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The answers provided are for orientation purposes only. They are not binding and any final decision is taken on the basis of the contents of a submitted proposal. The answers often represent a summary or simplification of the documents published with the call for proposals, which remain the basis on which decisions will be taken.

Please note that the "beneficiary" and the "partners" in LIFE III are now called "coordinating beneficiary" and "associated beneficiaries" in LIFE + (see the Common Provisions for a description of their roles and responsibilities). When "beneficiary" is mentioned without further specification, it refers to both the coordinating beneficiary and all associated beneficiaries.

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1. General/miscellaneous issues

<i>Question</i>	<i>Answer</i>
What is considered a transnational project? Is it a project that involves more than one country as a territory of application? Or is it a project that the participants are of more than one country?	A project is considered transnational when there are beneficiaries from more than 1 EU Member State and hence costs are incurred in several EU Member States.
Do trans-national proposals have better success rates?	Not necessarily. Just note that they obtain a few more points in evaluation if there is an added value in their transnational character.
What percentage of the projects selected from the 2007 call were transnational projects (compared to the 15% target)	Roughly 30%, which is in line with past averages. Note that, also in line with the past, LIFE+ Environment Policy and Governance includes more transnational projects.
For the transnational projects, is there a list for interested bodies to form a partnership?	No.

How do we find partners to develop a new project?	If you are looking for partners in the context of your work or wish to exchange information and experience, you can look in the LIFE projects database (see LIFE homepage). The database contains an invaluable source of information about each project, including a description, beneficiary contact details and links to project homepages. Users can carry out a search to find projects in specific Member States, or to find projects with a specific profile.
Can a transnational LIFE+ Information project that involves participants from non-EU countries (candidate country) be supported under LIFE+?	No, it applies only to EU countries, as no agreement with candidate countries has been signed yet.
Can non-EU associated beneficiaries participate in a LIFE+ project?	This is not presently possible.
For future calls (2009 and beyond) will we still be limited in EU sites or is there potential to include non-EU sites?	Please refer to arts. 1 and 8 of the LIFE+ Regulation. Consult the yearly calls for proposals.
A European grouping of territorial cooperation established in accordance with Regulation 1082/2006 shall have in each Member State the most extensive legal capacity accorded to legal persons under that Member State's national law. Can such a European grouping that has its registered office in one Member State submit a LIFE+ proposal through another Member State where one of its members is registered?	LIFE+ beneficiaries must submit their proposals to the competent national authority of the Member State in which the coordinating beneficiary is registered.
Can LIFE+ finance projects overseas (France)? Are there any specific conditions?	LIFE+ projects can be funded in the French Overseas Departments, but LIFE+ Nature projects are limited to those territories where the Birds and Habitat directives apply.
Are there any consultant companies located in country X that can help writing a LIFE+ proposal?	The Commission cannot reply to this question. We suggest consulting the relevant ministries (Environment, Agriculture, Industry, etc.).
How many people are required in average for writing a LIFE+ proposal? How long does it take?	It depends on the size and complexity of the proposal. However, note that in order to write a proposal, technical, financial and administrative skills are required. Depending on the requirements of each project the load on the technical, financial and administrative tasks will vary. You may consider contacting previous LIFE projects' staff when possible to learn from their experience.
If in 2008 there are a lot of good proposals that are approved and the total allocation for country X (€Y million) is granted, then will this favour larger allocation for country X in 2009?	There is no such link, for any country, for any year, neither in a positive nor in a negative way.
How many projects will be funded as the national allocation for 2009 for country X is Y million €?	The number of approved projects depends on the quality of the projects, not on the financial framework or number of projects submitted. It also depends on the size of the eligible projects, i.e. on the EC contribution requested.
What is the purpose of the indicative national allocations, if a country can in any case have more or less of the budget depending on the numbers of good proposals?	LIFE+ is an EU level programme and as such should aim to ensure that all Member States benefit. Indicative national allocations are an attempt to ensure this takes place, subject to sufficient, good quality proposals being submitted from all countries.

Isn't the allocation for my country somewhat small?	The Commission decides about indicative allocations per country following agreed criteria which are set out in the LIFE+ Regulation.
What is the role of the European Parliament in the project approval process?	After the LIFE+ Committee has delivered its opinion on the short and reserve list, it is submitted for <i>scrutiny</i> to the European Parliament, before the list can be finalised and grant agreements be issued. NB. The EU Parliament has a "right of scrutiny" (" <i>droit de regard</i> ") for draft implementing measures based on legislation decided jointly by the Council and Parliament (co-decision). The "right of scrutiny" gives Parliament one month to object to the measures if it considers that the Commission has exceeded its implementing powers.
What is the role of the national authority in the selection process?	The role of the national authority is to carry out a first informal eligibility check (if it chooses to do so), ensuring that the proposals are complete, but it does not screen proposals for other reasons. The national authority can also make comments on the proposals, which can give applicants a limited advantage if the comments are positive. National authorities may have defined national priorities, which are found on the LIFE+ website. Furthermore, after the first eligibility step, the national authority forwards the proposals to the Commission by the agreed date.
The Ministry of Environment from member State X plans to support a project financially and, thus, it may become a project co-financer. The Ministry also performs duties of authorised authority and will comment on proposals. One may see a conflict of interest in having one agency being a part of a project and also commenting on projects. What is the opinion of the Commission about this situation?	Please refer to the section entitled "6. Compliance with national annual priorities and national added value according to the LIFE+ national authority". It is stated, inter alia, that "Any Member State comments submitted must also refer to the national authority's relationship with the project", and that "Proposals may be given a higher score (out of a maximum of 5 points) regarding their national added value if the Member State comments provide additional positive elements that have not been considered so far in any of the other award criteria". There need not necessarily be a conflict of interest, but the assessment of the comments from the Ministry would be carried out with particular care in this case.
Do projects in my Member State receive financial support from the Ministry of Environment?	The European Commission does not know about particular arrangements for specific Member States. Although ministries may participate in certain projects as coordinating beneficiaries, associated beneficiaries or co-financers, we are not aware of any ministry which systematically co-finances all projects in a given Member State.
National priorities: Purpose? Scoring? When and how should MS' comments be submitted?	As set out in Article 6 of the LIFE+ Regulation. They are scored in accordance with criterion 6 of the Evaluation Guide. Comments must be submitted by 5 January 2009 in the form of a letter.
Giving a score to projects in the Member States that have submitted national priorities is used to compare projects within that Member State and not between Member States that have chosen the option to not submit priorities. Is this interpretation correct?	Yes.

Who checks compliance with the national priorities?	The European Commission does.
What does complementarity with other funding instruments mean?	<p>Ample information provided in the application guides and forms.</p> <p>Article 9 of the LIFE+ Regulation has details on the complementarity between financial instruments: LIFE+ should not finance measures which fall within the eligibility criteria and main scope of, or receive assistance for the same purpose from, other Community financial instruments, including the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme, the European Fisheries Fund and the Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration activities.</p>
How can applicants check whether their projects can or cannot be financed by other instruments?	<p>Several means available. They can check the information made available by their national or regional authorities (for instance, websites of relevant Ministry or direct contact); they can check the information made available by the European Commission for every financial instrument; for nature projects, they can also check the "Financing Natura 2000" toolkit developed by the WWF for the Commission. This document is available on DG Environment's website (http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/financing/index_en.htm).</p>
Are overlaps with other programmes considered at an EU- or a local-level? For example, if at the EU-level the EAFRD includes a particular area of action, but a particular region does not chose to include this action in its priorities, can LIFE+ cofinance actions in this area?	<p>At both levels, depending on the type of programme and its level of management. Instructions on complementarity are to be found in the application guide and forms, as well as in the evaluation guide published with the LIFE+ calls for proposals. Applicants should, inter alia, prior to submitting their proposal to the European Commission, check thoroughly that the actions proposed under their project cannot be and are not funded through other European funds.</p> <p>If the project has already been submitted to another funding instrument and rejected, it is worth mentioning it in the technical application forms (this is foreseen).</p>
Concerning the compatibility of LIFE+ and INTERREG. If a group of local authorities has received significant funding from INTERREG to implement biodiversity projects, but it was not yet decided how the funding would be distributed amongst the members of the group of 10 municipalities that received the funding. Would the municipality still qualify for LIFE+ Biodiversity funding?	<p>In principle, they would qualify. Still, applicants should, prior to submitting their proposal to the European Commission, check thoroughly that the actions proposed under their project cannot be and are not funded through other European funds (Interreg or other).</p> <p>Note that applicants are asked to sign a declaration to this effect. Form A3 includes the following paragraph: "1.The specific actions listed in this proposal do not and will not receive aid from the Structural Funds or other Community financial instruments. In the event that any such funding will be made available after the submission of the proposal or during the implementation of the project, my organisation will immediately inform the European Commission".</p>

