



LIFE4BEST – ORs



**AGENCE FRANÇAISE
POUR LA BIODIVERSITÉ**
ÉTABLISSEMENT PUBLIC DE L'ÉTAT



SWIFT SMALL GRANTS

Call for proposal 2019

Supporting Biodiversity Action in the EU's Outermost Regions

Guidelines for Applicants

Deadline for submission of concept notes:

16 December 2019 at 23:59 (Brussels date and time)

(In order to convert to local time click [here](#))

Applicants are strongly recommended to read this guidance document in full before completing and submitting a proposal for LIFE4BEST

NOTICE

Only concept notes must be submitted first for evaluation. Thereafter, applicants who have been pre-selected will be invited to submit a proposal (full application).

OVERVIEW OF LIFE4BEST

BACKGROUND

The LIFE4BEST Programme (hereafter LIFE4BEST) continues the [EU BEST Initiative](#).

LIFE4BEST provides grant funding for **small-scale field actions** for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in the Outermost Regions of the European Union (ORs).

OBJECTIVES OF LIFE4BEST

The overall objective of LIFE4BEST is to **provide support for biodiversity action in the EU Outermost Regions.**

The **specific objectives** of LIFE4BEST are:

1. To **facilitate access** to EU funds for actors in the nine EU Outermost Regions so as to unlock initiatives and potential in the fields of biodiversity conservation and the sustainable use of ecosystem services, including ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and mitigation, as a basis for sustainable development.
2. To **increase the capacity** of these actors to access and effectively manage EU funds.
3. To **increase the visibility** of EU Outermost Regions as key contributors to the achievement of EU and global biodiversity and targets.

LIFE4BEST is a grant scheme designed to provide **effective support for actions on the ground at the local, as well the regional level.**

LIFE4BEST TYPES OF GRANT

LIFE4BEST grants are swift small grants:

Type of Grant	LIFE4BEST Funding
Swift Small Grants	≤ € 50 000

FINANCIAL ALLOCATION

The indicative total amount made available for the first LIFE4BEST call for proposals is **one million three hundred thousand euros (EUR 1 300 000)**. Depending on the number of high quality proposals, the LIFE4BEST Board reserves the right to allocate more funds.

Swift Small Grant budget is limited to EUR 50 000. The budget must be realistic. It is not necessary to request the maximum (or close to the maximum) grant amount available. **The amount requested should be consistent with the proposed project activities and workplan**

Swift Small Grants requested **must be 100% funded by LIFE4BEST: Co-funding** cannot be included. The total budgeted costs of the project must be equal to the grant amount requested from LIFE4BEST.

PROJECT DURATION

The project duration is **up to 14 months as a maximum**. The **project duration must be aligned with the proposed activities and workplan**.

Type of Grant	LIFE4BEST Funding	Max. Duration
Swift Small Grants	≤ € 50 000	14 months

Start Date: Projects must have a start date in **June 2020 or after**.

End Date: The latest possible end date should be in **August 2021**. Projects must end on or before August 2021.

No extension will be authorised.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

There are three sets of eligibility criteria, relating to the actors, the activities and the costs.

ELIGIBILITY OF THE APPLICANTS (I.E. APPLICANT AND CO-APPLICANT(S))

For being eligible for LIFE4BEST, lead applicant and co-applicants **must be:**

- I. **A private or public legal entity** (e.g. a registered/incorporated in one of the EU Outermost Regions (ORs). Individuals, sole traders are not eligible to receive a grant from LIFE4BEST.
- II. **Directly responsible** for the preparation and implementation of the grant project. Applications submitted by a body acting as an intermediary for a third party are not eligible.
- III. **Have a bank account in the name of the organisation;** grants cannot be paid into an account in the name of an individual.

In line with LIFE4BEST objective, target beneficiaries are primarily:

- local non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
- local civil society organisations (CSOs)
- local community-based organisations (CBOs)
- local non-profit organisations
- Small and medium enterprises as defined by the EC¹
- local sub-governmental bodies i.e. municipalities, cities of a territory, communal services

The lead applicant may act **individually or with co-applicant(s)**. Co-applicants must sign the mandate included as Annex 1 to these guidelines. If awarded a grant, the lead applicant will become the beneficiary identified as the Coordinator in the grant contract. The Coordinator is the main interlocutor of the LIFE4BEST Secretariat. The coordinator represents and acts on behalf of any other co-beneficiary (if any) and coordinates the design and implementation of the action. The Coordinator will bear full responsibility for the technical and financial implementation of the project.









¹ See https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition_en

An organisation can submit a **maximum of two concept notes/proposals per call** as lead applicant and/or co-applicant. Nonetheless, **an organisation can only be awarded 1 grant as lead applicant**. If two proposals where an organisation is lead applicant successfully pass the assessment steps, only the proposal with the highest score will be retained for the award of a grant.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS

ORs' territorial government and services can apply for funding (as lead applicant or co-applicant) provided the project puts a strong emphasis on collaboration and partnership with the local civil society, and/or local sub-government bodies, socio-professional organisations.

National organisations registered in one EU Member States can apply for funding, provided the applicant can demonstrate that the proposed project has the support of the ORs authorities (e.g. by submitting a letter of support) and the project puts a strong emphasis on collaboration and partnership with the local civil society, and/or local sub-government bodies, socio-professional organisations and includes capacity building activities.

Applicant	Small Grant
Local non-government organisations (NGOs), civil society organisations (CSOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), non-profit organisations	
Small socio-professional organisations, SMEs, small for-profit organisations (<10 permanent staff, annual balance or turnover < €2 million) **	 **
Local sub-governmental bodies of an OR i.e. municipalities, cities etc.)	
OR territorial government departments and services	 *
Local/National Research organisations	 ***
Organisations based in an European Union Member State ²	 *
Regional Organisations ³	 Not eligible
International Organisations	 Not eligible

* See special conditions above.

** Individual consultants, sole traders are **not eligible to be the lead applicant or the co-applicant of a project**; they can only be involved in a project as sub-contractors.

*** Research organisations can apply for funding as co-applicant, provided the applicant makes clearly demonstrates that the research undertaken for the ongoing action is operational and supports action on the ground during the lifetime of the project (not fundamental research).

² Refers to organisations that are registered/incorporated in an EU Member State

³ A Regional organisation is here understood as international organizations (IOs), that incorporates international membership and encompasses geopolitical entities that operationally transcend a single nation state. Examples: CARICOM; COI.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND INELIGIBILITY

Grants will not be awarded to applicants whose staff includes an individual currently employed by, or closely related (i.e. immediate family) to, an IUCN employee or an employee of one of the IUCN collaborators (Regional Focal points, experts) involved in the management of the LIFE4BEST Programme.

