Updated on 27/02/2025. New text written in red.

BESTLIFE2030: Call for proposals 2025 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Questions related to the call

Applicants are invited to first refer to the Guidelines and related documents published on the BESTLIFE2030 website. In case of remaining questions, a list of frequently asked questions – and answers – classified by themes can be found below. Requests for additional clarifications regarding concept notes and full proposals, which are likely to be relevant to all applicants, will be added in this document periodically.

Eligibility (applicant profile, activities, overall project design)
Question 1: Can I apply if I already benefited from a previous BEST/BESTLIFE grant? Can a new project continue activities previously financed by BEST/BESTLIFE?
Answer: You can apply again as a former BEST/BESTLIFE beneficiary provided you still meet the eligibility criteria set in the Guidelines for applicants. A new project can continue activities previously financed by BEST/BESTLIFE but cannot duplicate them (implement the same activities in the same place).
Question 2: Is there a maximum number of co-applicants?
Answer: No, there is no maximum threshold. However, please bear in mind the feasibility of your project and its coordination. Numerous co-applicants could add an administrative layer and complexity to the management of your project.
Question 3: Are universities eligible to apply?
Answer: Universities are eligible on a case-by-case basis. It is necessary to verify their legal status and meet the “special conditions for research organisations” as defined in the Guidelines for applicants.
Question 4: Can cross-boundary work also involve collaboration with countries outside Outermost Regions (ORs) / Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs)?
Answer: Financing of entities from third countries is only possible under exceptional and limited circumstances. Each case will be examined individually, but the application must show beyond a doubt that the involvement of the third country entity is essential to the project to reach its expected impact in ORs / OCTs. However, an entity from third countries can never be coordinating beneficiary.
Question 5: What does duplication of work mean?
Answer: Duplication means doing the same action(s) in the same place. The same action(s) can be done elsewhere, or new actions can be implemented at a location where another project was completed / is ongoing.
Question 6: Can I submit my proposal with a “to be confirmed” co-financer contribution?
Answer: In case you have a co-financier contribution, upload the related signed declaration in the “Additional documents” section of the portal. Please indicate either "Confirmed" or "To be confirmed". If the status is "to be confirmed", this must be explained. Note that, at a later stage, if successful in the selection process, you will be required to provide a signed declaration with "confirmed" status as a pre-condition to sign the Grant Agreement.

Question 7: Is there a recommendation for the number of milestones or deliverables?

Answer: The same recommendation applies to both milestones and deliverables – they have to be relevant and to the point, and the number depends on the needs and scope of the project. Please use your own discretion in this regard.

Question 8: Can we receive funding from other EU programmes in addition to BESTLIFE2030?

Answer: LIFE programme funding (which includes BESTLIFE2030) must not overlap with funding from other EU programmes. Applicants must inform the BESTLIFE2030 consortium in their project proposal about any related funding that they have received from the EU budget, as well as any ongoing applications for funding from the EU budget. They must also check that they are not receiving ongoing operating grants from LIFE (or other EU programmes) that could lead to double financing.

The European Commission has noticed that an increasing number of similar or same proposals are submitted to various programmes and carries out systematic checks and cross-checks. Failure to declare that the same or a similar proposal has been submitted to another programme (or worse, already even been partly financed) has serious consequences.

Question 9: Does BESTLIFE2030 fund research in any way?

Answer: Horizon Europe is the instrument specifically targeting research. Research is not the main focus of the LIFE Programme (and implicitly of BESTLIFE2030) and should not be the main focus of your project. However, limited research aimed to improve and enhance the knowledge data underpinning the project may be carried out. Research must be strictly limited and intrinsically related to the project's objectives and the applicant shall explain in detail how the proper implementation of the project relies on these research activities, showing that the existing scientific basis is insufficient, and how the additional knowledge will be used to implement the project actions. In such a case, scientific publications are considered important deliverables of the project.

Question 10: Can the BESTLIFE2030 grant be used to fund less than 95% of a project? (Can the grant fund, for instance, a specific work package of a larger project?)

Answer: Yes, as long as the expected outcomes are consistent with the BESTLIFE2030 programme's rules and objectives, and if there is no double funding.

Question 11: Can a Belgian company apply alone?