<p>Where and how can we have details on other Financial/Funding Instruments?</p>	<p>Firstly, consult the relevant national ministries: agriculture, economy, etc. Some details on other Financial/Funding Instruments can be found on the webpage of the following financial instruments: European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/fin/index_en.htm or contact directly the Ministry of Agriculture or the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development European Regional Development Fund: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funds/feder/index_en.htm or contact directly the Ministry of Development, Public Works and Housing Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP): http://ec.europa.eu/cip/index_en.htm 7th Research Framework Programme: http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/index_en.cfm Civil Protection Financial Instrument: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/civil/prote/finance.htm Cohesion Fund http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funds/cf/index_en.htm European Fisheries Fund: http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/tenders_proposals_en.htm</p>
<p>Can a project proposal be refused because a number of actions included in the proposal do not fall within the scope of LIFE+ component under which it is submitted?</p>	<p>This needs to be looked at on a case-by-case basis. If the elimination of those actions would result in a significantly different project, or if it led to the project losing coherence, then the proposal would very likely be refused.</p>
<p>Which European financial tools can LIFE+ be combined with?</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p>Can LIFE+ projects receive additional funding through other instruments after the projects end?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>What does the “EU added-value” of a project and its actions mean?</p>	<p>Please refer to art. 3.2 of the LIFE+ Regulation, to the LIFE+ Guides for Applicants, and to the Guide for the evaluation of LIFE+ project proposals (for instance, by searching "added value" in the documents cited).</p>
<p>Is the evaluation done in relation to the European objectives or the implementation of the European directives?</p>	<p>The criteria for European added value are in Article III of the LIFE+ regulation.</p>
<p>Is the European added value an important criterion?</p>	<p>The criterion " European added value and complementarity and optimal use of the EU funding ", fourth evaluation criterion, is the criterion with the heaviest weight (30 points out of 100). Any proposal that does not reach a minimum of 15 points for this criterion would be rejected.</p>

<p>Does European added value imply demonstration within the EU or promotion of EU work in an international context? For example, is protection of a bird living in the Vosges a regional or European problem?</p>	<p>If the bird is in the relevant annex of the Directive, it is considered European. It is EU added value because the project supports the implementation of a European policy (Birds Directive in that case).</p>
<p>How binding are the numbers highlighted in the Project Output Monitoring Indicator? What happens if a project underperforms on the defined targets?</p>	<p>Projects need to strive to meet such targets; failure to meet them will not necessarily result in a financial penalty. The expected results and deliverables of a project are the ones detailed in the relevant forms A, B and C: this will be the information that will be used by the EC to evaluate the achievements of a project. The purpose of the project output monitoring indicator forms is to collect information for statistical purposes. However, applicants should ensure that the information entered in the project output monitoring indicator forms corresponds to the project outputs defined in proposal forms A, B and C.</p>
<p>Can the Commission give more information on output monitoring indicators?</p>	<p>Please consult the LIFE+ website and Guidance chapter 4.</p>
<p>In which context is the assessment of the carbon footprint of a project to be documented: (a) minimisation of the footprint; (b) quantification of the foot print; (c) qualitative awareness of the existence of the foot-print; and/or (d) (others)? If a project produces a large number of hardcopy documents (because this is thought to be the most effective means of communication), could it be that it becomes penalised for it during evaluation?</p>	<p>Please refer to page 28 of the Evaluation Guide.</p>
<p>A project about techniques to enhance the welfare of animals in piggeries, chicken housing and cow sheds, concentrating on air conditioning and waste management. Is there a 'place' in LIFE+ for such a project?</p>	<p>The general objective of LIFE+ is to contribute to the implementation, updating and development of Community environmental policy and legislation. Animal welfare is the remit of DG SANCO.</p>
<p>If a proposal is rejected, is the applicant informed with enough details?</p>	<p>Yes. If the proposal is rejected after the eligibility phase, the applicant is notified before the meeting of the LIFE+ Committee. If the rejection is done after, the applicant receives a letter with detailed explanations on why the project was rejected.</p>
<p>Will applicants receive an evaluation of their proposals from the EC including the score (number of points) their proposal received? Based on this information, can the applicant revise its rejected proposal and submit it again next year?</p>	<p>Applicants whose applications are rejected receive detailed explanation of the grounds for rejection. The applicant may re-submit its proposal, preferably bearing in mind the comments received.</p>
<p>If a proposal is rejected, can it be resubmitted the following year?</p>	<p>Yes. It is advisable to take into account the reasons for rejection and modify the proposal accordingly.</p>
<p>Is there a record of what happened to reserve list projects that were resubmitted? If so, what proportion were successful in being cofinanced the next year?</p>	<p>No record is kept on this issue, nor on resubmitted projects. Projects on the reserve list of a given year are not transferred to subsequent years, but may be resubmitted. In this case, they will be re-evaluated from scratch without taking into account any findings or assessments from the previous evaluation round.</p>

<p>Is it necessary to present, as a part of the LIFE+ Application, supportive statements from “all kinds” (at respective levels) of decision-making authorities (meaning authorities that will be issuing permits, statements, etc., necessary for successful implementation of the project) concerned with the project?</p>	<p>Indications on this issue are provided on pages 43 and 44 of the document entitled <i>Nature and Biodiversity – Guidelines for applicants</i>, see section "Form A8 – Competent authority supporting the proposal", as well as on page 33 of the <i>LIFE+ Information and Communication Guidelines for applicants</i>.</p>
<p>How many participants, especially beneficiaries, shall participate in a project? Are there any “good practice” guidelines on this issue?</p>	<p>There is no obligation to involve associated beneficiaries in a LIFE+ proposal. A proposal that is submitted without any participant other than the coordinating beneficiary itself is perfectly eligible.</p> <p>Projects involving partnerships between beneficiaries are only encouraged when this partnership brings an added value to the project. Overall, the experience of the previous LIFE programmes has shown that multi-beneficiary projects are more difficult to manage and involve higher technical and financial risks. It is therefore strongly advised to keep the number of associated beneficiaries in a proposal to the necessary minimum. It is generally recommended not to involve more than 5 associated beneficiaries in a LIFE+ proposal. Should the proposal involve more, this should be explicitly justified.</p>
<p>Is there a minimum or maximum number of project participants?</p>	<p>At least 1 (coordinating beneficiary) and a recommended maximum of 5 associated beneficiaries. Keep it simple, and only add participants if they add value. Refer to the section entitled "Who may participate in a project?" in the guidelines for applicants.</p>
<p>Why are the application forms so inflexible? There are some cases when all the specifics cannot be put in the forms. For example, financial state of the applicant can change (e.g. due to raising additional capital). Experience from last year shows that if you put such specifics as annexes to the application form they are not accepted and the application is rejected. How to avoid this, how to show the specifics in the application forms?</p>	<p>The Commission believes the forms are clear and transparent. Note that the evaluation of a project must be made on the real situation when it is submitted, not on the basis of potential future developments.</p>
<p>Why is it not possible to add additional information which would show/support the quality of the project as an annex to the application? For example, instead of summarising how certain visitors’ infrastructure will be built, the plan for its construction could be simply annexed to the application.</p>	<p>Such information is not evaluated.</p> <p>Evaluation of various projects must be made on the basis of comparable information.</p>
<p>Why does the project evaluation take such a long time?</p>	<p>See the document entitled Evaluation Guide to get an idea of the various aspects that need to be assessed.</p>
<p>How much recourse does an applicant have if they do not agree with proposed changes during the Revision Phase?</p>	<p>Revision instructions can be challenged, provided good arguments (in line with the applicable rules and regulations) can be provided in due time.</p>

Are there any sanctions of backing out not sooner than in the revision phase of the project evaluation?	There are not. But try and avoid this whenever possible.
What language should be used to write a LIFE+ application? Should it be preferably English or other EU official languages?	Either language is possible. Although the Commission recommends using English where possible, applications written in other official EU languages (Irish and Maltese excluded) are not at a disadvantage, i.e. they are not penalised in any way.
Is it possible to focus a project on complex area environmental problems under the LIFE+ Programme or should a project proposal rather be concentrated on limited (specific) number of environmental issues (problems)?	It is possible to have LIFE+ projects focusing on a wide range of environmental problems in a given area. However, note that project coherence is important for both specific and wide projects, and that it may prove a greater challenge in more ambitious projects. See, for instance, the section on Technical coherence and quality in the Award phase of the Guide for the evaluation of LIFE+ project proposals.
What if a project fits all three categories at the same time - LIFE+ Natura and Biodiversity, Environment Policy and Governance as well as Information and Communication? For example, a project focusing on protection of a Natura 2000 site could have strong informational and educational component which would include new approaches and technologies to stimulate environmental governance?	All 3 types of projects require a publicity and information component, the difference is that projects that apply for LIFE+ Information and Dissemination have to show that they have reached significant change in knowledge or behaviour of the target groups by the end of the project. A LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity proposal must allocate at least 25% of its budget to concrete conservation actions. A LIFE+ Information and Communication project cannot include concrete conservation actions.
Could you give a list of topics for projects?	The LIFE programme has a bottom up approach philosophy. Participate in it if you have a problem that you really want to deal with. It gives you freedom for deciding on project's subject matter in the framework of the LIFE+ programme. You may also consult the LIFE website project database for past examples.
Among the beneficiaries of selected projects, what is the percentage public/private?	About 60% from the public sector, 25% from NGOs, and 15% from the private sector.
Is it possible to use LIFE+ for projects going beyond 2013 (for example with implementation from 2011 – 2016)?	Yes.
Will the timetable for next year's Call for Proposals be similar to this year's?	Consult the LIFE webpage.
Is it possible to modify the proposal presentation timetable?	Not possible. It is the same schedule for all EU Member States.
Will there also be a Call for Proposals next year?	Yes, every year until 2013 there will be a Call for Proposals in the LIFE+ programme.
Will formal conditions of the year of 2009 Call differ from those of 2008?	This is not known at the moment; check the LIFE website.