Organisations that are a member of IUCN are eligible to apply for grants provided they can demonstrate their legal and structural independence from IUCN.

Potential applicants may not participate in calls for proposals or be awarded grants if they are in any of the situations listed in annex 4 (exclusion criteria). In the Applicant Declaration (see annex 5) the lead applicant must declare that the lead applicant himself and the co-applicant(s) are not in any of these situations.

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES:

Eligible activities **must**:

- be located in one or more of the ORs;
- contribute to the LIFE4BEST objectives;
- comply with the LIFE4BEST and IUCN environmental and social safeguard aspects;
- contribute to tangible impacts in terms of ORs' biodiversity conservation, sustainable development and/or sustainable use of natural resources and ecosystem services, including ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation or mitigation;
- not be fundamental research projects. Proposals that include research activities must include tangible follow-up actions using the research, the results of which are delivered within the timeframe of the project, i.e. proposal of a practical management plan or new policy, or new protected area design, new natural resources management plan, in vivo pilot site activities implementing the results of the research with new management or conservation actions.

INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES:

- The purchase of land, involuntary resettlement of people, or activities that negatively affect physical cultural resources, including those important to local communities;
- Activities adversely affecting individuals and local communities or where these communities have not provided their broad support to the project activities;
- The removal or altering of any physical cultural property (includes sites having archaeological, paleontological, historical, religious, or unique natural values);
- Activities that duplicate work previously funded by BEST.
- Financial support to third parties through sub-grants.

ELIGIBILITY OF COSTS:

Only eligible costs will be reimbursed. Eligible costs must be:

- necessary for the implementation of the project activities;
- reasonable and justified and consistent with the principles of sound financial management, in particular in terms of value for money and cost-effectiveness;
- generated during the lifetime of the project (costs incurred before the official starting date of the project or after the official end date of the project are not eligible); expenditure eligible for financing

- may not have been incurred before the signature of the grant agreement;
- either actually incurred by the beneficiary and be recorded in his accounts in accordance with the applicable accounting principles, or based on the simplified costs option or on the combination thereof;
- identifiable and verifiable;
- compliant with the requirements of the applicable tax and social legislation.

Categories of eligible costs:

- ✓ Personnel. The costs of personnel working under an employment contract with the beneficiary or an equivalent appointing act and assigned to the action, provided these costs are in line with the beneficiary's usual policy on remuneration. Those costs include actual salaries plus social security contributions and other statutory costs included in the remuneration.
- ✓ Travel. Costs of travel and related subsistence allowances, provided these costs are in line with the beneficiary's usual practices on travel.
- ✓ Equipment and supplies for the project, provided the purchases are made in accordance with LIFE4BEST Procurement Policy and are in line with the national procurement regulations, if applicable.
- ✓ Local office costs.
- ✓ Other costs, services. Costs derived from subcontracts, provided the purchases are made in accordance with BEST Procurement Policy.

REIMBURSEMENT OPTIONS:

Reimbursement of costs for **Swift Small Grants** can be based on the **actual costs** incurred by the beneficiary(ies), a **simplified costs option or on a combination thereof** as appropriate.

The use of simplified costs option "UNIT RATE" is allowed for the following cost categories:

- ✓ Personnel costs
- ✓ Local transportation (use of own vehicles)
- ✓ Per diems for missions (travel)
- ✓ Office costs

Simplified costs option – unit rate method (Annex 3):

- ✓ A unit value is established at the budget stage by the applicant.
- ✓ A unit value is based on statistical data/historical data provided by the applicant.
- ✓ A unit value is fixed and cannot be changed in the course of project implementation.
- ✓ Budgeted costs are calculated as a unit value multiplied by the number of units.
- ✓ Eligible costs are paid subject to reaching concrete inputs/outputs in the approved budget.

Simplified costs option - Expenditure verification - Auditors will not check supporting documents to verify the actual costs incurred but they will verify the correct application of the method and formula for the calculation of the cost based on related inputs and relevant quantitative and qualitative information.

At contracting phase, the LIFE4BEST Secretariat decides whether to accept the proposed amounts or rates on the basis of the provisional budget submitted by the applicants, by analysing factual data of grants carried out in the past by the applicants or of similar actions and by performing checks described in Annex 3.

It is therefore in the applicants' interest to provide a **realistic and cost-effective budget**.

ELIGIBLE INDIRECT COSTS

The indirect costs incurred in carrying out the action may be eligible for flat-rate funding, but the total **must not exceed 7 %** of the estimated total eligible direct costs. Indirect costs are eligible provided they do not include costs assigned to another budget heading. The lead applicant may be asked to justify the percentage requested

before the grant contract is signed. However, once the flat rate has been fixed in the Special Conditions of the grant contract, no further supporting documents need to be provided.

CONTRIBUTIONS IN KIND AND INELIGIBLE COSTS

Contribution in kind means the provision of goods or services to a beneficiary free of charge by a third party. As contributions in kind do not involve any expenditure for beneficiaries, they are **not eligible costs**

The following costs are not eligible:

- debts and debt service charges (interest);
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- costs declared by the beneficiary(ies) and financed by another action or work programme receiving a European Union (including through EDF) grant;
- purchases of land or buildings;
- currency exchange losses;
- credit to third parties.

HOW TO APPLY AND THE PROCEDURE TO FOLLOW

There is a **two-stage application process** for LIFE4BEST Swift Small Grants:

- **Stage 1:** Open call for project **concept notes** (a short application form)
- **Stage 2:** By invitation only call for **full project proposals** (a more comprehensive application form).

Applicants can submit applications **in English or French**. Templates (technical and financial, see Annexes) and guidelines are available in each language. **Hand-written concept notes will not be accepted.**

Application forms are available online for submitting the proposals through the [LIFE4BEST/BESTRUP portal](#).

ONLINE APPLICATION

Applications **must be submitted only through the LIFE4BEST/BESTRUP online portal** that is accessible [here](#).

- 1) Applicants need to create an account;
- 2) Applicants can fill up the forms offline and then upload the application that can be saved as a draft;
- 3) Once completed, applicants can submit the final version and click on “submit” link

Please note that once submitted, applications cannot be modified in any way even though all the information provided and the files uploaded will be available for consultation and downloading.

Before submitting applicants should ensure that all the requested information have been entered and all the required documents have been uploaded successfully (see checklist in the application template). Applications can also be DELETED if the applicant desires to do so.

However, in case of technical difficulties applicants can submit via email to the relevant regional focal point ensuring that the [LIFE4BEST Secretariat](#) is copied in the email. The email containing the complete application documents must be received before the deadline for submissions.

