



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 Labs: innovative solutions for maritime
challenges**

EMFF Work Programme 2016
Call for Proposals EASME/EMFF/2016/1.2.1.4

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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 for projects in the field of Blue Labs: innovative solutions for maritime challenges.

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 1.2.1.4. 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 delegated to EASME.

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

1.3. Background

Blue Growth and Innovation in the Blue Economy

Our seas and coasts are key drivers for economic development. In the EU, it is estimated that about 5 million people work for the blue economy with about half of these in the coastal tourism sector³. In addition to coastal and maritime tourism which is the largest activity at EU level, the blue economy comprises 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 and jobs (such as blue biotechnology, aquaculture, 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. However, innovation across all sectors of the blue economy is critical for realising its growth and jobs potential, which can also bring about significant environmental benefits.

A significant amount of funds such as those coming from Horizon 2020 and the EU's Structural and Investment Funds are earmarked for innovation, including in the maritime economy. Some of these initiatives seek to build bridges between the results of research on one hand and the potential investors on the other, taking innovation out of the lab and onto the market. However, the recent *Communication "Innovation in the Blue Economy: realising the potential of our seas and oceans for jobs and growth"*⁶ points out that further complementary actions and targeted efforts are needed to develop the potential of the blue economy in Europe. The Communication singles out that – along with marine

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 1.2.1.4

² <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:L:2014:149:TOC>.

³ "Blue Growth: Scenarios and drivers for Sustainable Growth from the Oceans, Seas and Coasts" ("Blue Growth Study" MARE/2010/01)

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](#) (13.09.2012)

⁶ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=COM:2014:254:REV1&from=EN>.

knowledge skills and gaps – diffuse research efforts in marine and maritime science hinders inter-disciplinary learning and slows the progress of innovation in the blue economy. The Commission is working on overcoming such barriers, including in further supporting inter-disciplinary research and development as well as innovative partnerships between maritime stakeholders to support the blue economy.

Sea-basin based strategies and regional approaches

To better address the specific nature of the EU-shared sea basins and the blue economy developed there, tailor-made measures are crafted to foster cooperation, raise awareness and stimulate networks and partnerships among stakeholders across sectors and (marine) borders. In particular, sea basin strategies have been developed for the Atlantic (Action Plan for a Maritime Strategy in the Atlantic area⁷), the Baltic Sea (EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region⁸) and the Adriatic-Ionian Seas (EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region⁹).

A common feature of these sea basin strategies is the recognition of the need to enable blue growth and jobs, whilst fostering the health and productivity of seas and oceans. Pressures such as climate change, growing pollution, overexploitation of fish stocks or invasions of alien species are affecting all the seas of Europe. Some of these can be more predominant in some sea basins, such as eutrophication in the Baltic Sea or marine litter in the Mediterranean. Likewise, different sea basins provide a mix of opportunities for blue growth and jobs: from the Atlantic's renewable energy potential to the Mediterranean's strong coastal and maritime tourism.

A regional initiative that deserves attention is the BLUEMED¹⁰ (and its related Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda - SRIA), which aims at developing a strategic marine research and innovation framework for a healthy, productive and resilient Mediterranean Sea. Following the adoption of the Union for the Mediterranean¹¹ (UfM) Declaration on the Blue Economy¹² (on 17 November 2015) it is now open to all UfM countries as well.

Acknowledging that a number of EU programmes are supporting research and innovation in the blue economy, the "Blue Labs" action under this call for proposals, aims to build on the results of relevant projects¹³ and support innovative and multidisciplinary approaches that can help move those results forward closer to the commercial stage. This action also takes a more targeted approach than other programmes covering marine and maritime topics, by focusing on the specificities and needs at sea basin level and in line with the regional strategies and initiatives defined above.