2. Financial / Administrative issues

How limiting is the average project grant of €1 million (EU contribution)?	Not limiting at all. Proposals could be less or more than €1 million. It's just a broad indication.
Please clarify the ideal size of a project.	The average project may well be of some €2 million, out of which €1 million can come as the EC grant. Proposals could be substantially less or more than this. It's just a broad indication.
If a project is small (total budget 200,000€), can it be submitted under any LIFE+ component?	This budget is small but it can, provided it meets the requirements for the specific component.
Is there a minimum budget for EU-contribution?	No, but note that very small projects are not favoured in the selection process for reasons of scale and management effort.
Can a small municipality undertake a project grant of €1 million (EU contribution)?	Yes, provided it has sufficient resources for implementing and managing all necessary actions.
Can a public or non-public body submit more than one proposal where they are the coordinating beneficiary?	There is no limit to the number of proposals a public or non-public body may submit.
If a public or non-public body has already a LIFE+ project which is currently running, can they submit a new LIFE+ proposal?	Yes
Can the "law 1901" (France) associations submit a LIFE+ proposal?	The "law 1901" associations are legal entities according to French law and can thus submit a LIFE+ proposal.
Can an individual (not a company, organisation etc) submit a proposal?	No.
May private companies (not non-profit organisations) be involved as participants in a proposal?	Yes.
Can a bank submit a LIFE+ proposal, as it is a profit-organisation?	Yes.
Is a university eligible?	Yes.
Are there any circumstances in which universities would not be considered eligible as beneficiary due to the "bottom-up" character of the programme?	No. Bottom-up refers to the fact that the programme solicits project ideas and concepts from applicants, rather than being imposed from the top by the authorities. It does not refer in any way to the kind of applicants that can apply.
Can the JRC participate in LIFE projects?	Only under extremely limited conditions.
Is there any difference if the applicant is a public body or a private company? What is the status of the NGOs?	All differences are explained in detail in the Application Guidelines. The main difference being the financial information to be provided.
If there are no co-financers included in the list of participants in a proposal, can the 50% non-European contribution be covered by associated beneficiaries?	All beneficiaries (coordinating or associated) must make a reasonable financial contribution.

<p>Is it acceptable if the (coordinating) beneficiary pays only a negligible financial contribution to the project from its own resources for the reason that it has no revenue-generating activities, but it is able to ensure larger amounts for the project co-financing through various co-financiers?</p>	<p>Yes, but note that the Guidelines for Applicants state that "The (coordinating) beneficiary and (if applicable) any associated beneficiaries are expected to provide a reasonable financial contribution to the project budget. A beneficiary's financial contribution is considered as a proof of its financial commitment to the implementation of the project objectives - a very low financial contribution may therefore be considered as an absence or lack of commitment".</p>
<p>Can the co-financing of the coordinating beneficiary be less than the co-financing of the associated beneficiaries?</p>	<p>Yes, however, it must be reasonable and cannot be zero.</p>
<p>What is the minimum of a financial contribution of an associated beneficiary or co-financier?</p>	<p>There is not a minimum amount specified. But note that the Guidelines for Applicants state that "The (coordinating) beneficiary and (if applicable) any associated beneficiaries are expected to provide a reasonable financial contribution to the project budget. A beneficiary's financial contribution is considered as a proof of its financial commitment to the implementation of the project objectives - a very low financial contribution may therefore be considered as an absence or lack of commitment". Careful, it should not be zero, else the proposal will be rejected.</p>
<p>How must we distribute the budget? What is the co-financing for partners?</p>	<p>You can decide yourself about budget distribution, provided it respects LIFE+ rules. Note that each project beneficiary must receive part of the EC grant and also make a financial contribution to the project.</p>
<p>Is a different share of the contribution acceptable when the partners are a public subject, commercial subject and NGO, and if yes, what differences are acceptable?</p>	<p>Yes. You can decide yourself about the contributions, provided they respect LIFE+ rules. Note that each project beneficiary must receive part of the EC grant and also make a financial contribution to the project.</p>
<p>Can a coordinated beneficiary be also a co-financier?</p>	<p>Yes, in a way (if part of its contribution is used for co-financing the actions of the other beneficiaries, it is de facto a co-financier). However, it should <u>not</u> participate in the project as both coordinating beneficiary <u>and</u> co-financier: it should contribute the entire intended co-financing to the project under the single identity of coordinating beneficiary.</p>
<p>Could you please go over eligible costs for national co-financing?</p>	<p>Please refer to the Common Provisions, articles 25 eligible and article 26 ineligible costs.</p>
<p>Is there a negotiation period with regards to the amount of financing which will be given?</p>	<p>There is no "negotiation" on the amount of co-financing to be granted by the Commission. The maximum co-financing <u>rate</u> is fixed (see Guidelines for Applicants). The actual <u>amount</u> will be determined during the Revision phase of the evaluation (see section entitled "How will LIFE+ projects be selected?" in the Guidelines for applicants).</p>

<p>Please clarify about co-financing 50%. Are the rules for private, public and NGO the same? Let's say I am a private business participating in LIFE project and I were to buy a tractor (for forestry related activities). What is the co-financing share I will be entitled to? Is it only 40% because I am private business?</p>	<p>There are special provisions for NGOs and public bodies in LIFE+ Nature, as regards the maximum amount of depreciation of durable goods (see the Common Provisions).</p>
<p>What is the role of a cofinancer?</p>	<p>Please refer to art. 7 of the Common Provisions.</p>
<p>Could you please provide examples on 75% EC grant exception?</p>	<p>Please refer to the LIFE website project database for concrete examples.</p>
<p>Specifically on the LIFE+ Nature Application Guide p. 13, middle paragraph "Finally, it is expected ...during revision" does it imply that all project beneficiaries should get the exact percent of the EU contribution which they contribute. For example, a beneficiary offers 20% of the budget (non-EU contribution), should they benefit from 20% of the EU contribution?</p>	<p>No.</p>
<p>No formal national mechanism for co-financing of LIFE project is in place in country X. Therefore, it is always extremely difficult for beneficiaries to ensure co-financing of LIFE projects, particularly in the case of larger projects. The same stands for pre-financing of the 3rd instalment payable after the project end date, subject to approval of the Final Report. Is it possible to have a review of the practice in Member States on: how to obtain additional capacity/additional costs in relation to LIFE project implementation; what is the common source of financing; and what is the common manner of national financing? Could you provide any examples?</p>	<p>The Commission does not have any systematic insight into the co-funding mechanisms of LIFE projects in the various Member States.</p> <p>Generally speaking, cofinancing is provided by national authorities, other public bodies and certain private organisations (NGOs, Foundations, private companies and other).</p>
<p>Project size is an issue for many of us. Could you please give examples how we can make such a large co-financing share?</p>	<p>This is usually done through co-financers and associated beneficiaries. Note that several NGOs have successfully managed LIFE projects, including large ones.</p>
<p>A project presented by a private non-commercial organisation hasn't been selected because of a lack of sufficient financial guarantees. Can financial guarantees be provided by the organisation's associates?</p>	<p>Note that during the evaluation phase, the Commission tries to determine the financial situation of the coordinating beneficiary.</p> <p>Please refer to art. 28.2 of the Common Provisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> depending on the coordinating beneficiary's financial viability as evaluated during the selection phase, a guarantee issued by a bank or an insurance company may be requested by the Commission during the revision phase. This guarantee will equal the amount of the first pre-financing and will cover the duration of the project plus six months. Its validity will be extended in the event of an extension of the project. In exceptional cases this guarantee could be replaced by joint and several guarantees by a third party. The guarantee is to be in the format set out in Annex II.