Answer: An organisation based in an EU member country can be a co-applicant. It must therefore partner with a structure located in the OR/PTOM which would submit the

proposal as the main applicant.	

<u>Question 12</u>: Is an association with less than one year of activity eligible?
<u>Answer</u>: Yes, it is eligible, there is no seniority criterion. However, the financial risk will be considered high.
<u>Question 13</u>: Are national research institutions eligible for the BESTLIFE2030 programme?
<u>Answer</u>: National research institutes are not eligible as main applicant. However, they are eligible as co-applicant. Furthermore, local research institutes are eligible as both lead applicant and co- applicant. Fundamental research is ineligible for BESTLIFE2030. “Direct concrete actions on the ground” must be the focus of all proposals. Thus, projects proposing a mix of action on the ground and research are eligible.
<u>Question 14:</u> Is a SCIC ("Société Coopérative d'Intérêt Collectif") eligible? Is an economic interest group ("GIE") eligible? Similarly, are mixed economy companies ("SEM") eligible?
<u>Answer:</u> It is necessary to verify the statutes of each organization of this type that wishes to submit a project.
<u>Question 15:</u> Can a parents' association apply to rehabilitate the garden?
<u>Answer:</u> It will depend on the status of the association. Associations under the 1901 law are eligible. <u>The proposed action must align with the objectives of BESTLIFE2030</u> (a concrete field action with a tangible and measurable impact on biodiversity).
<u>Question 16:</u> Are agricultural businesses eligible?
<u>Response:</u> An individual farmer is not eligible. However, corporate farming structures (GAEC, EARL, SCEA) are eligible.
<u>Question 17</u>: Is a branch of a large group eligible according to the European nomenclature?
<u>Answer</u>: If an organisation (company, institution, association) has offices/branches in several regions, these offices/branches must be legally and fiscally registered in these regions in order to be able to apply independently of each other in the different regions.

<u>Additional note:</u> The due diligence analysis is an objective procedure meant to evaluate financial risk of the applicant (low, medium or high) based on the documents provided during the concept note application process. In case of high risk, mitigation measures such as heightened reporting, closer monitoring, etc. will be decided if the application is eventually selected for funding.

However, this procedure does not affect or influence an organisation's eligibility. Eligibility criteria are listed in Art. 2 of the guidelines for applicants.

Eligibility (activities)
<u>Question 18</u>: Is the development of a strategic document eligible? In other words, is data acquisition (to then implement field actions) eligible?
<u>Answer</u>: This action alone is not eligible without concrete conservation actions during the duration of the project.
<u>Question 19</u>: Concerning the impacts on the ground, should the impacts be visible during the duration of the project? (18 to 36 months)
<u>Answer</u>: When setting up the project, it will be necessary to identify indicators which will make it possible to evaluate the actions carried out on the ground. These indicators will necessarily be measurable during the duration of the project.
<u>Question 20</u>: How can research themes be included in the projects submitted to BESTLIFE2030?
<u>Answer</u>: Conservation stakeholders can contact research organisations with the required expertise in the event that a research component is necessary to carry out the project and vice versa. It is also possible to go through the BESTLIFE2030 regional hub who will try to identify an appropriate structure in the network of local stakeholders if the structure wishing to submit a project does not know of one. It is important to note that research activities cannot constitute the main action of the project. Research must necessarily support operational actions on the ground.
<u>Question 21</u>: For a research project, eligible actions must be integrated into the project or can they be implemented afterwards?
<u>Answer</u>: They must be integrated into the project during its lifetime.
<u>Question 22</u>: Will it be possible to hire consultants to write the complete proposal?
<u>Answer</u>: The project will not be able to finance actions carried out before the signing of the grant agreement. However, the regional hubs are there to provide support.
<u>Question 23</u>: Training and awareness-raising actions are not considered concrete actions?
<u>Answer</u>: No, they must be accompanied by concrete actions targeting a habitat or species.
<u>Question 24</u>: Is an old project already financed by BEST/BESTLIFE eligible with a change

of scale?

Answer: Yes, the new project can build on the results of the old one and deploy the feedback acquired on other sites. However, an exact replica of a former BEST/BESTLIFE project is not eligible.