⁷ <http://www.atlanticstrategy.eu/en>

⁸ <http://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/>

⁹ <http://www.adriatic-ionian.eu/>

¹⁰ Research and innovation initiative for blue jobs and growth in the Mediterranean area (the Bluemed 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-bluedmed-initiative-documents-now-online/>

¹¹ The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) is an intergovernmental institution bringing together 43 countries to promote dialogue and cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean region

¹² <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/maritimeforum/en/node/3846>

¹³ E.g. on alien species the FP7 project VECTORS, on bio-remediation FP7 projects KILL SPILL, ULIXES, BIOCLEAN and H2020 project INMARE, on marine litter FP7 projects MARLISCO, CLEANSEA and NANOPLAST, etc.

2. OBJECTIVES – PRIORITIES – ACTIVITIES – OUTPUTS/IMPACTS

2.1. Objectives

Based on the needs set out above, this action aims at promoting innovative "laboratories" (hereinafter called Blue Labs) to pilot new and viable solutions addressing selected maritime and marine challenges and opportunities in the blue economy. The focus of this action is to support a novel way of working, where young scientists supported by researchers, industry and local stakeholders, team up to develop innovative solutions to support the development of a sustainable blue economy, while preserving marine resources and ecosystems.

In order to ensure the EU added value of supported activities, the development of solutions have to be tailored to the specific problems or needs of one or more sea basins surrounding the EU coasts (Mediterranean, Atlantic, North Sea, Baltic Sea, Black Sea).

The Blue Labs concept works at the interface between research and commercial exploitation so that results from research are taken forward to the market. By doing so, it aims at contributing to generate jobs and business opportunities in the blue economy.

In the context of the above general objectives, and in order to support the development of Blue Labs, proposals submitted under this action must develop the following specific elements:

- leveraging young peoples' skills and creativity and increasing awareness of marine challenges and opportunities;
- supporting pioneering partnerships between maritime stakeholders and fostering multidisciplinary approaches by combining competences from businesses, the public sector and research bodies;
- supporting enhanced cooperation and coordination amongst maritime stakeholders at local and sea basin levels (including at sub-region level of the sea basin), whilst capitalising on local stakeholders' knowledge.

Blue Lab

For the purpose of this call, a "Blue Lab" is the collective endeavour to develop a new idea and to apply it in the maritime domain and/or marine environment. It provides the organizational space for collaborative and multidisciplinary work. A Blue Lab shall be:

- Result-oriented: resulting in a tangible deliverable, such as a marketable service or product;
- Innovative: having a pilot and/or demonstrative dimension;
- Multidisciplinary: developed by a team of post-graduate students, recent post-graduates, other students, researchers and experienced tutors from business and/or the public sector;
- Stakeholder driven: being designed and implemented in consultation with a group of relevant partners (e.g. research bodies, businesses and local authorities).

2.2. Priorities

For this call for proposals, priority will be given to Blue Labs projects aiming at developing innovative solutions relating to one of the following topics:

1. Blue (bio)remediations: to exploit new metabolites and biomolecules, enzymes and genes from micro-organisms living in extreme marine environments; to develop and test (bio)remediation measures in different areas/places, including the possible re-use and recycling of hazardous materials.
2. Marine litter: to develop new technologies, tools and products to address mitigation and management of specific types of litter, including nanomaterials, micro-plastics and explosive litter.
3. Underwater cultural heritage: to develop new services, technologies or products (e.g. unmanned autonomous vehicles/robotic systems/etc.) to discover, protect and value underwater cultural heritage.
4. Invasive alien species¹⁴ and jelly fish proliferation: to develop new products, services and tools to address invasive alien species and/or jelly fish proliferation in the marine environment, including early detection, prevention, mitigation and management measures. Where relevant, management may include sustainable exploitation of the resources, for example jellyfish harvesting can be used for food, health and industrial applications.

These 4 topics reflect the priorities of this year's call. However, applicants may propose a Blue Lab project focusing on other themes or topics in so far as the general and specific objectives of this call for proposals are met and the choice is duly justified in the proposal.

2.3. Activities

Core activities

In order to realise the objectives, projects must implement targeted activities resulting in concrete, measurable results within the project duration of maximum two years. In particular, the new solutions developed should be tested during the project lifetime.