<p>What is the rationale, and the “type”, of activity to be defined in the sentence “if the same type of action is carried out by several project participants, it is advisable to split this action and to assign one separate action to each of the participants“ (page 35 of the Application Guide, LIFE+ Environment Policy and Governance)? Under what circumstances an activity should be split or kept as a single activity? (An applicant from LIFE+ in 2007 interpreted the sentence to mean that an action (e.g. Project Management) that is shared between several partners must be listed as a separate activity for each participant. During the Revision Phase, it was asked to lump them together in one activity again).</p>	<p>For the sake of transparency of the budget, it is highly advisable not to pool costs for different beneficiaries into one single project action. This makes the proposal more transparent and reduces the work burden for the applicant and for the Commission, in particular during the revision phase. Conversely, a proposal that has costs for several beneficiaries pooled into one single action will be scored lower on technical and financial coherence and quality. If the beneficiary nevertheless decides to make several beneficiaries responsible for the same actions, then the proposal should include a detailed breakdown of the costs per beneficiary, on form FB and on the detailed financial forms.</p>
<p>Can a project change partners during the life of a project if, for example, one partner become incapable to act and endanger the capacity of the project to deliver? If yes, under which circumstances a change of partner is possible?</p>	<p>Yes, a project can in principle change "partners" (associated beneficiaries / cofinancers). There are various conditions: Article 15.2 of the Common Provisions: When the changes are substantial, written additional agreement from the Commission must be obtained. Substantial changes are: [...] Changes to the project partnership structure.” Article 15.3 “In the cases foreseen in Article 15.2 the coordinating beneficiary shall submit a formal request for changes, in accordance with the Guidelines issued by the Commission. When a request for changes includes modifications of the project partnership and/or of the budget made available by an associated beneficiary or a co-financier, the associated beneficiary / co-financier involved shall also sign the modification request. The Commission reserves the right to accept or to refuse the request and may decide not to take into consideration any request received later than three months before the end of the project. “</p>
<p>If a LIFE+ project is about networking on an environmental issue in Northern Europe and the issue is written into the application, are the costs of the networking of the EU LIFE+ partner to non-EU country (Norway etc.) eligible? For instance travelling to meetings to non-EU site? (The non-EU country, naturally, pays its own costs.)</p>	<p>Proposals submitted under the 2008 call may only take place on the territory of the European Union Member States. Actions are not allowed to take place and costs are not allowed to be incurred outside the EU territory. The only exception to this rule may be related to a limited amount of travel and subsistence costs for the attendance of conferences, workshops or similar events, provided that these are useful to achieve the project objectives and have been specifically foreseen in the proposal or have specifically been approved by the Commission</p>
<p>Can LIFE+ funding be used to finance the participation at some event in the EU of some experts from non EU third countries that are willing to completely finance a mirror project component in their home country?</p>	<p>LIFE+ funding may be used to limited amount of travel and subsistence costs for the attendance of conferences, workshops or similar events by experts from outside the EU, provided that this is useful to achieve the project objectives, has been specifically foreseen in the proposal or has specifically been approved by the Commission. Note that what matters here is the contribution to achieving <u>the LIFE project objectives</u>.</p>
<p>Do sub-contractors have to be registered in the EU to represent an eligible cost or can sub-contractors from outside the EU be paid out of eligible expenditures under LIFE+?</p>	<p>Subcontractors should preferably be registered in the EU, but it could be possible for a non-EU country if this country falls within Articles 106-107 of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities.</p>

<p>a. Can a company from non-EU country become a subcontractor to the project if the work itself is placed in EU area?</p> <p>b. What if the work is done outside EU-area?</p> <p>c. What about the possibility that a subcontractor from country X in the EU builds up a secondary sub-subcontract with a company outside the EU? This might be relevant in for instance seeking staff for monitoring.</p>	<p>a. Yes (see answer to question above).</p> <p>b. No. LIFE+ projects are implemented in the EU.</p> <p>c. Fine, if the monitoring is done in the EU.</p>
<p>Concerning sub-contracting rules in the Common Provisions for a private beneficiary (Article 8.4), can the Commission clarify if the amount of €125,000 refers to a single sub-contracting relationship of that amount, or whether it refers to the sum of all sub-contracting relationships proposed in the application?</p> <p>Also, for contracts exceeding €125,000, can the Article be interpreted to mean that the normal practices of the beneficiary concerning invitations to tender can be followed (assuming they comply with the phrases included in the Article) (in this case the applicant would be an international NGO)?</p>	<p>€125,000 refers to contracts, not to "subcontracting relationships".</p> <p>The answer to the second question is "yes".</p>
<p>It is difficult to estimate exactly the costs of subcontractors' work and certain expenses – prices can change reasonably before the project even gets started. Can the estimated costs be changed later, in the implementation phase?</p>	<p>Variations in costs per category are accepted up to that foreseen in the budget plus 10% and €30 000. Over and above that, for the costs to be eligible, prior authorisation is needed from the Commission. See article 15 of the Common Provisions.</p> <p>In no case can the EC contribution mentioned in the grant agreement at the start of the project be increased.</p>
<p>The public administration of Member State X has to manage long procedures for contracting services and personnel. In order to be able to carry out the project actions in due time, contracts should be prepared in advance (e.g. one year in advance to the starting date of the project). Could this represent a problem taking into account that eligible costs must actually be incurred during the lifetime of the project and the legal obligation to pay must be contracted after the signature of the grant agreement by the Commission? Would the LIFE+ funding be acknowledged already in the preparation of such contracts, even if funding were not confirmed?</p>	<p>The LIFE funding would have to be acknowledged in such contracts. Moreover, such contracts must include a clause by which they would be rescinded if the LIFE project is not granted. See article 25.1 of the common provisions.</p>
<p>Project management can be financed as external assistance or it must be personnel cost?</p>	<p>Please refer to the section of the Guidelines for Applicants entitled "Which project beneficiary should be in charge of the project management?"</p>
<p>Should service contracts be declared as personnel or external assistance costs?</p>	<p>As personnel costs if fulfilling article 25.2.</p>
<p>For a French territorial collectivité, assistance for project management is subject to public procurement and public procurement regulations do not allow mentioning the name of the company that will be in charge of implementing the project; is LIFE+ an appropriate tool for such institution?</p>	<p>The Commission prefers that the project is managed by its beneficiary. Otherwise, it is a weakness of the project; it is not however an exclusion criterion. The application must describe well why this information cannot be mentioned.</p>

<p>The maximum of 35% of the budget for external assistance. Some projects are planning to perform extensive restoration works of a kind that requires heavy machinery. This means that it is likely that the cost for external assistance will be more than 35%.</p> <p>Is this acceptable, if the reason for the high use of external assistance is the fact that it is the most cost effective way of performing desired actions within a project?</p>	<p>Higher percentage (i.e. above 35%) may only be accepted if an adequate justification for this is provided in the project proposal. This is examined on a case-by-case basis.</p>
<p>What about public tendering procedures in the context of the LIFE+ Programme? Are national laws applicable?</p>	<p>Please refer to art.8 of Common Provisions.</p>
<p>Is an external co-operation with a top expert less appreciated than a partnership (also with a top expert) since externally cooperating expert cannot be co-financed by 50% contribution from LIFE?</p>	<p>Generally speaking, if the company is an active participant, interested in project results, it should be an associated beneficiary. If, on the other hand, it were a mere service provider, not interested in project results, it could be external assistance (see arts. 8.2 and 8.3 of the Common Provisions).</p>
<p>May a development company participate as associated beneficiary (next to a prefecture/municipality) or as sub-contractor? Does the participation of a development company require public contest?</p>	<p>Generally speaking, if the company is an active participant, interested in project results, and willing to accept all the obligations that come with it, it should be an associated beneficiary. If, on the other hand, it were a mere service provider, not interested in project results, it could be external assistance (see arts. 8.2 and 8.3 of the Common Provisions). If the company were a subcontractor, concerning tendering requirements please refer to art. 8 of Common Provisions.</p>
<p>Is it possible that for actions assigned to sub-contractors to last the whole duration of a LIFE+ project?</p>	<p>Yes, so long as they are limited in scope.</p>
<p>Do sub-contractors appear in the proposal?</p>	<p>No.</p>
<p>If a project invests in an expensive piece of infrastructure, such as a new pipe for the improvement of water passage under a road (to improve the ecological function of the river passing through the pipe), can the construction works related to the installation of the pipe be considered as a part of the investment, or do they have to be registered as external assistance?</p>	<p>If the infrastructure is registered as such by the beneficiary, then the related costs can be included as durable goods. Otherwise, it would be external assistance.</p>
<p>Can an EU grant from another EU programme be counted as part of the budget of a LIFE+ project (beyond the LIFE+ grant)?</p> <p>What are the conditions or restrictions, if any?</p>	<p>No. Please refer to art. 9 of the LIFE+ Regulation.</p>
<p>We wish to publish a magazine in the course of the LIFE+ project. Can we sell the magazine or advertisements in it? Since we are dealing with an NGO the objective would not be to benefit but to finance the subsequent publishing of the magazine. Can this kind of financing be self-financing?</p>	<p>Please, refer to art. 24.4 of the Common Provisions.</p>

