EUROPEAN CLIMATE, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT EXECUTIVE AGENCY (CINEA)

CINEA.D - Natural resources, climate, sustainable blue economy and clean energy
D.1 – LIFE Energy + LIFE Climate

Calls LIFE-2026-CET and LIFE-2026-PLP

Frequently Asked Questions

FAQs version 12 June 2026

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In case of additional questions, please contact CINEA-LIFE-CET@ec.europa.eu.

Please send your questions at the latest 7 days before the submission deadline AND indicate clearly the reference of the call and topic to which your question relates.

Frequently Asked Questions applicable to all topics of the calls mentioned above

What is the co-funding rate?
Under call LIFE-2026-CET, the action's eligible costs will be reimbursed up to the maximum funding rate fixed in the Grant Agreement i.e. 95%. Under call LIFE-2026-PLP, the action's eligible costs will be reimbursed up to the maximum funding rate i.e. 90%.

Are infrastructure and equipment costs eligible?
Infrastructure costs are not eligible under calls LIFE-2026-CET and LIFE-2026-PLP-ENER.
As regards equipment costs, some limited equipment costs may be considered eligible for funding if the proposal justifies that these are indispensable for the sole purpose of the action. This could for example be the case for monitoring and testing equipment. The eligibility of equipment costs is subject to depreciation during the lifetime of the project.

Is it possible to subcontract some of the project activities to an organisation based in a country that is not automatically eligible for funding?

Irrespective of the location of a subcontractor, as per Article 6.2.B of the LIFE grant agreement, subcontracting costs are eligible provided that they are, *inter alia,* "awarded using the beneficiary's usual purchasing practices — provided these ensure subcontracts with best value for money (or if appropriate the lowest price) and that there is no conflict of interests" (see also the AGA – Annotated Grant Agreement). Specific subcontractors should not be identified at proposal stage.

Are costs related to intellectual property rights (IPR) eligible?
Costs related to IPR are in principle eligible, as long as they are reasonable and justified by the needs of the project. The relevance of these costs for a specific proposal will be assessed by the evaluators.

Is it possible to provide additional information about the proposal through hyperlinks in the application or as part of the annexes, for example to substantiate some assumptions?
To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the call document mentions a limit of 65 pages for the application (part B) for Call LIFE-2026-CET and a limit of 50 pages for Call LIFE-2026-PLP. Therefore, the core information related to the proposal should be presented within those 65/50 pages and not through hyperlinks or within the annexes. This is also because evaluators have a limited amount of time to evaluate each proposal (hence the 65/50-page limit).

There are mandatory annexes (Detailed Budget Table and Participant Information in all cases, as well as the Table of Investments for the PDA topic) and one optional annex to upload the Letters of Support. Any additional information contained therein (e.g. details of the impact calculation, details about the pilots etc.) will be disregarded by the evaluators.

In case a proposal builds upon another project, is it possible to continue using the website that was developed under this project?
In accordance with section 10 of the LIFE-2026-CET call document, costs for separate project websites are in principle not eligible unless duly justified by the project objectives. That is the case for new as well as for existing websites. On the other hand, communication costs for presenting the project on the participants' websites or social media accounts are eligible. In case

a proposal is selected for funding, the eligibility of costs for a dedicated website will be further assessed by the Agency at the time of the grant agreement preparation.

Can a proposal build upon a previous LIFE-funded project?
Yes. Proposals that build upon and go beyond the results of previous projects are welcome, provided the added value and the progression beyond earlier achievements are clearly demonstrated. In such cases, the proposal should clearly explain the baseline, what has already been achieved, and how the new action will extend and scale up the previous results.

Is there additional guidance or support available for applicants?
Yes. The LIFE CET calls were presented at the EU LIFE Info Days on 28-30 April 2026. Recordings are available on CINEA's website (PLP, CET) . In addition, applicants are encouraged to consult LIFE National Contact Points in their respective countries, the Funding & Tenders Portal Online Manual, and the EU Grants AGA (Annotated Grant Agreement). The LIFE database and CORDIS website also provide information on previously funded projects that may serve as useful references.

Do you plan to organise matchmaking?
No, but you can find partners interested in applying for the same topic in the LIFE CET 2026 Info day website. After registering and creating a profile, you can set up "1 to 1" meetings until the call deadline.

Are eligible entities owned by a non-eligible country under the LIFE programme?
According to the relevant Call document, section 6, Eligibility *Eligible participants (eligible countries) In order to be eligible, the applicants (beneficiaries and affiliated entities) must:*
– be legal entities (public or private bodies)
– be established in one of the eligible countries*, i.e.:*
– EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs))
– non-EU countries:
*– listed EEA countries and countries associated to the LIFE Programme (*list-3rd-country-participation_life_en.pdf*)*
– the coordinator must be established in an eligible country

The relevant eligibility criterion is based on the **place of establishment of the legal entity itself**. Therefore, in principle, a legal entity established in an eligible country would meet this requirement, irrespective of the nationality/ownership structure of its shareholder (to be confirmed during grant preparation in case the proposal is selected for funding).