In line with the innovative character of the solutions to be developed by Blue Labs, examples of "core activities" include:

- Design, testing and piloting of the innovative services/products/tools to be developed;
- Field work necessary for the development of the planned solutions;
- Market analyses, studies and business plans;
- Training activities;
- Patents registration and deposit;
- Legal and financial counselling (including crowdfunding and fund raising).

¹⁴ *Invasive alien species'* means an alien species whose introduction or spread has been found to threaten or adversely impact upon biodiversity and related ecosystem services; as defined in Regulation (EU) no 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species.

This list is **non-exclusive** 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.

Complementary activities

In addition to implementing the core activities directly related to the Blue Lab action, every project must also address the following aspects, which will also be assessed against the award criteria:

- Awareness raising and dissemination activities on the marine/maritime topic or theme the project focuses on;
- Measures to facilitate the transferability of the project activities and results to other sea basins or regions of the EU facing similar challenges;
- Measures to ensure the sustainability of the project activities/results after the end of the EU support (i.e. other funding sources, profit making activities, etc.);
- Measures to seek complementarity and synergies with relevant projects funded under other EU programmes (e.g. H2020, LIFE programme, European Structural and Investment Funds) as well as with relevant initiatives and transnational programmes or policies (e.g. Sea-basin and macro-regional strategies).

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 Labs. 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 concern one or more of the above sea basins¹⁵ and may include EU Member States and third countries bordering the selected sea basin(s) 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 regions¹⁶.

2.5. Expected outputs/impacts

Projects under this action must achieve concrete results within the project duration. The proposal must clearly describe at application stage the specific outputs/impacts of the project for each of the following elements:

- New services/products/tools relating to selected marine/maritime challenges/opportunities developed at pilot or commercial stage;

¹⁵ The project proposal can focus on a sub-region of the above sea basins.

¹⁶ Crimea, Abkhazia, Transnistria, Libya and Syria.

- Smart partnerships combining multidisciplinary competences from businesses, the public sector and research bodies, and integrating local knowledge, resulting in an increased capacity to drive innovation forward;
- Increased awareness on marine challenges and opportunities and increased focus of research and development activities on these issues.

A list of relevant indicators (qualitative/quantitative) to measure the expected outputs/impacts of the project must be included in the proposal¹⁷.

In addition, a Blue Lab project should achieve results beyond the project duration, where the solutions developed are fully implemented or brought to the market within 2 years after the end of the project. Applicants are encouraged to report on this 2 years after the project has ended.

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	29/02/2016
b)	Deadline for submitting applications	31/05/2016 (in case of hand-delivery by 16:00 Brussels time)
c)	Evaluation period	June-September 2016
d)	Information to applicants	October 2016
e)	Preparation and signature of the grant agreement	November-December 2016
f)	Starting date of the project	January 2017
g)	Progress reports	To be provided at month 6 and month 18 of the project
h)	Interim report	After 12 months after the starting date of the project
i)	Final report	Within 60 days of the end of the project

¹⁷ See section III 1.c of the application form.

3.2. Implementation period

As an indication, supported projects are expected to start in January 2017.

The project duration shall start on the first day of the month following when the last of both parties signs the related grant agreement or at the 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 this action is **EUR 1,700,000**.

This budget might be increased by maximum 20%.

It is estimated that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of between EUR 200,000 and EUR 500,000 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 5-6 proposals.

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 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.

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

6. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA¹⁸

6.1. Geographical eligibility

Applicants from all EU Member States¹⁹ as well as from third countries are eligible.

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

¹⁸ Art. 131 FR, 201 RAP

¹⁹ Including landlocked EU Member States

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 regions²⁰ 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.

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 organisations²¹, 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 should be provided together with the proposal.

2. Applicants must be active in the fields of research, marine, maritime affairs or any other field if their relevance for the project is duly justified in the proposal.

3. Examples of potential applicants are (non-exhaustive list):

- non-profit organisations (private or public);
- public authorities (national, regional, local);

²⁰ Crimea, Abkhazia, Transnistria, Libya and Syria.

²¹ 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.

