



GOVERNMENT OF MALTA
MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT,
CLIMATE CHANGE AND PLANNING

Guidance Notes for Applications for
LIFE Proposal Writing Assistance Scheme
for Non-Government Organisations and Voluntary
Organisations

May 2021

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Prospective applicants are to note that given the evolving nature of the COVID-19 outbreak, only soft copies submitted via the website www.vofunding.org.mt will be accepted.

Applications in hard copy, whether submitted by mail, by hand or any other means, will not be accepted and in this case, the application will not be deemed admissible and hence not considered during the evaluation process. Likewise, no pen-drives, cd's etc will be accepted. Again, in such case, and in this case, the application will not be deemed admissible and hence not considered during the evaluation process.

Only applications that successfully reach the website www.vofunding.org.mt by the close of deadline will be considered. It remains the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the application was successfully delivered.

Note that the automated acknowledgement sent from the vofunding mailbox does not in any way confirm or otherwise the (a) successful receipt of part or full application, nor, (b) that the application is deemed admissible.

Prospective applicants are strongly advised to avoid submitting applications on the last days of the call.

The Project Selection Committee also reserves the right to request additional information not included in this Guidance Document.

Further details on the application process may be published in due course on the websites of the Ministry for Environment, Climate Change and planning www.environment.gov.mt. For more information, the Ministry can be contacted by email at life.mecp@gov.mt or Tel. 23316239/43, 22926314.

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Abbreviations

MECP: Ministry for Environment, Climate Change and Planning

PDPID: Policy Development and Programme Implementation Directorate

VO: Voluntary Organisation

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

Introduction

The LIFE Proposal Writing Assistance Scheme, herein referred to as the ‘Scheme’, is a Ministry for the Environment, Climate Change and Planning (MECP) measure designed to enhance the conveying of financial support towards the assistance of writing LIFE funded project proposals. Beneficiaries who would also be applying for the LIFE Projects Co-Financing Grant will be given preference. In this case, applicants are to quote **REF: LIFE/WAS/002**. Applicants who have the financial capacity to carry out the project if such project is selected by Commission but who still feel the need to make use of LIFE Proposal Writing Assistance Scheme are to quote **REF: LIFE/WAS/001**.

The LIFE programme is the EU’s funding instrument for the environment and climate action. The new LIFE programme for the period 2021-2027 will be covering the following areas:

- Nature and biodiversity
- Circular economy and quality of life
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Clean energy transition

Private non-commercial organisations (NGOs, VOs), private commercial organisations and public bodies can undertake environment related projects co-funded by the European Commission in line with the priorities above and the LIFE Projects Co-Financing Grant guidelines. Calls under the LIFE Programme are launched every year by the European Commission in order to submit proposals which answer the requirements of the published calls (these will be published in the coming period in the EU [Funding & tenders opportunities](#) Portal). The selection of successful applications is done by the European Commission following the closure of the calls for proposals.

Since 2013, the LIFE National Contact Point has been entrusted within MECP, with the aim to assist applicants through the process of project applications. To further build on this assistance MECP on behalf of the Government of Malta, will offer grants to NGOs and VOs who want to engage expertise and specialised capacity from consultancy services for the proposal writing to finalise LIFE project submissions.

Eligible applicants may wish to contact and consult directly with the LIFE Unit within MECP. Any enquiries can be communicated via the e-mail address life.mecp@gov.mt or by calling telephone number 23316239/43, 22926314.

1. Objectives

The aim of this scheme of grants is to support NGOs and VOs with regards to administrative, technical and financial assistance for application and proposal writing to answer the 2021 LIFE Call for Proposals. The objective of the scheme is to help NGOs in the planning of the proposal development and writing process. Therefore, prospective applicants will have the opportunity of engaging a service provider who can support them through the pre-/full proposal writing of the LIFE project application in line with the LIFE calls for Proposals.

Priority will be given to project proposals which cover the priority areas below in:

- Measure and management of Natura 2000 sites
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Green infrastructure
- Energy Efficiency
- Waste management and/or Marine litter
- Afforestation

2. Eligible Applicants

This scheme is specifically opened for NGOs and VOs. Proposals must be submitted only through the e-application by a **single legal entity** that fulfils the below requirements:

- Applicants must be established non-Government, non-profit voluntary organizations, with a clear primary focus on environmental conservation in the Maltese territory.
- At the date of application, applicants must be duly enrolled with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organizations and must also be compliant with the Voluntary Organizations Act, (Cap 492 of the Laws of Malta) and its subsidiary legislation.
- Applicants requesting assistance for writing proposals must be the Coordinating beneficiaries in subsequent submitting proposals.

