



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
**Thematic Routes on Underwater Cultural
Heritage**

EMFF Work Programme 2015

EASME/EMFF/2015/1.2.1.8

Call for Proposal – EASME/EMFF/2015/1.2.1.8

Thematic Routes on Underwater Cultural Heritage

1. INTRODUCTION – BACKGROUND

The Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, hereafter referred to as "EASME", is launching a call for proposals under the powers delegated by the European Commission (also referred to as "the Commission") with a view to concluding grant agreements, each valid for a maximum period of 18 months, for the conduction of projects in the field of thematic routes on underwater cultural heritage.

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

This call is launched in accordance with the 2015 Work Programme for the Implementation of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)¹ (section 1.2.1.8. 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 that is covered by this call for proposals forms part of the EMFF Work Programme, whose implementation is delegated to the Executive Agency for Small and medium-sized Enterprises (EASME).

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

1.3. Background

1.3.1. European policy framework

The Lisbon Treaty provides a new framework which allows the Commission to undertake measures in order to complement the action of the Member States in the tourism sector, in particular by:

- a) Encouraging the creation of a favourable environment for the development of undertakings in this sector;

¹ Annex to the Commission Implementing Decision concerning the adoption of the work programme for 2015 and the financing for the implementation of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (C(2014) 9794 final), of 18 December 2014, section 1.2.1.7.

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.

- b) Promoting cooperation between the Member States, particularly by the exchange of good practice.

Within this context, in its **2014 Communication on "A European Strategy for more Growth and Jobs in Coastal and Maritime Tourism"**³, the Commission has identified 14 actions which can help the sector grow sustainably and provide added stimulus to Europe's coastal regions.

Among these measures, Action 11 stated that the Commission will "encourage the diversification and integration of coastal and inland attractors, including through transnational thematic itineraries like cultural, religious and ancient trade routes". The Commission also "invites Member States, regional and local authorities and industry to develop cultural heritage based tourism, underwater archaeological parks (based on work done by UNESCO), and nature and health tourism in coastal destinations".

As competition in tourism is now worldwide, the EU has to develop innovative and competitive products to attract tourists who are no longer only looking for the "sea and sun" option. Thus, the Strategy for Coastal and Maritime Tourism encourages EU Member States, local and regional authorities and the tourism sector to develop more targeted products, offering unique experiences to customers. The EU maritime heritage offers a competitive advantage in comparison to the rest of the world. Unfolding the potential of our natural and cultural heritage as a touristic attraction requires us to first and foremost ensure its protection for the future generations.

1.3.2 Specific international policy framework

The **UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage**⁴ (hereafter referred as "The Convention"), adopted in 2001, defines "underwater cultural heritage" as

(a) all traces of human existence having a cultural, historical or archaeological character which have been partially or totally under water, periodically or continuously, for at least 100 years such as:

(i) sites, structures, buildings, artefacts and human remains, together with their archaeological and natural context;

(ii) vessels, aircrafts, other vehicles or any part thereof, their cargo or other contents, together with their archaeological and natural context; and

(iii) objects of prehistoric character.

(b) Pipelines and cables placed on the seabed shall not be considered as underwater cultural heritage.

³ COM (2014) 86 final – 20.02.2014

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/coastal_tourism/documents/com_2014_86_en.pdf

⁴ <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/underwater-cultural-heritage/2001-convention/>

(c) Installations other than pipelines and cables, placed on the seabed and still in use, shall not be considered as underwater cultural heritage."

Underwater cultural heritage encompasses wrecks, ruins, submerged landscapes, caves and wells and traces of marine exploitation. This heritage is a testimony of our past history and reflects that seas and water were a platform of exchange and intercultural dialogue between different regions of the globe.

The Convention sets out basic principles for the protection of underwater cultural heritage. It provides a detailed State cooperation system and provides widely recognized practical rules for the treatment and research of underwater cultural heritage.

