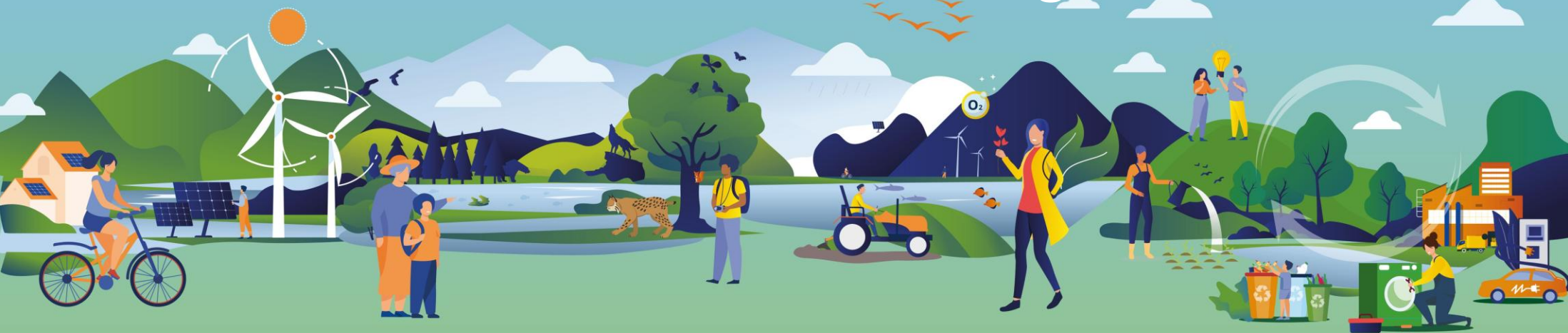


The LIFE Programme's contribution to the sustainability of the agri-food sector LIFE Platform Meeting

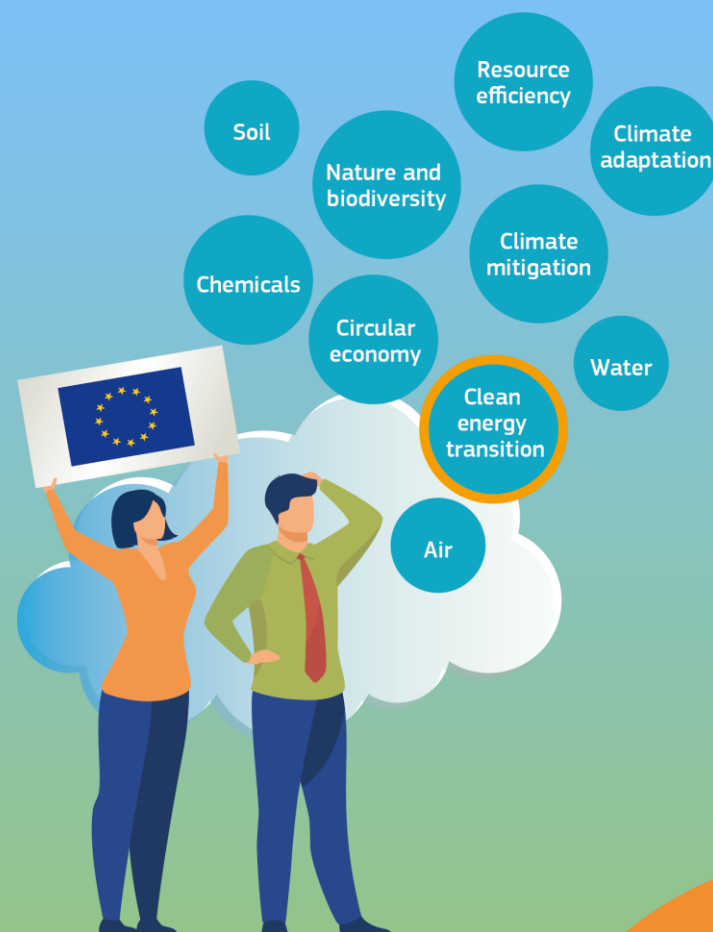


Gianmarco Italia
Policy Analyst at European Commission's
Directorate-General for Climate Action
(DG CLIMA)

#LIFEPMaAgriFood
3 – 4 December 2025

The LIFE Programme 2021-2027

- The LIFE programme is the only EU funding scheme dedicated exclusively to the environment, nature conservation and climate action
- The LIFE programme fully contributes to the objectives and targets of the European Green Deal
- LIFE has funded over 6,000 projects in the past 33 years
- For the years 2021-2027, LIFE has a budget of 5.43 billion €
- Total budget for Calls 2025 : 596 million €



The LIFE Programme - sub-programmes

To contribute to the shift to a circular, energy-efficient, renewable energy based- and climate resilient economy

To protect and improve the quality of the environment

To halt and reverse biodiversity loss



Nature and Biodiversity



Circular Economy and Quality of Life



Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation



Clean Energy Transition

Projects

- Develop and demonstrate innovative techniques and approaches to solving environmental challenges
- Help to implement plans and strategies, required by EU legislation.
- Promote best practices and behavioral changes
- Catalyse the large-scale deployment of successful solutions

Impact

- Support the development, monitoring and implementation of EU environment & climate policy
- Provide models to copy and upscale

Project beneficiaries typically are:

- 1/3 private enterprises
- 1/3 NGOs and civil society organisations
- 1/3 public authorities

LIFE Sub-programme on Climate Mitigation and Adaptation



Climate Change
Mitigation and
Adaptation

Contribution to:

- The transformation of the European Union into a climate-neutral and - resilient society, especially through:
- Climate Change Mitigation
- Climate Change Adaptation & Related Governance

Typical actions

On **climate mitigation**, projects that contribute significantly to the implementation of:

- the 2030 energy and climate policy
- the EU Member States' National Energy and Climate Plans
- European Union's mid-century and long-term climate and energy strategy

On **climate adaptation**:

- projects that support the implementation of the new EU adaptation strategy and related national implementation

Two main types of projects: SAPs and SIPs

SAPs: Standard Action Projects – Direct action, generally implementing solutions on the ground.