3. Eligibility Criteria

- Applicants must submit, within the Grant application form, a Project proposal summary and demonstrate how it addresses maximum two of the LIFE priority project topics as well as at least one priority area identified by MECP for projects proposals.
- Eligible cost of the Scheme will be limited to fund an external service provider to assist the applicants with their proposal for future submission to a LIFE funding call.
- The application for the Scheme will not ensure the applicant to be granted for the assistance. Selected applicants will receive a Letter of Intent issued by MECP, to begin the consultancy with the ‘service provider’.
- Submissions received after the respective date and time will be rejected.

The Ministry for Environment, Climate Change and Planning reserves the right to request additional information not included in this Guidance Document, to proceed with checks and evaluation of the application throughout the process.

3.1. Requested Assistance

The maximum amount that can be granted will not exceed € 5,000 (excluding VAT) per proposal. The relevant quotations obtained from proposal writing service providers shall be submitted together with the application form as a justification of the amount of funding required. Quotations submitted need to be in line with the public procurement regulations.

Applicants must submit a proposal of at least 3 potential ‘service providers’ together with their proven track record including a list of other European funded projects that they have supported in the past especially those concerning LIFE.

3.2. Applicant Criteria

Applicant Criteria	
Eligible applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicants must be non-profit and non-governmental organisations which are enrolled with the Commissioner for the Voluntary Sector. • Voluntary Organisations in compliance with the Commissioner for the Voluntary Sector by the deadline of the submission of the applications. • Applicants requesting assistance for writing proposals must be the Coordinating beneficiaries in subsequent submitting proposals.
Number of applications	One online application for each proposal shall be submitted by the VO until the stipulated deadline.
Where to apply	E-applications can be found on the MCVS home page www.vofunding.org.mt and must be submitted on line to the Malta Council of the Voluntary Sector
When to apply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The online application shall open on the: 31st May 2021 • The online application shall close on the: 25th June 2021
How to apply	<p><u>Step One: Access the website:</u> For the online application, access the webpage link: www.vofunding.org.mt For further details on the application process, access the webpage link: www.environment.gov.mt</p> <p><u>Step Two: Access the LIFE Assistance Scheme Call</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Search for the LIFE Assistance Scheme call ✓ Click on it ✓ Download the LIFE Assistance Scheme guidelines <p><u>Step Three: if the VO is not registered to the MCVS website</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Register to the MCVS portal by following the instructions <p><u>Step Four: Access the online application:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Click on the LOGIN TO APPLY button ✓ Fill in Login online box ✓ Click on Login <p><u>Step Five: Fill in the online application</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Comply with the Assistance guidelines <p><u>Step Six: Submit the online application</u></p> <p>Upload the supporting documentation requested:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Annual Activity Report of the previous year 2. Profit and Loss statements of the previous year 3. Previous LIFE evaluation synthesis report (If applicable) 4. Three quotes from potential service providers proposal writers in line with the public procurement regulations 5. Proven track records of the service providers 6. Service Providers' Annual Activity Report of the previous year

Exclusion Criteria	
<p style="text-align: center;">Exclusion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project proposal has been already granted any EU/national fund. • Does not observe any of the eligible/applicant criteria • The applicant is bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding-up procedures, its assets are being administered by a liquidator or by a court, it is an arrangement with creditors, its business activities are suspended, or it is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for under EU or national laws or regulations. • It has been established by a final judgement or a final administrative decision that the applicant is in breach of its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions in accordance with the applicable law. • It has been established by a final judgement or a final administrative decision that the applicant is guilty of grave professional misconduct by having violated applicable laws or regulations or ethical standards of the profession to which the applicant belongs, or by having engaged in any wrongful intent or gross negligence, including, in particular: fraudulently or negligently misrepresenting information required for the verification of the absence of grounds for exclusion or the fulfilment of eligibility or selection criteria or in the performance of a contract, a grant agreement or a grant decision; entering into agreement with other applicants with the aim of distorting competition; violating intellectual property rights; attempting to influence the decision-making process of the MECP during the award procedure; attempting to obtain confidential information that may confer upon it undue advantages in the award procedure. • It has been established by a final judgement that the applicant is guilty of fraud, corruption, conduct related to criminal organisation, money laundering or terrorism financing, terrorist offences or offences linked to terrorism activities, child labour or other offences concerning trafficking in human beings. • the applicant has shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations in the performance of a contract, a grant agreement or a grant decision financed by the Union's budget, which has led to its early termination or to the application of liquidated damages or other contractual penalties, or which has been discovered following checks, audits or investigations by an authorising officer, OLAF or the Court of Auditors.