CONCEPT NOTE CONTENT

The applicants have to complete the different sections of the template. Activities must be clearly articulated and capacity demonstrated to manage and implement successful projects.

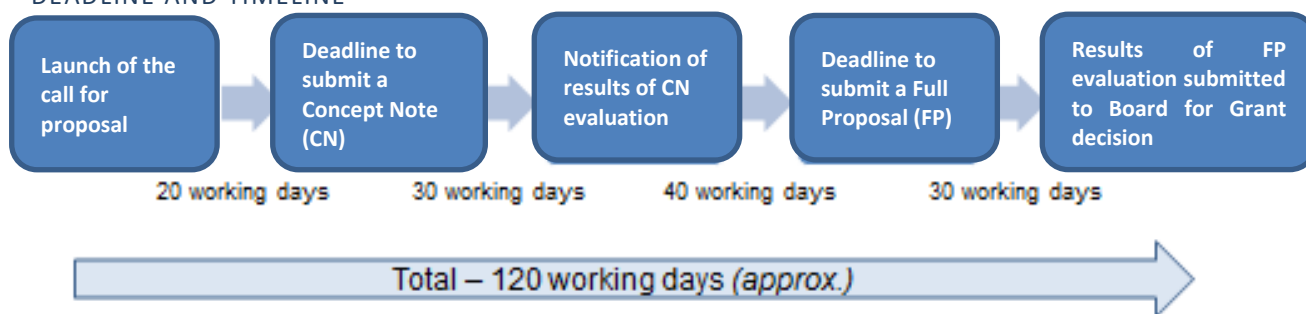
From a financial point of view, lead applicants must only provide **an estimate of the requested LIFE4BEST contribution**. The elements outlined in the concept note may not be modified in the full application. The LIFE4BEST contribution **may not vary** from the initial estimate **by more than 20%**. A detailed budget is to be submitted only by the lead applicants invited to submit a full application in the second phase.

Any error or major discrepancy related to the concept note instructions may lead to the rejection of the concept note. Clarifications will only be requested when the information provided is not sufficient to conduct an objective assessment.

Lead applicants must verify that their concept note is complete using the checklist for concept note. Incomplete concept notes may be rejected.

In addition to consulting the Frequently Asked Questions on the [LIFE4BEST/BESTRUP portal](#), clarification questions on the call for proposals can be sent by email to the Regional Focal points **no later than 10 working days before the deadline for the submission of proposals**, indicating clearly the reference of the LIFE4BEST 2019 call for Proposals.

DEADLINE AND TIMELINE



All dates/time are in the time zone of Belgium.

LIFE4BEST-ORs SSG call for proposals (2019)	DATE	TIME*
Launch of the call for proposal	18 Nov. 2019	
Deadline for requesting any clarifications from the LIFE4BEST Secretariat and Regional Focal Points	11 Dec. 2019	23:59
Deadline for submission of concept notes	16 Dec. 2019	23:59
Notification of invitation to prepare a full proposal	27 Jan. 2020*	-
Deadline for submission of full proposals	23 March 2020*	23:59
Evaluation results submitted to the Board for selection decision	4 May 2020*	-

Notification of the selection of projects by the Board to be awarded a LIFE4BEST-ORs Swift Small Grant	11 May 2020*	
Signature of Grant Agreements	15 June 2020*	-

*Indicative dates, depending the number of submitted proposals the dates could be earlier or later

The deadline for the submission of concept notes is **16 December 2019 (at 23:59 Brussels date and time)**. Once the deadline for the call expires, all incomplete applications within the system that have been saved as draft but not submitted will be rejected.

FULL PROPOSALS

Only applicants invited to submit a full proposal following pre-selection of their concept note can do so using the LIFE4BEST Small Grant Proposal Application Form which can be found on the *Forms and Documents* page of the [LIFE4BEST/BESTRUP portal](#). **Hand-written proposals will not be accepted.**

The elements outlined in the concept note cannot be modified by the lead applicant in the full application. The LIFE4BEST contribution **may not vary** from the initial estimate by **more than 20%**. Applicants must submit their full proposal in the **same language** as their concept note.

Any error related to the points listed in the checklist in the proposal application form or any major inconsistency in the full proposal (e.g. if the amounts in the budget worksheets are inconsistent) may lead to the rejection of the proposal.

Lead applicants must verify that their proposal is complete using the checklist for proposals. Incomplete full proposal may be rejected. Clarifications will only be requested when information provided is unclear and thus prevents the evaluators and LIFE4BEST Secretariat from conducting an objective assessment.

As part of the full proposal the applicants have to complete the Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) questionnaire (see annex 2) **that is compulsory** for enabling the evaluation of the project proposal and will support the environmental and social risk identification and solutions.

WHERE AND HOW TO SEND THE FULL PROPOSALS

The full proposal should be submitted electronically on the [LIFE4BEST/BESTRUP portal](#) using the same account and login and the same process.

DEADLINE

The deadline for the submission of full proposals will be indicated in the letter sent to the lead applicants whose concept notes have been pre-selected. In case of proven technical difficulties, applicants can submit via email to the relevant regional focal point ensuring that the [LIFE4BEST secretariat](#) is copied in the email. The email containing the complete application documents must be received before the deadline for submissions.

In case of difficulties that cannot be solved thanks to the Frequent Asked Questions, available on the [LIFE4BEST/BESTRUP portal](#), questions may be sent by email to the relevant regional focal points **no later than 10 working days before the deadline for the submission of full proposals**, indicating clearly the reference of the call for proposals.

Please note that questions that may be relevant to other applicants, together with answers are published on the [LIFE4BEST/BESTRUP portal](#) along with other important notices.

EVALUATION AND SELECTION

Concept notes and full proposals will be examined and evaluated by the relevant Regional Advisory Committee according to the criteria set out in this document. All concept notes and full proposals will be assessed according to the following steps and criteria:

STEP 1: ADMINISTRATIVE CHECKS

During the administrative check the following will be assessed:

- If the deadline has been met. Otherwise, the concept note will be automatically rejected.
- If the concept note satisfies all the criteria specified in this document. This includes also an assessment of the eligibility of the action. If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the concept note may be rejected on that **sole** basis and the concept note will not be evaluated further.

The eligibility verification will be performed on the basis of the supporting documents submitted with the Due Diligence and Financial Capacity Form.

- The declaration by the lead applicant will be cross-checked with the supporting documents provided by the lead applicant. Any missing supporting document or any incoherence between the declaration by the lead applicant and the supporting documents may lead to the rejection of the application on that sole basis.
- The eligibility of applicants will be verified according to the criteria set out in this document.

