



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME)
Department A - COSME, H2020 SME and EMFF
Unit A3 - EMFF

Call for Proposals
For EU Grants
under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
**Blue Technology: Transfer of innovative solutions to
sea basin economies**

EMFF Work Programme 2016
Call for Proposals EASME/EMFF/2016/1.2.1.3

CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION – BACKGROUND	4
1.1.	Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).....	4
1.2.	General information concerning the call for proposals	4
1.3.	Background	4
2.	OBJECTIVES – PRIORITIES – ACTIVITIES – OUTPUTS/IMPACTS	6
2.1.	Objectives.....	6
2.2.	Process description.....	8
2.3.	Activities	8
2.4.	Geographical scope	10
2.5.	Expected outputs/impacts.....	11
3.	TIMETABLE	11
3.1.	Indicative timetable	11
3.2.	Implementation period	12
4.	BUDGET AVAILABLE.....	12
5.	ADMISSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	12
6.	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA.....	13
6.1.	Geographical eligibility.....	13
6.2.	Eligible applicants	13
6.3.	Eligibility conditions for consortia.....	15
6.4.	Eligible activities.....	16
7.	EXCLUSION CRITERIA.....	16
8.	SELECTION CRITERIA.....	16
8.1.	Financial capacity.....	16
8.2.	Operational capacity.....	17
9.	AWARD CRITERIA	18
10.	LEGAL COMMITMENTS.....	22
11.	FINANCIAL PROVISIONS.....	23
11.1.	General principles.....	23
11.2.	Form of funding.....	25
11.3.	Payment arrangements	28
11.4.	Pre-financing guarantee.....	29
11.5.	Reporting requirements	29

- 12. PUBLICITY 30
 - 12.1. By the beneficiary 30
 - 12.2. By the EASME..... 30
- 13. DATA PROTECTION 31
- 14. PROCEDURE FOR ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW 32
 - 14.1. Evaluation Review procedure 32
 - 14.2. Admissibility and Eligibility Review procedure 32
- 15. PROCEDURE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS..... 33

1. INTRODUCTION – BACKGROUND

The Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, hereafter referred to as "EASME", acting under the powers delegated by the European Commission (also referred to as "the Commission"), is launching a call for proposals with a view to concluding grant agreements to accelerate the transfer of innovative technological solutions to sea basin economies.

1.1. Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)

This call is launched in accordance with the 2016 Work Programme for the Implementation of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)¹ (section 1.2.1.3 of the annex), on the basis of the objectives set out in the Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund², and in particular Article 82(c).

1.2. General information concerning the call for proposals

The action covered by this call for proposals forms part of the EMFF Work Programme, whose implementation is partially delegated to the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises.

According to the Act of Delegation³, grant agreements will be signed by EASME.

1.3. Background

The seas and coasts of Europe have great potential to foster regional development and technological innovation. In the EU, it is estimated that about 5 million people work in the blue economy. It includes well-established sectors (such as shipbuilding and ship repair, transport, offshore oil and gas), as well as emerging sectors with a high potential for growth (such as blue biotechnology, aquaculture, ocean renewable energy)⁴. These sectors were identified in the Blue Growth Strategy launched by the European Commission in 2012⁵, which aims at strengthening the potential for jobs and growth of Europe's coasts, seas and oceans.

¹ Annex to the Commission Implementing Decision concerning the adoption of the work programme for 2016 and the financing for the implementation of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (C(2015)8729 final), of 11 December 2015, section 1.2.1.3.

² Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2328/2003, (EC) No 861/2006, (EC) No 1198/2006 and (EC) No 791/2007 and Regulation (EU) No 1255/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council, Official Journal of the European Union, L 149/1 of 20.5.2014.

³ Act of Delegation: Commission Decision C(2013)9414 of 23 December 2013 delegating powers to the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises with a view to performance of tasks linked to the implementation of Union programmes in the field of energy, environment, climate action, competitiveness and SMEs, research and innovation and ICT, comprising, in particular, implementation of appropriations entered in the general budget of the Union as amended by Commission Decision C(2014)4636 of 11 July 2014 with a view to the performance of tasks linked to the implementation of the EMFF.

⁴ See: http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/blue_growth/infographics

⁵ Communication from the Commission: 'Blue Growth opportunities for marine and maritime sustainable growth' COM (2012) 494 final (13.09.2012).

As stated in the 2014 Communication *"Innovation in the Blue Economy: realising the potential of our seas and oceans for jobs and growth"*⁶, innovation is one of the drivers of the blue economy. One of the fundamental challenges for a more competitive and innovative maritime economy in all sea basins is that the transfer of research results into business ventures must become easier and new technologies need to be brought faster to a commercial and industrial scale.

There is significant EU funding available for innovation in 2014-2020, with the 79 billion € Horizon 2020 programme (i.e. research and innovation actions, SME Instrument projects, projects on the uptake of research results⁷ and knowledge transfer), COSME⁸ and a large proportion of the EU's Structural and Investment Funds earmarked for innovation. Still, there is a lack of strategic public-private collaboration projects, in particular transnational ones, to help bring research results to the market and harness new business and investment opportunities in the blue economy.

In addition, synergies and complementarities between existing funding instruments remain difficult to implement at operational level. This is a significant obstacle to creating a critical mass for transfer and application of new technology areas, processes and solutions, as well as for scaling up and testing/piloting local solutions in wider commercial environments.

The regional smart specialisation strategies⁹ are an initiative that deserves special attention, notably the National/Regional Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3 strategies). Smart specialisation focuses on improving the innovation process by developing specialisation strategies building on a region's strengths, competitive advantages and potential for excellence, whilst being based on strong partnerships between public entities, knowledge institutions and businesses.

Following a similar logic as that of smart specialisation strategies, the EU's maritime policy promotes growth and development strategies that exploit the strengths and address the challenges and needs of each sea basin in the EU. By addressing a certain sea basin or sub-sea basin, it becomes possible to explore the regional potential and provide appropriate solutions for the difficulties or assets of the area, thus creating European added value. This action will support the implementation of sea basin strategies and regional approaches, notably in the Atlantic (Action Plan for a Maritime Strategy in the Atlantic Area¹⁰), the Baltic Sea (EU

⁶ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 'Innovation in the Blue Economy: realising the potential of our seas and oceans for jobs and growth' COM/2014/0254 final/2 */

⁷ See COLUMBUS project funded under Horizon 2020 BG 11: <http://www.aquatt.ie/horizon-2020/228-projects/horizon-2020/1178-columbus>

⁸ COSME is the EU programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs, running from 2014 to 2020; http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/cosme/index_en.htm

⁹ 'Smart specialisation strategy' means the national or regional innovation strategies which set priorities in order to build competitive advantage by developing and matching research and innovation own strengths to business needs in order to address emerging opportunities and market developments in a coherent manner, while avoiding duplication and fragmentation of efforts. <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>

¹⁰ <http://www.atlanticstrategy.eu/en>

Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region¹¹), the Adriatic-Ionian Seas (EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region¹²) and the Mediterranean (BLUEMED¹³).

