (EU)2018/2001 as regards the promotion of energy from renewable sources; COM(2021) 557 final; Proposal for a Directive on the energy performance of buildings (recast), COM(2021) 802 final.

³⁹ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=25235&langid=en>.

Scope

Proposals should develop, test, validate and prepare the deployment of new and/or the upgrade of existing training and qualifications for all types of professionals involved in the building value chain ('blue collars' and/or 'white collars' professionals), as well as for professionals active in other sectors than buildings renovation. To ensure a successful deployment phase, the proposed training and qualification schemes should be tailored to the specificities of the national markets targeted.

The main focus of proposals should be on continuous vocational education and training (or professional training) of professionals, i.e. after their initial, compulsory education and training or after they have entered working life. This includes the retraining of professionals from other sectors with skills transferable to construction and building renovation. Proposals are also encouraged to address other parts of education and training (e.g. initial education and training, higher education), provided this is justified based on needs detected in the countries targeted.

All professional profiles involved in the building value chain, at all educational levels (European Qualification Framework levels 1-8) can be validly addressed. Proposals do not need to address all profiles and educational levels but should clearly justify the choice of the profile(s) and educational level(s) targeted.

The proposed action should address one of the following thematic areas:

1. Skills development and deployment supporting the implementation of core provisions of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD), covering one or several of the following:
 - skills for carrying out building energy audits, including assessment and advice for preparing buildings to operate at low temperature and integrate heat pumps.
 - skills for inspections of heating, air conditioning and ventilation systems.
 - skills to deliver renovation passports.
 - skills enabling to leverage accessibility, fire safety, and/or seismic safety interventions for energy efficiency improvements.
2. Skills development and deployment supporting the decarbonisation of the building stock, covering one or several of the following:
 - skills for delivering building deep renovation, including through modular and industrialised solutions.
 - skills for new and existing nearly Zero Energy Buildings (nZEBs) and bridging the gap towards Zero Emission Buildings (ZEBs).
 - skills related to whole life carbon (via the assessment of Global Warming Potential), circular construction and resource efficiency, and leveraging the Level(s) framework.
 - digital skills supporting greater energy performance of buildings, in particular through an enhanced use of Building Information Modelling.
 - skills for upgrading the smartness of buildings for greater energy performance (based on the Smart Readiness Indicator), looking in particular at sensors, building controls and building management systems.
3. Skills development for small-scale renewable energy deployment and energy system integration, covering one or several of the following:

- skills to increase the workforce of trained installers and maintenance staff, in particular for onsite solar systems; measures focusing on the identification of skills gaps in companies along the value chains combined with targeted trainings.
 - upskilling for energy systems related digitalisation to allow energy management in homes, buildings and energy communities, i.e. covering several buildings or larger areas and districts (to facilitate system integration via electrification of buildings and transport, linking smart appliances, smart recharging with demand response and storage etc.)
4. Development and delivery of innovative on-site training methods (especially for on-site workers/ craftspeople) as part of renovation projects, in cooperation with product manufacturers. Actions should focus on the skills needed to carry out deep renovation. The proposed methods should help address one of the main barriers to upskilling, i.e. the lack of time from companies and professionals to enrol in upskilling activities. The proposed training should ultimately facilitate the cooperation and understanding between different crafts and professions, and support a holistic vision of the building and of renovation works.
5. Skills development and deployment for the implementation and effective operation of integrated home renovation services (or one-stop-shops), providing coordinated and coherent responses to the needs of building owners at each step of their renovation journey: from technical and social diagnosis, technical offer, obtaining permits, finding qualified professionals, contracting of works, structuring and provision of finance (e.g. loans), facilitating access to available subsidies or other support schemes, to the monitoring of works and quality assurance.

Regardless of the thematic area addressed, proposals should:

- provide details on the actual scope and content of the training and qualification schemes to be developed/upgraded, e.g. professional profiles and levels in the European Qualification Framework targeted; thematic coverage; duration of the training; validation mechanisms.
- include activities ensuring the recognition of trained and qualified professionals.
- include train-the-trainer activities.
- include a testing and validation phase for the new or upgraded qualification schemes developed; this testing and validation phase should take place during the project lifetime. It will take the form of training sessions for building professionals, during which participants will trial and test the draft qualification scheme, the curriculum, the training materials as well as the recognition mechanisms developed within the project. The testing and validation phase should involve a representative number of trainees, based on the size of the targeted sector(s) in the countries involved. After the training sessions, feedback collected from the trainees should be used to validate and/or further improve the qualification and training schemes developed within the action. Infrastructure costs for developing new or upgrading existing training facilities will not be considered eligible.
- include activities to develop a strategy ensuring that the proposed schemes will be scaled up and sustained after the end of the project, linking to available sources of funding at national and EU level.

Proposals are also expected to include activities to engage relevant institutions in the field of energy, climate, education, employment, social and industrial policies. Applicants should notably foresee activities to engage employers, trade unions as well as education and training providers in order to ensure that training programmes and curricula are labour market-relevant and proactively integrate emerging skills.⁴⁰

Proposals are expected to support the work done within the European Construction Blueprint⁴¹ which focuses on vocational education and training primarily for 'blue-collar' professionals up to level 5 in the European Qualification Framework. The proposed activities are also expected to align with and support the "Pact for Skills in Construction" by the EU sectoral Social Partners, EFBWW and FIEC in cooperation with EBC as part of the European Skills Agenda.

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

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU in the 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 related to Skills development activities for renewables and waste heat-based district energy networks, please refer to topic LIFE-2023-CET-DHC.*
- *For actions related to Skills development activities for deployment of heat pumps, please refer to topic LIFE-2023-CET-HEATPUMPS.*

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 impacts.

Proposals submitted under this topic should demonstrate how they will contribute to an increased uptake of sustainable energy skills along the building value chain.

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 qualification schemes developed or upgraded and tested.
- Number of professionals with increased qualifications and the level of the European Qualification Framework (EQF).
- Number of trained professionals.
- Number of trained trainers.
- Number of requalified professionals and the level of the EQF.

⁴⁰ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1530&langId=en>

⁴¹ <https://constructionblueprint.eu>

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

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

Funding rate

Other Action Grants (OAGs) — 95%

Supporting the decarbonisation of heating and cooling

LIFE-2023-CET-HEATPUMPS: Boosting heat pump deployment through alternative models and skilled installers

Objectives

Heat pumps represent one of the key technologies to meet the 2030 EU energy and climate targets and towards the climate neutrality of heating and cooling by mid-century. As part of the REPowerEU⁴² Plan to phase out EU dependence on fossil fuels imports, the European Commission has called for doubling the current deployment rate of individual heat pumps, resulting in a cumulative 10 million units installed across EU Member States by 2027.

In this framework, the aim of this topic is to complement existing legislative and financial incentives at the EU, national and local levels and to facilitate a large-scale rollout of high-quality heat pump installations. In particular, the topic aims to reduce upfront costs and perceived complexity of design and installation as well as to increase the number of skilled installers⁴³ and the confidence of end-users.

Scope

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

Scope A: Alternative business and delivery models

Proposals should stimulate large-scale demand for heat pumps in existing buildings, while significantly reducing or spreading over several years investment costs and ensuring high-quality of the installations.

⁴² Communication from the Commission of 8.3.2022 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](#).

⁴³ According to the International Energy Agency's estimates, the REPowerEU targets for heat pumps will require an increase in the number of trained heat pump installers from around 40 000 in 2019 to 110 000 by 2030. Source: The Future of Heat Pumps. World Energy Outlook Special Report, International Energy Agency, 2022.

To that end, the proposed actions should tackle specific market barriers and develop, demonstrate, upscale and/or replicate alternative business and/or heat delivery models. These may include, but are not limited to, any of the following: a) heat as a service; b) Pay-for-Performance (P4P) and c) joint procurement actions.