The Convention consists of a main text and an annex, which sets out the "Rules for activities directed at underwater cultural heritage". The main principles are the following ones:

- **Obligation to Preserve Underwater Cultural Heritage** - States Parties should preserve underwater cultural heritage and take action accordingly. This does not mean that ratifying States would necessarily have to undertake archaeological excavations; they only have to take measures according to their capabilities. The Convention encourages scientific research and public access.
- **In Situ Preservation as first option** - The in situ preservation of underwater cultural heritage (i.e. in its original location on the seafloor) should be considered as the first option before allowing or engaging in any further activities. The recovery of objects may, however, be authorized for the purpose of making a significant contribution to the protection or knowledge of underwater cultural heritage.
- **No Commercial Exploitation** - The Convention stipulates that underwater cultural heritage should not be commercially exploited for trade or speculation, and that it should not be irretrievably dispersed. This regulation is in conformity with the moral principles that already apply to cultural heritage on land. It is not to be understood as preventing archaeological research or tourist access.
- **Training and Information Sharing** - States Parties shall cooperate and exchange information, promote training in underwater archaeology and promote public awareness regarding the value and importance of Underwater Cultural Heritage.

1.4. Cultural thematic routes

Transnational thematic tourism products and services are an important niche market with a large growth potential (e.g. cultural routes crossing several countries, industrial heritage sites in various Member States). Whilst recognising the important role Member States play in developing and implementing strategies for tourism at national and regional level, the Union should help the development and promotion of transnational tourism products which embody common European shared values and heritage and promote Europe as a "unique tourism destination".

These considerations have already led to the launch of calls for proposals⁵ as well as EU flagship initiatives such as the European Heritage Days⁶ and the European Heritage Label⁷. It is the intention of the Commission to capitalise on those initiatives and look for synergies with similar or complementary initiatives undertaken by other International and European Organisations, such as the "Cultural Routes" program of the Council of Europe (CoE)⁸ and the UNESCO world heritage sites⁹.

2. OBJECTIVES– THEMES –ACTIVITIES

2.1 General and specific objectives

General objectives

The general objective of this action is to promote the creation of touristic thematic routes on underwater cultural heritage and its preservation as a way to promote the competitiveness of the coastal and maritime tourism sector and to promote diversification in tourism offer.

The present Call for Proposals aims at awarding grants for two to three projects aiming at the conception, development, establishment and promotion of a tourism product in the field of underwater cultural heritage routes in European sea-basins.

DEFINITIONS

- Tourism Product: For the purposes of this call, a “tourism product” represents a combination of different aspects (characteristics of the places visited, modes of transport, types of accommodation, specific activities at destination, etc.) around a specific centre of interest, such as nature tours, visits to inland attractors and rural areas, visits to historical and cultural sites, visits to a particular city, the practice of specific sports, the beach, etc. This notion of “tourism product” is not related to the concept of “product” used in economic statistics, but rather to that used by professionals in the tourism business to market specific packages or destinations. It is then possible to speak of specific types of “tourism products”, such as cultural heritage tourism, ecotourism, city tourism, agro-tourism, health tourism, winter tourism, etc.

- Product Development: For the purposes of this call, “product development” refers to the process that includes all activities needed to provide a set of tourism services to meet the tourists' needs, excluding the launching of the product into the market.

⁵ See Guide on EU funding for the tourism sector (2014-2020) <http://ec.europa.eu/DocsRoom/documents/9501>

⁶ <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/ehd-jep/home>

⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/heritage-label/index_en.htm

⁸ www.coe.int/routes

⁹ <http://whc.unesco.org/>

Specific objectives

This call aims at realising the following specific objectives:

- Support the extension of the tourism season, hence contributing to improve SMEs' competitiveness and jobs growth;
- Foster synergies between tourism and culture related activities and increase the impact on the local economy and people;
- Foster transnational cooperation among various actors along the tourism value chain with regard to underwater cultural heritage;
- Encourage diversification of the supply of European sustainable and cultural tourism products and services by the development of sustainable transnational underwater cultural heritage thematic tourism products;
- Reinforce market uptake and visibility of attractive sustainable European transnational underwater cultural heritage tourism offer;
- Valorise better the European natural and cultural underwater heritage and its potential for the further development of the tourism sector;
- Improve the preservation and promotion of underwater cultural heritage;
- Encourage the promotion of underwater cultural heritage routes to the public.