The Blue Technology action aims to build on existing smart specialisation strategies and support strategic partnerships of maritime regions and their stakeholders for developing sea basin specific roadmaps/action plans in key blue growth domains that will bring research results faster to the market and accelerate the development of pre-commercial and commercial applications. Based on the roadmaps, a strategic set of pre-commercial or commercial projects will be developed to boost blue growth investments in the sea basin.

DEFINITIONS

- Roadmap: an action plan that identifies and coordinates relevant new business and investment opportunities in a sea basin on a mid- to long-term scale, in order to harness the development potential of a chosen blue growth technology, domain or value chain.
- Domain: corresponds to a specific area of expertise. In this context it relates in particular to knowledge fields and activities relevant to blue growth within an economic sector or cutting across different economic sectors.
- Value chain: the entire range of activities that (one or more) actors engage in to bring a product from its conception to its end use, ranging from design, production and marketing to distribution and support to the final consumer¹⁴.
- Demonstration project: a pre-commercial or commercial pilot project that ensures a full-scale demonstration of a new solution with a high potential to be marketed on an international scale. The new solution can be a new technology, process, service or a new application of an existing solution.
- Technology Readiness Levels (TRL)¹⁵: Scale applied by many public and industry stakeholders to assess the maturity of evolving technologies/applications in terms of their feasibility and commercial potential. A TRL level 5 and higher refers to a technology/application/service demonstrated in a relevant concrete environment.

¹¹ <http://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/>

¹² <http://www.adriatic-ionician.eu/>

¹³ Research and innovation initiative for blue jobs and growth in the Mediterranean area (the Bluedem initiative) is the result of a joint effort of a group of European Member States - Cyprus, Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, and Spain - with the support of the European Commission; <https://www.researchitaly.it/en/understanding/press-media/news/the-marine-and-maritime-sectors-the-bluedem-initiative-documents-now-online/>

¹⁴ <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/value-chains>

¹⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2014_2015/annexes/h2020-wp1415-annex-g-trl_en.pdf

2. OBJECTIVES – PRIORITIES – ACTIVITIES – OUTPUTS/IMPACTS

2.1. Objectives

Based on the needs set out above, this call for proposals aims to support strategic transnational partnerships to develop joint roadmaps at sea basin level¹⁶ in order to coordinate investments for innovation in a specific high potential blue growth technology, domain or value chain. The specific roadmaps shall include an investment plan that will deliver a set of bankable/ready-to-invest demonstration projects for new technologies, industry applications, processes or services within the targeted blue growth area. The aim is that these concrete demonstration projects will be readily available for industry and finance institutions to move swiftly to the implementation stage at the end of the project.

This Blue Technology action aims at Technology Readiness Level 5 or higher, i.e. testing/validating applications in a relevant concrete environment. By doing so, the action will support bringing research results to the commercial and industrial sectors faster. This will in turn contribute to generating jobs and business opportunities in the blue economy.

The roadmaps that projects will develop should build upon existing sea basin/macro-regional strategies, blue growth investment priorities and research and innovation initiatives and funding instruments such as the National/Regional Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3)¹⁷, with the objective to:

- maximising synergies between existing strategic roadmaps for research, technology and innovation at sea basin level¹⁸;
- coordinating funding for priority investments;
- making the best use of existing financial instruments at EU level (e.g. Horizon 2020, ERDF and EFSI, EIB) and at national/regional levels.

This call for proposals is open to all blue growth related technology areas, domains and value chains. Nevertheless, projects contributing to the implementation of EU priority areas such as the Circular Economy¹⁹, the Digital Agenda²⁰ and the Energy Union and Climate²¹ are particularly encouraged.

In order to ensure the relevance and impact of this action, the active participation of industrial partners is strongly encouraged throughout the process. Their input and commitment is needed to accelerate the deployment process and to answer to real commercial/market opportunities and industrial challenges.

¹⁶ Atlantic, Baltic Sea, Black Sea, Mediterranean or North Sea.

¹⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/smart_specialisation_en.pdf

¹⁸ Apart from smart specialisation strategies this includes, for instance, sector innovation strategies, cluster strategies, European Technology Platforms, ERA-NETS, JPI 'Oceans', BONUS article 185, BLUEMED, etc.

¹⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/jobs-growth-investment/circular-economy/docs/communication-action-plan-for-circular-economy_en.pdf

²⁰ <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en>

²¹ http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/energy-union/index_en.htm

2.2. Process description

The process description below illustrates the scope of projects to be funded under this action.

PROCESS DESCRIPTION

The starting point of any project is the establishment of a transnational consortium focused on a sea basin²² and related blue growth challenges and opportunities. The consortium has to have a common interest in a specific blue growth related technology, domain or value chain, for example blue biotechnology, aquaculture, coastal and maritime tourism, wave, tidal or offshore wind energy, etc.

Taking existing strategies and investment plans for the sea basin as a starting point, the consortium will analyse the targeted domain and the opportunities and industry challenges. This analysis should provide a good overview of business opportunities and technologies to tackle industrial challenges that could benefit from enhanced cooperation and to identify the available funding for these cases. To give but a few examples, initiatives could be related to algae biomass production, the multi-use of the marine space or utilisation of new materials for enhanced performance or cost reduction in ocean energy, etc.

Based on the analysis made, the consortium should develop a joint roadmap that a) shows the development opportunities for the blue growth domain in the sea basin in the medium to long term and b) specifies the activities, commitments of stakeholders and milestones needed to realise these opportunities. The final roadmap will include an investment plan that will map the available funds comprehensively and show which funding is available at what stage of the development process, so that the roadmap can be implemented.

The consortium will then mobilise public-private investment partnerships to focus on the most promising opportunities and develop two to three bankable demonstration projects that will show how a new solution for the chosen blue growth area will be put in practice. At the end of the project, these demonstration projects should be ready to be pitched to additional investors/financing institutions and put into action.

²² The project proposal can focus on a sub-region of the chosen sea basin.

2.3. Activities

In order to realise the objectives outlined above, projects should implement targeted activities resulting in concrete and measurable results within the project's duration of maximum two years.

Core activities

In line with the above objectives, projects must implement the following core activities, the completion of which is fundamental to realise the objectives of the call:

- Develop a **joint roadmap** including an investment plan for a promising blue growth technology area, domain or value chain at sea basin level. The roadmap should identify key business opportunities and investment priorities (be they local, regional, national or transnational) for a medium to long term timeframe (5-10 years). The main building blocks of the joint roadmap shall include:
 - The set-up of a strategic partnership of cluster organisations and/or business network organisations²³, which will **jointly analyse, identify and scope out a common vision** for the specific blue growth technology area, domain or value chain for the targeted sea basin, in cooperation with regional/national public authorities and research organisations as appropriate;
 - The establishment of **an investment plan** for the implementation of the roadmap to coordinate the financing for the chosen domain, pool financial resources, map other funds that could be mobilised and establish links and synergies with related major investments at local, regional or national levels.
- Mobilise public-private partnerships that will **develop two to three bankable/ready-to-invest demonstration projects**. These projects should turn research results, new technologies or other innovations into commercial applications and market opportunities within the targeted blue growth area. The demonstration projects should as a minimum address the following elements:
 - identify partners and stakeholders;
 - elaborate the demonstration project concept and consortium that will implement it;
 - develop the business case and necessary financing (industrial/private and public funding);
 - identify solutions to cover the innovation risks;
 - produce a timeline for the implementation of the demonstration project.