The concept notes that pass this check will be evaluated on the relevance and design of the proposed action.

STEP 2: CONCEPT NOTE EVALUATION

Concept notes will be assessed using the evaluation criteria in the evaluation grid below.

Criteria	Maximum Score	Awarded Score	Assessor Comments
Alignment of the project with the objectives of the LIFE4BEST Programme.	5		
Extent to which the project is likely to have tangible positive impacts on biodiversity conservation / sustainable use of natural resources / climate change/ ecosystem services.	10		
Extent to which the project concept will support the implementation of relevant local, territorial, national and regional strategies, the BEST Regional Ecosystem Profile and Investment Strategy.	5		

Criteria	Maximum Score	Awarded Score	Assessor Comments
The feasibility of the proposed approach and the presence of potential risks that could impede implementation.	10		
The extent to which the project identifies all relevant stakeholders and has adequately considered them in the design and implementation.	5		
The likely sustainability of the project concept and the potential for replication.	5		
TOTAL Threshold 25	40		

The concept notes are ranked according to the final score awarded. **The threshold is 25.** Concept notes with a total score below this threshold will not be selected for developing a full proposal.

All applicants will be informed in writing by the [LIFE4BEST secretariat](#) about the results of the evaluation of their concept note (see the following section on Notification of applicants). Only pre-selected lead applicants will subsequently be invited to submit full proposals.

(3) STEP 3: EVALUATION OF FULL PROPOSALS

The following will be assessed:

- If the submission deadline has been met. Otherwise, the application will automatically be rejected.

The full proposals which arrived in time will be further evaluated on their quality, including the proposed budget and capacity of the applicants. They will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria in the evaluation grid below.

Criteria	Maximum Score	Awarded Score	Assessor Comments
1) Technical coherence and understanding (Max 70 points)			
<i>1.1 Project objective and feasibility</i>			
1.1.1 Are the project’s overall objective, purpose and intended results appropriate, achievable and consistent with objective of the LIFE4BEST Programme?	5		
1.1.2 Is the proposed approach well-articulated, realistic and feasible?	10		
<i>1.2 Proposal design and implementation tools</i>			
1.2.1 Does the proposal clearly identify any risks and provide solutions to mitigate/overcome them? <i>This point will be assessed on the basis of the ESMS questionnaire to be added to the application form.</i>	10		

Criteria	Maximum Score	Awarded Score	Assessor Comments
1.2.2 Does the project logical framework contain objectively verifiable indicators for measuring the outcome of the action at the purpose and result levels?	5		
1.2.3 Are the action plan and the timeline for completing the work clear and realistic?	5		
1.3 Partnership and capacity-building			
1.3.1 Have all of the relevant stakeholders been identified and given a proper role in the project implementation?	10		
1.3.2 Does the action support capacity-building, experience sharing, and /or foster local partnerships?	10		
1.4 Demonstration and communication of project's added-value			
1.4.1 Does the proposal demonstrate added value in terms of tangible results on the ground, innovation, potential for sustainability, and stimulation of best-practice in terms of 1) conservation biodiversity and ecosystem services or 2) sustainable use of natural resources and ecosystem services or 3) climate change adaptation, mitigation, green and blue infrastructures?	10		
1.4.2 Does the proposal include dissemination and communication activities? Are the activities appropriate and the target groups clearly identified?	5		
2) Financial coherence and availability (Max 30 points)			
2.1 Is the budget adequate: Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the expected results satisfactory?	15		
2.2 Are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget?	15		
3) Policy coherence (Max 15 points)			
3.1 Is the project relevant to the BEST regional ecosystem profiles and investment strategies?	5		
3.2 Will the project support the implementation of relevant local, territorial, national and local strategies?	5		
3.3 Will the project support a tangible implementation of the EU Strategy for the ORs ?	5		
4) Durability (Max 5 points)			
4.1 Is there a clear approach for ensuring the sustainability of the project activities	5		

Criteria	Maximum Score	Awarded Score	Assessor Comments
beyond the end of the project and promoting replication?			
Bonus Points (Max 5 points)			
Does the action foster regional cooperation and synergies at the regional and/or sub-regional level with other projects including BEST 2.0+ and BIOPAMA AC projects?	5		
TOTAL (threshold 80)	125		

The proposals are ranked according to the final score awarded. **The threshold is 80. Full proposals with a total score below this threshold will not be selected for funding by LIFE4BEST.**

Funding will be awarded to the top ranking proposals in each region according to the total score until the whole budget is used. In case of equal scores, the proposal that matches or complements a similar action involving an Overseas Country and Territory or an African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Country for fostering regional cooperation will be given priority.

Examples of regional cooperation activities:

- Supporting sub-regional approaches based on geographic, institutional and other commonalities, where appropriate;
- Improving coherence and creating synergies between European initiatives in ORs, OCTs and ACP Countries;
- Developing partnership, joint initiatives between stakeholders in ORs, OCTs and neighbouring ACP countries to foster regional cooperation on the ground on shared issues;
- Capacity building aimed at networking, sharing knowledge and experience, strengthening capacity on the ground of stakeholders in ORs, OCTs and neighbouring ACP Countries;

ESMS QUESTIONNAIRE

The LIFE4BEST project proposal forms are based on several elements of the basic project design including environmental and social risks. A dedicated Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) questionnaire is submitted with the full proposal application (see annex 2). The analysis of this questionnaire will support the RAC in the evaluation of the full proposal and more particularly the point of the risks identification and solutions.

The RAC will focus on analysing the information provided by the potential grantee to determine the following aspects related to the environmental and social effects of the project:

- Compliance with LIFE4BEST objectives and IUCN environmental and social safeguard policies⁴
- Potential for the project to cause adverse environmental impacts
- Potential for the project to cause adverse social impacts
- Capacity of the applicant to implement any required safeguard-related measures during the preparation and implementation of the project.

⁴ For more details please visit <https://www.iucn.org/resources/project-management-tools/environmental-and-social-management-system>

At the conclusion of the ESMS questionnaire review, the RAC will identify any environmental and social effects of the project and define any safeguard requirements necessary. Information on the findings of the ESMS analysis will be shared with the Board as part of the evaluation report. The intent of this process is to ensure that the environmental and social safeguard issues are well analysed, prevented or mitigated.

After the evaluation, a table will be drawn up listing the proposals ranked according to their score. The highest scoring proposals will be recommended for funding until the available budget for this call for proposals is used.

NOTIFICATION OF APPLICANTS

Applicants will be informed in writing by the LIFE4BEST Secretariat about the results of the evaluation of their proposal.