2.2. Themes

For the purpose of this call, the underwater cultural heritage route must develop a theme which satisfies all of the following criteria:

1. The theme must be representative of European values and common to at least two countries as defined in section 6.1;
2. The theme must be illustrative of European memory, history and heritage and contribute to an interpretation of the diversity of present-day Europe;
3. The theme must permit the development of initiatives, exemplary projects and awareness rising in the field of cultural tourism, preservation and promotion of natural heritage and sustainable cultural development;
4. The theme must allow for the development of tourist products in partnership with tourist agencies, oceanographic museums and various types of operators aimed at different publics.

For the purpose of this call, the cultural thematic routes should be a newly developed tourism product.

Proposals can be based on underwater cultural heritage that can be found at sea (i.e. including scuba diving activities and other water sports) or on land (i.e. museum where the "underwater cultural heritage" is exhibited and explained to public).

2.3 Activities and results

Projects must undertake the following activities and achieve at least the following results as a direct and immediate consequence of the project implementation:

- Elaborate (a) tourism product(s) tailored for underwater cultural heritage routes;
- Develop and test a long term strategy for self-sustainable underwater cultural heritage tourism products, including a communication and marketing strategy of the tourism products;
- Establish a mechanism to encourage a better cooperation among different actors of the tourism value chain;
- Establish specific and measurable indicators to evaluate and monitor the results of the product and measure the impact on tourism flows.

Projects should also aim at demonstrating the following additional results (this list is non-exhaustive and only aiming at providing guidance to applicants):

- Professionalization of tourism service providers in this specific market;
- Improve knowledge of the underwater cultural heritage tourism market;
- Strengthen awareness-raising of Europe as a sustainable, high quality and safe destination;
- Propose an efficient system/model of socio-economic incentives to ensure the sustainability of the project after the EU co-financing period.

3. TIMETABLE

The indicative planning is:

	Stages	Date and time or indicative period
a)	Publication of the call	November 2015
b)	Deadline for submitting applications	15 th March 2016
c)	Evaluation period	April-May 2016
d)	Information to applicants	June 2016

e)	Signature of grant agreement	July 2016
j)	Starting date of the action	August 2016

Implementation period

The activities shall start on the first day of the month following the signature of the grant agreement or on a specified date by the last of both parties and will last for a total duration of 12 to 18 months. However, the total duration may be extended by EASME for duly justified reasons.

4. BUDGET AVAILABLE

The total budget earmarked for the co-financing of projects amounts to € 195.000. This budget might be increased under exceptional circumstances by up to 20%.

The EASME expects to fund two to three proposals.

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

5. ADMISSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Applications must be sent no later than the deadline for submitting applications indicated in section 3.
- Applications must be submitted in writing using the application form provided in annex to this Call for Proposals¹⁰.
- Applications must be drafted in one of the EU official languages. However, drafting in English would speed up the evaluation process.

Failure to comply with these requirements will lead to the rejection of the application.

6. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA¹¹

6.1 Geographical eligibility

A/ Applicants must be established in:

- a) an EU Member state or
- b) a non-EU country participating in the EU macro-regional strategies¹² or sea-basin strategies.

¹⁰ Art. 131 Financial Regulation.

¹¹ Art. 131 Financial Regulation, 201 Rules of Application.

B/ To be eligible, the proposal must include applicants from at least 2 different eligible countries as defined in 6.1 A/, of which at least one must be an EU member state.