In doing so, proposals should ensure the high quality of installations and that selected buildings are suitable and ready (e.g. in terms of thermal insulation, radiator systems) for heat pump installation prior to any installation and that building heating needs and heat pump size are properly evaluated. To that end, proposals may apply innovative methods/tools simplifying processes and assessments.

Proposals should demonstrate the effectiveness and replicability of the proposed approaches.

The focus of the proposed actions should be at least on space heating; however, this does not preclude considering reversible heat pumps in addition. Actions may address any type of buildings, although multi-apartment and commercial buildings are especially encouraged. Synergies of heat pumps with PV installations and/or hybrid renewable heating and cooling systems could also be promoted.

Heat pumps should be designed and installed by professionals with relevant qualifications and skills. All relevant stakeholders necessary for the successful implementation of the action should be involved; if not directly involved, their support should be demonstrated in the proposal.

In this context, proposals may put in place new or strengthen existing strategic partnerships between relevant stakeholders (e.g. industry, installers, local authorities, consumer associations, integrated home renovation services) and consider the objective of the European Commission's Green Deal Industrial Plan for the Net-Zero Age of strengthening, among others, the heat pump supply chain within the EU⁴⁴.

The proposed actions are invited to build on experiences and lessons learned from other relevant projects and programmes⁴⁵.

Scope B: Addressing the shortage of skilled installers and professionals for heat pumps

Launched in 2011, the BUILD UP Skills initiative has been supporting the upskilling of building professionals across Europe to facilitate the achievement of the EU's climate and energy objectives as well as the implementation of the European Green Deal. The initiative has also supported actions to boost demand for and supply of skilled professionals in the heat pump sector and to facilitate mutual recognition of skills and competencies along the value chain.

Building on the above, proposals should aim to significantly increase the number of skilled heat pump installers and other relevant professionals, thereby reducing the growing gaps in certain markets.

To that end, proposals shall undertake one or more of the following:

- Identify and map profiles and set up actions (e.g. partnerships) to attract and reskill professionals from other sectors with skills transferable to the heat pump value chain.

⁴⁴ COM(2023) 62 final.

⁴⁵ This should include e.g. LIFE projects, the implementation of Air Quality Plans and the implementation of Operational Programmes under ESIF, H2020 projects, Intelligent Energy Europe projects, and other relevant national, local, or regional initiatives.

- Identify and quantify skills and workforce gaps at the local/regional/national level and/or build on existing solid gap analyses and set up actions (e.g. new or upgraded training/qualification schemes) incentivising/facilitating the upskilling of the workforce, especially installers; strengthen skills for professionals to integrate heat pumps as part of building renovation projects and skills for integrated solutions (e.g. heat pumps and PV together, hybrid heating systems combining several technologies and fuels, e.g. hybrid heat pumps, solar thermal with heat pumps, integrated thermal and electric storage solutions, digital control systems etc.).
- Support cooperation between trades and/or among national associations and other relevant stakeholders to develop, test, and disseminate widely agreed EU-wide competencies, content guidelines for specialised training programmes, and core training material replicable and adaptable to local contexts.
- Support the set-up of state-of-the-art training facilities for heat pump installers (excluding infrastructure costs).

While proposals should plan a testing and validation phase, the actual and long-term running of the proposed activities is not within the scope of this topic. Thus, a key element should be a strategy ensuring that the proposed activities will be sustained after the end of the project, linking to available sources of funding at the national and EU level.

In the case of training, proposals should include train-the-trainer activities and provide details on the actual scope and content to be developed, e.g. professional profiles and levels in the European Qualification Framework targeted, thematic coverage, duration of the training and validation mechanisms.

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

For Scope A, 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.

For Scope 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.

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 impacts.

Proposals submitted under this topic should demonstrate how they will for scope A, contribute to stimulate demand for heat pumps in existing buildings, reduce costs and ensure the high quality of installations and for scope B, increase the number of skilled heat pump installers and professionals. 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:

For Scope A:

- Number of new installations triggered by the action, including measures to ensure quality and performance for the end user.
- Number of users and stakeholders benefitting from alternative model set-up and test during the action.
- Number of commitments for replication of alternative models 5 years after the action.
- Investments in sustainable energy (energy efficiency and renewables) triggered by the project (cumulative, in million Euro).
- Primary energy savings triggered by the project (in GWh/year).
- Renewable energy generation triggered by the project (in GWh/year).

For Scope B:

- Number of training schemes and actions developed, upgraded and replicated to support re-skilling or upskilling of professionals, based on high-quality gap analyses.
- Number of professionals trained.
- Number of trainers trained.
- Number of stakeholders and organisations endorsing EU-wide competencies and minimum content guidelines and core material for specialised training programmes contents.

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

- Investments in sustainable energy (energy efficiency and renewables) triggered by the project (cumulative, in million Euro) – partly covered as topic-specific indicator.
- Primary energy savings triggered by the project (in GWh/year) – partly covered as topic-specific indicator.
- Renewable energy generation triggered by the project (in GWh/year) - partly covered as topic-specific indicator.
- Reduction of greenhouse gases emissions (in tCO₂-eq/year).

Funding rate

Other Action Grants (OAGs) — 95%

LIFE-2023-CET-DHC: District heating and cooling: Enabling modernisation and fuel switch through support for investment plans and skills development

Objectives

To advance towards carbon neutrality and to phase out EU dependence on fossil fuels imports, there is an urgent need to reduce fossil fuels consumption for heating purposes. In that context, modern and efficient district heating systems can connect local demand with low-temperature 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 and the proposals for a revision of the Energy Efficiency Directive (EED) and the Renewable Energy Directive (RED) set out ambitious measures, including to increase the use of renewable energy and waste heat in district heating systems.

District heating operators/owners need to prepare and implement plans so that existing systems fulfil the proposed criteria for 'efficient district heating and cooling', as proposed for the revision of the EED. This will require, among other aspects, the cost-effective and energy efficient retrofitting of existing, inefficient district heating networks and the integration of low-temperature renewable energy (e.g. from solar thermal, ambient energy and geothermal resources) and waste heat, including supported by heat pumps. Furthermore, district heating has been identified as a key option for the decarbonisation of the heating sector in countries and regions without long tradition and experience in the technology.

The option to further develop district heating and cooling systems should be integrated in energy planning and heat mapping by public administrations, taking a district approach when addressing the policy priority of deploying renewable and efficient heating and cooling, including for instance building or modernising district heating systems when planning renovation programmes.

Guidance, recommendations and technical advisory services have already been developed and tested at the 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 low-temperature 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 are expected to focus on one of the two scopes below. The scope addressed should be specified in the introduction of the proposal.

Scope A: Technical support for the development of investment plans for the modernisation, fuel switch and system integration of existing district heating systems

Proposals should work with operators/owners of existing district heating systems and provide them with the required technical support for the preparation of investment plans to fulfil the criteria for 'efficient district heating and cooling' as defined in the revised Energy Efficiency Directive.

The focus should be on identifying concrete ways to modernise the systems and to integrate low-temperature renewable energy or waste heat (the latter defined in the Renewable Energy Directive). However, the transformation into low-temperature of

the district heating networks is not compulsory and other feasible approaches enabling the fuel switch to low-temperature renewable energy or waste heat are possible.

The investment plans should include the detailed identification of the investments, 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 investment plans to be produced should enable the targeted district heating system to fulfil the criteria for “efficient district heating and cooling” as proposed for the Energy Efficiency Directive Recast within in a timeline of 10 years.

Activities should include, among others, financial planning and pre-feasibility studies including, where relevant, the assessment of the compatibility with the existing building stock and options to link district heating retrofitting to local building renovation plans. Proposals under this topic are not expected to finance the development of new tools, e.g. software, or the upgrade of existing ones. On the other hand, applicants are encouraged to make use of existing commercial software, as needed.