3.3. Eligible Expenditure

In order to be eligible under this scheme, costs must:

- Be incurred solely by the beneficiary.
- Be incurred from the NGO/VO's main account.
- Be according to the procurement procedures.

- Be backed up by original supporting documents.
- Strictly cover only those costs related to proposal writing and not any other project-management services.

3.4. Selection Criteria

The selection criteria shall include the following:

<p>Degree of convergence with established priority areas</p>	<p>35%</p>	<p>The applicant will need to explain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how the proposal will adhere to the principles of LIFE, • highlight a specific call or sub-programme they will be applying for, and • adherence to one or more of the priority areas described in these guidelines.
<p>Contribution to national policies and targets</p>	<p>55%</p>	<p>The applicant will highlight, with reference to official documentation,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the specific policies that they aim to contribute to, or • the specific target they aim to reach.
<p>Financial and operational capacity</p>	<p>10%</p>	<p>The applicant must show that they will have sufficient financial and human resources for the setting up of appropriate management and legal structures, to complete the project if their proposal is successful.</p>

3.5. Payment or recovery of the balance

Applicants that are successful in their application will receive 50% of the funds upon signing the agreement for the grant and the submission of an official invoice (exclusive of VAT) from the chosen 'service provider'. The other 50% will be received upon submitting acknowledgement received from LIFE CION that application was submitted for the LIFE call.

3.6. No double funding

An applicant who receives this grant may not be in receipt of any other Government or European Union funding for the same project proposal writing.

To avoid the risk of double-funding, the applicant must indicate in the relevant section of the application form, the sources and the amounts of any other funding received or even applied for the same project.

3.7. State aid

This grant is applicable under State Aid Rule, under the condition that there will be no economic activity emanating from the project.

4. Outcome of the selection

This grant will be managed by the LIFE Unit within MECP. The LIFE Unit will ensure fair, transparent and equitable selection procedures.

The LIFE Unit shall inform applicants with the outcome of their application and will liaise with successful applicants for the signing of agreements. The Unit is delegated the task to recommend payments in respect of every approved sponsorship.

5. Auditing and monitoring of the project

5.1. Monitoring

In accepting the grant, a beneficiary is expected to:

- Ensure that the ‘service provider’ is engaged and able to commence work within **one month** of the launch of the LIFE application calls and that work is scheduled to be completed in due time for submission of the project proposal to the LIFE call.
- Provide due acknowledgement to the MECP in all publications and reports, all informative signage, and all public communications relating to the approved project; and
- Ensure that all funds are used in line with the grant conditions.

MECP shall have the right to review any documentation pertaining to the beneficiary organization in relation to the grant, and to take any action as it considers appropriate if the relevant procedures and safeguards are not observed, see (5.2).

5.2. Auditing

Beneficiaries will be required to provide proof that the grant has been used correctly and in accordance with the provisions of the grant.

Beneficiaries must also retain for **2 years** all documentation pertaining to the funded project, as well as original fiscal invoices and receipts, and submit them when and as requested.

If it is shown that an application, or any terms of agreement (or the inclusion or omission of any such terms), were vitiated or influenced by incorrect, misleading or fraudulent information or assurance, or by a breach of rules or regulations, MECP shall have the right to revoke the scheme agreement or parts thereof, or to amend its terms, as it deems appropriate, as well as to recover any funds or seek any other appropriate redress. The LIFE Unit or MECP shall not be liable for any ensuing damage or inconvenience suffered by the beneficiary. MECP shall also have the right to take further action in the event of fraud or other malicious circumstance.

6. Data Protection

All personal data contained in the application form shall be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act as per local legislation without prejudice to the possibility of transferring such data to the responsible bodies for inspection and audit.

Contact Details

LIFE Unit: life.mecp@gov.mt

Dr. Evelina Maria Colacino - Malta LIFE NCP

Tel +356 23316239

Email: evelina-maria.colacino.1@gov.mt

Mr. Mekonen Birhane - EU Project Officer

Tel +356 22926314

Email: mekonen.a.birhane-mekonen@gov.mt

Mr. Jan Quintus Engelenburg - EU Project Officer

Tel +356 2231 6243

Email: jan-quintus.engelenburg@gov.mt