Entities established in a third country, other than those above, may participate in the action. However, these entities shall not be entitled to receive Union financial support. Moreover, these entities will not be taken into consideration for determining the minimum requirements relating to the size and nature of each consortium.

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 organisations¹³, they must be constituted under international law. Natural persons are not eligible as applicant for the purpose of the present call.

2. Applicants must be active in the following fields: tourism, maritime affairs or any other field if their relevance for the proposal is duly justified.

Examples of potential applicants are:

- Public authorities and their networks or associations at European, international, national, regional and local level or organisations acting on behalf of a public authority;
- Training or education institutions including universities, research centres;
- Museums, in particular maritime and oceanographic museums;
- Chambers of commerce and industry, chambers of handicrafts or similar bodies and their umbrella associations;
- Destination management organisations and their networks/associations;
- Travel agents and tour operators and their umbrella associations;
- Non-profit organisations (private or public), NGOs, civil society organisations, foundations, think-tanks, networks or federations of public or private bodies, whose core activity falls in the following fields: tourism, regional development or any other field that is related to the subject of the proposal (e.g. sports or culture related organisations);
- International, European and national organisations/associations active in the field of cultural tourism in Europe and related fields;

¹² Participating in the Adriatic-Ionian macro regional strategy: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia.

¹³ 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.

- Federations and associations operating in partnership across the borders of a number of countries with a proven cross-border outreach operating in the field of tourism, maritime affairs culture or sport;
- Small and Medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) active in the tourism sector;
- National, regional, local tourism organisations, public and private agencies related to tourism promotion, etc.

3/ In case no public authority¹⁴ is member of the consortium, the proposal must contain a letter of support to the project idea and to the activities proposed, delivered by a public national/or regional governmental authority of the eligible country, namely a Ministry at national level or a Ministry at regional level in charge of tourism and/or regional development, or of any other area which is in relation to the object of the proposal will be considered as an added value for the proposal, testifying that the project has the support of public authorities.

4/ 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.

6.3 Eligibility conditions for consortia

1. Proposals must be submitted by a consortium of organisations. One of these organisations must act as the consortium coordinator, while the others will act as partners.
2. The consortium must consist of a **minimum of three organisations**.
3. The consortium must comprise at least:
 - a) **one SME** – a small or medium-sized enterprise - **active in the tourism sector**.

For the purpose of the present call, SMEs that are part of the consortium must be active in one of the following fields:

- tourist accommodation;
- catering;
- travel agencies and tour operators;
- touristic attractions;

¹⁴ For the purpose of this Call for Proposals, "public authority" refers to any political institution with administrative authority (e.g. a ministry, a regional or municipal department) or an executive body (e.g. an agency) which performs public service work with a mandate from a political institution.

- leisure (recreational, cultural and sporting) activities;
- tourism related transport;
- other tourism related fields if their relevance for the project proposal is duly justified by the applicant.

SMEs active in other areas (e.g. in the fields of media, ICT development and others) can be involved in the project as subcontractors (see point 11.1.e), or as partners if they fulfil the requirements mentioned above.

- b) **one public entity** (e.g. national, regional, local administration, research institutes, universities, etc.) active in the field of tourism, maritime affairs, regional development, or any other field of direct relevance and duly justified for the proposal.

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 should be provided with the application of compliance with the above criteria.

6.4 Eligible activities

In order to realise the objectives listed in the section 2.1, projects must develop the following "core" activities:

1. Design and develop a transnational cultural underwater heritage tourism product.
2. Run a pilot test to validate the transnational underwater heritage tourism product concept.
3. Measure and evaluate the test results and gather the lessons learned.