²³ See sections 6.2 and 6.3 for definitions.

Nota bene: The two processes – that is developing the joint roadmap on the one hand and developing the bankable/ready-to invest demonstration projects on the other hand – can run consecutively or in parallel during the project lifetime, depending on what exists already as strategy for the region/sea basin to build the roadmap on.

Complementary activities

Projects are encouraged to implement one or more of the following complementary activities to support the above core activities:

- Organise workshops and matchmaking events to develop, scope out and fine tune roadmaps and to create public-private partnerships for joint investments in demonstration projects;
- Provide support to the public-private partnerships in terms of mentoring, coaching, training, investment readiness support, other advisory and financial planning support (e.g. through technical assistance vouchers);
- Undertake activities that will increase the likelihood of market uptake from the demonstration projects.

The list of complementary activities is **non-exhaustive** and aims at providing guidance to applicants. Applicants may propose other activities they deem necessary to achieve the objectives of this action as long as the choice is justified and establishes a clear and direct link between the proposed activities and the project objectives.

Networking with other projects

During the lifetime of the projects financed under this action, a number of meetings will be organised at EU level for the grant beneficiaries to facilitate the exchange of experience and good practices across sea basins, to foster mutual learning and to enhance the European dimension of the blue growth focus. Project beneficiaries are expected to participate in these meetings, which will be held in Brussels or other relevant locations.

2.4. Geographical scope

The geographical area covered by the action includes the North Sea, Baltic Sea, Black Sea, the Atlantic and the Mediterranean sea basins. Proposals shall target one of the above sea basins²⁴. They shall involve EU Member States and may also include third countries bordering the selected sea basin and participating in the respective cooperation frameworks

²⁴ Proposals can focus also on a sub-sea basin (i.e. a sub-region of the chosen sea basin, e.g. the Adriatic-Ionian sub-sea basin of the Mediterranean).

(e.g. Union for the Mediterranean, EU Atlantic Strategy, EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian region, Black Sea Synergy, etc.), excluding volatile regions²⁵.

2.5. Expected outputs/impacts

Projects under this action should achieve concrete outputs within the project's duration. The core activities shall result at least in:

- A joint roadmap that includes an investment plan. This roadmap can serve as a model for other sea basins and consortia to address common challenges and to help turn research results/innovations into industrial applications/business opportunities;
- Two to three bankable demonstration projects, involving a transnational public-private consortium, ready for industry and financing institutions to invest in and to be implemented at the end of the project.

In a wider perspective, projects are encouraged to produce:

- New market opportunities for European industry and SMEs in high potential and innovative blue growth technology areas, domains or value chains;
- More rapid market uptake of new technologies or industry applications, processes or services;
- New transnational business and investment opportunities and value chains in high potential blue growth domains across a sea basin.

A list of relevant indicators (qualitative/quantitative) to measure the expected outputs/impacts of the project should be included in the proposal.

3. TIMETABLE

3.1. Indicative timetable

The indicative timetable for this call for proposals is:

	Stages	Date and time or indicative period
a)	Publication of the call	31/03/2016
b)	Deadline for submitting applications	30/09/2016 (in case of hand-delivery by 16:00, Brussels time)

²⁵ Crimea, Abkhazia, Transnistria, Libya and Syria.

c)	Evaluation period	October–December 2016
d)	Information to applicants	January 2017
e)	Preparation and signature of the grant agreement	February–March 2017
f)	Starting date of the project	April 2017
g)	Progress report	After the 3 rd month of implementation
h)	Interim report including the joint roadmap	After the 12th month of implementation
i)	Final report including the demonstration projects	After the end of the project

3.2. Implementation period

The project duration shall start on the first day of the month following the day when the last of both parties signs the related grant agreement or at a fixed starting date specified in the grant agreement.

Projects shall not exceed the duration of 24 months.

4. BUDGET AVAILABLE

The total budget earmarked for the co-financing of projects is EUR 2.520.000.

This budget might be increased by maximum 20%.

It is estimated that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of between EUR 600.000 and EUR 800.000 would allow the objectives of this call for proposals to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

EASME expects to fund up to four proposals.

EASME reserves the right not to distribute all the funds available.

5. ADMISSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Failure to comply with the following requirements will lead to the rejection of the application:

- Applications must be sent no later than the deadline for submitting applications referred to in section 3;
- Applications must be submitted in writing (see section 15), using the application form provided as annex to this call for proposals;
- Applications must be drafted in one of the EU official languages. Submission in English is strongly encouraged and will facilitate the evaluation process.

6. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA²⁶

6.1. Geographical eligibility

Both applicants from EU Member States²⁷ and applicants established in third countries are eligible to participate.

Applicants established in non-EU countries are eligible:

- if a project activity is carried out outside the territory of the Union, and
- if the involvement of those applicants from non-EU countries is necessary in view of the nature of the action and in order to achieve its objectives.

For the purpose of the present call, the eligible third countries bordering the North Sea, Baltic Sea, Black Sea, the Atlantic and the Mediterranean sea basins and participating in the respective cooperation frameworks (e.g. Union for the Mediterranean, EU Atlantic Strategy, EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian region, Black Sea Synergy, etc.), excluding volatile regions²⁸ are as follows:

- Participating in the EU Atlantic Sea Strategy: Canada and United States of America
- Participating in the EU Baltic Sea Strategy: Belarus, Norway and Russia
- Participating in the Adriatic-Ionian Macro-regional Strategy: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia
- Participating in the Union for the Mediterranean: Algeria, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia, Turkey
- Participating in the Black Sea Synergy: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine.

²⁶ Art. 131 Financial Regulation, 201 Rules of Application.

²⁷ Including landlocked EU Members States.

²⁸ Crimea, Abkhazia, Transnistria, Libya and Syria.

6.2. Eligible applicants

1. Applicants must be legal entities. They can be public or private bodies. In the event of private bodies, they must be properly constituted and registered under national law. In the event of international organisations²⁹, they must be constituted under international law.

Natural persons are not eligible as applicant for the purpose of the present call.

To be considered a public entity, the body in question must fulfil all of the following criteria:

- The body has been created by a public authority or is governed by private law with a public service mission;
- The public interest of the body must be explicitly mentioned in the relevant legal or administrative act(s);
- The body is financed totally or to a large extent (more than 50%) by public sources;
- In the event that the entity stops its activities, all rights and obligations including financial rights and obligations will be transferred to a public authority.

For bodies to be considered as public entity, proof of compliance with all above criteria must be provided together with the proposal.

2. Applicants must be active in the field of research and innovation, and/or in regional cooperation and/or in the implementation of National/Regional Research and Innovation Smart Specialisation Strategies and/or in the blue economy and related sectors (such as marine renewable energies, blue biotechnology, coastal tourism, aquaculture, maritime transport, shipbuilding and ship repair, shipping, offshore oil and gas, fisheries or aquaculture).

3. Examples of potential applicants

The following non-exhaustive list provides examples of potential applicants:

- cluster organisations³⁰ or business network organisations;
- public authorities (national, regional);
- research centres and centres of excellence;
- innovation agencies;

²⁹ An international organisation can be considered as such if the following criteria are met:

- it is international;
- it is a public sector organisation;
- it is set up by intergovernmental agreements.