Proposals should support the development of a substantial number of investment plans in at least 3 eligible countries.

In line with the Renewable Energy Directive, actions may also include the assessment of the potential to participate in electricity markets by providing balancing, storage and other flexibility services.

Additionally, proposals should clearly demonstrate the interest/commitment of the district heating operators receiving support, and explain the content of the support to be provided and how the consortium will deliver this support on the ground.

Proposals should promote replication by other district heating operators/owners.

- *For actions focused mainly on specific investment project development, including preparation of a detailed business plan, project documentation, procurement and award of investment contracts, please refer to topic LIFE-2023-CET-PDA.*

Scope B: Skills development of professionals, operators and public authorities

Proposals should strengthen the capacity of targeted professionals across the district heating and cooling value chain (including white collar workers) and/or civil servants in national, regional and local authorities.

In particular, proposals should provide the technical and practical knowledge required to:

- develop new district heating and/or cooling systems based on low-temperature renewable energy sources and waste heat; and/or
- modernise and integrate low-grade renewable energy and waste heat sources into existing systems; and
- operate district heating networks at low temperatures.

This could cover, among others, one or more of the following aspects:

- Development, testing and validation phase of new and/or upgrade and replication of existing training schemes, including on-site training and mentoring schemes.

- Development or upgrade and dissemination of technical guidelines, including for buildings preparation for low-temperature district heating and solutions for heat storage.
- Capacity building for deploying renewable and efficient district heating and cooling networks, integrating district heating development and building renovation programmes, including links with planning and heat mapping.

Activities should:

- build on the lessons learned and material developed from previous projects and other programmes.
- be based on concrete successful examples.
- be tailored to local contexts.
- enable peer-to-peer learning; and
- be carried out, where applicable, through the use of existing software and tools.

Proposals should provide details on the actual scope and content of the training and capacity building activities to be developed, e.g. professional profiles and levels in the European Qualification Framework targeted; thematic coverage; duration of the training; validation mechanisms. Additionally, proposals should include the training of trainers and a testing and validation phase for the new or upgraded schemes developed. However, the actual, long-term, running of training schemes is not covered by this topic. Thus, a key element should be the development of a strategy ensuring that the schemes will be sustained after the end of the project, linking to available sources of funding at national and EU level.

Where relevant, applicants should aim to bring together employers, trade unions as well as training providers.

For public authorities, activities may also aim to support the development or strengthening of an enabling regulatory environment.

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

For Scope A, 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.

For Scope 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.

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 impacts.

Proposals submitted under this topic should demonstrate how they will contribute to:

- equip district heating operators with investment plans, guidance, internal capacity and other elements which are required to transition towards the criteria defined for 'efficient district heating and cooling' (for scope A).
- build the capacity of professionals and/or civil servants to develop new district heating and/or cooling systems based on low-temperature renewable energy sources and waste heat; and/or modernise and integrate low-temperature renewable energy and waste heat sources into existing systems; and operate district heating networks at low temperatures (for scope B).

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:

For Scope A:

- Number of existing district heating systems equipped with an investment plan allowing them to fulfil the criteria for 'efficient district heating and cooling' defined in the Energy Efficiency Directive.
- 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).

For Scope B:

- Number of training schemes and capacity building activities developed, upgraded and replicated of existing, including on-site training and mentoring schemes for professionals, operators and public authorities.
- Number of trainers trained.
- Number of professionals and civil servants trained.
- Number of operators with strengthened capacity (when relevant).
- Number of stakeholders and organisations endorsing technical guidelines and core material for specialised training.
- Number of local, regional, or national regulatory frameworks strengthened.

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

- Investments in sustainable energy (energy efficiency and renewables) triggered by the project (cumulative, in million Euro) – covered as topic-specific indicator, see above.
- Primary energy savings triggered by the project (in GWh/year).
- Renewable energy generation triggered by the project (in GWh/year).
- Reduction of greenhouse gases emissions (in tCO₂-eq/year).

Funding rate

Other Action Grants (OAGs) — 95%

Attracting private finance for sustainable energy

LIFE-2023-CET-PRIVAFIN: Crowding in private finance

Objectives

The topic aims to increase the amount of private finance allocated to energy efficiency and small-scale renewable energy sources by establishing innovative financing schemes for investments in sustainable energy and/or engaging with financial institutions to develop financial products and adapt their investment practices.

Significant investments in energy efficiency and small-scale renewables need to be mobilised to achieve the ambition set by the European Green Deal⁴⁶ and the objective to reduce EU dependence on fossil fuels imports set out in the REPowerEU Plan⁴⁷. The only way to deliver the necessary level of investments is to progressively maximise the mobilisation of private capital, using public funds as a catalyst and an enabling regulatory framework. This has been at the heart of the works of the Energy Efficiency Financial Institutions Group (EEFIG)⁴⁸ and will remain a central objective of the upcoming High-Level European Energy Efficiency Financing Coalition. In addition, the Energy Efficiency Directive as proposed for revision⁴⁹ provides that Member States facilitate the implementation of innovative financing schemes for energy efficiency and promote energy efficiency financial products. Moreover, 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 small-scale 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 objectives⁵⁰. These schemes have to be adapted to the specificities of energy efficiency investment profiles, as well as those of small-scale renewables, in buildings, SMEs, district heating and other relevant sectors.

In parallel, there is a need to engage with financial institutions in order to change their approach to energy efficiency. Work is needed at the strategic level, in particular in relation to the EU's sustainable finance policy and how energy efficiency can impact the sustainability and risk profiles of portfolios. At the operational level, there is a

⁴⁶ [COM\(2019\) 640 final](#).

⁴⁷ [COM\(2022\) 108 final](#).

⁴⁸ The Energy Efficiency Financial Institutions Group (EEFIG)(https://ec.europa.eu/eefig/index_en) analyses drivers and barriers for energy efficiency investments in buildings and industry, including adequate financing instruments.

⁴⁹ Proposal for a Directive on energy efficiency (recast) COM(2021) 558 final.

⁵⁰ As proposed for the revisions of the Energy Efficiency Directive (COM(2021) 558 final) and the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive COM(2021) 802 final, as well as the 2020 Renovation Wave Strategy COM(2020) 662 final.

need to build capacity across the whole private finance value chain, from retail banking to capital markets, in order to adapt financial products and develop the market.

Scope

Proposals should clearly focus on tailored, market-oriented solutions to crowd in private finance at scale for sustainable energy investments, understood as investments in energy efficiency and/or small-scale renewable energy sources and storage.

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

Scope A: Innovative financing schemes

Proposals should set-up innovative financing schemes leveraging private finance for sustainable energy investments, with a dedicated and clear focus on energy efficiency, in at least 1 eligible country with a clear ambition and effort towards expansion in additional eligible countries. The financing scheme should be operational by the end of the project, whereas the related investments may be implemented after project completion.

The financing schemes can involve, for example but not limited to:

- Equity, debt, mezzanine financing, potentially combined with non-reimbursable grants ("blending").
- Guarantees, risk-sharing, insurances or other de-risking instruments.
- Energy services such as energy performance contracting 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 for energy efficiency and/or integrated renewables in at least 1 eligible country. Proposals can build on and/or upscale innovative financing schemes successfully tested previously.⁵¹
- Address the provision of finance as well as the structuring of demand, in particular at regional and national level.
- Define the target region(s) and sector(s) and justify how the proposed scheme is innovative and complements available funding schemes.

⁵¹ 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 Horizon 2020 (H2020) and Intelligent Energy Europe (IEE) programmes (including H2020 PDA or ELENA-EIB).

- 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.