The following additional possible activities are eligible for funding provided that applicants clearly motivate the choice and demonstrate that the activities are necessary to reinforce the above mentioned activities:

- Underwater cultural heritage market analysis, surveys, comparative analysis, evidence-gathering, studies;
- Discussion platforms, focus groups, fora, workshops, exchange of good practices, conferences, seminars, awareness raising events;

- Networking and partnering activities;
- Comparative analysis of the quality of existing underwater cultural tourism services provided, definition of common quality criteria or recommendations for such services, etc.;
- Measures to create synergies with European/UNESCO/Council of Europe initiatives and transnational programs and policies (e.g. Macro-regional strategies, twinning policies between cities).

This list is non-exhaustive and only aims at providing guidance to applicants. Applicants may propose any other action they deem necessary to achieve the objectives of the call provided that they justify their choice and clearly describe the link between the proposed actions and the objectives they want to achieve.

In order to ensure a clear structure of the project, applicants are requested to divide the actions into work packages, having clear objectives, a clear description of the work, deliverables, milestones, and expected results measured by performance indicators.

7 EXCLUSION CRITERIA

7.1 Exclusion from participation:

Applicants will be excluded from participating in this call for proposals if they are in any of the following situations:

- (a) they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations as referred in Art. 106 (1) (a) FR;
- (b) they or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment of a competent authority of a Member State which has the force of res judicata as referred in Art. 106 (1) (b) FR;
- (c) they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify including by decisions of the EIB and international organisations;
- (d) they are not in compliance with their obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the RAO or those of the country where the grant agreement is to be performed as referred in Art. 106(1)(d) FR;

- (e) they or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation, money laundering or any other illegal activity, where such an illegal activity is detrimental to the Union's financial interests as referred in Art. 106 (1) (e) FR;
- (f) they are currently subject to an administrative penalty referred to in Article 109(1) FR.

The same exclusion criteria apply to affiliated entities.

7.2 Exclusion from award:

Applicants will not be granted financial assistance if, in the course of the grant award procedure, they:

- (g) are subject to a conflict of interest as referred in Art. 107.1 FR;
- (h) are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the EASME as a condition of participation in the grant award procedure or fail to supply this information;
- (i) find themselves in one of the situations of exclusion, referred to in section 7.1.

The same exclusion criteria apply to affiliated entities.

Administrative and financial penalties may be imposed on applicants, or affiliated entities where applicable, who are guilty of misrepresentation.

7.3 Supporting documents¹⁵

Applicants and where relevant, their affiliated entities, must sign a declaration on their honour certifying that they are not in one of the situations referred to in articles 106(1) and 107 to 109 FR, filling in the relevant form attached to the application form accompanying the call for proposals. The EASME reserves the right to request evidence of the above.

¹⁵ Art. 197 RAP

8. SELECTION CRITERIA

8.1 Financial capacity

Applicants must 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.

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

- A) Grant value is \leq EUR 60 000:
- a declaration of honour (to be provided by each of the applicants concerned)
- B) Grant value is \geq EUR 60 000:
- a declaration of honour (to be provided by each of the applicants), AND

For public entities and international organisations:

- On the basis of article 131(3) FR 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.

For all other applicants:

For all other applicants that are not public entities or international organisations, the financial capacity will be assessed on the basis of the following supporting documents to be submitted with the application:

- the profit and loss account, the balance sheet for the past 2 years for which the accounts were closed;
- for newly created entities, the business plan might replace the above documents;
- the financial capacity table provided for in the grant application form, filled in with the relevant statutory accounting figures, in order to calculate the ratios as detailed in the form.

The above thresholds apply by applicant taking part in the consortium.

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;
- or reject the application.

8.2 Operational capacity

Applicants must have the professional competencies as well as appropriate qualifications necessary to complete the proposed actions. 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;
- where appropriate, a description of the technical equipment, tools or facilities and patents at the disposal of the applicant;
- in addition, the consortium as a whole, must have demonstrated experience in the areas related to one of the fields as specified in Section 6.2.2 and adequate technical (human resources, equipment, etc.) capacity to implement the respective actions.

Public authorities operating in the fields listed in section 6.2.2 do not need to provide evidence of their operational capacity.