The specialised agencies set up by these organisations will also be considered international organisations.

The formal proof is the intergovernmental agreement that establishes the international organisation.

³⁰ Cluster organisations are legal entities that support the "enhancement of collaboration, networking and learning" in innovation clusters and act as innovation support providers by providing or channelling specialised and customised business support services, especially to SME. For more information see the EU Cluster Portal at <http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/cluster>

- public or private, small, medium or large enterprises;
- non-profit organisations (private or public).

4. Affiliated entities

Legal entities having a legal or capital link with applicants, which is neither limited to the action nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation, may take part in the action as affiliated entities, and may declare eligible costs as specified in section 11.2.

For that purpose, applicants shall identify such affiliated entities in the application form. The affiliated entities will have to comply with the eligibility and exclusion criteria.

5. Supporting documents

In order to assess the applicants' eligibility, the following supporting documents are requested for the coordinator and each of the partners:

- Public entity: copy of the resolution/law/decreed/decision establishing the entity OR if not available, any other official document proving the establishment of the entity by the national authorities;
- Private entity: extract from the official journal, copy of articles of association, extract of trade or association register, VAT registration document;
- Affiliated entities: shall demonstrate their legal/capital link with the applicant.

6.3. Eligibility conditions for consortia

1. Proposals must be submitted by a consortium (partnership) of minimum 3 legal entities. One of these must act as the consortium coordinator, while the others will act as partners. The consortium coordinator has to be established in an EU Member State bordering the sea basin targeted by the proposal.
2. The consortium must comprise at least 3 cluster organisations and/or business network organisations all of which are providing or channelling cluster and network support services, in compliance with the definition of innovation clusters given in the "Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation"³¹. Each of these minimum 3 cluster organisations and/or business network organisations must be located in a different EU Member State.

In order to establish their eligibility, applicants have to submit a description of each cluster and business network organisation involved as a partner in the project demonstrating that it offers or channels cluster and network support services to businesses in compliance with

³¹ The communication from the European Commission on the "Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation" (2014/C 198/01) in section 1.3 (s) defines **innovation clusters** as "structures or organised groups of independent parties (such as innovative start-ups, small, medium and large enterprises, as well as research and knowledge dissemination organisations, non-for-profit organisations and other related economic actors) designed to stimulate innovative activity by promoting sharing of facilities and exchange of knowledge and expertise and by contributing effectively to knowledge transfer, networking, information dissemination and collaboration among the undertakings and other organisations in the cluster". The full reference text can be found at:

[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014XC0627\(01\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014XC0627(01)&from=EN)

the definition given in section 1.3 (s) on 'innovation clusters' in Annex I of the new “*EU Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation*”.

3. Additional participants

As proposals need to be focused on a specific sea basin and a specific blue growth related technology, domain or value chain, all participants must have a specific interest in the growth and development of the sea basin concerned and/or offer a key contribution to the chosen blue growth related technology, domain or value chain in question.

Thus, a consortium can comprise additional public and private partners from EU Member States and/or third countries if they comply with the provisions set out in section 6.2 and if their relevance for the project is duly justified in the proposal³².

4. Mandate

All partners of the consortium will provide the coordinator with a power of attorney in writing through a mandate signed for that purpose³³. The mandate shall fully empower the coordinator to act on the partners' behalf in the context of the grant agreement.

6.4. Eligible activities

Eligible activities shall be those necessary to carry out the project and realise the intended outputs/impacts in accordance with the objectives and activities listed in section 2.

7. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

All applicants must provide a declaration of honour (see template in Annex I.a – application form), signed and dated by an authorised representative, stating that they are not in one of the situations of exclusion listed in that declaration of honour.

In case of proposals submitted by a coordinator on behalf of all the partners, each member of the consortium must provide a declaration of honour signed by an authorised representative.

The EASME reserves the right to verify whether the successful applicants are in one of the situations of exclusion by requiring the supporting documents listed in the declaration of honour.

³² The participation of additional partners from public entities involved in the implementation of national or regional research and innovation strategies for smart specialisation (RIS3) as well as knowledge providers is highly encouraged in order to strengthen the impact of the project at sea basin level.

³³ A template for this mandate is included as Annex IV to the grant agreement published together with this call.

8. SELECTION CRITERIA³⁴

8.1. Financial capacity³⁵

Applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activity throughout the period during which the action is being carried out or the year for which the grant is awarded and to participate in its funding.

The applicants' financial capacity will be assessed on the basis of the following supporting documents to be submitted with the application:

A) Total grant value is \leq EUR 60 000:

- a declaration of honour (to be provided by each of the applicants).

B) Total grant value is $>$ EUR 60 000:

- a declaration of honour (to be provided by each of the applicants), AND

For all applicants except for public bodies and international organisations³⁶, the following additional supporting documents:

- the profit and loss accounts and the balance sheets for the past 2 years for which the accounts were closed;
- the financial capacity table provided for in the application form, filled in with the relevant statutory accounting figures, in order to calculate the ratios as detailed in the form.

For newly created entities, the business plan might replace the above documents.

C) Total grant value is \geq EUR 750 000:

In addition to the supporting documents required under B) above, applicants shall provide an audit report produced by an approved external auditor certifying the accounts for the last financial year available. In the event of an application grouping several applicants (consortium), the above threshold applies by applicant.

If on the basis of the documents submitted, the financial capacity is not considered satisfactory, the EASME may:

- request further information;
- propose a grant agreement with a pre-financing covered by a bank guarantee (see section 11.4 below);
- where applicable, require the joint and several financial liability of all the co-beneficiaries;

³⁴ Art. 132 Financial Regulation, 202 Rules of Application.

³⁵ Art. 131, 132 Financial Regulation, 202 Rules of Application.

³⁶ On the basis of article 131(3) of the Financial Regulation and given the eligibility criteria set for applicants under section 6 of this call for proposals, such applicants are considered to have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activity throughout the period during which the action is being carried out and to participate in its funding. Therefore no additional supporting documents are necessary.

- or reject the application.

8.2. Operational capacity³⁷

Applicants must have the professional competencies as well as appropriate qualifications to complete the proposed project. In this respect, applicants have to submit a declaration on their honour and the following supporting documents:

- Curriculum vitae or description of the profile of the people primarily responsible for managing and implementing the project. This profile should include for each person the educational background, work experience, language and other relevant skills (maximum 1 page per person)³⁸;
- Where appropriate, a description of the technical equipment, tools or facilities and patents at the disposal of the applicants³⁹;
- For each applicant, a list of up to 3 activities (i.e. projects, publications, products, services and/or other achievements) relevant to the call content⁴⁰.

The EASME may request further supporting documents to confirm the operational capacity.

9. AWARD CRITERIA⁴¹

The application will be assessed on the basis of the following award criteria.

A maximum of 100 points will be awarded for the quality of the proposal. The required minimum overall score is 60 points and a minimum score of 50% is required for each criterion (see below).

Proposals will be ranked according to their total score.