Are organisations from Serbia currently eligible to apply as participating beneficiaries under the LIFE calls?
Serbia is currently in ongoing negotiations with the European Commission services to participate in the LIFE programme.
That means Serbian entities can apply to the LIFE 2026 Calls; however, those entities will only be eligible to receive EU funding subject to the successful outcome of the negotiations and a starting date of the association agreement covering the current calls LIFE-2026-CET and LIFE-2026-PLP.
If there is no successful conclusion of the negotiations covering Calls LIFE-2026-CET and/or LIFE-2026-PLP, Serbian entities may participate as beneficiaries without EU funding. If the granting

authority considers their participation essential for the implementation of the action, the costs of Serbian entities could be considered eligible for funding (see Section 6 on Eligibility in the CET Call Document and PLP Call Document). These cases are rather exceptional though.

Is it possible for the proposal's budget to deviate from the EU contribution indicated under each topic?

The call document mentions for each topic an indicative EU contribution, which is considered appropriate to address the topic's specific objectives. In specific cases, a proposal could however request a higher or lower EU contribution than the one suggested. It is essential that the proposed budget is based on a realistic bottom-up estimation of the costs involved in the target country/countries, for relevant and impactful activities. This will be assessed by expert evaluators.

Can an organisation be involved in multiple proposals submitted under call LIFE-2026-CET?

An organisation can be involved in multiple proposals under the call, whether as Coordinator or as Beneficiary. It is however essential to ensure that the organisation has the necessary operational capacity to carry out its tasks under the different proposals, should they be eventually selected for funding.

How should Letters of Support be presented under Call LIFE-2026-CET?

The application tool foresees the possibility of uploading an Annex for Letters of Support in PDF format. To facilitate the evaluation process, applicants are invited to provide on the first page of this Annex an overview of the letters, namely a list with the name of the organisation, the type of organisation (e.g. public body, NGO, housing association, industry, energy agency…) and the signatory of each letter of support.

Topic-related Frequently Asked Questions

LIFE-2026-PLP-ENER-COMPLIANCE

Which stakeholders should be involved in the project consortium for LIFE-2026-PLP-ENER-COMPLIANCE?

Relevant stakeholders (e.g. European and national level organisations) necessary for the successful implementation of the action should be involved in the project consortium with an adequate balance of interests, including at least:

- European organisations representing relevant economic operators in different sectors such as associations of suppliers and associations of dealers, with a minimum of 5 partners covering together through their membership at least 2/3 (two-thirds) of the EU Member States.
- European organisations representing relevant actors in the public or non-profit sector, with a minimum of 3 partners representing consumer associations, standardisation bodies and Market Surveillance Authorities' organisations, covering together through their membership at least 2/3 (two-thirds) of the EU Member States.

Access to (networks of) experts with technical knowledge on the concerned products, regulations and standards as well as the wider legal framework is necessary and should be demonstrated in the proposal.

LIFE-2026-PLP-ENER-GOV

Under topic LIFE-2026-PLP-ENER-GOV, do Member States need to be included in the consortium?

There is no obligation to include Member States (MS) administrations directly as beneficiaries. However, MS administrations and/or their delegated bodies need to be strongly engaged in the relevant steps of the proposed activities.

Under topic LIFE-2026-PLP-ENER-GOV, what is meant by neutral facilitation process?

Proposals should identify which stakeholders they would rely on to ensure a neutral facilitation process which allows to include effectively all relevant stakeholders and has the capacity to remain impartial regarding the expected outcomes.

LIFE-2026-CET-BETTERRENO

Are pilot actions in real-life settings required and at which scale?

Yes. Proposals should include hands-on testing phases in real-life buildings or renovations with real users and real data, generating evidence that the approach works and can be replicated. Scope A should demonstrate the end-to-end renovation approach (e.g. demand aggregation through to project delivery) in practice in view of a large-scale roll-out of solutions, models and approaches with measurable results. Scope B should deploy and test the main EPBD information tools in use, notably the improved EPCs and Renovation Passports, including roll-out and use to guide real renovation decisions. Where relevant SRI, Digital Building Logbooks and Indoor

Environmental Quality (IEQ) should be integrated showing they are usable and taken up by stakeholders. The scale of testing phases should be appropriate to demonstrate practical application, effectiveness and replicability of the proposed solutions and instruments.

What is meant by 'high-quality renovation' under Scope A?

In the context of this scope, which seeks to support the large-scale roll out of solutions, models and approaches, 'high-quality renovation' refers to be reliable, building renovation that is faster, simpler and cost-effective, and that reduces the performance gap between expected and actual savings. That should involve coordinated actions across the renovation value chain (e.g. building owners, social housing providers, financial institutions, public authorities/energy agencies, energy suppliers and service providers). Proposals are encouraged to take a holistic, building-level approach that goes beyond energy, for example, by improving indoor environmental quality (e.g. ventilation), considering whole-life carbon, sustainable materials, climate resilience and the value of flexibility in buildings. High-quality renovation also relies on strong performance assurance (e.g. energy performance guarantees) and supports deep renovation outcomes or staged pathways that avoid lock-in.

What types of costs are eligible under the grant?

LIFE CET typically funds the enabling activities needed to make renovations happen (e.g. project coordination, stakeholder engagement, capacity building, development and roll-out of services and instruments). Proposals should not include costs for actual construction works and materials. Some limited equipment costs may be considered eligible if the proposal convincingly justified that they are absolutely necessary for the core purpose of the action (e.g. monitoring and testing equipment). Eligibility is subject to depreciation over the project lifetime.