- universities;
- educational and training institutions;
- research centres;
- public or private, small, medium or large enterprises;
- federations and associations;
- Fisheries Local Action Groups²².

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.

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 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 2 organisations, comprising at least:

a) one scientific/research body/institution (such as a higher education institution²³, research centre, technology institute)

and

b) one private entity **or** public entity.

These 2 organisations have to be established in an EU Member State.

Additional public and private partners²⁴ from EU and third countries are allowed.

3. The consortium coordinator has to be established in an EU Member State.

²² Fisheries Local Action Group, or FLAG: a local partnership or group involving key actors in given local fisheries area brought together to develop and implement strategies at a local level.

²³ I.e. any type of higher education institution which, in accordance with national law or practice, offers recognised degrees or other recognised tertiary level qualifications, whatever such establishment may be called, or any institution which, in accordance with national law or practice, offers vocational education or training at tertiary level.

²⁴ It is strongly encouraged that a private company is part of the consortium.

All members of the consortium will provide the coordinator with a power of attorney in writing through a mandate signed for that purpose²⁵. The mandate shall fully empower the coordinator to act on the partners' behalf in the context of the grant agreement.

6.4. Blue Lab Team requirements

The Blue Lab project has to be developed by a team consisting of at least:

a) post-graduate students²⁶ and/or recent post-graduates (having completed their post-graduate degree within the last 4 years);

and

b) one or more researchers and an experienced tutor from business and/or public sector who will steer the work of the abovementioned students.

In addition, other students (e.g. undergraduate students) can also be part of the Blue Lab Team.

The Blue Lab Team has to work in consultation or cooperation with representatives of local communities (civil society and public authorities) that are concerned by the subject of the project. Those entities and the modalities to consult or cooperate with them have to be clearly identified and explained in the project proposal.

6.5. Eligible activities

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

7. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

7.1. Exclusion from participation

An applicant will be excluded from participating in the call for proposals procedure if it is in any of the following situations:

- (a) - it is bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding-up procedures, OR
 - its assets are being administered by a liquidator or by a court, OR
 - it is in an arrangement with creditors, OR
 - its business activities are suspended, OR
 - it is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for under national laws or regulations;

- (b) it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the entity is **in breach** of its obligations relating to the **payment of taxes or social security contributions** in accordance with the law of the country in which it is established, with those of the country in which the contracting authority is located or those of the country of the performance of the contract;

²⁵ A template for this mandate is included as Annex IV to the grant agreement published together with this call.

²⁶ Post-graduate student: a student who has obtained a degree from a university (university diploma of at least 3 years) and is pursuing studies for a more advanced qualification e.g. a Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma, Master's Degree, PhD, etc.

An entity shall also be excluded where a **natural or legal person** that assumes unlimited liability for the debts of that entity is in a situation listed in point (a) or (b) above;

- (c) it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the entity is guilty of **grave professional misconduct** by having violated applicable laws or regulations or ethical standards of the profession to which the applicant belongs, or by having engaged in any wrongful conduct which has an impact on its professional credibility where such conduct denotes wrongful intent or gross negligence, including, in particular, any of the following:
- (i) fraudulently or negligently misrepresenting information required for the verification of the absence of grounds for exclusion or the fulfilment of selection criteria or in the performance of the contract;
 - (ii) entering into agreement with another entity with the aim of distorting competition;
 - (iii) violating intellectual property rights;
 - (iv) attempting to influence the decision-making process of the contracting authority during the procurement procedure;
 - (v) attempting to obtain confidential information that may confer upon it undue advantages in the procurement procedure;
- (d) it has been established by a final judgment that the entity is guilty of any of the following:
- (i) **fraud**, within the meaning of Article 1 of the Convention on the protection of the European Communities' financial interests drawn up by the Council Act of 26 July 1995²⁷;
 - (ii) **corruption**, as defined in Article 3 of the Convention on the fight against corruption involving officials of the European Communities or officials of Member States of the European Union²⁸, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 May 1997 and Article 2(1) of Council Framework Decision 2003/568/JHA²⁹, as well as corruption as defined in the legal provisions of the country where the contracting authority is located or the country in which the applicant is established or the country of performance of the contract;
 - (iii) **participation in a criminal organisation**, as defined in Article 2 of Council Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA³⁰;
 - (iv) **money laundering or terrorist financing**, as defined in Article 1 of Directive 2005/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council³¹;
 - (v) **terrorist-related offences or offences linked to terrorist activities**, as defined in Articles 1 and 3 of Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA³² respectively, or inciting or aiding or abetting or attempting to commit such offences, as referred to in Article 4 of that Framework Decision;
 - (vi) **child labour or other forms of trafficking in human beings** as defined in Article 2 of Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council³³;