<p>1. Relevance of the proposal</p> <p>Max. score – 25 points (minimum required 12,5)</p>	<p><i>The relevance of the proposal to the objectives of the action</i></p> <p>The relevance of the proposal will be assessed on the following basis:</p> <p>Sub-criterion 1.1 - Relevance to the objectives (maximum 15 points)</p> <p>– the extent to which it meets the objectives of the call defined in section 2.1;</p>
---	---

³⁷ Art. 131 Financial Regulation, 202 Rules of Application.

³⁸ To be completed in section II.1 of the application form.

³⁹ To be completed in section II.1 of the application form.

⁴⁰ To be completed in section II.1 of the application form.

⁴¹ Art. 132 Financial Regulation, 203 Rules of Application.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the extent to which it provides clear, measurable and realistic objectives that are achievable within the duration of the project; – the extent to which it will take the National/Regional Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3) and other⁴² relevant strategic roadmaps for research, technology and innovation into consideration as a basis for its actions; – the extent to which the project relates to EU priority areas (such as the Circular Economy⁴³, the Digital Agenda⁴⁴ and the Energy Union and Climate⁴⁵). <p>Sub-criterion 1.2 - Relevance of the activities and expected results (maximum 10 points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the extent to which there is a clear link between the project objectives, the activities proposed and their expected results; – the extent to which it demonstrates how it will address specific challenges of the sea basin with the joint roadmap, the investment plan and demonstration projects; – the extent to which it provides justification for the chosen blue growth domain and activities as proposed in the project proposal; – the extent to which the proposal explains the relevance of the joint roadmap for the sea basin in a mid- to long-term time frame.
<p>2. Complementarity of partners</p> <p>Max. score – 15 points (minimum required 7,5)</p>	<p><i>Adequate composition, competence and complementarity of the project team, including in terms of geographic coverage and experience in regional cooperation</i></p> <p>The complementarity of the partners will be assessed on the following basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the extent to which the partners complement each other in terms of competence and experience in regional cooperation in view of

⁴² http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/smart_specialisation_en.pdf

⁴³ http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/jobs-growth-investment/circular-economy/docs/communication-action-plan-for-circular-economy_en.pdf

⁴⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en>

⁴⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/energy-union/index_en.htm

	<p>delivering the expected results and impacts;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the extent to which the consortium includes relevant public entities involved in the implementation of National/Regional Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3) as well as knowledge providers in order to strengthen the impact of the project at sea basin level; – the extent to which the project actively involves relevant industry/businesses throughout the different project phases; – the extent to which partners complement each other in terms of geographical coverage to achieve the expected results and have an impact at sea basin or sub-sea basin level.
<p>3. Added value</p> <p>Max. score – 25 points (minimum required 12,5)</p>	<p><i>Added value of the project for the sea basin considering the socio-economic situation of that basin, in particular the extent to which the project can increase the competitiveness and the strength of the sea basin and create synergies with existing institutions, bodies and players</i></p> <p>The added value of the proposal will be assessed on the following basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the extent to which it demonstrates the added value of the proposed activities for the development of the blue economy in the sea basin and increase competitiveness of the region; – the extent to which it proposes concrete and effective solutions to accelerate the transfer of research results to the market for the chosen blue growth domain; – the extent to which the proposal describes how the project will impact on the blue growth domain/value chain beyond the project lifetime, especially through the demonstration projects; – the extent to which it intends to realise effective synergies between the different institutions, bodies and players in terms of regional cooperation, research and innovation and industry for the sea basin; – the extent to which the project will enhance complementarities and synergies with relevant projects funded under other EU programmes as well as with other relevant initiatives.

<p>4. Methodology and implementation</p> <p>Max. score – 20 points (minimum required 10)</p>	<p><i>Appropriate and clear methodology ensuring that the project implementation is coherent, realistic and feasible in terms of actions and timetable. Effectiveness of the proposed project organisation and management of resources</i></p> <p>The methodology and implementation of the proposal will be assessed on the following basis:</p> <p>Sub-criterion 4.1 – Methodology (maximum 8 points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the extent to which relevant methods and techniques are proposed that will lead to project specific outputs and solutions; – the extent to which expected results and outputs of the project are clearly identified; – the extent to which appropriate qualitative and/or quantitative indicators have been provided to assess the expected outputs and impacts (short- and long-term) of the project. <p>Sub-criterion 4.2 – Implementation (maximum 12 points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the extent to which there is a clear description of planned activities and appropriate allocation of tasks and resources to be committed to the project including an appropriate balance of tasks and workload between partners to ensure an active commitment towards the successful implementation of the project; – the extent to which the proposed budget is consistent with the actions proposed, sufficiently detailed and that the project is cost-efficient and represents value for money; – the extent to which the project has a coherent and effective work plan, providing a timetable (Gantt Chart or equivalent) clearly showing the progress of each work package including a timetable of deliverables; – the extent to which appropriate management structures and procedures within the consortium (e.g. clear description of management responsibilities, decision-making mechanisms and communication arrangements) are proposed; – the extent to which there is a risk management plan identifying potential risks and providing risk prevention and mitigation
--	---

	measures for each work package.
<p>5. Dissemination, sustainability and transferability</p> <p>Max. score – 15 points (minimum required 7,5)</p>	<p><i>Dissemination, sustainability and transferability of the expected results</i></p> <p><i>This criterion will be assessed on the following basis:</i></p> <p>Sub-criterion 5.1 – Dissemination and transferability (maximum 5 points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the extent to which the proposed plan for dissemination of project results and activities (with a description of appropriate activities, tools and channels) is clear and comprehensive; – the extent to which the steps that the applicant will take to effectively spread the results and benefits of the project to the stakeholders and non-participating audience are clearly identified and elaborated. <p>Sub-criterion 5.2 – Sustainability (maximum 10 points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the extent to which the project outputs have the capacity to achieve a long-lasting impact; – the extent to which the project is designed to facilitate the uptake of key investment priorities and priority projects as identified in the joint roadmap after the project has ended.

The EASME may call upon external experts in support of the evaluation of the proposals.

10. LEGAL COMMITMENTS⁴⁶

In the event of a grant awarded by the EASME, a grant agreement, drawn up in euro and detailing the conditions and level of funding, as well as the procedure in view to formalise the obligations of the parties will be sent to the coordinator.

The 2 copies of the original agreement must be signed first by the beneficiary/coordinator and returned to the EASME immediately. The EASME will sign it last.

Please note that the award of a grant does not establish an entitlement for further support after the end of the project.

⁴⁶ Art. 121 Financial Regulation, 174 Rules of Application.

11. FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

11.1. General principles

a) Non-cumulative award⁴⁷

An action may only receive one grant from the EU budget.

In no circumstances shall the same costs be financed twice by the Union budget. To ensure this, applicants shall indicate the sources and amounts of Union funding received or applied for the same action or part of the action or for its functioning during the same financial year as well as any other funding received or applied for the same action.⁴⁸

b) Non-retroactivity⁴⁹

No grant may be awarded retrospectively for actions already completed.

A grant may be awarded for an action which has already begun only where the applicant can demonstrate the need to start the action before the grant agreement is signed. In such cases, costs eligible for financing may not have been incurred prior to the date of submission of the grant application.

c) Co-financing⁵⁰

Co-financing means that the resources which are necessary to carry out the action may not be entirely provided by the EU grant.

