



GOVERNMENT OF MALTA
MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT,
ENERGY AND ENTERPRISE

Guidance Notes for Applications for the LIFE Proposal Writing Assistance Scheme

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1. Introduction

The LIFE Proposal Writing Assistance Scheme is offered by the Ministry for the Environment, Energy and Enterprise (hereinafter referred to as “MEEE”) to increase participation in LIFE projects by voluntary organisations. MEEE understands the challenge faced by voluntary organisations with regard to capacities and the time that can be allocated to the application process for LIFE. Hence, through this Scheme, MEEE is offering eligible voluntary organisations the opportunity of a financial grant to outsource the writing of the project proposal with a view to securing a successful application under the LIFE Programme.

1.1. Objective of this Scheme

The aim of this Scheme is to support voluntary organisations in the submission of their project proposal to the LIFE programme by providing the means to finance professional consultancy services from service providers to write their project proposal. Through this Scheme, the project idea of the voluntary organisation can therefore be developed by experts, thus increasing the chances of a successful LIFE application.

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

- Measures and Management of Natura 2000 Sites;
- Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation;
- Green Infrastructure;
- Energy Efficiency;
- Renewable Energy
- Waste Management and/or Marine Litter; and/or
- Afforestation.

1.2. LIFE National Contact Point

Any questions or clarifications regarding this Scheme are to be addressed to the:

LIFE National Contact Point
Ministry for the Environment, Energy and Enterprise
6, Qormi Road, Santa Venera

Ms Rachella Muscat
Email: life.meee@gov.mt
Tel: 2331 6232

1.3. Definitions

In this Scheme, unless the context otherwise requires, the term:

“Applicant” means any voluntary organisation eligible to apply in terms of these Guidelines and which consequently applies for funding under this Scheme;

“Letter of Intent” refers to a document outlining the understanding between MEEE and a voluntary organisation which provides the basis for future legally binding agreements (in this case, an official letter of approval).

2. Eligibility for Participation

2.1 Applicant Eligibility

This Scheme is offered to voluntary organisations, as a single legal entity, that fulfil the below requirements:

- Applicants must be an established non-Government, non-profit voluntary organisation in the Maltese territory; and
- Applicants must be duly enrolled with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations and must be compliant with the provisions of the Voluntary Organisations Act (Cap 492 of the Laws of Malta) and its subsidiary legislation.
- Applicants must also be the Coordinating Beneficiaries in subsequent submitted proposals under the LIFE Programme.

Funding under this Scheme is made available on the basis that the Applicant has not benefitted, and will not benefit, from any other grant or financial incentive of whatever nature, applied for and/or utilised for the same project proposal as that subject of the funding requested under this Scheme.

The above provisions are applicable to Applicants both at the date of deadline and until such time when funding is due to be granted.

2.2 Application Eligibility

An application shall be considered eligible for funding under this Scheme if:

- the duly filled in application form is successfully submitted through the online submission platform and within the established deadline;
- the submitted application form is complete and includes all relevant supporting documentation;
- the submitted application form is coordinated by an eligible voluntary organisation that satisfies the eligibility criteria of Clause 2;
- Applicants requesting assistance under this Scheme are the Coordinating Beneficiary in the proposal;
- consultancy services chosen by the applicant voluntary organisation are those to be rendered from a registered company in an EU country.

2.3 Exclusion Criteria

An application shall not be considered under this Scheme if:

- the project proposal has been already granted any EU/national funding, even if in part;
- any of the eligible/applicant criteria are not met;
- 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 in 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:

- (i) 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;
 - (ii) entering into agreement with other applicants with the aim of distorting competition;
 - (iii) violating intellectual property rights;
 - (iv) attempting to influence the decision-making process of the MEEE during the award procedure;
 - (v) 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.

2.4 Application Process

Applicants are to submit an e-application form, as explained below. Prospective applicants are to note that only soft copies submitted via the online portal will be accepted. Applications in hard copy, whether submitted by mail, by hand or by any other means will not be accepted. Likewise, applications via pen-drive, cd or other digital storage means will not be accepted.

All relevant information and documentation will need to be submitted with the application form for the form to be considered for further processing. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that all requested information and documents are duly provided.

The e-application form is to include:

- the information and experience of the voluntary organisation;
- a summary of the project idea and how it addresses LIFE priorities and national priorities;
- three (3) quotes, company information, and experience in EU projects from prospective consultancy service providers with a justification for their preferred choice.