The LIFE4BEST Secretariat - through the LIFE4BEST Regional Focal Points – will provide an explanation to all applicants whose concept notes or proposals are unsuccessful as part of its focus on building capacity. Applicants are encouraged to contact the relevant Regional Focal Points or the Secretariat if they have additional questions about the decision. If the applicant is not satisfied with the response, a grievance may be submitted to the LIFE4BEST Coordinator at [LIFE4BEST secretariat](#)

Or by mail to the following address:

*IUCN
LIFE4BEST Programme Secretariat
Attn: LIFE4BEST Coordinator
28, Rue Mauverney
1197 Gland
Switzerland*

THE AWARD DECISION

Following the Board award decision, the beneficiary(ies) will be notified and offered a contract based on the standard grant agreement. By signing the proposal application form the applicants agree, if awarded a grant, to accept the contractual conditions of the standard grant contract.

Recommendations to award a grant are always subject to the condition that the checks preceding the signing of the grant contract do not reveal problems requiring changes to the budget (such as arithmetical errors, inaccuracies, unrealistic costs and ineligible costs). The checks may give rise to requests for clarification and may lead the LIFE4BEST Secretariat to impose modifications or reductions to address such mistakes or inaccuracies. It is not possible to increase the grant amount as a result of these corrections.

Useful links:

Application Forms

All of the application forms can be found on the **Forms and Documents** page of the [LIFE4BEST/BESTRUP portal](#).

Frequent asked Questions (FAQs) can be found too on the [LIFE4BEST/BEST RUP Portal](#).

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Annexes

- Annex 1: Co-applicant Mandate Template
- Annex 2: ESMS Questionnaire
- Annex 3: Guidelines & Checklist for Assessing Action Budgets & Simplified Costs Option
- Annex 4: Exclusion criteria
- Annex 5: Applicant declaration

ANNEX 1: LIFE4BEST CO-APPLICANT MANDATE TEMPLATE

The co-applicant authorises the Applicant <insert the name of the lead applicant organisation> to submit on their behalf the present application form and to sign the standard grant contract with IUCN as well as, to be represented by the Applicant in all matters concerning this grant contract.

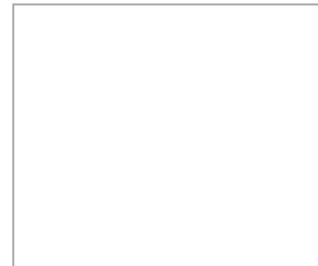
I have read and approved the contents of the proposal submitted to IUCN. I undertake to comply with the principles of good partnership practice.

(Signature)

Name:

Position:

Date:



(Organisation Stamp)

ANNEX 2: LIFE4BEST ESMS QUESTIONNAIRE (TO BE COMPLETED BY THE APPLICANT)

Instructions:

- Please answer all the questions, except when instructed to skip to a question or to the next section.
- When answering a “Yes / No” question, please tick the box.
- When a box is provided for more details, please type your answer in the box. Please give as much detail as you feel is appropriate (you may be asked to provide additional detail if necessary).
- If you have any difficulty answering any questions, please contact your LIFE4BEST Regional Focal Point.

1. Potential Impacts Related to ESMS Standards		
1.1. Involuntary Resettlement and Access Restrictions		
<p>1. Does the project include activities that might restrict peoples’ access to land or natural resources and as such might impact livelihoods?</p> <p><i>Potential activities include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - designating new Protected Areas or enlarging the boundaries of existing ones; - developing Protected Area management plans that include use restrictions; - assessing impact of resource use to as an input for defining changes of management plans - improving enforcement of Protected Area regulations (e.g. training guards, providing monitoring and/or enforcement equipment, providing training/tools for improving management or anti-poaching effectiveness); - constructing physical barriers that prevent people accessing certain places; - changing how specific natural resources are managed – to a management system that is more restrictive on how the resources are used; <p><i>If you answered Yes to Questions 1, please answer the questions in the rows below. If you answered No, please skip to Section B2.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>Reviewer comment</p> <p>Standard Triggered? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <input type="checkbox"/> No / <input type="checkbox"/> TBD</p> <p>Comment: If possible indicate probability (unlikely, likely, almost certain) and magnitude (minor, moderate, major) of the identified impacts.</p> <p>Are further assessments required to better understand the impacts and identify mitigation measures? What specific topics are to be assessed?</p> <p>Have measures for avoiding impacts already been considered? Are they sufficient?</p> <p>Action(s) required:</p>

LIFE4BEST-ORs Guidelines

<p>2. Explain whether assessments have been undertaken to understand potential impacts on the livelihood of local communities.</p> <p><i>Please specify the groups affected by restrictions (including women and ethnic/indigenous groups) and provide details about impacts.</i></p>		
<p>3. If impacts have been identified, have options been considered to avoid restrictions?</p> <p><i>Please explain.</i></p>		
<p>4. If this is not possible, will the project include measures to minimize negative impacts (e.g. access to alternative resources or support to develop alternative livelihood/ income sources)?</p> <p><i>Please describe the measures.</i></p>		
<p>2. Indigenous Peoples</p>		
<p>1. Will the project activities be implemented in an area or territory inhabited by or used by indigenous peoples, tribal peoples, or other traditional peoples?</p> <p><i>Indigenous peoples include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>People who identify themselves as being indigenous;</i> b. <i>Tribal peoples whose social, cultural, and economic conditions distinguish them from other sectors of society, and whose status is regulated by their own customs/traditions, or by special laws/regulations;</i> c. <i>Traditional peoples not necessarily called indigenous or tribal, but who share the same characteristics (see b., above), and whose livelihoods are closely connected to ecosystems and ecosystem goods and services.</i> <p><i>If Yes, go to Question 3. If No, go to Question 2.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>Reviewer comment</p> <p>Standard Triggered? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <input type="checkbox"/> No / <input type="checkbox"/> TBD</p> <p>Comment:</p> <p>If possible indicate probability (unlikely, likely, almost certain) and magnitude (minor, moderate, major) of the identified impacts.</p> <p>Are further assessments required to better understand the impacts and identify mitigation measures? What specific topics are to be assessed?</p> <p>Have measures for avoiding impacts already been considered? Are they sufficient?</p>
<p>2. Even if indigenous peoples are not found at the project site, is there still a risk that the project could affect the rights and livelihoods of indigenous peoples?</p> <p><i>If Yes, go to Question 3. If No, go to Section B3</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>Action(s) required:</p>