Co-financing of the action may take the form of:

- the beneficiary's and affiliated entities' own resources,
- income generated by the action,
- financial contributions from third parties.

Co-financing may take the form of in-kind contributions from third parties, i.e. non-financial resources made available free of charge by third parties to the beneficiary⁵¹.

d) Balanced budget⁵²

The estimated budget of the action is to be attached to the application form. It must have revenue and expenditure in balance. A model of a budget overview can be found in annex to the application form.

⁴⁷ Art. 129 Financial Regulation.

⁴⁸ Art. 196.4 Rules of Application.

⁴⁹ Art. 130 Financial Regulation.

⁵⁰ Art. 125 Financial Regulation, 183 Rules of Application.

⁵¹ Art.127 Financial Regulation.

⁵² Art. 196.2 Rules of Application.

The budget must be drawn up in euros.

Applicants who foresee that costs will not be incurred in euros, shall use the exchange rate published on the Infor-euro website available at http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro/inforeuro_en.cfm.

e) Implementation contracts/sub-contracting⁵³

Where the implementation of the action requires the award of procurement contracts (implementation contracts), the beneficiary must award the contract to the bid offering best value for money or the lowest price (as appropriate), avoiding conflicts of interests and retain the documentation for the event of an audit.

Entities acting in their capacity of contracting authorities in the meaning of Directive 2004/18/EC⁵⁴ or contracting entities in the meaning of Directive 2004/17/EC⁵⁵ shall abide by the applicable national public procurement rules.

Sub-contracting, i.e. the externalisation of specific tasks or activities which form part of the action as described in the proposal must satisfy the conditions applicable to any implementation contract (as specified above) and in addition to them the following conditions:

- it may only cover the implementation of a limited part of the action;
- it must be justified having regard to the nature of the action and what is necessary for its implementation;
- it must be clearly stated in the proposal.

The beneficiary has the possibility to award contracts to provide services or to assist in the implementation of certain limited activities.

The term “subcontracts” is applied to expenses paid by the beneficiary on the basis of:

- Contracts, and
- Invoices/requests for reimbursement to external service providers who carry out certain tasks or assist in the implementation of certain limited activities for the project because the beneficiary lacks the resources or expertise to carry them out.

N.B. The model grant agreement imposes additional requirements where the value of the contracts necessary for the implementation of the action or subcontracting of tasks forming part of the action exceeds EUR 130.000.

⁵³ Art. 137 Financial Regulation, 209 Rules of Application.

⁵⁴ Directive 2004/18/EC on the coordination of procedures for the award of public work contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts.

⁵⁵ Directive 2004/17/EC coordinating the procurement procedures of entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors.

g) Financial support to third parties

Financial support to third parties is not an eligible expenditure.

11.2. Form of funding⁵⁶

Funding takes the form of mixed financing.

Mixed financing grants are calculated on the basis of a detailed estimated budget indicating clearly the costs that are eligible for EU funding. The grant amount may neither exceed the eligible costs nor the amount requested. Amounts are indicated in euros.

➤ Maximum amount requested

The EU grant is limited to a maximum co-funding rate of **80% of eligible costs** actually incurred.

Consequently, part of the total eligible expenses entered in the estimated budget must be financed from sources other than the EU grant (see section 11.1.c).

➤ Contributions in-kind⁵⁷

The external co-financing may be made up of contributions in-kind from third parties in order to cover other costs necessary to carry out the project. Such contributions must not exceed:

- either the costs actually borne and duly supported by accounting documents;
- or, in the absence of such documents, the costs generally accepted on the market in question.

In-kind contributions shall be presented separately in the estimated budget to reflect the total resources allocated to the action. Their unit value is evaluated in the provisional budget and shall not be subject to subsequent changes.

In-kind contributions shall comply with national tax and social security rules.

➤ Eligible costs⁵⁸

Eligible costs are costs actually incurred by the beneficiary of a grant which meet all the following criteria:

- a) they are incurred during the duration of the action, with the exception of costs relating to final reports;
- b) the period of eligibility of costs will be defined in the grant agreement. If a beneficiary can demonstrate the need to start the action before the agreement is signed, expenditure may be authorised before the grant is awarded. Under no circumstances can the eligibility period start before the date of submission of the grant application (see section 11.1.b);

⁵⁶ Art. 123 Financial Regulation, 181 Rules of Application.

⁵⁷ Art. 127 Financial Regulation.

⁵⁸ Art. 126 Financial Regulation.

- c) they are indicated in the estimated budget of the action;
- d) they are necessary for the implementation of the action;
- e) they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular being recorded in the accounting records of the beneficiary and determined according to the applicable accounting standards of the country where the beneficiary is established and according to the usual cost accounting practices of the beneficiary;
- f) they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation;
- g) they are reasonable, justified, and comply with the requirements of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency.

The beneficiary's internal accounting and auditing procedures must permit direct reconciliation of the costs and revenue declared in respect of the action/project with the corresponding accounting statements and supporting documents.

The same criteria apply to the affiliated entities.

Eligible direct costs

The eligible direct costs for the action are those costs which, **with due regard for the conditions of eligibility set out above**, are identifiable as specific costs directly linked to the performance of the action and which can therefore be booked to it directly:

- the costs of personnel working under an employment contract with the applicant or equivalent appointing act and assigned to the action, comprising actual salaries plus social security contributions and other statutory costs included in the remuneration, provided that these costs are in line with the applicant's usual policy on remuneration. Those costs may include additional remuneration, including payments on the basis of supplementary contracts regardless of their nature, provided that it is paid in a consistent manner whenever the same kind of work or expertise is required and independently from the source of funding used. For the calculation of costs of personnel, the calculation sheet is provided on the EMFF webpage for project implementation;
- costs of the personnel of national administrations to the extent that they relate to the cost of activities which the relevant public authority would not carry out if the project concerned were not undertaken;
- subsistence allowances (for meetings, including kick-off meetings where applicable, conferences etc.) provided that these costs are in line with the beneficiary's usual practices;
- costs of travel (for meetings, including kick-off meetings where applicable, conferences etc.), provided that these costs are in line with the beneficiary's usual practices on travel;
- depreciation cost of equipment (new or second-hand): only the portion of the equipment's depreciation corresponding to the duration of the action/project and the rate of actual use for the purposes of the action may be taken into account;

- costs entailed by subcontracting awarded by the beneficiaries for the purposes of carrying out the action/project, provided that the conditions laid down in the grant agreement are met;
- costs arising directly from requirements linked to the implementation of the action/project (such as dissemination of information, specific evaluation of the action, translations, reproduction);
- value added tax (VAT) in relation to eligible direct costs where it is not recoverable/deductible by the beneficiary;
- contributions in-kind: if necessary to implement the action, the beneficiaries may use in-kind contributions provided by third parties whether against payment or free of charge. If the in-kind contribution is provided against payment, the beneficiaries may declare costs related to the payment of in-kind contributions as eligible, up to the third parties' costs for the seconded persons, contributed equipment, infrastructure or other assets or other contributed goods and services. If the in-kind contribution is provided free of charge, the beneficiaries may declare costs incurred by the third parties for the seconded persons, contributed equipment, infrastructure or other assets or other contributed goods and services as eligible. The third parties and their contributions must be set out in Annex 1. The beneficiaries must ensure that the Agency, the European Court of Auditors (ECA) and the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) can exercise their rights.