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

9 AWARD CRITERIA

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 minimum overall score required is 70 points and the minimum for each criterion is 50% of the points assigned for that criterion.

Proposals will be ranked according to their total score.

Award criteria	Maximum Score
<p>Technical coherence - Relevance (minimum required 15 points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The applicant should describe clearly and comprehensively how the proposed actions, the pilot test and its expected results meet the objectives described under Section 2. - The proposal should ensure coherence with EU Strategy for more Growth and Jobs for coastal and maritime tourism and with the 2001 UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage. - The proposal should convincingly elaborate the following aspects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status quo (SWOT or similar) analysis of the current situation; • Identification of the needs the project wants to address; • Description of and reasons for the chosen solution as proposed in the project proposal; -The proposal should describe the extent to which the outputs are likely to lead to clear and tangible results. 	30
<p>Technical coherence - Methodology and organisation of work (minimum required 15 points)</p> <p>Applicants should demonstrate the coherence and effectiveness of the work plan.</p> <p>Applicants should demonstrate the rationale of the proposed methodology and organisation (including the timetable, structure in work packages and monitoring) in view of reaching the project objectives and outputs.</p> <p>The expected results of the project should be clearly described and they should be quantifiable and measurable. The proposal should indicate how the results can be measured (i.e. which indicators and sources can be used to measure the results, also after the end of the project).</p> <p>The proposal should clearly elaborate on the following aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortcomings and specific needs to be addressed; • Logical link between identified needs, specific objectives, proposed actions and expected results; 	30

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complementarity or continuity of the project with other actions being taken (if any) by the applicants. 	
<p>Technical coherence - Project management (minimum required 7,5 points)</p> <p>Applicants should demonstrate the appropriateness of the management structures and cooperation procedures put in place to implement the project.</p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an appropriate coordination mechanism amongst the consortium members and a clear identification of their roles and responsibilities in the project - an efficient management structure , involving staff with the necessary competences - a clear distribution of work between partners and their respective staff members 	15
<p>Cost effectiveness (minimum required 7,5 points)</p> <p>Applicants should demonstrate the relevance and quality of the means of implementation and the resources deployed in relation to the objectives envisaged, particularly in terms of cost-effectiveness.</p> <p>Applicants shall provide a detailed budget and demonstrate that the breakdown of the budget by work package, category by category, offers a way of ensuring that the amount of the grant requested is the minimum necessary for the operation to be completed.</p> <p>Applicants shall also provide an estimation of costs and revenues and financial effectiveness, for the chosen solution in the medium term as wells as a business plan in view of the period after the EU co-financing.</p>	15
<p>Innovation, transferability, sustainability and visibility (minimum required 5 points)</p> <p>Proposals should aim at the creation of successful tourism products and services, which have excellent marketing potential, are attractive and interesting for travellers and operators, and can continue after the end of the project period.</p> <p>Applicants should describe their communication and marketing plan and how they intend to ensure that the created underwater cultural heritage itinerary is known by tourists</p> <p>Applicants should demonstrate the transferability of the project to other sea basins and how the results of the project can be disseminated and optimally used by others.</p> <p>The applicant should describe added value in terms of innovation</p>	10

<p>and stimulation of best practices.</p> <p>The proposed action should have a real transnational dimension and demonstrate a European added value. A consortium covering more than the minimum number of eligible countries (see Section 6.2) would be considered as an added value to the project</p> <p>The applicants should demonstrate the sustainability of the project and should therefore provide an estimation of the impact of the proposed actions on the local economies of targeted areas.</p>	
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The EASME may call upon external experts in support of the evaluation of the proposal.

10. LEGAL COMMITMENTS¹⁶

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, will be sent to the coordinator as well as the procedure in view to formalise the obligations of the parties.

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.

11. FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

11.1 General principles

a) Non-cumulative award¹⁷

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.¹⁸

b) Non-retroactivity¹⁹

No grant may be awarded retrospectively for actions already completed.