Scope B: Mainstreaming sustainable energy finance

Proposals should address one or several of the following areas of work:

- Development, evolution, labelling and certification of financial products, including insurance, as well as provision of information and potential advice to the borrower or investor in order to ensure uptake of green products, with a focus on the retail side and/or capital markets.
- Evolution of risk and sustainability assessment of private investors by integrating the specificities of energy efficiency and integrated small-scale renewables, including multiple benefits of energy efficiency. The focus can be at project level (e.g. creditworthiness analysis, quality standards, benchmarking data) or at portfolio level (e.g. internal ratings-based approaches, climate stress-testing, analysis of investment strategies, etc.).
- Benchmarking, tagging, monitoring and disclosure of data on energy efficiency investments and financial performance thereof, including standards to report on the energy performance of investment portfolios (in particular mortgages, consumer loans, corporate loans).⁵²
- Targeted support to policy makers, regulatory bodies and supervisory authorities on sustainable energy related activities, for example on risk ratings and stress testing related to energy performance of assets.
- Accelerating implementation of EU sustainable finance principles by private investors and/or companies for sustainable energy investments, including for investments not yet covered by the EU taxonomy.
- Capacity building at all levels of the private finance value chain, in the form of exchanges of best practices, development of training programmes and/or evolution and/or rollout of existing training programmes.

The proposed actions should have a strong component of engagement with the relevant stakeholders in the private finance value chain, including institutional investors, but also retail banking branches, brokers, fund managers, investment advisers, insurers, etc., in order to ensure adoption of the results by market players. Proposals should demonstrate support of the targeted stakeholder groups and how they will be involved throughout the project.

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

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.

⁵² Activities related more broadly to the availability and interoperability of building energy data collected e.g. from energy performance certificates, energy audits, smart meters, are addressed more specifically under the topic *LIFE-2023-CET-BETTERRENO*.

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 impacts.

Proposals submitted under scope A should demonstrate how they will contribute to deliver adequately tailored innovative financing schemes that are operational and ready to finance investments, and the impact that this will have on investments in energy efficiency and small-scale renewables.

Proposals submitted under scope B should demonstrate how their proposed results will contribute to, depending on the focus of the activities: enhanced capacity and appetite of private financial institutions to invest in energy efficiency and small-scale renewable energy sources; adoption of new approaches, tools, labels and certification schemes; enhanced access to data related to financial and energy performance; evolutions in the regulatory and supervisory frameworks; easier identification of the alignment of sustainable energy investments to the criteria of the EU taxonomy of sustainable activities.

Proposals under both scopes 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:

For scope A:

- Number of investors and project developers using the financing scheme.
- Number of investment projects processed/covered by the financing scheme.
- Volume of investments processed/covered by the financing scheme.
- Number of households and businesses benefitting from the financing scheme.
- Investments in sustainable energy (energy efficiency and renewables) triggered by the project (cumulative, in million Euro).
- Investments in building energy renovation triggered by the project (cumulative, in million Euro).
- Average % of energy savings targeted by investment projects.

For scope B:

- Number of financial institutions using the developed financial products/tools.
- Number of investment projects processed/covered by the developed financial products/tools.
- Volume of investments covered by the developed financial products/tools.
- Number of households and businesses benefitting from the financial products.
- Number of private finance stakeholders, and related investment portfolios, integrating the results of the project in their work.

- Number of private finance stakeholders benefitting from enhanced capacity.
- Number of policy makers, regulatory bodies and supervisory authorities benefitting from support on sustainable energy policies.
- Investments in sustainable energy (energy efficiency and renewables) triggered by the project (cumulative, in million Euro).
- Investments in building energy renovation triggered by the project (cumulative, in million Euro).

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

- Investments in sustainable energy (energy efficiency and renewables) triggered by the project (cumulative, in million Euro) – where not covered as topic specific indicator.
- Primary energy savings triggered by the project (in GWh/year).
- Renewable energy generation triggered by the project (in GWh/year).
- Reduction of greenhouse gases emissions (in tCO₂-eq/year).

Funding rate

Other Action Grants (OAGs) — 95%

Supporting the development of local and regional investment projects

Developing innovative integrated service offers

LIFE-2023-CET-OSS: Integrated services for clean energy transition in buildings and businesses

Objectives

As highlighted in the "Renovation Wave" initiative of the European Green Deal and in the REPowerEU Plan, there is 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. Businesses are one of the key contributors to the clean energy transition. However, many homeowners, building owners, small businesses or public authorities 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, proposing integrated services for clean energy transition in buildings and businesses.

Projects are expected to tackle, but are not limited to, 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 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 mediated by One-Stop-Shops.
2. Provide methods and support:
- Integrated services implemented, operational and tested
 - Build expertise and organisational innovations needed for project development.
 - Reduce costs and time on-site through standardised approaches (e.g. optimised business processes, standardised contractual arrangements, branding of the proposed services etc.).
 - Ensure cost effectiveness and price transparency of services provided to final beneficiaries.
3. Aim at a self-sustained business model:
- Integration of services can be developed through dedicated operators and/or through an improved co-ordination between existing local actors.
 - The prospect of economically viable business models is expected, targeting self-sustainability in the medium to long term, i.e. *ultimately* running without subsidies to cover running costs.
4. Communicate results:
- Disseminate innovative solutions (e.g. organisational and contractual), suited to the targeted contexts.
 - Help improve legal and regulatory environments.
 - 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 be well integrated in their local and national context, making best use of what is locally available, notably in terms of local market conditions and public support schemes, and contribute to develop partnerships between local authorities and the relevant market players, in the construction, heating and cooling, and wider energy sectors. 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.

Scope

Based on the generic approach and common objectives presented above, proposals are expected to focus on one of the four 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 scopes, proposals must be perfectly 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 efficient 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). For instance, actions targeting mainly social/public rental housing operators would not be in scope A, but rather in scope B or C (depending on the national context).

Beyond the common objectives presented above, 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, from technical and social diagnosis, technical offer, obtaining permits, finding qualified professionals, contracting of works, structuring and provision of finance (e.g. loans), facilitating access to available subsidies or other support schemes, to the monitoring of works and quality assurance. Proposals should not only aim to provide first level information and generic diagnosis, but also clearly indicate how they will actively support homeowners in the selection of professionals to carry out the renovation works and in the works phase itself, including an analysis of how they will deal with potential legal issues related to competition regulations.

Scope B: Integrated services for private rental housing energy upgrade

Under scope B, actions should clearly focus on the energy performance improvement of existing buildings owned by private professional entities operating under private law, with a core focus on rental housing. Examples of stakeholders that could be targeted by the services developed under scope B are, among others: housing companies, housing cooperatives, 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 above, 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, especially from a real estate portfolio management and asset valuation perspective. Services developed under scope B should not be limited to first level information and generic diagnosis, but should also address: the development of strategic partnerships with construction companies and/or financial institutions (notably in the context of the EU taxonomy); the development of dedicated financial and/or fiscal schemes; the development of a sustainable business model. 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.

Scope C: Integrated services for clean energy transition in public buildings

Under scope C, actions should clearly focus on the ambitious energy renovation of existing public buildings (e.g. administrative buildings, hospitals, schools), and should target legal entities operating under public law (e.g. public authorities, public bodies,

social/public rental housing operators, etc.) as the main final beneficiaries of the services to be put in place.