Are proposals limited to residential buildings?

No. Proposals may address residential and/or non-residential buildings, and public and/or private segments, depending on the chosen approach.

Can proposals include activities regarding IT development?

Proposals focusing solely on IT development are not considered priority under this topic. Digital technology can be used as an enabler for delivery and uptake of building instruments and limited development might be justified, but the IT development should not be the centre of the action. IT development will be considered as justified only if providing a clear added value compared to existing tools and applications and the proposal should clearly demonstrate that.

Can a proposal address more than one scope?

Applicants are expected to focus on one scope, as the approach, activities and stakeholders typically differ by scope. Addressing elements of another scope is possible, but must be clearly justified. The proposal should state the main scope, explain why additional elements are needed, and demonstrate coherence with the overall concept and consortium. Applicants are encouraged to avoid broadening the proposal in a way that compromises its ambition and quality.

LIFE-2026-CET-BUILDSKILLS

How can the reports submitted by Member States under Article 28(6) of the Energy Efficiency Directive be accessed?

The submitted reports are published on the policy reporting platform of the European Commission: https://policy-reporting-platform.ec.europa.eu/Reporting/web/public/obligations/OZVP7zxMW9/8N9MZ3qPzw
Successful proposals selected for funding will be expected to consider the content of these reports as part of their activities.

Is it possible to involve only one country in the proposal?
Yes. Proposals may be submitted by a single applicant or by applicants from a single eligible country, although proposals can also choose to involve applicants from more than one eligible country.
In 2026, the BUILDSKILLS topic targets the following EU Member States: Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden; and countries associated to the LIFE Programme: Iceland, Moldova, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Ukraine. Proposals not addressing the update of the national skills platform and roadmap in these countries will be considered as out of scope.

Is there a maximum project duration?
There is no maximum project duration indicated in the topic text. For a proposal asking the EU contribution indicated in the topic (EUR 1-1.5 million), and given the range of activities required, a duration of around 30-36 months would be considered appropriate.

How open is the design of the large-scale national communication and awareness raising campaign?
In addition to the requirements highlighted in the topic text, the campaign should focus on specific gaps and professions identified by the national roadmap, wherever possible. The proposal must justify the relevance and efficiency of the specific campaign activities to address those gaps and engage the relevant professionals.

How should the specific performance indicators for the communication and awareness raising campaign listed in the topic text be understood?
The topic lists a number of indicators that may be used to track the success of the campaign:

- gross reach: the total number of contacts generated throughout the campaign (i.e. the total number of times the target audience was exposed to all campaign products, including multiple exposures to the same individual). It represents the overall reach of the campaign.
- net reach: the percentage of the target audience that has been reached by the campaign at least once, after removing duplicated contacts.
- recall: the number of people who can remember or correctly identify at least one specific campaign message or the associated brand after being exposed to the campaign.
- increased knowledge: the percentage of the audience reached declaring that they have increased their knowledge of the campaign's topic, as a result of the exposure to the campaign.
- percentage of audience who took action as a result of the campaign: the percentage of the target audience reached declaring to have taken action as a result of campaign exposure.

This list is indicative and other indicators may be put forward in the application; the choice of indicators and the methods to track impacts should be clearly specified.

Are applications expected to involve communication professionals to design and run the campaign as well as data specialists to carry out the status quo analysis?

In order to ensure maximum quality and impact, it is important that applications demonstrate sufficient expertise in those fields, either through the presence of specific consortium members or through purchase of services. In case this expertise is sourced directly within the consortium, this should be clearly outlined in the annex on Participant Information, by detailing the profiles of staff members in chargse of carrying out those specific tasks.

Does the LIFE-2026-CET-BUILDSKILLS topic's specific focus on a number of eligible countries imply that all consortium members should be based in those countries? **NEW**

The call text specifies that "proposals may be submitted by a single applicant or by applicants from a single eligible country." Proposals should focus on rebooting the national platform, updating the national roadmap and implementing a large-scale national communication and awareness raising campaign in one or several of the countries targeted by the topic. The consortium could include one or several entities based in eligible countries not directly targeted by the topic, if this makes sense to carry out the proposed activities in the targeted countries, which will need to be explained in the proposal.

The LIFE-2026-CET-BUILDSKILLS topic text states that "proposals should include a small share of activities to exchange with similar platforms across Europe". Could these exchange activities be organised with countries not directly targeted by the topic? **NEW**

Yes, it is possible for proposals to plan these exchange activities with eligible countries not directly targeted by the LIFE-2026-CET-BUILDSKILLS topic and that are already advanced in the implementation of their own national roadmap, as long as the rest of the activities focusses on rebooting the national platform, updating the national roadmap and implementing the large-scale national communication and awareness raising campaign in one or several of the countries targeted by the topic. For example, large-scale dissemination or replication of activities to or from countries not directly targeted by the topic would not be considered in scope.

LIFE-2026-CET-DIGITAL NEW

Under topic LIFE-2026-CET-DIGITAL, do projects submitted by gas DSOs fall under the scope of the call?