¹⁶ Art. 121 Financial Regulation, 174 Rules of Application.

¹⁷ Art. 129 Financial Regulation.

¹⁸ Art. 196.4 Rules of Application.

¹⁹ Art. 130 Financial Regulation.

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 or the grant decision is notified.

In such cases, costs eligible for financing may not have been incurred prior to the date of submission of the grant application.

c) Co-financing²⁰

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 or of the work programme 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 also 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 beneficiary.²¹ The corresponding costs are not eligible.

d) Balanced budget²²

The estimated budget of the action is to be attached to the application form. It must have revenue and expenditure in balance.

The budget must be drawn up in euros.

If the applicant foresees that costs will not be incurred in euros, it is invited to use the exchange rate published in the Official Journal of the European Union on the website available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro/inforeuro_en.cfm .

e) Implementation contracts/sub-contracting²³

Implementation contracts are intended to cover the purchase of services and/or goods, equipment etc. necessary for the implementation of the action.

Sub-contracting implies one or several applicants hiring a contractor following the applicants' internal procurement procedures, in order to carry out specific tasks or activities which form part of the action as described in the proposal (see also general conditions of the grant agreement).

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),

²⁰ Art. 125 Financial Regulation, 183 Rules of Application.

²¹ Art. 127 Financial Regulation.

²² Art. 196.2 Rules of Application.

²³ Art. 137 Financial Regulation, 209 Rules of Application.

avoiding conflicts of interests and retain the documentation for the event of an audit.

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.

f) Financial support to third parties

Financial support to third parties is not an eligible expenditure.

11.2 Form of funding²⁴

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**.

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

➤ **Contributions in kind²⁵**

The external co-financing may be made up of contributions in kind 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 costs²⁶**

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

²⁴ Art. 123 Financial Regulation, 181 Rules of Application.

²⁵ Art. 127 Financial Regulation.

²⁶ Art. 126 Financial Regulation.

- ✓ they are incurred during the duration of the action, with the exception of costs relating to final reports and audit certificates;

The period of eligibility of costs will start as specified in the grant agreement. If the 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 11.1b).

- ✓ they are indicated in the estimated budget of the action;
- ✓ they are necessary for the implementation of the action which is the subject of the grant;
- ✓ 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;
- ✓ they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation;
- ✓ 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 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, such as:

- 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;
- 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,

- costs of consumables and supplies, provided that they are identifiable and assigned to the action/project;
- Depreciation costs of equipment (new or second-hand): only the portion of the equipment's depreciation corresponding to the duration of the action and rate of actual use for the purposes of the action may be taken into account by the EASME;
- costs entailed by implementation contracts awarded by the beneficiaries for the purposes of carrying out the action, provided that the conditions laid down in the grant agreement are met;
- costs arising directly from requirements linked to the implementation of the action;
- costs relating to external audits where required in support of the requests for payments;
- value added tax (VAT) in relation to eligible direct costs where it not recoverable by the beneficiary.

N.B. Project Kick-off meeting: Applicants must foresee, in the budget proposal of the project, the participation of maximum two representatives of the project consortium (including at least one representative of the coordinator organisation) at the kick-off meeting in Brussels, organised by EASME, at the beginning of the implementation period.

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.

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

The applicant's attention is drawn to the fact that in the case it is receiving an operating grant from the EU budget, indirect costs are not eligible under this specific action.

➤ Ineligible costs

- return on capital;
- debt and debt service charges;
- provisions for losses or debts;
- interest owed;
- doubtful debts;
- exchange losses;
- costs of transfers from the Agency 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;
- contributions in kind
- excessive or reckless expenditure;
- others (in accordance with the relevant legal base);
- deductible VAT.

➤ 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 documents²⁷, including relevant supporting documents where appropriate:

- a final report providing details of the implementation and results of the action ;
- the final financial statement of costs actually incurred;
- where applicable, a certificate on the financial statements of the action and underlying accounts²⁸.