In order to ensure complementarity with previous projects funded by BEST and to avoid duplication of activities, applicants are invited to consult the corresponding sections of the BESTLIFE2030, LIFE4BEST and BEST2.0+ websites.

Question 25: Can we submit two similar projects for several different calls for projects? If we are selected for both, must we necessarily abandon one of them?

Answer: You can submit similar projects for two calls for projects to increase your chances. On the other hand, you will have to choose one of the financing options. Identical actions cannot be financed twice.

Question 26: Is it possible to submit a project that concerns both an overseas territory and a non- EU territory?

Answer: The action must take place in an eligible territory, i.e. a European overseas territory. It is, however, possible to involve a non-European organisation in carrying out the project if this is essential to guarantee the expected conservation impacts on the eligible territory.

Question 27: Can proposals be a continuation of an already existing project or must they only concern new actions?

Answer: In this case, it is preferable to divide the project into several phases to request financing for only one of these phases. Projects already started are not eligible. Expenditure becomes eligible from the signing of the grant agreement by all stakeholders (a priori January 2026 for successful proposals of the 2nd call).

Question 28: Are biodiversity inventories, which are part of the actions listed as eligible on the slideshow, considered as data acquisition or as concrete action on the ground?

Answer: Biodiversity inventories are more about the acquisition of knowledge and must therefore be accompanied by more concrete action which makes it possible to obtain "measurable" and "tangible" results (EU terms). Similarly, all actions listed in the guidelines are eligible as long as they are backed by concrete conservation actions. Example: carry out an inventory which will be used at the same time as the project to deploy action to protect the species concerned by the inventory.

Question 29: Can the inventory of biodiversity in a private space be eligible?

Answer: Yes, if it is accompanied by concrete actions. The private space (e.g. private protected areas) is eligible, but it is necessary to show how the sustainability of the action will be ensured with the owner through a lease or agreement.

Question 30: Are small structures wishing to submit a project in a limited territory (a municipality) eligible?

Answer: Yes, as long as the municipality is located in an OR/OCT.

Question 31: Can an ecotourism project on a protected island (home to protected fauna and flora) involving human activities (bivouacs, agriculture, etc.) and that aims to implement protection and development measures (sorting bins, trails, etc.) fit into the criteria of a BEST project?

Answer: Projects can have a broad scope, while necessarily proposing the implementation of concrete actions with at least one key objective linked to the conservation of a habitat, a species or the fight against IAS that it is possible to measure. Example: number of individuals of a threatened species in a better state of conservation, removal of IAS on a given area of a problematic habitat, etc.

Question 32: Are the calls for proposals open to projects carried out between 2 ORs or 2 regions?

Answer: Yes, regional cooperation is possible. The project must be carried out in 2 ORs or OCTs. For example, a project carried out in Saint-Martin and Sint-Marteen.

Question 33: Can a project which aims to improve knowledge on the distribution/detection of invasive alien species, with the development of early detection tools, be eligible if no management/fighting action is taken behind it? Knowing that this development of detection tools is intended to be transmitted to local stakeholders.

Answer: A project relating solely to the acquisition of knowledge is ineligible. In this case, this acquisition of knowledge must indeed be followed by management/fight against IAS actions on the ground.

Question 34: Is a project focused on pressure reduction eligible?

Answer: Yes.

Costs and budget

Question 35: How should the budget be presented if the project involves co-applicants?

Answer: Pre-selected applications will need to present separately the costs of each organisation involved through different budget lines at the full proposal stage.

Question 36: How to design the budget? Is it necessary to request the maximum amount allowed?

Answer: The total amount of the grant must be spent during the implementation period of the project. The amount should be consistent with the proposed activities and workplan. It is important to be realistic as to what can be achieved and spent during the project. It is therefore not necessary to request the maximum amount allowed, although this is encouraged.

Question 37: Is there a maximum amount allowed on subcontracting?

Answer: Yes – 30% (exceptionally it could be exceeded, but only if well justified, in cases where the necessary skills are not available to carry out all the activities).

Question 38: What are the procurement rules applicable?

Answer: The procurement policy and procedures applicable to BESTLIFE2030 beneficiaries are defined in the grant agreements signed by recipients. They may vary depending on the value of the contracts, are applicable to all goods and services procured, and must be respected in all cases.