Gas DSOs are not excluded from applying for this LIFE Clean Energy Transition topic as any other entity which fulfils the general eligibility requirements of this call (see Topic conditions and documents in the call). However, the topic addresses the digitalisation of electricity Distribution System Operators (DSOs). In this context, all applicants should ensure their proposal is answering the challenges mentioned in the topic text: "DSOs must address complex technical, operational, and organisational constraints. These challenges are driven by the accelerating energy transition, the rapid growth in the installation of renewable energy sources, rising electricity demand, distributed loads, and the need to balance innovation with system reliability and (cyber)security."

Under topic LIFE-2026-CET-DIGITAL, what are the criteria to be categorized as a "small and medium-sized" DSO.

Article 38 of Directive (EU) 2019/944 (the Electricity Directive) indirectly defines a "small" DSO as an electricity or gas undertaking that serves fewer than 100 000 connected customers. Please consider that being a "small/medium DSO" is not a condition or requirement for this LIFE-2026-

CET-DIGITAL topic. The reference to small and medium-sized DSOs only highlights the increased need to upskill small and medium DSOs; however, all DSOs are eligible to participate in the call.

LIFE-2026-CET-EMPOWER

LIFE-2026-CET-ENERCOM

What types of energy communities are targeted by this topic?
The topic targets renewable energy communities (RECs) as defined in the revised Renewable Energy Directive ((EU) 2018/2001) and/or citizen energy communities (CECs) as defined in the Directive on common rules for the internal electricity market ((EU) 2019/944). Proposals should indicate clearly which types of energy communities are targeted.

Should a proposal address both Scopes A and B?
Proposals should address **only one** of the two topic scopes. The specific chosen scope should be clearly mentioned in the proposal.

What is meant by 'second level' energy communities?
Second-level energy communities refer to umbrella organisations, federations, associations, or groupings of individual energy communities. These structures allow multiple energy communities to cooperate, mutualise services, share expertise, and achieve economies of scale. The topic encourages the creation or strengthening of such entities to professionalise and scale up community energy activities.

Are proposals expected to develop new digital tools or platforms?
Proposals are not expected to develop any new tools, databases, or digital platforms unless their added value compared to existing ones is clearly justified and their potential scale-up beyond the project is convincingly addressed. Proposals should make use of existing resources and networks where relevant, such as the European Energy Communities Facility (ENERCOM Facility) and the Citizen Energy Advisory Hub.

Can existing tools be used, including with some budget for adaptation and translation?
Yes. Proposals can use existing tools and allocate budget for their adaptation and translation, provided this is duly justified.

Do public authorities (local or regional) need to be part of the consortium?
It is not an obligation. However, proposals will need to demonstrate that they have the support of the relevant public authorities. The strongest proof of this is their direct participation as beneficiaries in the consortium. However, there are other ways to demonstrate this support, including the provision of tailored and detailed Letters of Support.

Who should be part of the Consortium?
There is not only one ideal consortium as it will depend on the type of activities proposed, however, energy agencies, federations, cooperatives, local authorities should ideally be included

as beneficiaries (partners) as they are core implementers for the type of activities described in the call topic. Organisations with a structural link to a beneficiary can also join as affiliated entities. Stakeholders whose endorsement or participation matters but who do not need funding (e.g. a national ministry, a DSO, etc.) can be associated partners.

Interest and support in the project by relevant stakeholders can also be demonstrated through the provision of tailored and detailed Letters of Support, although in general, they constitute a weaker proof of interest than being active partners in a consortium.

Is there an indicative average budget for proposals?
There is not a general budget recommendation as it will depend on the type of activities proposed, but the European Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of up to 1.75 million EUR would allow the specific objectives to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

What if the project focuses on community heating and cooling and impacts will not materialise during the project lifetime?
The call text mentions impacts 'triggered'. For those impacts to be “triggered” during a specific period, the investment decision must be taken by the end of the period.

What is expected in terms of replication of the actions?
Proposals are expected to include an outline of the concrete measures that the consortium will take to ensure the action is replicated beyond the directly targeted communities and countries. This should include an indication of the resources (time and effort) the consortium plans to invest in replication and dissemination activities.

How should proposals ensure complementarity with existing initiatives?
Proposals must ensure their complementarity with existing national enabling frameworks and local support for energy communities. They should also complement and make use of existing resources and networks as relevant, such as the European Energy Communities Facility (ENERCOM Facility), the Citizen Energy Advisory Hub, and other LIFE-funded projects on energy communities.

What is meant in Scope B with renewable heating and cooling?
The definition to be considered is the one in the EPBD (Directive (EU) 2024/1275).

LIFE-2026-CET-ENERPOV

Under call LIFE-2026-CET, topic LIFE-2026-CET-ENERPOV, are equipment or renovation costs eligible?
No, under the call for proposals LIFE-2026-CET, infrastructure and equipment costs are not eligible. The LIFE CET programme does not finance the technologies themselves but the process and the setup of services or activities which trigger energy efficient or renewable energy investments. In exceptional cases, some limited equipment or low-cost devices may be considered eligible for funding if the proposal justifies that it is indispensable for the sole purpose of the action (e.g. monitoring devices).

Under call LIFE-2026-CET, topic LIFE-2026-CET-ENERPOV, Scope A, if the coordination structure is an energy poverty observatory, can it be established by private entities or foundations? Could such observatories also be established at regional level?

