

EN

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Answer given by Mr Serafin
on behalf of the European Commission
(5.5.2025)

Operating grants, as those under the EU LIFE Programme¹, support the functioning of civil society organisations involved in the development and implementation of EU legislation. These grants are part of the LIFE Regulation², adopted by the co-legislators, and their management complies with the Financial Regulation³.

Operating grants are awarded competitively. Applicants submit proposals that include the description of their work programmes of activities in areas indicated in the LIFE Regulation. This work programme is annexed to the grant agreement. The work programme may mention, among other applicant's activities, advocacy activities. The Commission does not prescribe the specific activities in the applicant's work programmes.

The Commission has not identified irregularities in operating grants under the LIFE programme. Nonetheless, agreements involving activities directed at EU institutions, even if they do not breach the legal framework, may entail a reputational risk for the EU. To mitigate these risks, the Commission has issued guidance⁴ addressed to all Commission services, covering all spending programmes, clarifying which activities should not be mandated as a condition for EU financing.

The Commission adheres to its transparency obligations. Article 38 of the Financial Regulation requires publishing information about EU fund recipients. Information about non-governmental organisations and amounts received under LIFE is published annually in the Financial Transparency System⁵ and on the LIFE programme website⁶.

For funding in the field of migration, the Commission awards action grants, which are limited in scope and correspond to the eligible activities of the call document, which do not foresee lobbying activities. These grants are published on the Funding and Tenders Portal⁷.

¹ https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/life_en (EU's funding instrument for the environment and climate action).

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R0783>

³ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=OJ:L_202402509

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/guidance-funding-dev-impl-monit-enforce-of-eu-law_en.pdf

⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/budget/financial-transparency-system/analysis.html> (The annual publications are based on Article 38 of the Financial Regulation whereby data on recipients is not disclosed for very low value contracts below EUR 15 000 and where disclosure risks threatening the rights and freedoms of the persons or entities).

⁶ https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/life/life-operating-grants_en

⁷ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>