Can revenues coming from activities developed during the project (such as fees for participation at events) be counted in the budget as part of the financing of the project? If yes, how precisely should such budget component be described and documented in the submission?	Please, refer to art. 24.4 of the Common Provisions.
Can a book that is produced via a LIFE+ project, in the end of the project, can it be used by a non-profit organisation as a product?	It depends on what is understood by "used as a product". If this is meant to generate revenue for the non-profit organisation, then art. 24.4 of the Common Provisions applies.
What happens to the rights of a published book/brochure after the end of a project? Who has the rights, the EU or the coordinated beneficiary?	The rights stay with the project beneficiaries. Note, however, that according to art. 13.9 of the Common Provisions, the Commission has the right to use all the information related to the project or produced by the project. Refer also to Common Provisions arts. 20 on Confidentiality, 21 on Protection of data and 22 on Ownership and exploitation of results.
How should income generated from e.g. websites be treated?	See articles 24.4 and 29 of the Common Provisions.
Can audit costs incurred to document: a) the project overall cost balance; and/or b) a beneficiary financial capability statement be counted as eligible costs?	No.
Do all the private applicants need an audit report? How old can the report be given the fact that now it would be difficult to obtain one on time?	Please refer to section 5 entitled "Administrative and financial information to be provided" in the various "Guidelines for applicants". The audit should refer to the last completed financial year.
An audit report or a certification by an independent auditor must be presented by the coordinating beneficiary together with the balance sheet and profit and loss account to certify that they present a true and fair view of the coordinating beneficiary's financial situation. This information shall be provided only by the coordinating beneficiary or also by other associated beneficiaries?	As noted in the guidelines for applicants, these documents must be provided only by the coordinating beneficiary.
Is the project's external audit an eligible cost?	It is, if an audit is necessary. Please refer to art. 31 of the Common Provisions.
Should multi-beneficiary projects have one auditor?	This is preferred.
What is an independent auditor?	As accepted by national law.
Can the cost of transfer of ownership from a national public authority to a local public authority represent an eligible cost under LIFE+?	Probably not.
Can in-kind expenses (i.e. expenses for which there is no cash-transaction during the project) be counted as: a) an eligible cost; and/or b) as a co-financing cost?	No.
Can the rights of a patent or technology be used as contribution for participation in a LIFE+ project?	No.
If a project participant has existing equipment that can be used for the project (i.e. a boat), can it participate in the project via the action of offering its equipment? Should this participant produce an invoice for such action?	This would amount to an "in kind" contribution, which is not acceptable.

If a participant's contribution is only limited to manpower, then what is the EU contribution that corresponds to that participant?	If this is understood as a contribution "in kind", this is not acceptable. If it is understood to mean that this beneficiary would have and declare personnel expenditure only, there is no set EU contribution. It depends on the logic of the project.
Can land lease of a private person be considered as contribution in kind?	In principle not. Land lease is allowed under certain conditions. See the section on "Land purchase/lease of land and/or compensation payment for use rights" in the Nature and Biodiversity Guidelines for Applicants.
Could volunteer work be considered as contribution in kind?	Yes, volunteer work is considered a contribution in kind. It is therefore ineligible.
Is the travel and subsistence of voluntary staff eligible?	Yes.
Can depreciation charges relating to durable goods be considered as eligible costs?	Yes – under some conditions (refer to Common Provisions: art. 25.5 - 25.10).
Can the expenses for providing training to schools, etc., be considered eligible costs?	Yes.
Can the production of a brochure which will be sent as an insert of a pre-existing magazine be considered an eligible cost?	Yes.
Is a thesis eligible?	Perhaps, provided it meets all of the other eligibility criteria and provided it is not just research.
Are costs associated with visitor centres for marine Natura 2000 sites eligible?	They may be depending on the detail of the project.
Are there any circumstances under which any expenses incurred before the Expected Start Date can be counted as eligible for support after the 01.01.2010 (for the 2008 Call)?	According to the Common Provisions Article 25.1, a cost shall be considered as incurred during the lifetime of the project (and therefore eligible) when the legal obligation to pay was contracted after the signature of the grant agreement by the Commission.
Is the time spent preparing the application in the year before the submission eligible?	No.
What are the eligibility rules for buying equipment?	Please refer to art. 25 of the Common Provisions.
Clarify to what extent can own personnel in public authorities work in LIFE+ projects.	Please refer to Article 5(5) of the LIFE+ Regulation. For a detailed explanation, see, for instance, question 6.10 on page 14 of the 2008 "Life+ Nature and Biodiversity" guidelines for applicants.
Can the salary costs of a public body be co-financed by a private organisation?	Yes, provided the financial contributions by the public body to the project budget still exceed (by at least 2%) the sum of the salary costs of their staff charged to the project.

<p>Sum of public bodies' contributions (as coordinating beneficiary and/or associated beneficiary) to the project budget must exceed (by at least 2%) the sum of the salary costs of their staff charged to the project. This will be checked at both the selection phase and at the time of the final payment.</p> <p>We are not clear about the interpretation. For example, if the costs of the permanent staff of a public body will total costs of €55,000 (€50,000 for work and €5,000 for other costs), what is the total in this case, that the public body as a beneficiary or associated beneficiary has to contribute to the project?</p>	<p>The Commission takes into account actual wages plus obligatory social charges and any other statutory costs included in the remuneration, but excluding any other cost. So, if the €5,000 corresponds to this definition, then the total is €55,000 + 2%.</p>
<p>What is the 2% rule on the salaries of the persons from the public sector?</p>	<p>The total amount of co-financing of public institutions which are beneficiaries of a project must be greater than or equal to 102% of the total personnel costs incurred by those same beneficiaries. For these personnel costs to be eligible they must be supported by timesheets, timely signed by the member of personnel, showing the time spent on the project by each person. The 2% rule does not apply to the salaries of the persons specifically contracted to implement the project and within the duration of the project (not before, not after).</p>
<p>Salaries of civil servants charged to the project: The “2% rule” is clear, as is the need for secondment. It is not, however, clear how to ensure/document that salaries of “permanent staff” (understood to be staff employed by the institution independently from the project usually for indefinite period) can represent “additional costs” to the institutions. It is usual practice that salaries of civil servants/public employees are allocated to the institution notwithstanding the number of projects it implements and these allocations are made according to the number of permanent staff members, rather than the number of projects that the institution implements. It therefore seems that only staff hired specifically for the project in addition to institution permanent staff can represent “additional costs with respect to existing permanent staff”. Please explain.</p>	<p>The rule on "additional costs" is to be understood in the context that the own financial contribution (to the project budget) of the public bodies in question must be at least 2% higher than the sum of the salary costs (in the project budget) of its permanent staff that is specifically seconded to the project.</p>
<p>Why must the sum of financial contributions of public bodies exceed by at least 2% the sum of the salary costs of their permanent staff charged to the project? This looks like subsidy or it gives impression that it is easier for the private organisations to apply for funding.</p> <p>Also, how do you distinguish between permanent staff charged fully to the project for which this rule applies and other staff that is fully charged to this project? For example, last year one of the applicants got the suggestion that out of 10 employees working on the project 4 could be considered as permanent staff for the 2% rule, while the other 6 do not count as such.</p>	<p>These are necessary guarantees sought by the Commission, also a requirement in the LIFE+ Regulation. Please refer to art. 25.2 of the Common Provisions and to art. 5 of the LIFE+ Regulation.</p>

According to the Common Provisions (art. 25.2) ‘the sum of the public authorities’ contributions (as coordinating beneficiary and/or associated beneficiary) to the project must exceed (by at least 2%) the sum of the salary costs of the civil servants charged to the project”. Does this rule concern only “civil servants” or also other employees of the public body?	It concerns all permanent staff of the public body.
Is the overhead of research organisations included in the 2% above the sum of the salary costs of their permanent staff charged to the project?	Please refer to point 6.10 of the Guidance. Public bodies' contributions to the project budget must exceed by at least 2% the sum of their salary costs charged to the project.
The Common Provisions specify requirements for personnel costs in case of civil servants (point 25.2). In the case of a University as beneficiary, is it necessary to have its professors specifically seconded to the project? If yes, how can it be demonstrated/formalised as they are not accountable to anybody in the organisation?	Such staff should be specifically seconded to the project.
Is there any limit (financial or other) on the eligibility of personnel costs under LIFE+ 2008? Is there any difference regarding the eligibility of personnel costs between the 2007 and 2008 calls for proposal?	No such limit on the eligibility of personnel costs (but note requirements regarding civil servants, as described in Guidelines for Applicants).
Is the VAT included in a proposal?	Please refer to article 30 of the Common Provisions.
On form A2 which VAT number is necessary: the national or the EU?	The VAT number from the national register.
Article 25.13 of the Common Provisions states that “ <u>Overheads</u> shall be eligible for flat-rate funding of a maximum of 7% of the total amount of eligible direct costs actually incurred, excluding land purchase/lease costs. They need not be supported by accounting documents. They shall be eligible as indirect costs which are intended to cover general indirect costs needed to employ, manage, accommodate and support directly or indirectly the personnel working on the project”. However, it happened that in revision phase of LIFE III projects (2005/2006) the Commission challenged the 7% flat rate included in LIFE Applications and requested beneficiaries to lower overheads to the lower level (and referred to the respective amount of the personnel costs (in the contrary to the wording aforementioned CP article). Please clarify.	According to art. 25.13 of the Common Provisions, "Overheads shall be eligible for flat-rate funding of a maximum of 7% of the total amount of eligible direct costs actually incurred, excluding land purchase/lease costs. They need not be supported by accounting documents. They shall be eligible as indirect costs which are intended to cover general indirect costs needed to employ, manage, accommodate and support directly or indirectly the personnel working on the project". This means 7% is accepted as a maximum
What’s the allowable overhead?	Up to a maximum of 7%.
Given that LIFE+ does not cover the costs of recurring activities, is it possible for LIFE+ to finance the project’s operating expenses?	Expenses to operate an investment are not eligible, but overhead expenses directly linked to the project’s operation are eligible, up to 7% of the eligible direct costs (except for the costs of land acquisition).
How can LIFE+ finance the salaries of NGO staff? Where is there information on this?	Refer to the Common Provisions, for instance to art. 25.2. Note that salaries are eligible only if related to implementing LIFE+ project activities.
When is the bank guarantee requested and under which conditions?	Please refer to Article 28.2 of the Common Provisions.