Question 39: Are the costs incurred during the preparation of the proposal eligible?

Answer: No, only the costs incurred during the implementation of the project are eligible costs.

Question 40: How to include import taxes?

Answer: Import taxes are considered as part of the cost of purchasing items and thus should be included within the cost budgeted for the item itself; they should not be included as separate lines in the budget.

Question 41: Do I have to provide quotes as supporting documents (e.g. for equipment) when defining my budget?

Answer: Supporting documents are required at the full proposal stage only if you choose to use a simplified costs option (SCO). We strongly encourage applicants to opt for this option if possible. The use of SCO is explained in the guidelines for applicants. SCO is allowed for staff costs, km, and per diems.

Question 42: What is the grant payment schedule? Are advanced payments made? What about the amount allocated to the co-applicant?
Answer: All payments are made to the account of the main applicant who is then responsible for the transfer(s) to the co-applicant(s). The grant will be paid in several instalments: a pre-financing at the beginning of the project; interim payments which are subject to the validation of periodic reports; and a final payment of the remaining balance (minimum 10%) after approval of the final report.
Question 43: Can the OFB, the State, or local authorities co-finance a BEST grant?
Answer: The State or local authorities can co-finance. However, the OFB will not co-finance the 5% self-financing contribution required from BESTLIFE2030 project holders.
Question 44: Can a foundation co-finance a BEST project?
Answer: Yes.
Question 45: Will advances be possible or will payments be made only by reimbursement?
Answer: Advances will be possible as projects are carried out upon submission of interim reports and forecast budgets up to 90% of the total amount of the grant. You will need to be able to advance the remaining 10% before requesting the balance. The first pre-financing which will be paid upon signature of the agreement is not fixed as a basis, it is up to the project leader to define it: "*the initial pre-financing of max 100% of the estimated budget for the first reference period is paid no later than 30 days after receipt of the signed grant contract and the corresponding payment request.*"
Question 46: Is there a budget limit for personnel costs?
Answer: There is no budget limit on this cost category. However, the costs declared must be realistic and consistent with the implementation of concrete actions on the ground. The budget must be balanced across the different categories.
Question 47: What are the eligible indirect costs? (maximum 7% of eligible direct costs)
Answer: These costs correspond to management costs (for example internet, electricity, etc.) for which no proof will be requested at the time of reporting.
Question 48: Can the budget change between the concept note and the full proposal?

Answer: A margin of 25% will be possible between the concept note and the complete proposal.

Question 49: On a previous BEST project, a small amount was paid following validation of the concept note to help finance the writing of the full proposal, is this still the case? If not, can this assistance be included in the indirect costs of projects?

Answer: This support is not planned within the framework of BESTLIFE2030. Applicants are invited to contact regional hubs. Furthermore, any expenses incurred before signing the agreement grant are ineligible. It will therefore not be possible to include such a service in the budget of successful projects.

Question 50: Is the 100,000 EUR threshold for multiple applications understood as an 'effective' threshold (= grants obtained) or a 'theoretical' threshold (= grants requested)?

Answer: The maximum 100,000 EUR is a threshold per project and not per structure.

Question 51: In the case of a project with a forecast budget larger than 100,000 EUR, can we present part of the project or is it better to present it overall and use the BEST funds for co-financing?

Answer: Both are possible, it depends on the project schedule. Co-financing is possible but more complex. It will be necessary to be closely supported by the BESTLIFE2030 consortium.

Question 52: Can an entity submit 2 project proposals at 100,000 EUR each?

Answer: The same structure can submit two projects worth 100,000 EUR provided that this configuration is respected:

1 proposal as lead applicant and 1 proposal as co-applicant or 2 proposals as co-applicant.

Question 53: Is it possible to segment a project into two and have each part carried out by a different organisation? Could each organisation receive 100,000 EUR?

Answer: A priori yes, but that does not ensure that both projects are successful.

Question 54: For companies, is the grant subject to the de minimis rule?

Answer: As the BEST carries out a competitive selection, the grant is not considered as aid in the de minimis category.

Question 55: Can a co-applicant receive a higher grant amount than the lead applicant? For example, the co-applicant receives 70% of the grant and the lead applicant

30%.