Only one (1) online application for each project proposal shall be submitted by the voluntary organisation. However, a voluntary organisation can submit applications for different project proposals.

Should it be necessary, the Ministry for the Environment, Energy and Enterprise reserves the right to request additional information not included in these Guidance Notes from the Applicant and/or from the chosen service provider where it is justified for the aims of implementing this Scheme in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Further details on the application process may be published on the website www.environment.gov.mt.

Step One: Access the Website:

- ✓ For the online application, access the webpage link: www.environment.gov.mt.
- ✓ If not yet registered, Applicants must first register with the VO Funding Portal ([VO Funding Portal](#)) before proceeding to step 2.
- ✓ Search for the LIFE Proposal Writing Assistance Scheme call.
- ✓ Read the related guidelines which will assist in the filling and submission of the relevant application form.

Step Two: Fill Out the Online Form, which includes:

- ✓ Applicant details and VO registration number
- ✓ Description of the Voluntary Organisation
- ✓ Selection of national priorities areas covered by the project proposal
- ✓ Selection of LIFE priority project topic/s covered in the proposal idea
- ✓ Summary of the project proposal and its impacts
- ✓ Information about the selected service provider
- ✓ Declarations

Step Three: Submit the Application

Click the link to upload the necessary documents:

1. Profit and Loss statements of the previous year (2021);
2. VO Certification of Enrolment;
3. Previous LIFE evaluation synthesis report (if applicable);
4. Three (3) quotes from potential service providers proposal writers in line with the Public Procurement Regulations (Legal Notice 352 of 2016 as amended);
5. Prospectus and CV/s as proven track record of the service providers.

2.5 Deadline for Submissions

The online application shall open on the **17th May 2022** and shall close on the **25th July 2022**.

Any submissions received after the deadline shall not be considered.

Applicants under this Scheme must keep in mind that any service provider engagement and work undertaken before the Letter of Intent is signed by the Ministry for the Environment, Energy and Enterprise shall not signify a commitment on behalf of the MEEE in terms of this Scheme.

Thus, it is advisable that the application form of the Proposal Writing Assistance Scheme is sent well in advance of the deadline in order to offer enough time for the engaged service provider to provide the desired outcome. Prospective applicants are strongly advised to avoid submitting applications on the last days of the Scheme to maximise the timeframe that the Applicant has to ensure that the project idea is submitted to the European Commission's LIFE programme on time.

2.6 Budget

The total maximum budget available for the running of this Scheme is €50,000.

3. Eligible Costs

Eligible costs under this Scheme shall be limited to the costs related to the fees of service providers to assist the Applicants with the proposal writing for submission to a LIFE call. The indicated costs will be reimbursed at 100% up to a maximum of €5,000, subject to the criteria and the result of the selection process referred to in these Guidelines.

Costs shall be considered eligible if they are:

- to be incurred solely by the beneficiary and from the voluntary organisation's main account;
- those resulting from the engagement of a service provider which is according to the procurement procedures outlined in these guidelines;
- to be backed up by original supporting documents;
- strictly those covering and related to proposal writing and not any project management services;
- those incurred during the eligible time period, which is from the date of the Letter of Intent provided by MEEE to the date of submission of the project proposal to the European Commission.

Engagement of consultancy services prior to receipt of the Letter of Intent will not be considered an eligible expense.

Expenses related to recoverable Value Added Tax (VAT) are also considered as ineligible costs.

The Applicant/Beneficiary organisation must follow fair procurement regulations and must also provide evidence that the services to be rendered are value for money by obtaining a minimum of three (3) quotations and by providing the track record of the selected service provider. The Applicant is required to provide MEEE with the three (3) quotations obtained for the proposal writing service. The cheapest option will need to be chosen (except for specific scenarios where the cheapest option is not possible. In such cases, a justification shall need to be provided and this shall be subject to prior approval from the MEEE.)

The Applicant must consider that no conflict of interest exists with the chosen proposal writer/s. A conflict of interest (COI) exists if the appointed service provider:

- stands to benefit directly if the proposal is positively evaluated. Providing market research information to the applicant will not be considered a COI;
- has a family/ personal relationship with any person representing the Applicant;
- is involved in the management of the Applicant organisation or is an employee of the same organisation.