Beyond the common objectives presented above, the proposals presented under this scope should meet the following specific objectives:

Projects selected under scope C should create and sustain long-term financial and technical capacity amongst public authorities to develop projects. Therefore, proposals should establish and operate facilitation structures, for example one-stop-shops, offering a comprehensive, all-inclusive service offer from technical, financial to legal advice, procurement and quality assurance of works. Service offers should cover a large territory (i.e. operating at provincial, regional or national level), for the benefit of especially small and medium-sized municipalities or other public bodies. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the facilitation structures will be established in terms of governance, mandate, geographical coverage and long-term sustainability. Legal assistance should be considered to facilitate and prioritise the aggregation of building renovation projects (belonging to one or several public entities). Services should also include financial engineering support to increase blending of public and private funding and uptake of EU funding sources (e.g. InvestEU, Recovery and Resilient Facility and European Structural and Investment Funds, including REACT-EU and Just Transition Mechanism). Proposals should demonstrate how the services will trigger ambitious energy renovation of public buildings, demonstrating the exemplary role of public authorities in decarbonising their assets and leading the way towards the European clean energy transition.

Scope D: Integrated services for the clean energy transition of businesses

Under scope D, actions should clearly focus on the lack of internal resources and/or lack of skilled personnel in businesses, especially SMEs, to cover the whole process of investment in energy efficiency and small-scale renewable energy projects.

Beyond the common objectives presented above, the proposals presented under this scope should meet the following specific objectives:

Projects selected under scope D should develop and optimise an integrated service offer for the clean energy transition of SMEs in the targeted territory. Coordinated and comprehensive service solutions should not be limited to audits but should necessarily cover the aspects related to the preparation and implementation of investments, for example but not limited to: business case (including non-energy benefits), engineering, procurement, supervision of the works, reception of the works, quality assurance and management of litigation, identification of available funding, matchmaking with banks, ESCOs or other investment sources. Where relevant, proposals could also envisage operational support to groups of companies (e.g. project aggregation, joint procurement activities, etc.) in a perspective of territorial development.

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

For Scopes A, B, C and D, 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 impacts.

Proposals submitted under this topic should demonstrate how they will contribute to:

- Integrated services implemented, operational and tested at the end of the action. Projects should necessarily set up and launch the services on a pilot phase, although upscale may happen after project completion.
- 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).
- Prospect of economically viable business models, in the medium to long term running without the need for public subsidies to cover running costs.
- Increased awareness and trust of end-users through clear accountability, quality assurance and/or dedicated consumer protection mechanisms.
- Data and guidance made publicly available 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.

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 (depending on the scope):

- Number of initial contacts (households, local authorities, private companies) made by the integrated service provider.
- Number of investment projects (number of housing units/number of public or private tertiary buildings (and floor area)/number of investment projects of private businesses) effectively implemented.
- Average conversion rate 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).
- Average percentage of energy savings per investment project.

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

- Investments in sustainable energy (energy efficiency and renewables) triggered by the project (cumulative, in million Euro) – already covered as topic-specific indicators, see above.
- Primary energy savings triggered by the project (in GWh/year).
- Renewable energy generation triggered by the project (in GWh/year).
- Reduction of greenhouse gases emissions (in tCO₂eq/year) and/or air pollutants.

Funding rate

Other Action Grants (OAGs) — 95%

Delivering public sector investments

LIFE-2023-CET-PDA: Project Development Assistance for sustainable energy investments

Objectives

Project Development Assistance (PDA) offers technical assistance to public and private project developers to deliver energy efficiency and renewable energy investments of ambition and scale.

While LIFE-CET topics such as *LIFE-2023-CET-LOCAL* or the European City Facility focus on the elaboration of transition plans such as Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAPs) or the elaboration of investment concepts and building investment pipelines, respectively, the PDA topic aims to support project developers across Europe to deliver a highly ambitious sustainable energy project pipeline. Projects are expected to develop replicable solutions that are mobilising private capital, blending public with private financing, setting up long-term and scalable financial instruments and at the same time overcoming legal and structural barriers. Projects shall demonstrate an innovative approach, for example in advancing existing procurement procedures, in aggregating and structuring investment projects, in advancing market boundaries or changing organisational and regulatory structures.

PDA projects contribute significantly to the European Green Deal goals⁵³ and will help pave the way for a decarbonised and clean energy system. In the next years, PDA projects are expected to significantly contribute to accelerating the clean energy transition, as pointed out in the REPowerEU Plan⁵⁴ to phase out EU dependence on fossil fuel imports, and to contribute to the Green Deal Investment Plan⁵⁵, by stimulating market demand for Net-Zero technologies and assisting in their uptake. A range of very innovative solutions with regard to the financing and mobilisation of investments were demonstrated in past Horizon 2020 PDA projects, which helped to shift market boundaries and demonstrate practical application of inspiring solutions. Examples include the development of a revolving loan fund combining European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funding, low interest-loans and third-party financing through Energy Service Companies (ESCOs) to deeply refurbish hospitals in a region, the development of a forfaiting fund using private investments⁵⁶, or the development of sustainable public real estate management and subsequent energy efficiency investments in municipal assets⁵⁷.

PDA projects are expected to continue the good track-record in terms of mobilisation of private investments and increased cost-effectiveness of national and Union public budgetary resources by developing ready-to-finance and bankable projects. In this

⁵³ [Energy and the Green Deal \(europa.eu\)](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/en/press-articles/2023/05/10/energy-and-the-green-deal).

⁵⁴ Communication from the Commission of 18.5.2022 to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, REPowerEU Plan, [COM\(2022\) 230 final](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/com22_230).

⁵⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_20_24.

⁵⁶ <https://sharex.lv/>.

⁵⁷ www.sure2050.be.

context, and where relevant, PDA projects should make use of existing EU-programmes⁵⁸ in the implementation of future investments.

Scope

Project Development Assistance (PDA) will support project promoters in preparing and launching investment pipelines of sustainable energy projects. The call topic aims to build technical, economic and legal expertise of project promoters needed for the successful project development and implementation. Projects shall demonstrate their added value and lead to the launch of tangible sustainable energy investments within the project duration.

Proposals for PDA projects 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.

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

- the organisational innovation for the mobilisation of the investment programme such as setting up project development units or establishing efficient procurement procedures for large-scale bundling and pooling of (mixed) assets. The geographical focus can be at district, city or a wider level; and/or
- financial engineering with a particular focus on leveraging enhanced levels of private investment and improved combination of existing funds. This could include Energy Performance Contracting, financial instruments, blended funds, innovative on-bill and on-tax payment schemes, community-based financing schemes, etc.

Proposals should aim for high ambition levels of energy savings and decarbonisation, such as deep renovation, NZEB standards, positive energy buildings or districts and/or highly energy efficient infrastructure.

Proposals could target sectors including:

- Buildings
 - Existing residential buildings including large social housing operators.
 - Existing non-residential buildings of public or commercial owners, including defence facilities such as their offices, hospitals and academies.
- District Heating
 - Decarbonisation and modernisation of existing district heating/cooling networks, including investments related to the expansion of existing systems.
- Infrastructure
 - Existing public infrastructure such as water/wastewater services or lighting.
- Businesses
 - Improving energy efficiency of industry and services, including SMEs through, for example, market facilitators that are supporting investment projects.

⁵⁸ One of such initiatives is the Smart Cities Marketplace and its matchmaking network: <https://smart-cities-marketplace.ec.europa.eu/matchmaking/investor-network>.

- Renewables
 - Building-integrated renewables and other small-scale renewables generation and storage.
 - Renewable energy production, including from energy communities and other citizen-led initiatives.
 - 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.
- *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 Energy Efficiency Directive, please refer to the topic LIFE-2023-CET-DHC.*

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 0.5 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.

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 impacts.

Proposals should result in the launch of an energy efficiency and/or renewable investment programme as well as the delivery of scalable financing solutions for sustainable energy investment projects with a particular emphasis on private sector funds. Proposals submitted under this topic should demonstrate that every million EUR of EU support will trigger at least EUR 15 million of investments in sustainable energy in the form of signed work contracts or investment contracts. In case projects address exclusively investments in residential buildings, the triggered investments should be at least EUR 10 million for every million EUR of EU support. 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:

- Investments in sustainable energy (energy efficiency and renewables) triggered by the project (cumulative, in million Euro).
- Primary energy savings triggered by the project (in GWh/year).
- Renewable energy generation triggered by the project (in GWh/year).