²⁷ OJ C 316, 27.11.1995, p. 48.

²⁸ OJ C 195, 25.6.1997, p. 1.

²⁹ Council Framework Decision 2003/568/JHA of 22 July 2003 on combating corruption in the private sector (OJ L 192, 31.7.2003, p. 54).

³⁰ Council Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA of 24 October 2008 on the fight against organised crime (OJ L 300, 11.11.2008, p. 42).

³¹ Directive 2005/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 October 2005 on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purpose of money laundering and terrorist financing (OJ L 309, 25.11.2005, p. 15).

³² Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA of 13 June 2002 on combating terrorism (OJ L 164, 22.6.2002, p. 3).

³³ Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA (OJ L 101, 15.4.2011, p. 1).

- (e) the entity has shown significant **deficiencies** in complying with main obligations in the **performance of the contract** financed by the budget, which has led to its early termination or to the application of liquidated damages or other contractual penalties, or which has been discovered following checks, audits or investigations by an authorising officer, OLAF or the Court of Auditors;
- (f) it has been established by a final judgment or final administrative decision that the entity has committed an **irregularity** within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95³⁴.

The contracting authority shall exclude the entity where a person who is a member of the administrative, management or supervisory body of that entity or has powers of representation, decision or control is in a situation listed in points (c) to (f) above.

The same exclusion criteria apply to affiliated entities.

7.2. Exclusion from award

An applicant will not be granted financial assistance if, in course of the grant award procedure, it:

- (a) is in a situation of exclusion established in accordance with Article 106 FR;
- (b) has misrepresented the information required as a condition for participating in the procurement procedure or has failed to supply that information;
- (c) was previously involved in the preparation of *grant documents* where this entails a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise.

The same exclusion criteria apply to affiliated entities.

7.3. Supporting documents³⁵

Applicants must declare on their honour that they are not in one of the situations triggering exclusion or rejection from a given grant award procedure according to Article 106(1) and 107(1) of the Financial Regulation, filling in the relevant form included as part of the application form accompanying the call for proposals. The EASME reserves the right to request evidence of the above.

8. SELECTION CRITERIA³⁶

8.1. Financial capacity³⁷

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:

³⁴ Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95 of 18 December 1995 on the protection of the European Communities financial interests (OJ L 312, 23.12.1995, p. 1).

³⁵ Art. 197 RAP

³⁶ Art. 132 FR, 202 RAP

³⁷ Art. 131, 132 FR, 202 RAP.

A) Grant value is \leq EUR 60 000:

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

B) 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 organisations³⁸, 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) 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;
- or reject the application.

8.2. Operational capacity³⁹

Applicants must have the professional competencies as well as appropriate qualifications necessary 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 (including all members of the Blue Lab team). This profile should include for each person at minimum: age,

³⁸ 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.

³⁹ Art. 131 FR, 202 RAP.

educational background, work experience (notably for researchers and tutor), language and other relevant skills (maximum 1 page per person)⁴⁰;

- where appropriate, a description of the technical equipment, tools or facilities and patents at the disposal of the applicant⁴¹;
- For each applicant, a list of up to 3 activities (i.e. projects, publications, products, services and/or other achievement) relevant to the call content⁴².