Answer: There is no specific rule on the distribution of funds between the principal applicant and the co-applicant. It is therefore possible that the co-applicant receives a higher amount than the main applicant (justification required).

Question 56: Can equipment provided as an in-kind contribution be considered co-financing?

Answer: No, in-kind contributions cannot be considered co-financing.

Question 57: For job creation, is it possible to proceed with the recruitment process before the start date of the project for an effective position taking up on the day the project starts?

Answer: Recruitment for personnel can happen before the project start. Only costs incurred during project implementation period are eligible.

Question 58: The 13th month and the Christmas bonus are among the eligible components of employee costs, while bonuses are ineligible. What is the difference between these 3 elements? How to know which type of bonus is eligible or not? For example, TAAF employees receive a “distance bonus” during their missions – is this bonus eligible for BEST?

Answer: Staff costs are eligible if they are statutory, contractual, and applicable equally to all employees.

Question 59: Is the use of volunteering (for the 5% co-financing) possible for any type of candidate structure or is it reserved for associations? Can an SME use volunteering?

Answer: Yes.

Question 60: “Accounting services” are listed in other costs and services: does this mean that the use of an accountant or auditor can be attributed to/covered by the project?

Answer: External accounting services are eligible for the costs related to and specific to the management of the project (not for all the organisation’s accounting purposes).

Question 61: In the case where an employee is only involved for a few months in the implementation of a 24-month project, will it be necessary to provide proof of expenses (pay slips and/or time sheets depending on the option chosen) only over the months of his involvement or over the entire duration of the project?

Answer: In each reporting period you need to provide supporting documents for all the employees who charge any amount to the project in the period being reported. If you are reporting for 24 months and someone has charged only 3 months to the project, you will still have to provide supporting documents for the other 21 months.

Question 62: Volunteers: Some projects will have a lot of volunteers and probably not same persons each year. It might be difficult for them to have a separate budget line per volunteer. We advised to put Volunteer 1, Volunteer 2 etc, keeping in mind that in Year 2 they might report for different persons than in Y1, for example. Would you please kindly advise if it is correct?

Answer: Where names are known, they should be budgeted for separately. Where that is not the case, it is OK to indicate the number of volunteers expected to be engaged and include a strong justification as to how that number is arrived at, and what roles they are foreseen to play. Volunteers valorisation is explained in the info session PowerPoint. Commission Decision C(2019)2646, daily rate.

Question 63: Interns: Since interns count as staff, will they have to fill out timesheets?

Answer: Yes.

Question 64: If organisations have teams working on field (hunters, workers) who not official staff of the organisations are. We advise them to budget their costs under “staff cost” considering they are “Natural persons beneficiaries without salary” (otherwise, they would fall over 30 % in category 4). Would you please kindly advise if SCO works in this case? If yes, what documents will be required for verification ex-ante?

Answer: To answer this question, we need to know the relation between the person and the organisation (Are project resources being used to pay for hunters? What contractual engagements exist between the organisations and these persons?). For “SME owners” or “natural persons beneficiaries without salary”, SCO is compulsory. See commission decision C(2020)7115 attached. Explanations are also provided in the info session PowerPoint.

Question 65: Official rates for subsistence / official rates for fuel. Most of organisations do not have policies on subsistence or fuel and would like to be advised with a rate to use for SCO. We have found some official policies on-line. Would you please kindly advise if these rates might work: e.g. for New Caledonia: fuel and subsistence, for French Polynesia fuel and subsistence, OR should we take URSSAF rates same for both territories?

Answer: Yes. URSAFF rates (for French ORs and OCTS) are the most recommendable. For others, equivalent official rates per country are acceptable and advisable. SCO rates will be agreed/discussed before signing Grant Agreements.

Question 66: Does the "VAT refundable or deductible is not an eligible cost for cost category 4" mean that I must use the net price (excluding VAT) only for this category (Costs and Other Services)? For example, if a service costs €100, should I list €81.96, excluding the 22% VAT? Does this requirement apply exclusively to category 4, or to all cost categories? Additionally, is the VAT we pay considered a financial contribution to the project?

Answer: One needs to use the total price of the service, unless one has the right to recover this VAT, as is the case with some NGOs or enterprises.