- Reduction of greenhouse gases emissions (in tCO₂-eq/year).
- Number of staff with increased skills within project promoter organisations.
- Number of organisations with increased capacity to deliver investments and/or organisational structures.

Funding rate

Other Action Grants (OAGs) — 95%

Involving and empowering citizens in the clean energy transition

Addressing energy poverty

LIFE-2023-CET-ENERPOV: Alleviating household energy poverty and vulnerability 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 and negatively affecting living conditions, well-being and health. Most recent estimates suggest that 6.9% of Europeans are unable to keep their homes adequately warm.⁵⁹ Following the recent surges in energy prices, the number of vulnerable households⁶⁰ overburdened by their energy costs is likely to be on the rise. These higher prices, combined with low incomes and poor energy efficiency of buildings and appliances, are root causes of energy vulnerability. 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. While increasing the uptake of building renovation measures can bring significant long-term benefits to vulnerable households, more immediate energy efficiency measures at the household level and increased use of renewable energy are also key tools in addressing energy vulnerability and can lead to lower energy bills and improved living conditions.

The European Green Deal⁶¹ 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 revision of the Energy Efficiency Directive (EED) as proposed⁶², Member States shall implement energy efficiency improvement measures as a priority among energy poor and vulnerable households. These households should be prioritised in the implementation of energy savings obligations, with the option of requiring obligated parties to achieve a share of their energy savings obligation among vulnerable customers and to work together with local authorities to do so. In addition, the proposed EED (recast) underlines the need to address the split incentive dilemma and remove barriers to energy efficiency measures in multi-owner properties. Finally, the

⁵⁹ EU-SILC survey, 2021.

⁶⁰ For the purposes of this topic, the term 'vulnerable households' is taken to mean households in energy poverty or households, including lower middle-income ones, that are particularly exposed to high energy costs.

⁶¹ [COM\(2019\) 640 final, including the Renovation Wave Strategy and Commission Recommendation \(EU\) 2020/1563 of 14 October 2020 on energy poverty.](#)

⁶² Proposal for a Directive on energy efficiency (recast) (COM(2021) 558 final).

REPowerEU Plan and the EU Save Energy Communication⁶³ highlight the role of immediate behaviour changes by households to reduce energy bills.

In this context, efforts should focus on offering support to build the concrete skills and capacity of vulnerable households to afford their energy bills and ensure adequate comfort levels, as well as supporting relevant actors, including public authorities, in designing longer-term strategies and frameworks to mitigate energy poverty at the sub-national levels, including dedicated financing schemes specifically addressing energy performance improvements for energy poor households. As obligated parties under energy efficiency obligation schemes have potentially at their disposal the necessary data and means to identify energy vulnerability among their customers, supporting the obligated parties is needed in order to spread such schemes across the EU.

Scope

Actions should contribute to actively alleviating energy poverty and energy vulnerability and build on the tools, indicators and resources of existing initiatives, such as the Energy Poverty Advisory Hub⁶⁴ or the energy poverty pillar of Covenant of Mayors⁶⁵.

The proposed action should cover one or more of the following aspects:

- Support the renovation of private multi-apartment buildings with vulnerable residents, with a special focus on reinforcing and adapting the governance and decision-making structures of building management and homeowners associations, tackling related regulatory framework barriers (e.g. property and/or rental laws), split incentives (where relevant), and setting up and coordinating relevant support services. The renovation actions supported should take into account the ability of residents to remain in their homes to avoid gentrification.⁶⁶
- Design and pilot sustainable, large-scale programmes to improve the skills and capacity of energy vulnerable households with a view to improving household energy efficiency and/or increasing the uptake of renewable energy solutions, thereby lowering household energy bills and improving comfort, and empowering vulnerable and energy poor consumers to take actively part in the energy market. These programmes should be tailored for vulnerable households and may include the provision of feedback⁶⁷, energy efficiency measures (e.g. draught proofing, simple insulation measures, or optimisation of existing building technology systems), financial support schemes, or collective solutions (e.g. group purchases, collective self-consumption/energy sharing schemes, peer to peer trading). These actions should be embedded in, and add value to, structural frameworks and activities involving public authorities, societal intermediaries or other relevant actors. A key element of the proposed activities should be the development of a strategy ensuring that the programmes will be sustained after the end of the project, linking to available sources of funding.

⁶³ COM(2022) 240 final.

⁶⁴ Results of the predecessor of the Energy Poverty Advisory Hub, the European Energy Poverty Observatory, should also be considered, where relevant.

⁶⁵ Actions should also take into account potential initiatives or schemes set up under other relevant EU funding such as the Social Climate Fund or the Just Transition Mechanism.

⁶⁶ Actions without a clear focus on vulnerable households may be submitted under topic *LIFE-2023-CET-BETTERRENO*.

⁶⁷ Direct or indirect feedback interventions making use of e.g. energy consumption metering tools, applications, portals, or energy bills.

- Facilitate the delivery of capacity-building for regional and/or local authorities and societal intermediaries and support these actors in setting up cross-sectoral coordination structures to address energy poverty and vulnerability. This capacity-building should ultimately lead to the relevant actors co-designing and rolling out integrated interventions and support schemes for the benefit of vulnerable households. 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 vulnerability in the long term and to improve social cohesion.
- Support obligated parties in setting up and testing schemes for energy efficiency improvement measures for the benefit of vulnerable households under the energy efficiency obligation schemes of the proposed EED (recast), including, where applicable, working together with local authorities or municipalities, and/or relevant networks such as the Covenant of Mayors. It is expected that obligated parties, in particular, are either directly involved or their support 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 vulnerable 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.

The proposed actions should involve local authorities and intermediaries such as consumer or social organisations energy companies, healthcare providers, homeowners or tenants associations, renewable energy communities or citizen energy communities, as relevant.

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 in the range of EUR 1.5 to 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 impacts.

Proposals submitted under this topic should demonstrate how they will contribute to the reduction of energy poverty and energy vulnerability for the targeted vulnerable households and the development of successful approaches for improvements in the energy efficiency and use of renewable energy solutions, which can be replicated in other regions or Member States. Prebound/rebound effects should be taken into account and reported on, where relevant.

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. Impacts under this topic are expected to be demonstrated for energy vulnerable households specifically.

The indicators for this topic include:

- Number of energy vulnerable households with reduced energy costs.
- Number of multi-apartment buildings renovated.
- Number of governance and decision-making structures adapted for multi-apartment buildings.
- Number of coordination structures or support and capacity-building programmes established.
- Quantified multiple benefits, where relevant, for vulnerable 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 and/or vulnerable consumers benefitting from the measures.
- Number of legislative acts, policies or strategies created/adapted on energy poverty and energy vulnerability.
- Other environmental impacts such as reduction of the production of harmful substances, or reduced CO₂ emissions.

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

- Investments in sustainable energy (energy efficiency and renewables) triggered by the project (cumulative, in million Euro).
- Primary energy savings triggered by the project (in GWh/year)⁶⁸.
- Renewable energy generation triggered by the project (in GWh/year).
- Reduction of greenhouse gases emissions (in tCO₂-eq/year).

Funding rate

Other Action Grants (OAGs) — 95%

Sustainable Energy communities and other citizen-led initiatives

LIFE-2023-CET-ENERCOMFACILITY: European Energy Communities Facility

Objectives

Under this topic, a 'European Energy Communities Facility' shall be set up and run to deliver financial support to third parties and appropriate support services for the early stages of energy community projects in the EU.