<p>How do you claim the expenses of the project implementation? Do you have to have a separate account for this project?</p>	<p>Project management has to establish accurate bookkeeping (timesheets, payment slips, receipts, etc.). In addition, tendering procedures have to be respected. It is strongly recommended to have a separate bank account, as the bank account or sub-account used by the coordinating beneficiary must make it possible to identify funds paid by the Commission (see art. 24.6 of the Common Provisions).</p>
<p>Does the requirement to have a full-time person on the project in 2007 still apply in 2008?</p>	<p>It is not compulsory and was not either in 2007. It is however strongly recommended to have a strong coordination structure to meet the requirements of the project and LIFE+ programme. In principle, the Commission expects the project manager to work full time, but it is not a requirement.</p>
<p>When should the bank account be active?</p>	<p>Upon signature of the Grant Agreement – in Annex VII of the Grant Agreement, the <i>Financial identification of the co-ordinating beneficiary</i> requests bank account details.</p>
<p>Is it possible to have two applicants on same Natura 2000 site?</p>	<p>Technically possible if sufficient guarantee of spatial segregation; really depends on the nature of the two projects.</p>
<p>Can staff from national parks be involved in more than one project at the same time? If so, under which conditions?</p>	<p>Yes. They have to keep real, clear, complete and separate accounts for every project.</p>
<p>Are the background or the qualifications of the contact person of the public or non-public body important? Will it be important if it is the coordinating beneficiary?</p>	<p>No. However, note that the contact person should belong to the coordinating beneficiary.</p>
<p>What if the project worker becomes ill? How do we allocate the days then? How should the time of the sickness be allocated with a) full time staff from the proposal and b) part time staff (etc. 10 hours per week)?</p>	<p>Time sheets should reflect hours effectively worked in the project. In special cases (illness, maternity leave), conditions vary, often from employer to employer and from country to country. This should be looked at in a case-by-case basis.</p>
<p>What percentage of a total project cost can be devoted to preparatory actions? Are there any limits in this context?</p>	<p>There are no specific limits on this issue. However, note that preparatory actions should be linked to other project activities; that, for projects requiring a minimum of 25% of concrete actions, preparatory actions count towards this 25% only insofar as they are directly necessary for the execution of concrete actions during the project's lifetime.</p> <p>Refer to the specific sections on preparatory actions in the guidelines for applicants per LIFE+ component.</p>
<p>What are the chances that the payments from the Commission will be late? Is in such case the payment paid with interest rates to the applicant? Delay in the last payment could threaten financial viability of the applicant.</p>	<p>On delayed payments and interest, please refer to art. 28.11 of the Common provisions.</p>
<p>How long does it usually take to get the final payment?</p>	<p>It depends on whether additional information is required, following analysis of the final report. Refer also to art. 28 of the Common Provisions.</p>

Public bodies have to fill in a special form – a statement that they are public bodies. How does the Commission check if this is true, what kind of certificate would a public body have to provide?	When in doubt, the Commission requests documents during the evaluation process. But note that there are no standard documents or certificates for the whole EU.
For organisations which are non-public but supervised by public bodies (ex research centres), are they considered public bodies?	Please refer to section 5 of the Guidelines for Applicants, consult also the requirements specified in the Public Body Declaration annexed to the Guidelines.
A foundation of a public body is also a public body or it is a private non-commercial organisation?	Please refer to section 5 of the Guidelines for Applicants, consult also the requirements specified in the Public Body Declaration annexed to the Guidelines.
Is cofinancing from the State environmental Fund possible?	Yes, provided that Fund is not using funds received from another EC instrument or structural funds for cofinancing the LIFE project.
Is it possible to shift funds within the scope of the budget items?	Please refer to art. 15 of the Common Provisions.
Is it possible to set a reserve in the budget for unexpected events?	No.
Slide 48 of the presentation mentions public and non-public organisations. What definition is given to these 2 terms?	See Section 5 of the Application Guides.
Does LIFE+ funding for NGOs count as a state aid?	See Article 34 of the common provisions
Does the EC Regulation 1998/2006 apply to LIFE+?	See Article 34 of the common provisions
If LIFE+ funding is not considered state aid, which is the basis for excluding this funding from the EC Regulation 1998/2006?	See Article 34 of the common provisions

3. LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity

<p>What specific characters differentiate a project under LIFE+ Nature compared to LIFE+ Biodiversity? Can the Commission services outline a few practical examples exemplifying clearly the differences?</p>	<p>Please refer to sections 2 and 3 of the "Nature & Biodiversity" Guidelines.</p>
<p>For a project regarding a Natura 2000 site, should a proposal be submitted under LIFE+ Nature or under LIFE+ Biodiversity?</p>	<p>As a general principle, LIFE+ Nature. However, it could be LIFE+ Biodiversity, but then it should not have, as a primary goal, conservation management of species/habitats covered by the EU Birds and Habitat Directives. Should this be the case, the project should be classified as a LIFE+ Nature project.</p>
<p>For a project that includes both Natura 2000 and non-Natura 2000 sites, should it be submitted under LIFE+ Nature or under LIFE+ Biodiversity?</p>	<p>LIFE+ Nature's focus is on long-term sustainable investments in Natura 2000 sites, habitats and species. A project targeting both Natura 2000 and non-Natura 2000 sites should be submitted under LIFE+ Biodiversity, provided other conditions specified in the application guide are met. Otherwise it would be rejected.</p>
<p>Is it possible to submit a project dealing with both biodiversity and Natura 2000? Which component to choose?</p>	<p>There are two distinct categories of projects: LIFE+ Nature and LIFE+ Biodiversity. A project must be one or the other, NOT a mixture of both. A nature conservation project that exclusively targets species and/or habitats from the Birds and/or Habitats Directives is by definition a LIFE+ Nature project. Any other project should be submitted for financing under another component of LIFE+, or another financing mechanism.</p>
<p>For actions which are both species-based but site-based, can they be submitted under a LIFE+ Nature project?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>Can a project be considered for rehabilitating species/sites within Natura 2000 sites?</p>	<p>Yes. Please refer to sections 2 and 3 of the "Nature & Biodiversity" Guidelines.</p>
<p>For LIFE+ Nature projects, do the objectives need to directly benefit the features that the site is designated for? For example, can LIFE+ cofinance a project in an area designated for the conservation of a fish species, if the project actions (putting the meanders back into the river course) cannot be conclusively proved to benefit the fish species (even though it is thought that it will benefit them, and will definitely benefit the area as a whole)?</p>	<p>For LIFE+ Nature projects, the objectives always need to directly benefit at least some of the features (habitat types or species) that the site is designated for.</p>
<p>Can a LIFE+ project deal solely with a proposed Natura 2000 site (i.e. a site that is not a Natura 2000 site, but it is recognised that it is a potential Natura 2000 site because of presence of numerous species and habitats from the two Directives)?</p>	<p>No, if the site qualifies for Natura designation, it must have been designated (SPA or pSCI) before the date of the deadline for submitting the proposal to the Commission.</p>
<p>Would a LIFE-Nature project proposal to be carried out in an area that has been proposed for the Natura 2000 network (SCI) in 2007, after approval of the list for the Mediterranean region by the European Commission, be considered eligible?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>