A national energy poverty observatory can be set up by both public and/or private bodies or entities. It is expected that an observatory represents all relevant stakeholder groups, including the national (and regional and/or local, where relevant) authorities. Such representation is expected to ensure the legitimacy of an observatory as a central point of information contributing to, for example, monitoring and data collection, supporting relevant professionals, enhancing understanding of energy poverty and helping to define an appropriate strategy.

It is mainly expected that any observatories would be set up at the national level. However, regional level observatories may also be considered in clearly justified cases, depending on e.g. the size and institutional arrangements within the country. It is up to the applicants to convince experts through the submitted proposal why a regional level observatory would be more relevant.

Under call LIFE-2026-CET, topic LIFE-2026-CET-ENERPOV, Scope B on facilitating renovation of residential multi-apartment buildings, are projects expected to undertake renovations as part of the proposed action?

No, actual renovation works do not need to form part of the proposed activities. Actual renovations should result from the proposed action, but it is not expected that the renovation of multi-apartment buildings would take place during the lifetime of the proposed action, if this is not realistic. Much would depend on the starting point of the proposed activities. However, proposed actions are expected to undertake concrete steps that could credibly lead to the expected impacts, including building renovations, supported by adequate evidence, such as proof of secured financing.

LIFE-2026-CET-HEATCOOLPLAN

Do local and regional authorities need to be beneficiaries of the consortium?

There is no obligation to include local and/or regional authorities as direct beneficiaries. However, in the context of this topic, proposals should demonstrate a firm political commitment, for instance by including them or their delegated bodies (such as e.g. local/regional energy agencies) in the consortium or by providing tailored letters of support clearly specifying their commitment and specific role in the project - and mirror that role through active involvement in relevant activities.

Can proposals focus on the development of digital tools to support local heating and cooling planning (LHCP)?

Proposals may use existing digital tools, such as those developed by national authorities or EU-funded projects, to support the development of local heating and cooling plans (LHCPs). Proposals whose main focus is to develop new digital tools are outside the scope of this topic.

LIFE-2026-CET-INDUSTRY

Under call LIFE-2026-CET, topic LIFE-2026-CET-INDUSTRY, Scope B, can energy cooperation take place between industrial clusters and ports?

Yes. Under the 2026 topic, energy cooperation can take place within the same industrial cluster or park, between different industrial clusters or areas, as well as between industrial clusters and port areas.
This reflects the increased role of ports as energy hubs and the objective to promote integrated energy systems, including energy sharing, waste heat recovery and shared infrastructure across industrial and port ecosystems.

Under call LIFE-2026-CET, topic LIFE-2026-CET-INDUSTRY, Scope B, what is expected from the investment plans and related project pipelines?
Proposals are expected to develop investment plans based on a pipeline of feasible projects identified through concrete interaction with participating companies and relevant stakeholders.

The investment plans should demonstrate the technical, organisational and financial viability of the envisaged investments, as well as their contribution to accelerating electrification, energy efficiency improvements and industrial energy cooperation in the targeted areas or clusters.

It is expected that the investment plans are endorsed by the relevant stakeholders, including where relevant public authorities, infrastructure operators, investors and participating companies.

Projects are not required to implement the planned investments during the project duration.

Under call LIFE-2026-CET, topic LIFE-2026-CET-INDUSTRY, Scope B, can proposals use voluntary agreements to support the implementation of investments?
Yes. Proposals may explore the use of voluntary national or regional agreements to mobilise public and private resources instrumental for the implementation of the investment plans.
These agreements can support coordination among stakeholders and facilitate access to financing, as well as contribute to the alignment of the proposed activities with local, regional and national climate and energy strategies.

Under call LIFE-2026-CET, topic LIFE-2026-CET-INDUSTRY, Scope A, can proposals address more than one technology and/or more than one sector?
Proposals under Scope A are expected to focus on a clearly identified clean energy technology or a coherent set of technologies contributing to improving the energy performance of the targeted industrial sector or process.

Proposals should not aim at addressing the full electrification or decarbonisation of an industrial process in a broad or generic manner. Instead, they should establish targeted collaborations between industrial sectors and technology providers to co-design, optimise and deploy specific technological solutions.

At the same time, proposals may address more than one industrial sector, provided that these sectors share similar production processes and energy-related needs, and that the proposed technological solution is relevant and applicable across them.

The proposed approach should therefore remain focused and well-defined, ensuring that the selected technology or set of technologies can be effectively standardised, replicated and deployed across the targeted industrial processes.

Under call LIFE-2026-CET, topic LIFE-2026-CET-INDUSTRY, Scope A, what level of technological maturity is expected?
Proposals should focus on technologies that are ready for market deployment, typically corresponding to Technology Readiness Levels (TRL) 8 or 9.
These include technologies that are already available on the market or that have been successfully demonstrated in real operational environments. Demonstration activities are not in the scope of this topic.

Under call LIFE-2026-CET, topic LIFE-2026-CET-INDUSTRY, Scope A, can proposals address sectors already covered by existing initiatives?
Yes. However, proposals addressing sectors already covered by ongoing initiatives should clearly demonstrate the added value and/or complementarity of their proposed activities.
Proposals should avoid duplication and explain how their approach builds on or differs from existing projects and initiatives in the same sector.