Energy communities can be an effective tool to attract private investment to renewable energy and energy efficiency, increase the public acceptance of sustainable

⁶⁸ According to studies, many low-income 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 projects and engage citizens in delivering a fair and clean energy transition locally. Given the speed and scale at which the clean energy transition needs to happen and the benefits of engaging and empowering consumers through energy communities, it is essential to create tools to help a large number of community energy projects to take off and contribute to the European climate and energy targets.

With the Clean Energy for all Europeans Package, the EU introduced the definitions of citizen energy communities⁶⁹ and renewable energy communities⁷⁰. For both, Member States are asked to create an enabling legal, regulatory and policy framework to provide a level playing field for energy communities and other actors and to support their development and integration in the energy system. As the transposition and implementation of the relevant Directives progresses, a growing number of Member States is developing bespoke support for energy community projects. However, there are large areas of the EU where this support is still scarce and energy community creation relies mostly on the work of volunteers.

The early phases of sustainable energy projects developed by energy communities require a significant effort. Emerging communities often struggle to know where to start when it comes to the technical and financial aspects of setting up a sustainable energy project and funding the key pre-development work (e.g. feasibility studies, permits, legal agreements, etc.). In fact, that work is often carried out by volunteers with limited expertise and/or financed by raising funds from members who, if the project fails, lose their initial investment. As a result, many projects are abandoned at an early stage due to the lack of professional advice and the difficulty of raising funds for the early phases of project development.

In order to support the growth of energy communities and make projects less dependent on the income level of community members or the availability of support at local level, this topic aims at creating a Facility able to provide support for the early phases of energy community projects. This support shall be designed to reduce the risk of the pre-development phase and thereby create a bridge between the project idea and the launch of the community investment.

Moreover, given the growing number of successful energy communities, there is a need to effectively share best practices across regions and create peer support opportunities. With this aim, the Facility could take the relay from the European Energy Communities Repository and the Rural Energy Community Advisory Hub (RECAH) and further develop on some of their key outputs.

Scope

The European Energy Communities Facility should offer support services, including financial support to third parties, to develop business plans to grow and implement sustainable energy community projects (addressing e.g. energy efficiency, heating and cooling, renewable energy production and use, electro-mobility).

The support directly benefiting third parties planning to launch energy community projects should amount to at least 70% of the budget through a support scheme which may include two different stages:

⁶⁹ Directive on common rules for the internal electricity market 2019/944/EU

⁷⁰ Renewable Energy Directive 2018/2001/EU

- *First stage: Pre-screening to check the feasibility of project ideas.* The pre-screening should be carried out by a network of dedicated experts at national level⁷¹ able to assess the projects' viability considering their local conditions.
- *Second stage: Support to the development of business plans for energy community projects considered viable following the pre-screening.* Proposals should set up a structure able to deliver financial support to third parties in the form of 'lump sum grants' to help projects develop business plans. These plans should be produced within a limited period of time and cover, inter alia: technical analysis of the planned investment project(s), a study of planning considerations and grid connection options, a legal analysis, a governance analysis, an engagement strategy and a clear identification of financing options. The network of national experts should also establish helpdesks to give ad-hoc advice to applicants, help promote the facility, train local actors, support third parties selected for direct financial support in contracting the expertise necessary to develop their business plans, and ensure quality control.

Proposals should outline their approach to ensure that the process and criteria for the allocation of financial support to third parties is conform to EU standards concerning transparency, equal treatment, conflict of interest and confidentiality. In accordance with the EU Financial Regulation, when designing schemes to provide financial support to third parties, applicants should outline:

- the different types of activities that may receive such financial support.
- the definition of the persons or categories of persons which may receive such financial support.
- the criteria to select beneficiaries, including, inter alia, the ambition of the energy-related impacts, the potential impact in the context of community energy in a particular country, the soundness of the business model envisaged, and the foreseen use of potential profits.

The proposed direct financial support shall be targeted only to third parties which are compliant with the definition of "Renewable Energy Community" or "Citizen Energy Community" in EU legislation or are developing structures which aim to qualify as such.

The Facility should also establish an appropriate framework for comprehensive monitoring, analysis and capitalisation of results, which will inform the design of future potential phases of the initiative, as well as policy development.

Applicants should maintain and expand strategic parts of the legacy of the European Energy Communities Repository and the Rural Energy Communities Advisory Hub (RECAH), in particular, the stakeholder networks created and the data collection for the impact assessment.

The Facility shall also carry out supporting actions to help best practice sharing and peer to peer exchanges between energy communities. In particular, applicants should plan cross-country trainings as well as a series of open strategic dialogues across Europe.

⁷¹ Some experts may cover several countries (where relevant).

The European Energy Communities Facility should also monitor the emergence of services delivering support for project development in the different Member States (capacity building and technical assistance) and, to the extent possible, exploit potential synergies with those. It may also collaborate with other relevant initiatives such as the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, the EU City Facility and the European Island Facility, the Smart Cities Marketplace and the Support Service for Citizen-led renovation.

Applicants should demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the varied typology of energy communities across the EU and their needs and challenges including the local, regional and national conditions. They should demonstrate technical expertise related to sustainable energy project implementation (economic, financial, legal, technical) and the capacity to run a large-scale financial support scheme. Consortia applying should demonstrate that they are able to mobilise a critical mass of potential energy community proponents and have a sound and inclusive outreach strategy to different areas of Europe, different sectors and different governance structures. A link with municipal networks and support structures working on sustainable energy projects would also be beneficial.

- *For actions supporting the examination and assessment of the legal frameworks for energy communities, please refer to topic POLICY-LIFE-CET-2023.*

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 10 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 impacts.

Proposals submitted under this topic should demonstrate how they will contribute to:

- Support the development of energy communities in the targeted countries.
- Create a network of national experts and helpdesks that is recognised by energy communities, ensures the quality of the different levels of support provided, and complements national support structures.
- Build capacity across Europe through an effective exchange of best practices across communities.

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 business plans delivered.
- Investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency resulting from the implementation of the business plans (cumulative, in million Euro).
- Number and diversity of energy communities supported for each type of support proposed.
- Number of energy communities having received support which are in operation.
- Number of citizens engaged in energy community projects.
- Renewable energy generation triggered by the project (GWh/year).

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

- Investments in sustainable energy (energy efficiency and small-scale renewables) triggered by the project (cumulative, in million Euro) – covered as topic-specific indicator, see above.
- Primary energy savings triggered by the project (GWh/year).
- Renewable energy generation triggered by the project (GWh/year) - covered as topic-specific indicator, see above.
- Reduction of greenhouse gases emissions (in tCO₂-eq/year).

Funding rate

Other Action Grants (OAGs) — 95%

3. Available budget

The available call budget is **EUR 99 000 000**.

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

Topic	Topic budget
LIFE-2023-CET-LOCAL	EUR 8 000 000
LIFE-2023-CET-POLICY	EUR 8 000 000
LIFE-2023-CET-EPREL	EUR 2 500 000
LIFE-2023-CET-BETTERRENO	EUR 11 000 000
LIFE-2023-CET-BUSINESS	EUR 6 000 000

LIFE-2023-CET-BUILDSKILLS	EUR 6 000 000
LIFE-2023-CET-HEATPUMPS	EUR 6 500 000
LIFE-2023-CET-DHC	EUR 6 500 000
LIFE-2023-CET-PRIVAFIN	EUR 6 500 000
LIFE-2023-CET-OSS	EUR 15 000 000
LIFE-2023-CET-PDA	EUR 7 000 000
LIFE-2023-CET-ENERPOV	EUR 6 000 000
LIFE-2023-CET-ENERCOMFACILITY	EUR 10 000 000

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

4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines(indicative)	
Call opening:	11 May 2023
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>16 November 2023 – 17:00:00 CET</u> <u>(Brussels)</u>
Information on evaluation results:	March - April 2024
GA signature:	August 2024

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 [Search Funding & Tenders](#) 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; for this call, all sections must be completed.