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<p>3. Describe the indigenous groups present in the project site, or likely to be affected by the project. <i>Include information on:</i> -their geographic distribution in relation to the project area - their use of (and dependency on) natural resources; - their characteristics that qualify them to be considered indigenous peoples, including how they identify themselves and how they are referred to by the Government (i.e. indigenous peoples, minorities, tribes, etc.).</p>		
<p>4. Have you already consulted with the relevant indigenous peoples to discuss the project and its activities and support a better understanding of potential impacts upon them? <i>Please provide details</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<p>5. Is there a risk that project activities might affect the livelihood of the indigenous peoples/local communities? <i>If Yes, how will you avoid or mitigate these impacts?</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes/ <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<p>3 Cultural Heritage</p>		
<p>1. Will the project be implemented in an area that includes: - important* cultural resources such as burial sites, buildings, or monuments of archaeological, historical, artistic, religious, spiritual, or symbolic value? - any natural features or resources that are of cultural, spiritual, or symbolic significance (such as sacred natural sites, ceremonial areas, or sacred species)? <i>(*as recognized either through an official designation, or through the perception of local communities)</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>Reviewer comment Standard Triggered? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <input type="checkbox"/> No / <input type="checkbox"/> TBD Comment: If possible indicate probability (unlikely, likely, almost certain) and magnitude (minor, moderate, major) of identified impact.</p>
<p>2. Will the project involve development of infrastructure (visitor track, fences etc.), construction of buildings, excavating/moving earth, or other physical changes to the environment that might affect known or unknown (buried) cultural resources? Is there a risk that the project will restrict access to cultural resources or natural features with cultural significance? <i>If yes please provide details and explain how these risks will be managed</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes/ <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>Are further assessments required to better understand the impacts and identify mitigation measures? What specific topics are to be assessed? Have measures for avoiding impacts already been considered? Are they sufficient? Action(s) required:</p>

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<p>3. Will the project promote the use of (or the development of economic benefits from) cultural resources or features? <i>Relevant activities might include: promoting traditional medicinal knowledge; promoting sacred or traditional techniques for processing plants, fibres, or metals; promoting traditional arts, music, etc.</i></p> <p><i>If Yes, please provide details and describe how equal sharing of benefits will be ensured</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<p>4. Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use of Natural Resources</p>		
<p>1. If the project will develop infrastructure for Protected Area management or visitor use or promote ecotourism, is there a risk of negative impacts on biodiversity (for example on threatened species) due to waste disposal, disturbance, noise etc? <i>If Yes please provide details and explain how these risks will be managed.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>Reviewer comment Standard Triggered? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <input type="checkbox"/> No / <input type="checkbox"/> TBD</p> <p>Comment: If possible indicate probability (unlikely, likely, almost certain) and magnitude (minor, moderate, major) of identified impacts.</p> <p>Are further assessments required to better understand the impacts and identify mitigation measures? What specific topics are to be assessed?</p> <p>Have measures for avoiding impacts already been considered? Are they sufficient?</p> <p>Action(s) required:</p>
<p>2. Will the project include the introduction of non-native species or the production of living natural resources (e.g. agriculture, aquaculture etc.) where non-native species might be introduced by accident? <i>If Yes, please explain how you will manage the risk of non-native species developing invasive behaviour.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<p>3. Does the project promote the use of resources from natural habitats (such as timber or non-timber forest products) within the project area? Or will the project procure natural resource commodities (e.g. timber for watch tower construction) that might affect areas of high biodiversity value outside the project area? <i>If Yes, please explain how you will ensure that harvest rates are controlled/monitored to ensure that the use is sustainable.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<p>4. Does the project expect to use pesticides, fungicides, herbicides or biological pest management techniques? <i>If Yes, please provide details, including whether alternatives have been considered, and how risks of adversely affecting biodiversity and human health are avoided.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<p>Other negative Social Impacts</p>		

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<p>1. Will the project influence land tenure arrangements or community-based property rights to land or resources and is there a risk that this might adversely affect peoples' rights and livelihoods? Consider in particular impacts on transhumant pastoralist, vulnerable groups, different gender etc.?</p> <p>- <i>If Yes please provide details and explain how these risks will be managed</i></p> <p>-</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>Reviewer comment</p> <p>Standard Triggered? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <input type="checkbox"/> No / <input type="checkbox"/> TBD</p> <p>Comment:</p> <p>If possible indicate probability (unlikely, likely, almost certain) and magnitude (minor, moderate, major) of identified impacts.</p>
<p>2. Is there a risk that the project could have impacts on people, that are inequitable or discriminatory (i.e. through unjustified preferential treatment of certain groups or by negatively affecting certain parts of society more than others)?</p> <p>- <i>Consider people living in poverty, marginalized/excluded individuals and groups. Explain how you avoid that privileged groups may capture benefits unfairly.</i></p> <p>- <i>If Yes please provide details and explain how these risks will be managed</i></p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>Are further assessments required to better understand the impacts and identify mitigation measures? What specific topics are to be assessed?</p> <p>Have measures for avoiding impacts already been considered? Are they sufficient?</p>
<p>3. Is there a risk that the project could create (or worsen) conflicts between communities, groups, or individuals?</p> <p>- <i>If Yes please provide details and explain how these risks will be managed</i></p> <p>-</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>Action(s) required:</p>
<p>4. Is there a risk that the project could create (or worsen) inequalities between women and men, or negatively impact the situation or livelihoods of women or girls, including through gender-based violence?</p> <p>- <i>If Yes please provide details and explain how the project will avoid such risks, including gender-based violence.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<p>5. Is there a risk that the project might negatively affect a community's health and safety?</p> <p>- <i>Consider risks of spreading diseases, human-wildlife conflict, exposure to hazardous substances, provision of equipment/machinery without appropriate safety instructions or accidental hazards caused by structural elements built by the project (eg. new infrastructure or buildings such as watch towers, canals, water reservoirs). If Yes please provide details and explain how these risks will be managed</i></p> <p>-</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <input type="checkbox"/> No	

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<p>6. Is the project (or project partners) engaging or working with law enforcement personnel including collaboration with government forest guards, Protected Area rangers and community rangers)?</p> <p><i>If Yes please explain how the project will ensure that potential safety risk for communities and/or individuals (in particular women) are avoided? Consider impacts from inappropriate use of force or weapons, including physical confrontation, torturing, threatening, abuse of power, sexual harassment or violence against women.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>-</p>
<p>- D. Climate change</p>		
<p>1. Is the project site prone to any specific climate-related hazards (floods, droughts, landslides, etc.)? <i>If Yes please provide details</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>Reviewer comment Is there any risk identified? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <input type="checkbox"/> No / <input type="checkbox"/> TBD</p> <p>Comment:</p>
<p>2. Is there a risk that climate variability, temperature increases or climate hazards might affect the effectiveness of project activities? <i>If Yes please provide details and explain how these risks will be managed</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>If possible indicate probability (unlikely, likely, almost certain) and magnitude (minor, moderate, major) of identified impacts.</p>
<p>3. Is there a risk that project activities could increase the vulnerability of local communities or of the local ecosystem to climate variability, temperature increases or climate hazards? <i>If Yes please provide details and explain how these risks will be managed</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>Are further assessments required to better understand the impacts and identify mitigation measures? What specific topics are to be assessed?</p> <p>Have measures for avoiding impacts already been considered? Are they sufficient?</p> <p>Action(s) required:</p>