Under call LIFE-2026-CET, topic LIFE-2026-CET-INDUSTRY, do proposals need to involve companies as beneficiaries?
No. Proposals have no obligation to include companies as beneficiaries in the consortium.
However, given the importance of industrial actors in both scopes, proposals should clearly demonstrate how their participation and engagement will be ensured, for example through direct involvement in activities or through letters of support.

Under call LIFE-2026-CET, topic LIFE-2026-CET-INDUSTRY, Scope B, how many companies and regional/local industrial area/clusters should be targeted by the proposal?
The topic is not prescriptive on the number of companies and industrial clusters/areas to be targeted by the proposal. Proposals should demonstrate how the choice of targeted companies and industrial clusters/areas will clearly lead to the validation of the proposed industrial energy cooperation approach.

The geographical scope of the targeted companies and industrial areas/clusters should be in line with the proposed industrial energy cooperation approach (e.g. sharing of energy infrastructure, services etc.) with the aim of maximizing its impacts.

Under call LIFE-2026-CET, topic LIFE-2026-CET-INDUSTRY, Scope B, shall the “deployment of energy related infrastructure”, as foreseen under the list of expected impact, be actually rolled out during the timeframe of the project?
No. Applicants are not expected to fully implement relevant energy related infrastructure (e.g. renewable energy generation, energy storage, district heating and/or cooling networks) within the timeframe of the project. It is sufficient to develop the business model, have them included in an investment plan and ideally have the commissioning phase starting within the 5 years after the project duration. Please note the equipment and infrastructure costs are not deemed to be eligible under this call.

LIFE-2026-CET-OSS

LIFE-2026-CET-PDA

Can the funding be combined with other sources of EU funding?

Projects selected under the topic Project Development Assistance (PDA) may receive a funding rate of 95% and their specific activities should not be (double) funded by any other (EU) funding programme. However, PDA projects may mobilise EU funding for the actual investments, which are expected to be launched before the end of the action, e.g. using European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) or a loan from the European Investment Bank (EIB).

Is it possible to involve only one country in the proposal?

Yes. Proposals may be submitted by a single applicant or by applicants from a single eligible country, although proposals may also involve applicants from more than 1 country.

How is Project Development Assistance related to the European Local Energy Assistance Facility (ELENA)?

Project Development Assistance (PDA) activities implemented under call LIFE-2026-CET are complementary to projects implemented under the European Local Energy Assistance Facility (ELENA) of the European Investment Bank (EIB). Whilst PDA typically supports public and private project promoters to launch project portfolios with an investment volume between EUR 7.5 million and EUR 50 million, the EIB-ELENA Facility usually supports larger-scale investments above EUR 30 million.

Can a proposal be submitted if parts of the investment programme/projects already exist?

A proposal could still be submitted for the remaining parts of the investment programme/project. The existing investments should be clearly highlighted to avoid double funding. Proposers should describe in the application form the (local) strategic framework and previous/ongoing relevant investment projects upon which the proposal will build. Overall, it should be demonstrated how the investments to be launched are attributable to the PDA support or, in other words, how PDA supports/enables the investment launch.

What is the actual outcome expected from Project Development Assistance (PDA) projects and which specific evidence is required?

Projects are expected to result in the actual launch of an energy efficiency and/or renewable energy investment programme, as well as the delivery of an innovative organisational approach and/or financing solution for sustainable energy investment projects.

Proposals need to demonstrate that every million EUR of EU support will result in at least EUR 15 million of investments in sustainable energy (at least EUR 10 million for exclusive investments in residential buildings). These investments must be launched during the project duration. Tangible evidence in the form of signed work or investment contracts, or a similar convincing proof, will need to be provided in this regard. It needs to be planned and indicated in the proposal and submitted during the project duration. If a similar convincing proof is proposed, it needs to be clearly explained in the specific investment context; a general (contractual) access to finance alone is not considered a sufficiently convincing proof for the actual investment launch.

Moreover, PDA projects should also contribute to increased skills and capacity to deliver further sustainable energy investments.

What is the purpose of Project Development Assistance (PDA)?
The purpose of the Project Development Assistance (PDA) topic is to help public and private project promoters to convert sustainable energy project ideas into actual investments (launched during the project duration) by offering technical assistance during the various stages of the investment journey (as required in the specific project context). This can cover activities like project bundling, technical studies, energy audits, assessing financing options, legal advice, tendering procedure preparation, outreach and engagement etc. In this sense, PDA provides and builds technical, economic and legal skills and expertise for project developers needed for the successful project development and implementation.

How can 'innovation' be delivered within Project Development Assistance activities?
PDA projects should be showcases and deliver innovative approaches with a view to accelerating sustainable energy investments across Europe. This can involve:

- Organisational innovation regarding the mobilisation and/or structuring of the investment programme: e.g. set-up of dedicated facilitation structures, project development units (PDUs), one-stop-shops (OSSs), aggregation and bundling/pooling approaches (regarding small(er) investments and/or diverse assets to create large(er)-scale investment programmes to enhance bankability/investability) or efficient procurement procedures for large-scale portfolios of (mixed) assets; or

- Financial engineering tailored to the specific project context, with a particular focus on leveraging private investment (including blending public with private financing or improved combination of existing funds), whenever appropriate. Examples could include investment approaches, which are different from ‘traditional’ ones in the sector/region targeted, like Energy Performance Contracting (EPC), dedicated financial instruments, on-bill and on-tax payment schemes, community-based financing schemes etc.