<p>Is LIFE+ Natura focused solely on the Natura 2000 sites? Can a project focus on a habitat or species listed in the Habitat Directive which is widespread both in a Natura 2000 site and its adjacent area?</p>	<p>LIFE+ Natura supports only “Natura 2000 species” within Natura 2000 sites. Exceptionally a project can include an area adjacent to a Natura 2000 site if you can show that it is important for conservation of a “Natura 2000 species” and if you obtain written commitment from the relevant Authority that the site will be declared a Natura 2000 site by the end of the project. In this case, the Authority has to be one of the partners in the project. In addition, an area outside of existing Natura 2000 sites can be included in the project if the objective is protection of corridors or “stepping stones”. This is only possible if the national Natura 2000 network is deemed sufficient; in addition, a guarantee must be provided that this area will gain highest possible protection status on the national level before the end of the project.</p> <p>For detailed information, consult the relevant pages in the application guide.</p>
<p>Specifically on the LIFE+ Nature Application Guide p. 24, bullet#2, is this statement valid outside Natura sites?</p>	<p>Note: The question refers to one of the exceptions to the need for projects to include a substantial amount of concrete conservation actions, namely, in this case, to "<i>Life+ Nature</i> projects for the support and/or the further development of the surveillance of the conservation status of natural habitats and species covered by the Birds and Habitats Directives".</p> <p>A project that deals with the further development of the conservation status surveillance is not required to restrict its "monitoring development and testing actions" to Natura 2000 sites.</p>
<p>For LIFE+ Biodiversity projects, if less than 25% of their action/budget is directed to Wild Birds and Natural Habitats, will such proposal be rejected? (p. 35 of LIFE+ Nature Application Guide)</p>	<p>Please refer to pages 35 and 36 of the document entitled Nature and Biodiversity - Guidelines for applicants.</p>
<p>Can a project proposal be associated with a combination of flora and fauna species?</p>	<p>Yes, it is often the case.</p>
<p>Can a project proposal involve both priority and non-priority species?</p>	<p>Yes. Note that where proposals also contain actions that do not target priority species/habitats, a maximum co-financing rate of 50% will be applied to the whole project.</p>
<p>Is LIFE+ Biodiversity only for non-Natura 2000 sites?</p>	<p>No. Please refer to the guidelines for applicants.</p>
<p>Can all species be included under LIFE+ Biodiversity project?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>If a N2000 site focus is on the conservation of one species (e.g. eagles), but the site is also getting funds from elsewhere for another issue (e.g. ponds), can LIFE+ still fund the eagle component/objective?</p>	<p>Yes, as long as there is a clear distinction of the actions and costs in terms of bookkeeping. Any risk of double-funding must be avoided through, inter alia, transparent bookkeeping.</p>

<p>Regarding land purchase, should the area be decided prior to submitting a proposal?</p>	<p>There is no requirement for pre-defining <u>exactly</u> which land plots will be purchased in a project, but each land purchase should be justifiable, related to the project objectives and take place inside of the boundaries of the project area.</p> <p>Please refer to the section on Land Purchase in the Guidelines for Applicants as well as to the instructions given, in the same document, for filling in Form C1b – B. Purchase/lease of land and/or compensation payment for use.</p>
<p>What documentary proof and level of details needs to be provided in the submission regarding the acquisition of land for a nature or biodiversity project?</p>	<p>Please refer to the specific section on land purchase in the LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity Guidelines for applicants 2008 (pages 27-28), to art. 35 of the Common Provisions, and to the explanations given in the Guidelines for Applicants regarding filling in forms B1 and F5 of the application forms. In addition, demonstrate the beneficiary is expected to demonstrate the feasibility of what it intends to do.</p>
<p>How is the “highest possible legal protection status” to be documented for surfaces in which measures that address species of Annex IV of the Habitats Directive are implemented outside a Natura 2000 area?</p>	<p>Generally speaking, a law that guarantees protection covering the activities of the project is sufficient. Examples of protection figures include nature reserves, national parks, etc.</p>
<p>For surfaces of types described under the question above on legal protection status, is a registration in the Land Register before the end of the project a sufficient proof of “highest possible legal protection status”? What should be then the preferred wording of the registration text in the land register?</p>	<p>No, this would be insufficient. Please refer to page 27 of the LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity Guidelines for Applicants.</p>
<p>For the surfaces of types described under the question above on legal protection status, is a declaration of the relevant authority that a procedure will be started to declare the surface as protected zone or natural monument before the end of the project, a sufficient proof of “highest possible legal protection status”?</p>	<p>No.</p>
<p>For the surfaces of types described under the question above on legal protection status, is a written declaration by the land-owner that the surfaces will in the future only be reserved for natural protection purposes a sufficient proof of “highest possible legal protection status”? What should be then the preferred wording of such declaration?</p>	<p>No. Please refer to page 27 of the LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity Guidelines for Applicants.</p>
<p>Target site/project area: which is which? Is the target site the whole site where the project will perform activities, and the project area the place where the concrete actions will take place, or is it vice versa?</p>	<p>There is no such distinction in the 2008 call documents.</p>
<p>Who should sign form A8 when the beneficiary is the responsible authority for Natura 2000?</p>	<p>The beneficiary should sign form A8.</p>

<p>Many natural areas needing special protection are in rural areas. How can local authorities be encouraged to apply for LIFE+, given that rural areas are “under-skilled” and not well informed of this opportunity?</p>	<p>Note the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most LIFE Nature projects are carried out in rural areas. Often the beneficiary is several municipalities working together, or NGOs. - Be careful with proposals relating to rural areas (as in linked to rural economic activity), for many of those would probably be eligible under other EC instruments (and thus not eligible under LIFE+). - LIFE+ workshops aim to inform a wide audience of this opportunity.
<p>The obligation to make the project sustainable after it ends creates financial limitations for some applicants; how can they prove that they will have enough revenues to cover future costs?</p>	<p>LIFE+ Nature is about long-term, sustainable conservation measures and investments in Natura 2000 sites, species and habitats. Sustainability is often not so much the beneficiary guaranteeing financing as identifying potential sources of financing.</p>
<p>Should LIFE+ Nature projects be demonstration projects or should they be innovation projects?</p>	<p>They should be best practice or demonstration projects.</p>
<p>On your film we saw a story about bears restored in Italy. We also want to have our bear population re-introduced in our country. Can we take it from Italy their project ideas? Will it not be considered as somewhat copying their project if we do?</p>	<p>The Commission encourages the exchange of best-practice in nature conservation. The fact that a best-practice action has already been implemented elsewhere in the EU is not a negative evaluation criterion.</p>
<p>Can a research action be involved in a LIFE+ project? For example, the study of a species that was never done before?</p>	<p>Yes, in this case, and it should be designated as a preparatory action. Keep in mind the minimum 25% concrete actions.</p>
<p>For a particular species that was never studied and will be via preparatory actions, how can the concrete actions be defined at the end of the preparatory study?</p>	<p>If the situation is so unclear that it is difficult to define concrete project actions, part of the project preparation should likely be done before the submission of the LIFE project. Note that this would not be an eligible cost.</p>
<p>In the context of LIFE+ Nature and LIFE+ Biodiversity: what is the definition of long-term and short-term (land purchase and long-term lease or compensation eligible versus only short term lease or compensation are eligible)?</p>	<p>Short term is the project's duration. Long term means decades (at least 30 years).</p>
<p>To what extent can training activities be eligible for cofinancing under LIFE+ Nature? Do they count as concrete actions?</p>	<p>Training activities are eligible for cofinancing under LIFE+ Nature where shown to be necessary for the achievement of the project objectives. They would normally not be considered as concrete actions.</p>
<p>Is it possible to include in a project (not connected with forest fires prevention) any training actions? What is a definition of “training activities” and what are the key differences between “training activities” (for example for forest fire agents) and communication and awareness raising “campaigns” and actions related to the implementation, updating and development of European environmental policy and legislation. For example: are seminars, conferences, workshops regarded as “training activities” or they constitute parts of awareness raising campaigns?</p>	<p>Please refer to the application guidelines. Training activities are eligible for cofinancing under LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity where shown to be necessary for the achievement of the project objectives. As to whether workshops, seminars, etc. can be regarded as training or as awareness raising, it depends on the structure and contents of such events.</p>