Question 67: Budget allocation: since in the platform there is no division of budget by partner, the methodology for allocating funds is not clear. Should applicants divide in the whole table every category cost and add a line for each partner integrating the proposal? As that is the case for personnel costs, should they do the same in the rest of the costs categories?

Answer: We recommend that applicants split the budget for staff costs into as many budget lines as necessary. For travel and the other cost categories, we are not requesting such detailed budget lines. However, if applicants want to detail and it is useful for them, they can do so. Also note that SCO is not allowed for travel (flights, train...).

Additional information

Question 68: Whom to contact in case of additional questions?

Answer: Should you have any questions or encounter any difficulties, please contact your Regional Hub or the programme coordinator IUCN (see Contact section on the BESTLIFE2030 website).

Question 69: Do I need to register on the grant platform?

Answer: Yes, you must create an account to access the form, fill it in directly online (saving drafts is possible) and submit it. You must select English as your preferred language before creating the account so that the entire form appears in English.

Access link to the platform: https://speciesgrants.iucn.org/dashboard.

Question 70: When will the 4 calls for projects be launched?

Answer: Approximately every 16-18 months. The 2nd call will probably be launched at the end of March 2025.

Question 71: Concerning the next 3 calls, will the eligibility criteria be exactly the same as the current call?

Answer: The eligibility criteria has been updated for the 2nd call. The priority will remain the implementation of concrete and measurable actions on the ground.

<u>Question 72</u>: How long can projects be?
<u>Answer</u>: From 18 to 36 months (including amendments). It is therefore recommended to submit projects shorter than 36 months in anticipation of possible delays which would require an amendment for the finalisation of activities.
<u>Question 73</u>: What is the deadline for submitting the concept note?
<u>Answer</u>: Concept notes must be submitted no later than May 30, 2025, at 2 p.m. CET.
<u>Question 74</u>: What is a co-financier?
<u>Answer</u>: A co-financier is an entity that provides funds to carry out the project in addition to the BEST grant.
<u>Question 75:</u> What is the difference between a project holder and the lead applicant?
<u>Answer:</u> The term "project holder" generally refers to the lead applicant (and possibly the co-applicant(s)) as well.
<u>Question 76</u>: Are small associations, which rely partly on volunteers, in competition with large structures such as research organisations, protected areas, reserves, etc.?
<u>Answer:</u> It is the quality of the project, and the conservation issues concerned which will be evaluated in relation to the entity that applies. There are no fixed proportions in terms of type of structure to be financed. Small associations have already been beneficiaries of BEST subsidies.
<u>Question 77:</u> Is local support from the DEAL ("Direction de l'Environnement, de l'Aménagement et du Logement") expected, both in terms of co-financing and monitoring of the projects?
<u>Answer:</u> Depending on the projects submitted, it is possible that the project holders may request co-financing from the DEAL. The monitoring of projects funded by BESTLIFE2030 will be handled by the regional focal point in connection with the IUCN.
<u>Question 78:</u> Who supervises a project if it involves stakeholders from Réunion Island, the French Caribbean, and French Guiana? Which contact person should be reached?
<u>Answer:</u> Initially, it is preferable to contact the coordinator of the region where the organisation that will take on the role of the main applicant is located. It is likely that each of the relevant hubs will contribute to the evaluation of the project.

<u>Question 79</u>: A service provider linked to the project cannot have more than 30% of the budget. Does service provider mean subcontractor?

<u>Answer:</u> Yes, that is correct.

<u>Question 80</u>: If the project calls on several service providers for different activities, is the 30% max for all service providers combined?

<u>Answer:</u> Yes, that is correct.

<u>Question 81</u>: For service providers, which procurement conditions apply?

<u>Answer:</u> These conditions will be explained during the second phase of project selection; the concept note does not require details of this type. However, the following rules must apply:

(a) ensure sufficient transparency, fair competition and adequate ex ante publicity;

(b) guarantee equal treatment, proportionality and non-discrimination;

(c) avoid conflicts of interest throughout the procurement process.

With the following procurement rules:

- **Purchases of goods and services with a cost of less than EUR 5000** may be made through "single sourcing". Competitive bids are not required. Research should be made of available suppliers, and the procurement decision should ensure best value for money.