In any case, ‘innovativeness’ is determined in relation to the specific situation in the sector and/or region addressed by the project and proposals should clarify the particular context in this regard.

What level of detail on the investments to be launched should be provided in the proposal?
The initially envisaged sustainable energy investment pipeline to be launched during the project duration has to be identified in the application (in the mandatory annex ‘Table of Investments’ specific to this topic, which can be downloaded on the Funding & Tenders Portal). The investment volume targeted in this context also needs to consistently reflect the envisaged leverage. Depending on the nature of the sustainable energy investment programme to be financed, tasks for establishing a full level of detail on the future investment(s) may be included in the application.
The investments to be launched during the project duration should only refer to sustainable energy investments, i.e. investments which are directly related to or required for energy savings and/or renewable energy generation (and the indicated amount of the investments to be launched should include VAT only for entities which cannot reclaim it). Other (investment) costs should not be included in the proposed 'sustainable energy investment costs' to be considered for the achievement of the leverage factor of 1:15 (1:10 in case of exclusive investments in residential buildings). For example, in case of a building refurbishment, the sustainable energy investment costs could include costs for changing windows or painting the façade after insulation. However, costs for painting the hallways or changing the bathtubs would not be eligible.

What does the Project Development Assistance (PDA) topic pay for in practice?
There is no comprehensive list of eligible activities; however, only activities which are required to launch the sustainable energy investments will be considered relevant.
In general, "PDA pays for brains, not for bricks". Actual hardware investments, basic research or technology development are not covered. Costs for the supervision of works may under certain circumstances be covered, if they are fully justified by the specific context of a proposal.
From previous experiences, the eligible costs for PDA projects can include e.g. staff efforts, subcontracting of specialist expertise (for example regarding legal, financial and technical matters), travel and subsistence and other costs such as publications. In practice, PDA will pay for those activities necessary to prepare and mobilise the investment programme and its financing, such as feasibility studies, stakeholder and community mobilisation, preparation for tendering procedures or setting up a specific financing scheme/financial engineering approach, including bundling of sustainable energy investment projects into bankable packages. In addition, costs for developing an action plan to communicate experiences and results towards potential replicators across the EU are eligible.

Are investments into new buildings/new assets eligible?
In general, Project Development Assistance (PDA) supports (renovation) measures regarding existing assets; for instance, support for construction of new buildings is in principle not within the scope. However, in particular as part of a larger (renovation) project, certain 'new investments' may be eligible, for example the extension of existing district heating/cooling networks (provided that the extended networks are fully based on low-temperature renewable energy or waste heat), or also renewable energy generation integrated in a larger-scale building retrofitting programme. Moreover, justified measures in the industry sector, as well as decentralised renewable electricity production and other renewable energy production directly replacing solid and/or fossil fuel use in targeted end-use sectors are generally eligible, if clearly advancing beyond business-as-usual approaches (in terms of organisational and financial innovation).

Are there specific target sectors for PDA projects?
Yes, proposals should target one or more of the following sectors, please refer to the details in the topic description:

- Buildings;
- Local energy and other infrastructures;
- Industry; and
- Renewables

LIFE-2026-CET-POLICY

Do Member States administrations or other relevant public authorities need to be part of the consortium of a proposal to demonstrate their support?
The proposal should clearly demonstrate through the suggested concept and methodology that it provides support to the relevant public bodies for the implementation of a core provision of the recast EED or a focus area of the recast EPBD. However, those bodies do not necessarily need to be direct beneficiaries of the project, the relevance of the suggested actions to support the implementation can be demonstrated, for example - if relevant- through letters of support, mirrored by relevant activities.

Are proposals limited to address core provisions as listed in scope A for the recast EED and the areas of action under scope B for the recast EPBD?

The list of core provisions in the call text is not exclusive and other provisions of the recast EED may also be addressed. However, at least one of the core provisions listed in the call text needs to be addressed. For the scope B, in which focus areas are defined, one focus area should be addressed while also other, additional areas could be addressed by a proposal.

For how many Member States does the support for the implementation of core provisions of the EED (scope A) or focus areas of the EPBD (scope B) need to be demonstrated?

There is no minimum requirement defined in terms of number of Member States to be addressed. Proposals should present the concrete results which will be delivered by the activities and demonstrate how these results will contribute to the topic-specific impacts.

LIFE-2026-CET-PRIVAFIN

Is it possible to involve only one country in the proposal?

Yes. Proposals may be submitted by a single applicant or by applicants from a single eligible country, although proposals may involve applicants from more than 1 country.

The same eligibility condition applies to topics LIFE-2026-CET-BUILDSKILLS, LIFE-2026-CET-OSS and LIFE-2026-CET-PDA.

Does the financing scheme need to be established in several countries?

No. The financing scheme should be established in at least 1 eligible country under the LIFE programme, in order to ensure the development of a sound and robust investment pipeline.

Note that proposals are expected to plan replication and/or rollout of the scheme envisaged beyond the region(s) targeted for the establishment, including the analysis of legal and market conditions for replication. Region(s) refer to sub-national territories.

Is it necessary to deliver investments by the end of the project?