<p>Would a project for protection of the dolphin population in the sea of EU Member State X be eligible for funding under LIFE+ Nature? It is a listed species, but there is no Natura 2000 site for its protection in X and it is highly unlikely that a Natura 2000 site can be designated for them due to specifics of X's marine situation. Is it perhaps better to apply under LIFE+ Biodiversity?</p>	<p>The <i>LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity Guidelines for applicants</i> provide indications on this and similar cases. Inter alia: "A nature conservation project that targets exclusively species/habitats of the Birds/Habitats Directive <i>is a LIFE+ Nature project</i> (provided it meets the various requirements specified in this document). In all other cases, it can only be a <i>LIFE+ Biodiversity</i> project (provided it meets the various requirements specified in this document), and must therefore be an innovative / demonstration project.</p> <p>The only exception to this rule is that applicants may submit a LIFE+ Biodiversity project proposal that targets exclusively species covered by the Birds / Habitats Directives in the case where it is a demonstration of an innovative site-related conservation measure not involving long-term investments, and that takes place outside a Natura 2000 site". The condition of site designation is only related to those species that are listed in Annex II of the Habitats Directive.</p>
<p>What is recommended for LIFE+ Nature regarding monitoring: does it have to be described as a part of each action or should it be a separate action encompassing monitoring of the results and impacts of other actions?</p>	<p>Please refer to the section entitled Project management and monitoring (obligatory) in the "Guidelines for applicants".</p> <p>It should always be a distinct action.</p>
<p>A project to be coordinated by a University intends to carry out studies for the identification of marine areas to be declared as marine reserves. Should the competent authorities be involved in the project and how?</p>	<p>The proposal must include a commitment from the Competent Ministry/Authority to designate the site(s) concerned as Natura 2000 sites before the end of the project and the Competent Ministry/Authority must be a beneficiary of the project (coordinating beneficiary or associated beneficiary). Proposals that gather data for other purposes (e.g. inventories for the designation of other types of marine protected areas) will be rejected (see <i>LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity Guidelines for applicants</i> page 24).</p>
<p>You've mentioned that for LIFE Nature and Biodiversity projects a minimum of 25% should be for concrete conservation actions, but an exception for marine territories and bio-indicators would apply. Does the exception apply to marine biodiversity monitoring projects? Usually there is little to no concrete conservation actions but only monitoring that can take place with regard to marine projects.</p>	<p>The Guidelines state that this exception only applies to preparatory inventories and planning for the designation of new / additional offshore marine Natura 2000 sites.</p>
<p>The Police in country X tend to enforce their role in the prevention of loss EU bird and animal species, especially because of illegal use of chemicals, hunting, etc. In favour of this arrangement of jeeps and field equipments, enforcement of cooperation between Police and Ranger Service, special nature training for police officers, enforced field services, etc., are planned. Would it fit within the LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity component? If so, which (Nature or Biodiversity)?</p>	<p>Probably not. From the information given, it sounds like reinforcing recurring activities, which are ineligible for LIFE+ funding. A LIFE+ project can finance investments that support recurring activities, but not the costs of the recurring activities itself.</p> <p>In the case of legal enforcement, LIFE+ can only support actions that would have an added value compared to the normal tasks carried out by the applicants.</p>

4. LIFE+ Environment Policy and Governance

<p>What specific character(s) differentiate(s) a “demonstration” project from an “innovation” project (both are testing, applying and proving innovative methodologies)? Can the Commission services outline a few practical examples exemplifying clearly the difference?</p>	<p>Please refer to pages 24-25 of the "Life+ Environment Policy and Governance" Guidelines. Giving examples is delicate.</p>
<p>The Public Transport Company of city X plans to introduce in Member State Y the technology special rubber rails for tram to reduce the noise and resonance of public transport. This technology is new in country Y although already used in other EU countries and there are no other sources of funding currently for this type of development. Can it be funded within the LIFE+ Environmental Policy and Regulation component?</p>	<p>For a definition of what is understood by "innovative", please refer to page 25 of the Guidelines for Applicants. Note that on the same page it is indicated that "Geographical technology or practice transfer alone (without a genuine development of innovative character) cannot be considered as innovative".</p>
<p>According to the Principal objective “Forests” under the LIFE+ Regulation and to the national priorities, could any actions to protect forest against fires be financed with this fund?</p>	<p>No, only actions foreseen are eligible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Projects contributing to the monitoring of the environmental status of forests within the European Union territory. - Awareness raising campaigns for the prevention of forest fires and training for forest fire agents.
<p>What is the difference between the CIP and LIFE+ programmes?</p>	<p>Please refer to the Environmental Policy and Governance Guidance pages 19-21.</p>
<p>What are the innovative and competitive environmental dimensions that can better be addressed through a LIFE+ project compared to a project under CIP?</p>	<p>Please refer to page 20 of the "Life+ Environment Policy and Governance" Guidelines.</p>
<p>It is not clear in the guidelines which types of ecolabel related project can be supported under LIFE+ compared with the CIP programme. In particular can a project developing a new ecolabel be eligible under LIFE+?</p>	<p>Please refer to footnote 13 on page 20 of the "Life+ Environment Policy and Governance" Guidelines.</p>
<p>What EMAS/ecolabel costs are eligible?</p>	<p>EMAS/ecolabel projects should in general be financed by the CIP programme – see footnote 13 on page 20 of the application guide. Dissemination of ecolabel activities may fall under the Information and Communication component.</p>
<p>For regulations that are obligatory for industry, can their application be a LIFE+ project?</p>	<p>There is no EU added value for an action if it is obligatory, so the answer is probably "No".</p>
<p>Could you give an example for Environmental Policy and Governance Project?</p>	<p>Please consult the LIFE website project database.</p>
<p>What is “major infrastructure”?</p>	<p>Examples of major infrastructure: roads, buildings, etc. Refurbishment for different purposes normally considered "minor".</p>
<p>Is a demonstration action resulting from research eligible under LIFE+?</p>	<p>LIFE+ does not fund pure research, but demonstration actions as defined in the guide (page 24) of Component II “Environment Policy and Governance”.</p>
<p>How can a LIFE+ Environmental Policy and Governance project bridge the gap between research and practical application of the results if it does not consider any investment costs eligible, i.e., to demonstrate how a certain technology works the project should obtain that technology.</p>	<p>Investment costs are eligible, provided all other requirements are met.</p>

<p>Where does the obligation to disseminate information start and stop? For a technical project, in addition to demonstrate its feasibility, is it also necessary to explain to potential competitors how to implement it? What level of detail is it necessary to present?</p>	<p>The Commission expects a broad dissemination of the information. One of the common provisions deals with copyrights (see Article 22 of common provisions), which are limited to a reasonable cost. The company remains the owner, but they must be available. Copyrights have never been an issue in previous LIFE programmes.</p>
<p>Is it possible to submit an environmental project focused on human health (without a considerable environmental scope)?</p>	<p>No.</p>
<p>Does an “innovation project” need to innovate at the community level or can a project be innovative only at the country level (the solution being already known in other EU countries).</p>	<p>Considering the European character of the programme, a project on innovation should be innovative at the community level, contrary to a demonstrative project.</p>

5. LIFE+ Information and Communication

How to understand the terms “innovation” and “demonstration” in the context of the LIFE+ Information and Communication?	Projects related to the third component do not have to be innovative or demonstrative in their nature.
Can a project focusing on awareness-raising using the demonstrative cleaning of the sidewalks of a transnational road with heavy traffic be supported under LIFE+? If so, under which component?	Yes, if the project meets the criteria of the Information & Communication component.
Can a project focused on drawing up a compendium and guide of “best practices” be supported under LIFE+? If so, under which LIFE+ component would such a project have greater chances of success?	Yes, if the project meets the criteria of the Information & Communication component.
Can licenses for images, videos, etc., necessary to develop good quality information and dissemination material, be eligible for cofinancing? If yes, how should such cost be presented to be compatible with the ineligibility rule “for license or patent fees or other fees related to the protection of intellectual property rights”?	As long as the licences are justified for the <u>implementation</u> of the Communication & Information project, they are eligible.
There is a project planned on the cultural linkages to environmental values, implementation of environmental issues and the potential to influence the environmental protection through cultural approaches. Could this be placed into some component of LIFE+ other than Information and Communication?	It depends on the concrete actions foreseen, but probably not.
Particularly for LIFE+ Information and Communication, how important are national priorities versus European priorities, based on the legislation on nature?	National Priorities are taken into account for a maximum of 5 out of 100 points in the Award phase.
For LIFE+ Information and Communication, A8 form (mandatory for all LIFE+ Information & Communication project proposals aiming at contributing to forest fire prevention) requires a declaration of support from the Competent Forest Fire National Central Authority. Is this national central authority support required even when the information and communication activities concern a region and there is a competent authority on forest fires at the regional level?	If there is a competent authority at the regional level, this would also be acceptable.
Marketing activities for commercial products must be avoided under LIFE+ Information and Communication projects, according to the guidelines for applicants for this kind of projects. Could a project publicise local products produced under environmental friendly agriculture or would these actions be considered ineligible?	Generally not eligible.
In Component III “Information and Communication”, is it possible to train in forest fire prevention a targeted audience (for example, teachers, elected officials, socio-professionals...) other than agents in charge of fighting forest fires?	In principle no; training under Component III is for the agents in charge of fighting forest fires (see guide, Annex 1, point F: training of agents, Form A8).

<p>Are demonstration actions to develop eco-labels for biodiversity eligible under Component III “Information and Communication”?</p>	<p>In principle no, possibly under Component I “Nature and biodiversity”.</p>
<p>To be eligible, under which component should you submit a project based on exchanges, transfer of experience, know-how, and networking at the international level?</p>	<p>As there is no innovation involved, under Component III “Information and communication”.</p>
<p>Could you give an example of Information and Communication project that a small municipality ran?</p>	<p>Please consult the LIFE website project database.</p>