- **Purchases of goods with a unit cost of more than EUR 5,000 but less than or equal to EUR 50,000** must be based on written quotations received from at least three potential suppliers. Quotations must include the price, the description and quantity of the goods, as well as the delivery time and place. Grant recipients are advised to initially request more than three quotations.

- **Purchases of Services in excess of EUR 5000 but less than EUR 50,000** must be based on a comprehensive Terms of Reference specifying in detail the necessary subject area qualifications and expected outputs. Statements of interest or CVs must be received from at least three potential firms or individuals. All purchases of services must be contracted on the basis of a written document that includes fixed outputs and specific payment terms. Fees may be paid on an hourly/daily rate, or on a fixed fee basis. All fees paid to individuals must be consistent with previous salary/fee history, as documented in a CV and must be competitive and in line with established norms for the type of work to be performed. File documents must reflect clearly the list of individuals or firms invited to bid, the statements of interest or CVs, salary/fee history, and rationale for selection.

- **Purchases of goods and services with a cost in excess of EUR 50,000** are subject to special competitive bidding procedures. <u>Such purchases are only allowed with separate</u>

written authorization from the relevant IUCN project manager.

In the event that purchases in excess of EUR 50,000 are authorized, IUCN shall assess the procurement procedures of the Grant recipient and either authorise the procurement to be carried in accordance with the grant recipient's procedures or request that the Grant recipient carries out the procurement in accordance with IUCN standard procedures.

The procurement policy and procedures for Grant recipients are detailed **in Annex 3 of the Grant Agreement.**

Question 82: If a service provider is a co-applicant, does the 30% limit still apply?

Answer: No, because they are a co-applicant. The co-applicant must meet the eligibility rules listed in the guidelines.

Question 83: Can a project be refused on the first call and reconsidered during one of the following calls for projects (if the actions are eligible)?

Answer: Yes, the same project can be resubmitted to a following call for projects as long as it takes into account the recommendations that will have been provided to the candidate by the evaluators.

Question 84: Where can I find the call specifications?

Answer: https://bestlife2030.org/for-applicants/.

Question 85: Is the objective of implementing concrete actions assessed based on the time of implementation or on the basis of expenditures?

Answer: No, no specific percentage is required.

Question 86: How to integrate volunteer time into the project?

Answer: Volunteer time is eligible and can be considered for the 5% co-financing.

Question 87: Are there priority themes?

Answer: Please check section 2.2 of the guidelines for applicants on regional priorities.

Question 88: Application portal: We have filled in some of the sections in their entirety, and the percentage that appears as filled in is not 100%, and we do not know what is missing? It happens in the 'Narrative', 'Logical Framework and Monitoring Plan' and 'Safeguards'. Is it necessary that everything be 100% filled in order to submit the application?

Answer: The portal looks at all the sections (text boxes/lines *and* buttons) when computing percentages. So, for instance, in the Safeguards section, which has a text box *and* a button, if an applicant simply writes "Not applicable" in the text box, they will still get 50% because they didn't use the button. This is not a problem. The application can be submitted as long as all relevant sections are filled in.

Question 89: Is it possible that the lead applicant of a project is not the one submitting the proposal in the portal?

Answer: Only the lead applicant can submit an application on the portal. If a co-applicant wishes to submit the application, the lead applicant will need to share its username and password. However, we do not recommend sharing passwords. If they choose to do so, they can under their own discretion and responsibility.

Question 90: Successful applicants may be asked to review their full proposal and revise their budget. Should they make the revisions online through the portal by logging into their accounts, or should they send their revisions via email?

Answer: Applicants must make the revisions online through the portal. The automated message sent via the portal instructs them to log into the platform and complete all pending actions related to their projects.

Question 91: While awaiting project approval, we had the opportunity to acquire some of the equipment initially planned for purchase under the BESTLIFE project. Can we reallocate those budget lines to other items, since purchasing the same equipment again would not be necessary?

Answer: Yes, budget reallocation is possible as long as the total project budget remains unchanged. However, please ensure that the adjustments align with the technical proposal. If the acquired equipment was originally listed as "to be purchased," the proposal must be updated accordingly. Additionally, if new equipment will be purchased instead, it should be clearly specified in the revised technical proposal.