The EU grant 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 arrangements²⁹

A pre-financing payment³⁰ corresponding to 60% of the grant amount will be transferred to the coordinator within 30³¹ days of the date when the last of the two parties signs the agreement.

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 order³².

²⁷ Art. 135 Financial Regulation.

²⁸ Art. 207.3 Rules of Application.

²⁹ Art. 90, 135 Financial Regulation, 207 Rules of Application.

³⁰ Art. 109, 110 Rules of Application.

³¹ Art. 92 Financial Regulation

³² Art. 109, 110 Rules of Application.

11.4 Pre-financing guarantee³³

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 below € 60.000.

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 as the payments of balances to the beneficiary, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the grant agreement.

11.5. Reporting requirements

The coordinator shall submit the following reports to the EASME

- 1 technical progress report, in the month following the mid-term of the project
- 1 technical final implementation report and financial statement within two months of the end of the project,

Reports must be submitted by the coordinator in English.

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 Commission and EASME 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.

³³ Art. 134 Financial Regulation, 206 Rules of Application.

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 level³⁴ 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 terms of reference 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 terms of reference 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 Central Exclusion Database (CED) 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

- the Commission Regulation 2008/1302 of 17.12.2008 on the Central Exclusion Database (for more information see the Privacy Statement on http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm)

³⁴ European Union Official Journal L 39, of 10 February 2007.

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 neither 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 out under sections 3.

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 process³⁵. Apart from the latter, no further communication will take place with applicants after the submission deadline

The applicant will be informed in writing about the result of the selection process³⁶.

➤ Submission on paper

The application form is provided in annex to these Terms of Reference.

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 annex 1a of the application form, which provides the checklist i all documents to be submitted with the application.

Where applicable, all additional information considered necessary by the applicant can be included on separate sheets.

The application must be sent to the following address³⁷:

a) by registered mail (date as postmark):

European Commission
EASME
Ref.: EASME/EMFF/2015/1.2.1.8
Unit A3 – EMFF
Madou
Place Madou, 1
B-1210 - Saint-Josse-Ten-Noode, Brussels

³⁵ Art. 96 Financial Regulation.

³⁶ Art. 133 Financial Regulation, 205 Rules of Application.

³⁷ Art. 195.3 Rules of Application.

Or:

b) Express delivery service or hand-deliver against signature (date as receipt):

European Commission
EASME
Ref.:EASME/EMFF/2015/1.2.1.8.
Unit A3 – EMFF
Mail Service
Avenue du Bourget 1
B-1140 Bruxelles

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 "Thematic Routes on Underwater Cultural Heritage".

➤ Annexes

Application form³⁸ (Annex 1a with checklist of documents to be provided)

- Financial capacity statement (Annex 1b)

Model Grant Agreement for multi-beneficiary projects

- Annex II General Conditions (hereinafter referred to as “the General Conditions”)
- Annex III to the GA: Budget form
- Annex IV to the GA: Mandate
- Annex V to the GA: Model technical reports:
 - Progress report (Va)
 - Interim report (Vb): not applicable

³⁸ The application will become Annex I of the Grant Agreement once approved by the contracting authority.

- Final report (Vc)
- Annex VI to the GA: Model financial statement
- Annex VII to the GA: Model terms of reference for the certificate on the financial statements: not applicable
- Annex VIII Model terms of reference for the operational verification report: not applicable
- Annex IX Model terms of reference for the certificate on the compliance of the cost accounting practices: not applicable
- Annex X to the GA: Model Report on the Distribution of the EU Final Financial Contribution

➤ Templates to be downloaded and completed

- Legal entity form: (for all applicants)
http://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legEnt_public_en.pdf
- Financial identification form: (for coordinator only)
http://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/contracts_grants/info_contracts/financial_id/fich_sign_ba_gb_en.pdf