N.B. Applicants must envisage in the budget proposal the participation of maximum two representatives of the consortium (including at least one representative of the coordinating organisation) to two project meetings organised at EU level during the project lifetime.

Eligible indirect costs (overheads)

A flat-rate amount of 7% of the total eligible direct costs of the action is eligible under indirect costs, representing the beneficiary's general administrative costs which can be regarded as chargeable to the action/project.

Indirect costs may not include costs entered under another budget heading.

➤ **Ineligible costs**

- return on capital;
- debt and debt service charges;
- provisions for losses or debts;
- interest owed;
- doubtful debts;
- exchange losses;

- costs of transfers charged by the bank of a beneficiary;
- costs declared by a beneficiary and covered by another action receiving a European Union grant. In particular, indirect costs shall not be eligible under a grant for an action awarded to a beneficiary who already receives an operating grant financed from the Union budget during the period in question;
- excessive or reckless expenditure;
- deductible VAT (N.B. VAT is eligible where provided for by the relevant articles of the Financial Regulation⁵⁹).

➤ Calculation of the final grant amount

The final amount of the grant to be awarded to the beneficiary is established after completion of the action, upon approval of the request for payment containing the following documents⁶⁰, including relevant supporting documents where appropriate:

- a final report providing details of the implementation and results of the action;
- a final financial statement of costs actually incurred;
- where applicable, a certificate on the financial statements of the action for each beneficiary.

EU grants may not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit within the framework of the action of the beneficiary. **Profit shall be defined as a surplus of the receipts over the eligible costs incurred by the beneficiary**, when the request is made for payment of the balance. In this respect, where a profit is made, the EASME shall be entitled to recover the percentage of the profit corresponding to the Union contribution to the eligible costs actually incurred by the beneficiary to carry out the action.

11.3. Payment arrangements⁶¹

11.3.1. *Pre-financing payment*

A pre-financing payment⁶² corresponding to 40% of the maximum grant amount will be transferred to the coordinator within 30⁶³ days of the date when the last of the two parties signs the agreement.

⁵⁹ Article 126(3)(c) of the Financial Regulation.

⁶⁰ Art. 135 Financial Regulation.

⁶¹ Art. 90, 135 Financial Regulation, 207 Rules of Application.

⁶² Art. 109, 110 Rules of Application.

⁶³ Art. 92 Financial Regulation.

11.3.2. *Interim payment*

An interim payment⁶⁴ of maximum 40% of the grant amount will be made within 60 days of receipt and approval by the EASME of an interim report on the project implementation including a financial statement and payment claim.

11.3.3. *Final payment*

The EASME will establish the amount of the final payment to be made to the coordinator on the basis of the calculation of the final grant amount (see section 11.2 above). If the total of earlier payments is higher than the final grant amount, the beneficiary will be required to reimburse the amount paid in excess by the EASME through a recovery order⁶⁵.

11.4. Pre-financing guarantee⁶⁶

In the event that the beneficiary is a private entity and its financial capacity is not sufficient, a pre-financing guarantee for up to the same amount as the pre-financing may be requested in order to limit the financial risks linked to the pre-financing payment. This is not necessary where the amount of the pre-financing is up to EUR 60.000 included.

The guarantee may be replaced by a joint and several guarantee by a third party or by a joint guarantee of the beneficiaries of an action who are parties to the same grant agreement.

The guarantee shall be released as the pre-financing is cleared by the payments of balances to the beneficiary, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the grant agreement.

11.5. Reporting requirements

➤ Reporting periods

The coordinator shall submit the following reports to the EASME:

- 1 progress report;
- 1 interim technical implementation report and interim financial statement;
- 1 final technical implementation report and final financial statement.

The progress report shall cover the period from month 1 to month 3 included and be submitted within two weeks of the end of that period.

An interim report is due within 60 days of the end of the 12th month of project implementation and a final report within 60 days of the end of the project.

⁶⁴ Art. 207.1 Rules of Application.

⁶⁵ Art. 109, 110 Rules of Application.

⁶⁶ Art. 134 Financial Regulation, 206 Rules of Application.

➤ **Reporting format and deadline**

The progress report shall be submitted to the EASME in electronic format. It shall explain the progress made on the milestones provided for by the grant agreement. The progress report is requested for project monitoring purposes and does not result in any payment.

The interim and final reports are to be sent to the EASME both electronically as well as in paper form.

The interim report shall detail the work progress and achievements as well as the budget implementation during the reporting period, the outputs delivered, and provide a forecast for the second year of implementation. Deliverables due for the corresponding period should be submitted with the interim report.

The final report shall include an executive summary and shall detail all the actions undertaken, the outputs delivered and the final results achieved, as well as the budget implementation during the reporting period. All final deliverables should be submitted with the final report.

Reports must be submitted by the coordinator in English, using the available reporting templates.

In case deliverables are not available in English, the applicant should provide a short summary in English (maximum 2 pages) together with the corresponding deliverable.

12. PUBLICITY

12.1. By the beneficiary

The beneficiary and its affiliated entities must clearly acknowledge the European Union's contribution in all publications or in conjunction with activities for which the grant is used.

In this respect, the beneficiary and its affiliated entities are required to give prominence to the name and emblem of the European Union on all their publications, posters, programmes and other products realised under the co-financed project.

If this requirement is not fully complied with, the grant may be reduced in accordance with the provisions of the grant agreement.

12.2. By the EASME

With the exception of scholarships paid to natural persons and other direct support paid to natural persons in most need, all information relating to grants awarded in the course of a financial year shall be published on an internet site of the European Union institutions no later than the 30 June of the year following the financial year in which the grants were awarded.

The EASME will publish the following information:

- name of the beneficiary;
- address of the beneficiary when the latter is a legal person, region when the beneficiary is a natural person, as defined on NUTS 2 level⁶⁷ if he/she is domiciled within EU or equivalent if domiciled outside EU;
- subject of the grant;
- amount awarded.

Upon a reasoned and duly substantiated request by the beneficiary, the publication shall be waived if such disclosure risks threatening the rights and freedoms of individuals concerned as protected by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union or harm the commercial interests of the beneficiaries.

13. DATA PROTECTION

The reply to any call involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as name, address and CV). Such data will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the EU institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data. Unless indicated otherwise, the questions and any personal data requested are required to evaluate the application in accordance with the specifications of the call and will be processed solely for that purpose by EASME. Details concerning the processing of personal data are available on the privacy statement at: <http://ec.europa.eu/easme/sites/easme-site/files/privacy-statement-calls-EASME.pdf>.

Personal data may be registered in the Early Warning System (EWS) only or both in the EWS and Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES)⁶⁸ by the Accounting Officer of the Commission, should the beneficiary be in one of the situations mentioned in:

- the Commission Decision 2008/969 of 16.12.2008 on the Early Warning System (for more information see the Privacy Statement on: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm), or
- Article 108 of the Financial Regulation establishing the Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES)⁶⁹ (for more information see the Privacy Statement on http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm).

⁶⁷ European Union Official Journal L 39, of 10 February 2007.