Action: Pilot, demonstration and best practices projects catalyzing the large-scale deployment of successful technical and policy related solutions

Topics: reduction of fluorinated gases and ozone depleting substances, land and sea management practices for carbon removals, reducing energy use and GHG emissions in industrial production and waste management etc.

- ☐ Co-financing rate of **60% max.**
- ☐ Duration: 3-5 years, Maximum 10 years.
- ☐ Typical LIFE grant: **€ 0.7-2.5 millions/project.**

SAPs can be “close -to-market”

SIPs: Strategic Integrated Projects

Action: Implementation of plans, strategies or action plans required by specific EU climate policy, such as NECPs, National/regional adaptation strategies, urban or community-based action plans etc.

- ☐ Co-financing rate of **60% max.**
- ☐ Duration: 6-10 years, Maximum 14 years.
- ☐ Typical LIFE grant: **€ 10-20 millions/project.**



LIFE 2025: support for the agricultural sector (1)

LIFE SAP 2025 - Priority area on climate change mitigation

Development and implementation of land and coastal management practices which have an impact on emissions and carbon removals, including the conservation and enhancement of natural carbon sinks in soils and forests and the storage of carbon in long-lasting products

- ✓ Increasing carbon removals
- ✓ Protecting existing carbon stocks
- ✓ Using biomass in long-lasting products and circular use of bio-based materials.
- ✓ Reducing non-CO2 agricultural emissions
- ✓ Carbon farming & certification

LIFE 2025: support for the agricultural sector (2)



LIFE SAP 2025 - Priority area on climate change adaptation

Adaptation solutions for agriculture and forestry

- ✓ Support the rollout of nature-based solutions
- ✓ Implement climate-resilient forestry
- ✓ Promote climate-resilient plant genetic resources
- ✓ Improve climate-resilience decision-support tools
- ✓ Enhance landscape water retention
- ✓ Promote water-saving technologies and sustainable agriculture
- ✓ Pilot business models and financial incentives for adaptation

LIFE Support for Agriculture aligns with EU policy objectives



- Strengthen agricultural competitiveness within global markets

Competitiveness
Compass

- Recognize agriculture and food as strategic sectors
- Strengthen competitiveness and attractiveness of the sector
- Ensure long-term growth, innovation and societal benefits

Vision for
Agriculture & Food

- First EU-wide voluntary framework for certifying carbon removals, carbon farming and carbon storage in products across Europe.

Carbon Removals
and Carbon Farming

- Support the uptake of water reuse practices in agriculture

Water Resilience
Strategy

LIFE VAIA - Valuing Afforestation of Damaged Woods with Innovative Agroforestry

Reference: LIFE20 CCA/IT/001630

Beneficiary: Rigoni di Asiago srl

Budget: €3,012,531 €

Duration: July 2021 – Sept 2026

Objective:

Demonstrate the *VAIA agroforestry model* to accelerate recovery of forest areas damaged by extreme weather events.

- Increase forest **resilience** through temporary agroforestry supporting natural and artificial regeneration.
- Reduce short-term impacts (erosion, biodiversity loss, soil degradation).
- Restore ecosystem services and establish **stable, high-biodiversity forests**.
- Create **new rural economic opportunities** (berries, edible plants, honey) to compensate for timber losses.
- Develop **fast-response models** transferable across EU regions and supporting the EU Climate Adaptation & Forest Strategies.



LIFE VineAdapt - Sustainable Viticulture for Climate Change Adaptation

Reference: LIFE19 CCA/DE/001224

Beneficiary: Landgesellschaft Sachsen-Anhalt mbH

EU Contribution: €1,544,264

Duration: July 2021 – June 2025

Objective:

- Implement an **ecosystem-based, biodiversity-driven vineyard management model** to increase resilience to climate change.
- Increase native biodiversity to strengthen **pest control, soil biota, humification, erosion control and water retention**.
- Apply **resource-efficient practices** (drip irrigation, reduced fertiliser, fewer tractor operations) to cut GHG emissions.
- Replace pesticides such as **glyphosate** by managing understory vegetation through nature-based approaches.
- Test and optimise approaches in **four countries**, ensuring transferability to EU wine-growing regions.
- Contribute to implementation of the **EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change**.



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LIFE Plants for Plants - New Organic Biostimulants to Reduce Water, Nutrient and Pesticide Use

Reference: LIFE18 ENV/NL/000043

Beneficiary: Van Iperen International B.V.

EU Contribution €1,588,731

Duration: July 2019 – May 2022

Objective:

- Introduce **plant-derived organic biostimulants (SMP)** enabling conventional farmers to reduce inputs while maintaining yields.
- Develop an **industrial process** and validate three prototypes:
 - LL002:** ~30% water savings, stronger stress resilience, better P uptake.
 - LL004:** Up to 30% reduction in phosphorus application.
 - LL017:** 20–40% reduction in fungicide use through plant defence activation.
- Carry out EU-wide field validation to shift farmer perception toward organic solutions.
- Achieve **commercial launch** and contribute to the Water Framework Directive, Soil Thematic Strategy, Fertilisers Regulation and Pesticides Directive.



Thank you!

LIFE - European Climate, Infrastructure and
Environment Executive Agency

