LIFE concept notes – guidance for filling in the template

Filling in a concept note is the first stage in writing a LIFE application. It is a short summary document to help frame the context of your project. It is designed to help to focus your thinking but to also help us evaluate the eligibility of your proposal or point you towards a more suitable funding programme. You can also use this to share with potential partners and to support other pieces of work such as compiling an internal business case etc

Before filling in the form it is essential that you read the:
- LIFE Multi-Annual Work Programme for 2014-2017, and
- 2016 LIFE Guidelines for Applicants.

The Commission wants innovative projects, so check the funding programme's compendia to make sure that 'your' project has not been funded before. The LIFE project database can be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm.

Remember, your concept note should:
- Be as quantifiable and specific as possible,
- Demonstrate you understand your project's baseline, i.e. the extent of the environmental problem you are addressing and the European and UK context
- Help you identify partners depending on the desired outcomes, scope, cost and duration of the project.

Concept note
Project name
➢ This should include the key elements and objective of the project and needs to have LIFE in the title.

Multi Annual Work Programme
➢ Please paste in the priority area and project topic that this project will address from the Multi Annual Work Programme.
➢ Please note the environment '2016 Guidelines for Applicants' states there should be a **maximum of two project topics** selected as otherwise the Commission feels the project risks being unfocused. These topics need to fall within the same priority area, i.e. it cannot be Environment and Resource Efficiency and Environmental Governance and Information. Select carefully as your project will need to satisfy all the elements defined in the project topics; you will not lose points for selecting one topic but you will for not meeting the all the elements of the selected topic.

Environmental problem
➢ What is the environmental problem you are trying to address? You need to be able to describe your environmental problem within two sentences – if not then it is too complicated to be solved by a €5 million project. What is the context of the project?
➢ What is the current state of play?
➢ What is your project hoping to achieve? Please note that your project must address a problem that spans the European area.
➢ What is the environmental baseline that indicates the extent of the problem which you wish to tackle? LIFE, like other EU funds, is increasingly results driven. Without knowing the baseline how can you show that your project is addressing the problem and achieving improvements?

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1

Project purpose
- ➢ What is the desired end state by the end of the project? This needs to be achievable and realistic.

Project Objectives
- ➢ These need to be realistic, achievable within the lifespan of the project and provide value for money.
- ➢ Remember that EU added value, sustainability, replicability and transferability all need to be considered within the scope of your project and that a strategy will need to be in place for these elements.
- ➢ Do not forget the socio-economic aspects of your project – how will your project help the local area; what figures are available to support your statements?

Expected results
- ➢ Expected results should not be the project objectives, but they should be the *outputs* and quantified *achievements* allowing the project to reach its objectives.
- ➢ These must be concrete, realistic and quantified as far as possible.

Causes of the problem
- ➢ You need to get to the root of the problem and identify the underlying causes of the situation you currently face. The environmental problem, your proposed actions ad solutions need to be causally linked. We recommend that you create a problem tree using the Logical Framework to identify the root of the problem and its underlying causes.
- ➢ Please list the causes in decreasing order of importance
- ➢ Please note that 'lack of' something does not cause an environmental problem. For example; lack of resources – the actual problem could be the area is not considered a priority for X organisation, staffing in a specific area have not received sufficient training, etc.

Activities
- ➢ What actions/means will be utilised to counteract the cause and achieve the impact and objective? Convert your problem tree into an objective tree to make sure you are addressing each element of the problem.
- ➢ You will need to ensure there are logical links between the cause, activity and result.

Results
- ➢ What is the outcome of addressing each cause of the problem?
- ➢ Please quantify any improvement to help determine value for money.
- ➢ You will need to start to think about how you will verify these improvements, ie what indicators you will use.

Environmental policy/ legislation
- ➢ Please include all relevant EU environmental policy links and all national/regional policy links
- ➢ A key element to any EU funded project is to show how your project will contribute not only to EU environmental policy but also other EU objectives such as economic and social objectives, e.g. Europe 2020.

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2

EU Context: what is the scale of the problem across the EU?
➢ Your project will need to clearly state why action needs to be taken on the EU scale. Therefore, you need to know the scale of the problem at your site, region on nationally but also across the EU.

Trans-national partners
➢ Projects do not need to have a transnational partner but you need to demonstrate how you will disseminate the project results across the EU through pre-identified networks and events.
➢ It is important to note the meaning of "transnational" only covers cooperation among Member States and third countries participating in the LIFE Programme specified under Article 5 of the LIFE Regulation. Activities outside the Union or in overseas countries and territories, while possible as foreseen under Article 6 of the LIFE Regulation, will not entail additional points during the evaluation phase. For further information please contact the UK LIFE NCP team.

AfterLIFE/ Sustainability
➢ The Commission want to see long-term results from their investment and you will need to demonstrate a clear strategy for the long term continuation of the project results – including which actions will be continued by whom and how this will be financed.

Participants
➢ **Coordinating Beneficiary**: the project lead and responsible for implementing the project. They will be the single point of contact with the Commission/ monitoring body. Receives the EU financial contribution and distributes this to partners as specified in the Partnership Agreement. They are financially responsible for the project and must financially contribute to the project. They must be a legal entity registered in the EU. Sole traders are not eligible to participate as a beneficiary.
➢ **Associated Beneficiary**: a project partner who must be responsible for implementing at least one action. They have to financially contribute to the project and be a legal entity but can be registered outside of the EU. Sole traders are not considered eligible to participate as a beneficiary.
➢ **Co-financer**: only contributes to the project with financial resources and has no technical responsibilities for delivery. Co-financers cannot benefit from the EU financial contribution and they cannot act as sub-contractors. These can be listed as 'to be confirmed' within the application but need to be in place before the Grant Agreement is signed. Examples include: water and utility companies & insurers.

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3