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

4. Payment

Applicants will be provided the quoted sum, within the maximum capping of €5,000, for engaging the proposal writing as agreed with MEEE following the successful application to the Scheme.

Payment of the grant to the voluntary organisation will be made following the provision of a fiscal invoice (exclusive of VAT) from the consultancy service and a receipt from the European Commission

confirming that the project proposal was submitted for funding consideration under the LIFE Programme.

MEEE will process the payment to the voluntary organisation within ten (10) working days.

It shall be the responsibility of the voluntary organisation to ensure that full payment is provided to the service provider and MEEE shall not be held responsible in any way for any default in payments to service provider.

5. Selection Process

5.1 Selection Criteria

The appraisal of applications submitted shall be undertaken by a Project Selection Committee appointed for the purpose by MEEE and against the criteria hereunder:

	Maximum Mark	Criteria
Degree of Convergence with Established Priority Areas <i>namely: (i) Nature and Biodiversity; (ii) Circular Economy and Quality of Life; (iii) Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation; (iv) Clean Energy Transition</i>	30	Applicant is required to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explain how the proposal will adhere to the principles of LIFE; • highlight a specific call or sub-programme being applied for; and • ensure adherence to one or more of the priority areas described in these guidelines.
Contribution to National Policies and Targets <i>namely: (i) Measure and Management of Natura 2000 sites; (ii) Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation; (iii) Green Infrastructure; (iv) Energy Efficiency; (v) Renewable Energy; (vi) Waste Management and/or Marine Litter; (vii) Afforestation</i>	50	Applicant is required to highlight, with reference to official documentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the specific policies that the project proposal aims to contribute to; or • the specific target they aim to reach.
Financial and Operational Capacity	10	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.
Evaluation of Proposed Consultancy Service	10	The preferred consultancy service will be evaluated against previous experience in EU funded projects and their prospectus/CV.
Total	100	

Applicants must pass a total score of 60 to be considered for assistance through this Scheme.

5.2 Outcome of the Selection Process

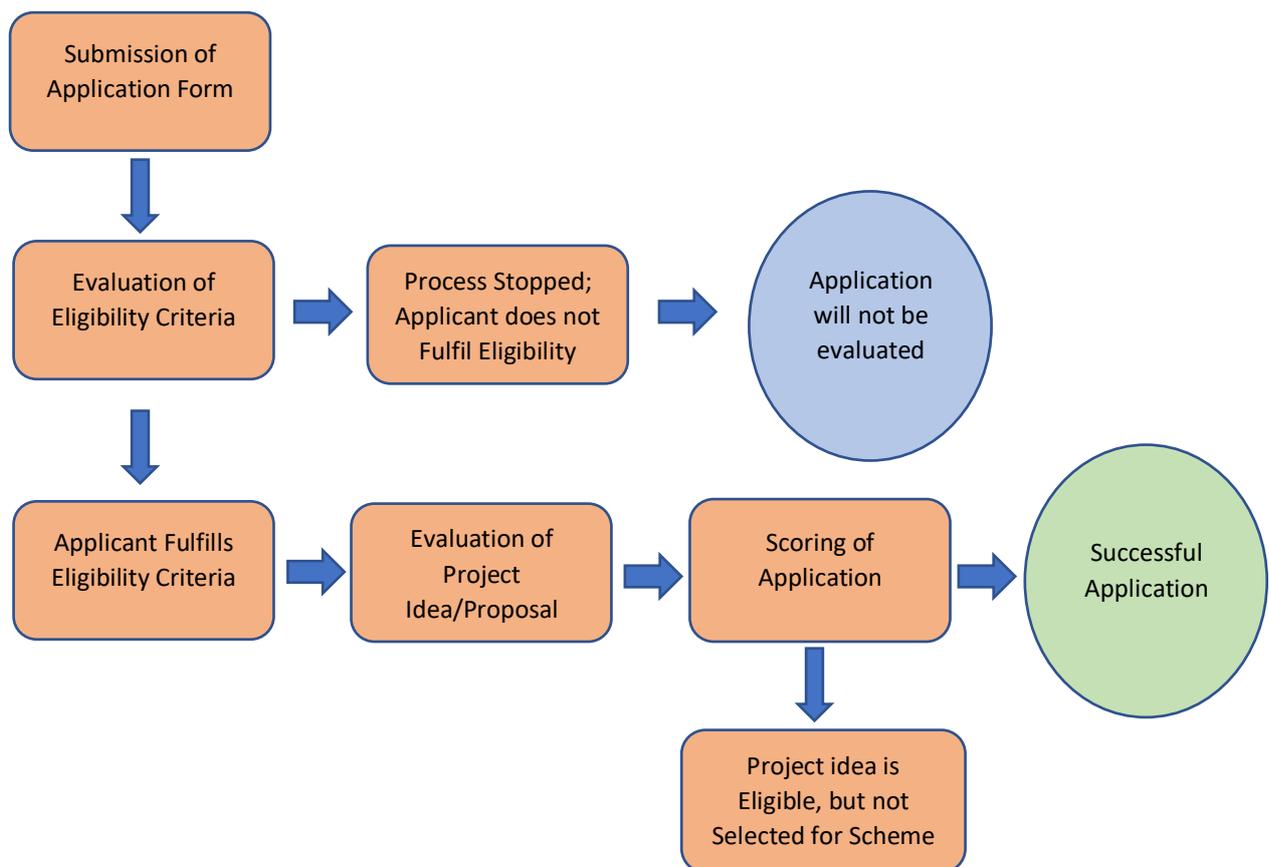
The Scheme will operate according to a systematic process from the submission to the outcome of the application.