ESMS summary Report (to be completed by the LIFE4BEST Regional Focal Points on the basis of the ESMS questionnaire)		
Risk category:	<input type="checkbox"/> low risk <input type="checkbox"/> moderate risk <input type="checkbox"/> high risk	
Rationale: Summarize findings from the questionnaire and explain the rationale of risk categorization		
Required assessments or tools	<input type="checkbox"/> Targeted Environmental or Social Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	
ESMS Standards	Trigger	Required tools or plans
Involuntary Resettlement and Access Restrictions	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/> TBD	<input type="checkbox"/> Resettlement Action Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Resettlement Policy Framework <input type="checkbox"/> Action Plan to Mitigate Impacts from Access Restriction <input type="checkbox"/> Access Restrictions Mitigation Process Framework
Indigenous Peoples	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/> TBD	<input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous Peoples Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous Peoples Process Framework
Cultural Heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/> TBD	<input type="checkbox"/> Chance Find Procedures
Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use Natural Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/> TBD	<input type="checkbox"/> Pest Management Plan

ANNEX 3: GUIDELINES & CHECKLIST FOR APPLICANTS ON THE USE OF SIMPLIFIED COSTS OPTION

	How to complete the justification sheet?	What supporting documents are required at the proposal stage?	What supporting documents are required for financial reporting?
Personnel Costs UNIT COSTS	1. Quantitative:	1. Actual:	Auditors will not check supporting documents to verify the actual costs incurred but they will verify the correct application of the method and formula for the calculation of the cost based on related inputs and relevant quantitative and qualitative information – outputs and the number of units.
	<i>Number of staff to be employed.</i> <i>Part-time (% of full-time equivalent) or full-time.</i> <i>Time period of employment in the project (weeks, months, years)</i>	<i>(a) Description of assumptions / principles to quantify staff costs and to define time periods.</i> <i>(b) Current, ongoing employment contracts of the beneficiary</i> <i>Salary and payroll data</i> <i>Official pay scales (ministry, sector, large NGOs)</i> <i>(c) Pay slips</i> <i>(d) Social charges description – breakdown</i> <i>If the position does not exist at the time of the proposal submission):</i>	1. Employment contract 2. Pay slips (several over the reporting period). 3. Time-sheets - mandatory

		<i>same as above for similar positions</i>	
	2. Qualitative:	2. Historical (optional):	
	<i>Detailed description of profiles / qualifications: requirements for staff to perform project tasks</i>	<i>2. Historical - optional: examples from previously implemented projects</i>	For Public Entities: Declaration on honour Salary costs of the personnel of national administrations are related to the cost of activities which the relevant public authority would not carry out if the Project were not undertaken
	3. Calculation:	3. Calculation:	3. Calculation:
	<i>number of units x unit value = total costs</i>	<i>number of units x unit value = total costs</i>	<i>number of units x unit value = total costs</i>
Use of own vehicles UNIT COSTS	1. Quantitative:	1. Actual:	
	<i>(a) justification of the number of units (km) budgeted (b) justification of the rate euro/km</i>	<i>- institutional rates proof (policy, schedule, etc) - official rates proof (reference to the publication in official sources)</i>	1. Log book or another tracking tool evidence of the number of units covered 2. Outputs - Proof of travel related to project work
	2. Qualitative:	2. Historical (optional):	
	<i>description of the need for use of own cars; description of the calculation</i>	<i>examples from past projects</i>	
	3. Calculation:	3. Calculation:	

	<i>number of units x unit value = total costs</i>	<i>number of units x unit value = total costs</i>	
Per diems UNIT COSTS	1. Quantitative:	1. Actual:	
	<i>(a) justification of the number of per diems the calculation must be based on plausible, realistic numbers of per diems budgeted for the project</i>	<i>(a) Beneficiary internal policies and rules (HR / management memo's, guidelines) (b) Government / tax / employment office communications (internet, brochures..)</i>	1. Internal policies/rules/officially published scales. 2. Outputs - Evidence of the project events/activities: agenda, materials, signed participants list.
	2. Qualitative:	2. Historical (optional):	
	<i>(a) per diems are based on internal policies and rules (b) per diems are based on official, generally applicable rules and regulations</i>	<i>examples from past projects</i>	Per diem unit cost in a specific country cannot exceed the EU rates.
	3. Calculation:	3. Calculation:	3. Calculation:
	<i>number of units x unit value = total costs</i>	<i>number of units x unit value = total costs</i>	<i>number of units x unit value = total costs</i>
Office costs UNIT COSTS	1. Quantitative:	1. Actual:	
	<i>(a) time period for which office costs will be incurred (b) number of items where applicable (e.g. consumables), measures (m2 for rental costs) (c) allocation key demonstrating the apportionment of costs to the project.</i>	<i>(a) rental contract (b) invoices for utilities (c) invoices for supplies If a new office is established, benchmark against rental prices per m2 (country, city) on the internet or obtained from real estate agencies</i>	1. Invoices for rental, utilities, supplies - sample. 2. Confirmation of allocation key.

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	2. Qualitative:	2. Historical (optional):	
	<i>(a) describe type of office and related costs necessary for the project;</i> <i>(b) describe tasks: managerial, financial, administrative, operational, technical, support to be performed inside / outside the office</i>	<i>Idem as above.</i>	
	3. Calculation:	3. Calculation:	3. Calculation:
	<i>number of units x unit value = total costs</i>	<i>number of units x unit value = total costs</i>	<i>number of units x unit value = total costs</i>

This checklist is not comprehensive and the specific circumstances and context of the project should be taken into account on a case-by-case basis.