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 (*to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed and then assembled and re-uploaded*)
- Part C (*to be filled in directly online*) containing additional project data
- **mandatory annexes and supporting documents** (*templates available to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded*):
 - detailed budget table (*mandatory excel template available in the Submission System*)
 - participant information including previous projects, if any (*mandatory template available in the Submission System*)
 - for topic LIFE-2023-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 the 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**.

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.*).

- ① For more information about the submission process (including IT aspects), consult the [Online Manual](#).

6. Eligibility

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

Eligible participants (eligible countries)

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

- be legal entities (public or private bodies)
- be established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
 - EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs))
 - non-EU countries:
 - listed EEA countries and countries associated to the LIFE Programme or countries which are in ongoing negotiations for an association agreement and where the agreement enters into force before grant signature ([!list of participating countries](#))⁷²
- 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

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 persons⁷³.

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

⁷² 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.

⁷³ See Article 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

Associations and interest groupings — Entities composed of members may participate as 'sole beneficiaries' or 'beneficiaries without legal personality'⁷⁴.  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 (*see above*) may participate in the call and can sign grants if the negotiations are concluded before grant signature (with retroactive effect, if provided in the agreement).

EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for certain entities (*e.g. 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)*⁷⁵ and entities covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)⁷⁶). Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).

 For more information, see [Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment](#).

Consortium composition

For topics [LIFE-2023-CET-LOCAL](#), [LIFE-2023-CET-POLICY](#), [LIFE-2023-CET-EPREL](#), [LIFE-2023-CET-BETTERRENO](#), [LIFE-2023-CET-BUSINESS](#), [LIFE-2023-CET-HEATPUMPS](#), [LIFE-2023-CET-DHC](#), [LIFE-2023-CET-PRIVAFIN](#), [LIFE-2023-CET-ENERPOV](#) and [LIFE-2023-CET-ENERCOMFACILITY](#): proposals must be submitted by **at least 3 applicants** (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities) from 3 different eligible countries.

For topics [LIFE-2023-CET-BUILDSKILLS](#), [LIFE-2023-CET-OSS](#) and [LIFE-2023-CET-PDA](#): proposals must be submitted by **at least one applicant** from an eligible country.

Eligible activities

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.*).

Financial support to third parties is not allowed in topics [LIFE-2023-CET-LOCAL](#), [LIFE-2023-CET-POLICY](#), [LIFE-2023-CET-EPREL](#), [LIFE-2023-CET-BETTERRENO](#), [LIFE-2023-CET-BUSINESS](#), [LIFE-2023-CET-BUILDSKILLS](#), [LIFE-2023-CET-HEATPUMPS](#), [LIFE-2023-CET-DHC](#), [LIFE-2023-CET-PRIVAFIN](#), [LIFE-2023-CET-OSS](#), [LIFE-2023-CET-PDA](#) and [LIFE-2023-CET-ENERPOV](#).

Financial support to third parties is allowed in topic [LIFE-2023-CET-ENERCOMFACILITY](#) 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

⁷⁴ For the definitions, see Articles 187(2) and 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

⁷⁵ 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](#).

⁷⁶ Commission guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#) on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards (OJEU C 205 of 19.07.2013, pp. 9-11).

- the calls must remain open for at least one month
- 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 these 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 all 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 participate⁷⁷:

- 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 misconduct⁷⁸ (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of

⁷⁷ See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

⁷⁸ Professional misconduct includes: violation of ethical standards of the profession, wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility, false declarations/misrepresentation of information, participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition, violation of IPR, attempting to influence decision-making processes or obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain advantage.

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).

Applicants will also be rejected if it turns out that⁷⁹:

- 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 '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.*

⁷⁹ See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

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. 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 of the contribution to one or several of the specific objectives of the LIFE Programme and the targeted sub-programme
- Extent to which the proposal is in line with the description included in the call for proposals, including, where relevant, its specific priorities
- 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
- 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
- Identification and mobilisation of the relevant stakeholders
- Appropriate geographic focus of the activities
- 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. PEF or OEF methods or similar ones such as PEFCRs/OEFSRs*) or environmental management systems (*e.g. 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
Overall weighted (pass) scores (without bonus)	55	90	N/A

Maximum points: 90 points.

Individual thresholds per criterion: 10/20 points (before weighting).

Overall threshold: 55 points (after weighting).

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

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

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

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

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

Starting date and project duration

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

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 (maximum 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
 - D.1 Financial support to third parties: **only allowed for topic LIFE-2023-CET-ENERCOMFACILITY**

- E. Indirect costs

Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:

- personnel costs:
 - SME owner/natural person unit cost⁸⁰: Yes
 - volunteers unit cost⁸¹: Yes (without indirect costs)
- travel and subsistence unit cost⁸²: No (only actual costs)
- equipment costs: depreciation
- other cost categories:
 - costs for financial support to third parties: only allowed for grants under topic LIFE-2023-CET-ENERCOMFACILITY; maximum amount per third party EUR 60 000
 - 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 (land purchase), if any)
- VAT: non-deductible VAT is eligible (but please note that since 2013 VAT paid by beneficiaries that are public bodies acting as public authority is NOT eligible)
- other:
 - in-kind contributions for free are allowed, but cost-neutral, i.e. they cannot be declared as cost
 - project websites: communication costs for presenting the project on the participants' websites or social media accounts are eligible; costs for *separate* project websites are in principle 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
 - large infrastructure costs are not eligible
 - indirect costs for volunteers are not eligible



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

⁸⁰ 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).

⁸¹ 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).

⁸² 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).

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; exceptionally less or no prefinancing). The prefinancing will be paid 30 days from entry into force/financial guarantee (if required) — whichever is the latest.

There will be one or more **additional prefinancing payments** linked to a prefinancing report except for topic LIFE-2023-CET-ENERCOMFACILITY for which interim payments will be implemented.

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 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 formally NOT linked to individual consortium members, which means that you are free to organise how to provide the guarantee amount (*by one or several beneficiaries, for the overall amount or several guarantees for partial amounts, by the beneficiary concerned or by another beneficiary, etc.*). It is however important that the requested amount is covered and that the guarantee(s) are sent to us 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.

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

n/a

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 [Search Funding & Tenders](#) 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 might 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. (For invitations, we will contact you directly in case of a call update).

Contact

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

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

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

13. Important



IMPORTANT

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

The roles should be attributed according to the level of participation in the project. Main participants should participate as **beneficiaries** or **affiliated entities**; other entities can participate as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions. **Associated partners** and third parties giving in-kind contributions should bear their own costs (they will not become formal recipients of EU funding). **Subcontracting** should normally constitute a limited part and must be performed by third parties (not by one of the beneficiaries/affiliated entities). Subcontracting going beyond 30% of the total eligible costs must be justified in the application.

- **Coordinator** — In multi-beneficiary grants, the beneficiaries participate as consortium (group of beneficiaries). They will have to choose a coordinator, who will take care of the project management and coordination and will represent the consortium towards the granting authority. In mono-beneficiary grants, the single beneficiary will automatically be coordinator.
- **Affiliated entities** — Applicants may participate with affiliated entities (i.e. entities linked to a beneficiary which participate in the action with similar rights and obligations as the beneficiaries, but do not sign the grant and therefore do not become beneficiaries themselves). They will get a part of the grant money and must therefore comply with all the call conditions and be validated (just like beneficiaries); but they do not count towards the minimum eligibility criteria for consortium composition (if any).
- **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).
- **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 double funding** — There is a strict prohibition of double 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 to two different EU actions.
- **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).
- **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 a 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 one of them (or it 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](#).