⁶⁸ Art 108 of Regulation 2015/1929 of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation n°966/2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, OJ L 286 of 30.10.2015, p.1.

⁶⁹ Art 108 of Regulation 2015/1929 of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation n°966/2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, OJ L 286 of 30.10.2015, p.1.

14. PROCEDURE FOR ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

14.1. Evaluation Review procedure

Unsuccessful applicants may request the review of the evaluation procedure of their proposals within one month after the dispatch of the communication to the applicants of the evaluation results. In case of proposals submitted on behalf of a consortium of applicants, the request must be raised by the coordinator.

The scope of the review will be limited to procedural aspects of the evaluation which includes procedural errors, factual errors, and manifest errors of assessment of the evaluation.

An internal Review Committee will be convened to examine each case. It is out of the scope of the Committee to review the merits of the proposal. The role of the Committee is also not to call into question the judgement of appropriately qualified experts and therefore it does not cover assessment by these experts with relation to the evaluation criteria.

The Committee provides specialist opinions on the implementation of the evaluation process on the basis of all the available information related to the proposal and its evaluation in the form of a report with recommendations on line of action for each request. In the light of its review, the Committee will recommend a course of action to the responsible authorising officer. Three recommendations are foreseen: (i) that the complaint is rejected as unfounded; (ii) that the complaint is upheld but the problem concerned did not jeopardise the decision whether or not to fund the proposal; (iii) that the complaint is upheld and a re-evaluation is recommended.

In all cases, a reply will be sent to the applicant within two weeks (ten working days) of the date of reception of the request for review. The Committee shall inform the applicant about the result of the evaluation review at the latest 2 months after the meeting of the Committee.

14.2. Admissibility and Eligibility Review procedure

Any unsuccessful applicant may request a review within 30 days from the date of the rejection letter by the Agency. The rejection letter shall indicate the means for submission of the request for review.

Complaints on failed submission proposals due to an online submission system fault have to be submitted through the IT Helpdesk within 4 calendar days from the call closure date.

The scope of the review will be limited to assess the fulfilment of either admissibility or eligibility criteria as laid down in the call for proposals.

An internal Admissibility and Eligibility Review Committee will be convened to examine each case. The Committee provides specialist opinions in the form of a report with recommendations on line of action for each request. In the light of its review, the Committee will recommend a course of action to the responsible authorising officer. Three recommendations are foreseen: (i) that the complaint is not eligible for

admissibility/eligibility review; (ii) that the complaint is rejected as unfounded; (iii) that the complaint is founded, which may lead to the evaluation of the proposals/the participation in the action.

15. PROCEDURE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

The proposal must be submitted in accordance with the formal requirements and by the deadline set in section 5.

No modification to the application is allowed once the deadline for submission has elapsed. However, if there is a need to clarify certain aspects or for the correction of clerical mistakes, the EASME may contact the applicant for this purpose during the evaluation process⁷⁰.

Applicants will be informed in writing about the result of the selection process⁷¹.

The application form, annexes and relevant documents can be found at:

<https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/european-maritime-and-fisheries-fund>

➤ **Submission on paper**

Applicants are requested to send their complete application according to the procedure below.

The application must contain the following documents:

- Grant application form (including declaration of honour);
- Estimated budget of the action (budget form);
- Information on the applicants:
 - documents as specified in section 8
 - a Legal Entity Form and supporting documents (section 6.2.5)
 - a Financial Identification Form (only by the coordinator of the consortium)

The application shall be submitted on the correct form, duly completed, dated, showing a balanced budget (revenue/expenditure), submitted in 2 copies (one original clearly identified as such, plus 1 copy), and signed by the person authorised to enter into legally binding commitments on behalf of the applicant organisation. Before submission, please make sure to carefully check the last page of the application form, which provides the checklist of all documents to be submitted with the application.

The paper version of the application will legally constitute the application. The envelope of the paper version must clearly state the reference of the Call (EASME/EMFF/2016/1.2.1.3). It must be submitted in a sealed envelope and must be either⁷²:

- sent **by registered mail**, posted or dispatched no later than **30th September 2016** to the address indicated below:

⁷⁰ Art. 96 Financial Regulation.

⁷¹ Art. 133 Financial Regulation, 205 Rules of Application.

⁷² Art. 195.3 Rules of Application.

European Commission
EASME
Unit A3 – EMFF
Ref. EASME/EMFF/2016/1.2.1.3 – Blue Technology
Place Madou 1
B-1049 Brussels

In this case, the evidence of the date of dispatch shall be constituted by the postmark.

- **delivered by hand** (by the applicant in person or by an agent), or sent **by courier service**, posted or dispatched no later than **30th September 2016 at 16.00, Brussels time** to the address indicated below:

European Commission
EASME
Unit A3 – EMFF
Mail Service
Ref. EASME/EMFF/2016/1.2.1.3 – Blue Technology
Avenue du Bourget 1
B-1140 Brussels

In case of submission by courier service, the evidence of the date of dispatch shall be constituted by the date of dispatch on the deposit slip.

In case of hand delivery by the applicant, a receipt must be obtained as proof of submission, signed and dated by the official in the Commission's central mail department who takes delivery. The department is open from 08.00 to 17.00 from Monday to Thursday, and from 8.00 to 16.00 on Fridays. It is closed on Saturdays, Sundays and Commission holidays.

Applications sent by fax will not be accepted.

➤ **Electronic copy**

In addition to the submission on paper, the applicant is requested to submit an electronic copy of the proposal and all its annexes on a CD-ROM or USB-stick in the same envelope as the paper version.

➤ **Contacts**

Requests for further information shall be sent by e-mail to EASME-EMFF-calls@ec.europa.eu indicating as subject title "2016/1.2.1.3 - Blue Technology".

Such questions, together with their answers, if of a general interest, will be published at:

<https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/european-maritime-and-fisheries-fund>

In addition, important information for the applicants may, if need be, be published on this website. Applicants are thus strongly recommended to consult this website regularly.

➤ **Annexes to this call for proposals**

- Application form⁷³ (with checklist of documents to be provided)
- Financial capacity table
- Model grant agreement for multi-beneficiary projects including:
 - Special Conditions
 - General Conditions (hereinafter referred to as “the General Conditions”) (Annex II to the GA)
 - Mandate (Annex IV to the GA)
- Estimated budget of the action (Annex III to the GA)

➤ **Templates to be downloaded and completed**

- Legal entity form

All applicants (Coordinator and partner(s)) must fill in the "Legal entity form" available at the following address:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm

- Financial identification form

The "Financial identification form" available at the following address shall be completed **only by the coordinator of the consortium**:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/financial_id/financial_id_en.cfm

➤ **Templates to be used for reporting during project implementation**

- Model technical reports (Annex V to the GA): progress report, interim report and final report
- Model financial statement (Annex VI to the GA) and model terms of reference for the certificate on the financial statements (Annex VII to the GA)
- Model Report on the Distribution of the EU Final Financial Contribution (Annex IX to the GA)
- Model for external audit certificate
- Form for calculation of staff costs

These templates can be downloaded by applicants for reference at the following address:

<https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/european-maritime-and-fisheries-fund>

⁷³ The application will become Annex I of the grant agreement once approved by the EASME.