ANNEX 4: EXCLUSION CRITERIA

An organisation will be excluded from participation in LIFE4BEST grant procedures if:

a) it is bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding-up procedures, where its assets are being administered by a liquidator or by a court, where it is in an arrangement with creditors, where its business activities are suspended, or where it is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for under national laws or regulations;

b) it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the economic operator is in breach of its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions in accordance with the applicable law;

c) it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the economic operator is guilty of grave professional misconduct by having violated applicable laws or regulations or ethical standards of the profession to which the economic operator belongs, or by having engaged in any wrongful conduct which has an impact on its professional credibility where such conduct denotes a wrongful intent or gross negligence, including, in particular, any of the following:

i) fraudulently or negligently misrepresenting information required for the verification of the absence of grounds for exclusion or the fulfilment of selection criteria or in the performance of a contract;

ii) entering into agreement with other economic operators with the aim of distorting competition;

iii) violating intellectual property rights;

iv) attempting to influence the decision-making process of the contracting authority during the procurement procedure;

v) attempting to obtain confidential information that may confer upon it undue advantages in the procurement procedure;

d) it has been established by a final judgment that the economic operator is guilty of any of the following:

i) fraud, within the meaning of Article 3 of Directive (EU) 2017/1371 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2017 on the fight against fraud to the Union's financial interests by means of criminal law⁷² and Article 1 of the Convention on the protection of the European Communities' financial interests drawn up by the Council Act of 26 July 1995⁷³;

ii) corruption, as defined in Article 4(2) of Directive (EU) 2017/1371 and Article 3 of the Convention on the fight against corruption involving officials of the European Communities or officials of Member States of the European Union, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 May 1997⁷⁴, and in Article 2(1) of Council Framework Decision 2003/568/JHA of 22 July 2003 on combating corruption in the private sector⁷⁵, as well as corruption as defined in the law of the country where the contracting authority is located, the country in which the economic operator is established or the country of the performance of the contract;

iii) conduct related to a criminal organisation referred to in Article 2 of Council Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA of 24 October 2008 on the fight against organised crime⁷⁶;

iv) money laundering or terrorist financing within the meaning of Article 1(3), (4) and (5) of Directive (EU) 2015/849 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2015 on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purposes of money laundering or terrorist financing, amending Regulation (EU) No 648/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Directive 2005/60/EC of the European

Parliament and of the Council and Commission Directive 2006/70/EC (Text with EEA relevance) of the European Parliament and of the Council⁷⁷;

v) terrorist-related offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, as defined in Articles 1 and 3 of Council Framework Decision of 13 June 2002 on combating terrorism⁷⁸, respectively, or inciting or aiding or abetting or attempting to commit such offences, as referred to in Article 4 of that Framework Decision;

vi) child labour or other forms of trafficking in human beings as defined in Article 2 of Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA⁷⁹;

e) the economic operator has shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations in the performance of a contract financed by the EU, which has led to the early termination of a legal commitment or to the application of liquidated damages or other contractual penalties or which has been discovered following checks and audits or investigations by an authorising officer, OLAF or the Court of Auditors;

f) it has been established by a final judgment or final administrative decision that the economic operator has committed an irregularity within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95 of 18 December 1995 on the protection of the European Communities financial interests⁸⁰.

g) it has been established by a final judgment or final administrative decision that the person or entity has created an entity under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or any other legal obligations of mandatory application in the jurisdiction of its registered office, central administration or principal place of business.

h) it has been established by a final judgment or final administrative decision that an entity has been created with the intent provided for in point (g).

Point a) does not apply to the purchase of supplies on particularly advantageous terms from either a supplier that is definitively winding up its business activities or from liquidators of an insolvency procedure, an arrangement with creditors, or a similar procedure under EU or national law.

In cases referred to in points c), d), f), g) and h) in the absence of a final judgment or a final administrative decision, or in the case referred to in point e), the contracting authority must exclude an economic operator on the basis of a preliminary classification in law having regard to established facts or other findings contained in the recommendation of the EDES panel. The EDES panel ensures a centralised assessment of those situations after giving the economic operator the opportunity to submit its observations. In indirect management, where applicable according to the correspondent financing or contribution agreement, the contracting authority will transmit the information to the Commission and the Commission may refer the case to the EDES panel.

With reference to taxation avoidance and money laundering, the following exclusion criteria apply:

- 1) breach of obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions in accordance with the applicable law (point (b) above);
- 2) involvement in money laundering or terrorism financing as defined in Directive (EU) 2015/849 (point (d)(iv) above);
- 3) creation of an entity to circumvent tax, social or other legal obligations (empty shell company) (points (g) and (h) above).

For the first case (breach of obligations relating to taxes or social security), a final judgement or final administrative decision is required in order to exclude an entity. For the second (involvement in money

laundrying or terrorism financing) and the third case (creation of an entity to circumvent tax, social or other legal obligations), the authorising officer can bring the case before the EDES panel (see Section [2.6.10.1.](#)) at any moment of the implementation of EU funds, on the basis of established facts and findings brought to its attention.

Applicants are obliged to declare that they are not in one of the exclusion grounds mentioned above through a signed declaration on honour (see annex 5).

ANNEX 5: LIFE4BEST APPLICANT DECLARATION

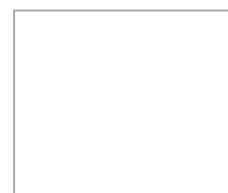
The applicant, represented by the undersigned, being the authorised signatory of the applicant, in the context of the present call for proposals, hereby declares that:

- the applicant has sufficient financial capacity to carry out the proposed action or work programme;
- the applicant certifies the legal statutes of the applicant as reported in the application;
- the applicant has the professional competences and qualifications specified in the LIFE4BEST Guidelines for Applicants;
- the applicant undertakes to comply with the principles of good partnership practice;
- the applicant is directly responsible for the preparation, management and implementation of the project and is not acting as an intermediary;
- The applicant is not in any of the situations, which are listed below excluding them from participating in contracts. Furthermore, it is recognised and accepted that if the applicant participates in spite of being in any of these situations, they may be excluded from other contracts:
 - they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
 - they, or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them, have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment of a competent authority of the country of the contracting authority, of the country in which they are established and of the country where the contract is to be performed, which has the force of res judicata (i.e. against which no appeal is possible);
 - they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify, including by decisions of international organisations;
 - they are not in compliance with their obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;
 - they, or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them, have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation, money laundering or any other illegal activity;
- the applicant is eligible in accordance with the criteria set out in the LIFE4BEST Guidelines for Applicants;
- if recommended to be awarded a grant, the applicant accepts all the contractual conditions as laid down in the Standard Contract.
- the applicant is aware that, for the purposes of safeguarding the financial interests of the EU, their personal data may be transferred to internal audit services, to the European Court of Auditors, to the Financial Irregularities Panel or to the European Anti-Fraud Office. The applicant is fully aware of the obligation to inform immediately the LIFE4BEST Secretariat to which this application is submitted if the same application for funding made to other sources has been approved by them after the submission of this grant application.

Name:

Function:

Date and signature : _____



(Organisation Stamp)