The NCP at MEEE shall be responsible for the timely notification of applicants of the outcome of their application.

In the case the application is successful the MEEE shall provide the successful voluntary organisation with a Letter of Intent using the full legal name of the organisation, the key contact, the name of the selected proposal writing service and the amount that will be guaranteed by MEEE. The period of eligible expenses begins on the date of the Letter of Intent.

In the case that the application is unsuccessful, the NCP shall provide the overall scores given by the Project Selection Committee. Unsuccessful applicants may appeal the decision within five (5) days of the result by sending an appeal in writing, outlining the area of contention, to life.meee@gov.mt.

Any appeal will be reviewed by an Appeals Committee made up of officials who were not involved in the project selection process. The appeal shall be decided, within ten (10) days, after a review of the complaint. The NCP shall be informed whether the original decision will be reversed or upheld. The decision on the appeal shall be final.



6. State Aid

The grant is applicable to eligible applicants that do not carry out an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU. The project under the EU LIFE Programme proposed by the eligible applicant should also not give rise to an economic activity.

In the case where the eligible applicant carries out an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU and/or the proposed project would give rise to an economic activity, the grant will be awarded in line with State aid rules.

7. Auditing and Monitoring

7.1 Monitoring

In accepting the grant, a beneficiary is expected to:

- ensure that the consultancy service is engaged and able to commence work to meet the deadlines in due time for submission of the project proposal to the EU LIFE calls as listed below:
 - Strategic Integrated Projects (SIPs) and Strategic Nature Projects (SNAPs):
Concept notes: **8th September 2022**
Full proposals: **7th March 2023**
 - Standard Action Projects (SAPs) for circular economy and quality of life, nature and biodiversity, climate change mitigation and adaptation sub-programmes: **4th October 2022**
 - LIFE Action Grants for clean energy transition sub-programme: **16th November 2022**
- ensure that all funds are used in line with the conditions of the Scheme.

MEEE shall have the right to review any documentation pertaining to the beneficiary organisation in relation to the grant obtained and to take any action as it considers appropriate if the relevant procedures and safeguards are not observed.

7.2. Auditing

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

Beneficiaries must also retain all documentation pertaining to the funded project, as well as original fiscal invoices and receipts, for a period of up to two (2) years 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, MEEE 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. MEEE shall not be liable for any ensuing damage or inconvenience suffered by the beneficiary or third party. MEEE shall also have the right to take further action in the event of fraud or other malicious circumstance.

8. Interpretation

This document endeavours to establish comprehensive and unambiguous rules governing participation in this initiative. However, should circumstances arise where the provisions herein

are inadequate, unclear, ambiguous, or conflicting, MEEE shall exercise its discretion in the interpretation of the rules through the setting up of an ad hoc committee.

9. Confidentiality of Submissions

Unless otherwise indicated, all application submissions shall be treated in strict confidence. The data collected via the application for the grant and its subsequent processing to evaluate data subject's request for funding under the Scheme is in line with the Data Protection Act, Chapter 586 of the Laws of Malta and Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation). 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.