No. What is requested is that the innovative financing schemes are operational by the end of the project and ready to finance investments. Therefore, investments may be implemented after the end of the action. However, in order to ensure that the financing scheme is operational and ready to finance investments at the end of the project, it may be relevant to process some investment during the project, leading to financing decisions.

What is expected in terms of project pipeline?

Proposals are expected to ensure the availability of demand in the form of a project pipeline complying with the requirements of the scheme, in particular at regional and national level. This is to avoid that a financing scheme is developed for which there is not sufficient demand.

Assuming that there will be a sufficient demand may not be judged credible without a detailed analysis of the potential pipeline of projects (project owners, types of investments, market quantification) and a clear strategy to engage with that project pipeline.

Note that proposals are not expected to develop the project pipeline themselves; they can rely on existing pipelines, including those developed by programmes and initiatives at the regional and national level.

Should the targeted investments be only financed through private funds?
No. The innovative financing schemes to be developed should focus on leveraging additional private funding sources. However, depending on the sector and country, public support programmes may be available to finance the same types of investments as those targeted by the proposal. Proposals should identify those public programmes and demonstrate how they complement them or even cooperate with them.

Is it necessary to detail the innovative financing scheme(s) addressed already in the proposal?
Please read carefully the elements listed in the description of the topic that proposals should take into account.
Based on past experiences with similar calls addressing innovative financing schemes, proposals should in particular:

- Include a sufficiently clear, concrete and mature concept with regard to the financial solution(s) to be developed, the sectors/investment types targeted etc.;
- Demonstrate that they actually respond to real market needs and can be expected to have a corresponding concrete (market) impact;
- Show the economic and financial viability of the solution(s) envisaged in a traceable way and contain an adequate (at least preliminary) market and barrier analysis; and

Address market acceptance in a suitable way, for instance clarifying whether key stakeholders and, in particular, financial sector actors are already involved, or with which engagement strategy this shall be achieved effectively.

Can the innovative financing scheme(s) proposed address solely renewable energy investments?
No. In view of the ambitious EU climate and energy policy, including dedicated targets for the years 2030 and 2050, significantly enhanced investments in sustainable energy will be required. In this context, in particular the level of energy efficiency investments, which have specific profiles, needs to be ramped up significantly. Therefore, the innovative financing schemes for investments in sustainable energy can also cover small-scale renewable energy sources, but need to demonstrate a dedicated and clear focus on energy efficiency.

When addressing the expected impacts related to the number of private finance stakeholders, does it matter which kind of stakeholders are involved?
Yes. The proposal should identify not only the number of private finance stakeholders reached, but also describe what type of financial institutions (banks, asset managers, asset owners, etc.) are targeted, and, when relevant, give an estimate of their volume of investment and/or capital under management.
It is not necessary to justify impacts on indicators listed in the topic description which are not relevant for the project, but proposals are expected to provide more specific impact indicators related to the context of the proposal. The impacts proposed should be quantified and justified in detail, both for the project time and afterwards.

Where can I find examples of previous or ongoing projects addressing the topic?
A number of successful projects, funded under similar topics of the predecessor programme Horizon 2020 Energy Efficiency, were presented at the info day and presentations can be found on the LIFE web page dedicated to the PRIVAFIN topic.

Proposals funded under the predecessor topics LIFE-2021-CET-INNOFIN, LIFE-2021-CET-MAINSTREAM, LIFE-2022-CET-INNOFIN, LIFE-2022-CET-MAINSTREAM, LIFE-2023-CET-PRIVAFIN, LIFE-2024-CET-PRIVAFIN and LIFE-2025-CET-PRIVAFIN can be found in the 'EU Funding projects' section of the Funding and Tenders portal once the grant agreements have been signed.
However, previous topics were not exactly the same as this year. Proposals should seek to best answer the current call for proposals while building on previous projects.

Does my proposal have to deliver results on all the impact indicators listed?
No. The topic provides a list of impact indicators that will be used to evaluate the impact criterion, but depending on the content of each specific proposal, some of the indicators may not be relevant.
It is not necessary to justify impacts on indicators listed in the topic description which are not relevant for the project, but proposals are expected to provide more specific impact indicators related to the context of the proposal. The impacts proposed should be quantified and justified in detail, both for the project time and afterwards.

LIFE-2026-CET-RENEWHC NEW

Under the LIFE-2026-CET-RENEWHC topic, shall proposals necessarily cover both solar thermal and heat pumps and possibly also another technology (e.g. photovoltaic (PV) or photovoltaic thermal (PVT))? Or are solar thermal-only or solar thermal/ PVT-only proposals also eligible? Are heat pump-only (or Heat pumps/PV) proposals also eligible?
The LIFE-2026-CET-RENEWHC topic aims to "support the establishment of national collaborative platforms to strengthen the existing regulatory and financial frameworks at the national and local levels, thereby facilitating a large-scale rollout of on-site heat pump and solar thermal installations in existing buildings, including in combination with photovoltaic (PV) or photovoltaic thermal (PVT) systems".

Given this background, proposals involving market operators exclusively active in the solar thermal or heat pump market segments will be eligible. On the other hand, the topic text underlines that national collaborative platforms should include market players and competent authorities, some of which are common for both technologies. In that context, evaluators will assess, among other things, how proposals justify their selection of technology in the specific context of the proposal and the extent to which they demonstrate the interest and the commitment of the broad range of actors required to achieve the topic's objectives.