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

9. AWARD CRITERIA⁴³

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 project</p> <p>Max. score – 25 points (minimum required 12,5 points)</p>	<p><i>The relevance of the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the call.</i></p> <p><i>Sub-criterion 1.1 – Relevance of the proposal objectives, activities and expected outcomes (up to 17 points)</i></p> <p>The relevance of the proposal will be assessed on the basis of the extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – it meets the objectives identified in section 2.1; – there is a clear link between the project objectives, the activities proposed and their expected results; – it has the capacity to produce a tangible outcome (e.g. new service or product or tool). <p>In view of this assessment, the proposal should convincingly elaborate the following aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status quo analysis of the targeted challenge/opportunity; • Identification of the needs that the project wants to address; • Description of and reasons for the chosen solution as
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⁴⁰ To be completed in section II 1 of the application form

⁴¹ To be completed in section II 1 of the application form

⁴² To be completed in section II 1 of the application form

⁴³ Art. 132 FR, 203 RAP

	<p>proposed in the project proposal;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of market prospects of the envisaged product/service/tool/etc. <p><i>Sub-criterion 1.2 – Relevance to the call priorities (up to 8 points)</i></p> <p>The proposal may receive up to 8 points depending on the extent to which it addresses a priority topic as listed in section 2.2.</p>
<p>2. Added value</p> <p>Max. score – 15 points (minimum required 7,5 points)</p>	<p><i>Added value of the proposal in terms of originality and innovation.</i></p> <p><i>Subcriterion 1 – Originality (new thinking) (up to 5 points)</i></p> <p>This will be assessed on the basis of the extent to which the proposal demonstrates the creativity of the proposed project in terms of the idea to be developed.</p> <p><i>Subcriterion 2 – Innovation (new doing) (up to 10 points)</i></p> <p>This will be assessed on the basis of the extent to which the proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - demonstrates an added value in terms of its innovative character and notably, the extent to which the proposed solution envisages a technical advancement compared to current technologies and practices within the selected marine challenge or opportunity; - represents an uptake of results of related research and innovation projects from the EU or other programmes⁴⁴.
<p>3. Relevance of the partnership</p> <p>Max. score – 15 points (minimum required 7,5 points)</p>	<p><i>Relevance of the partnership, composition, competences and multi-disciplinarity of the team and geographical coverage</i></p> <p><i>Sub-criterion 3.1 – Partnership composition, team competences and multi-disciplinarity (up to 10 points)</i></p> <p>The relevance of the partnership will be assessed on the basis of the extent to which the proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - comprises an appropriate mix of complementary participating organisations with the necessary profile, experience and expertise to successfully deliver all aspects of the project; - includes a well-articulated multi-disciplinary team within the Blue Labs team and that the competences of the team

⁴⁴ E.g. FP7, H2020, SME Instrument (Blue Growth topic).

	<p>match the proposed activities and outcomes;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - includes business involvement (i.e. when a company is a partner in the consortium and/or a tutor from business is included in the Blue Lab Team) and includes a business approach (up to 3 points might be awarded based on the business involvement and business uptake in terms of the solutions to be developed during the project). <p><i>Sub-criterion 3.3 – Geographical coverage (up to 5 points)</i></p> <p>This will be assessed on the basis of the extent to which the proposal includes partners from different countries, including the involvement of EU and third countries. The proposal should demonstrate the added value of the transnational approach to support the achievement of the project objectives.</p>
<p>4. Relevance at sea basin level</p> <p>Max. score – 10 points (minimum required 5 points)</p>	<p><i>Relevance of the proposed action for specific needs of the targeted sea basin</i></p> <p>This will be assessed on the basis of the extent to which the proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - demonstrates the relevance and added value of the proposed action to the specific needs/challenges of the targeted sea basin; - demonstrates how it will address issues relevant to the participating organisations and target groups in the targeted sea basin; - has a strategic link with R&D&I actions under one of the following initiatives: EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Sea Region, EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, Atlantic Action Plan and BLUEMED. Applicants have to identify and provide the reference to the project actions/topics under the relevant strategic documents/action plans of the above initiatives. The strategic link must be coherent with the objectives, the geographical scope and the partnership composition of the proposal.
<p>5. Methodology and implementation</p> <p>Max. score – 20 points (minimum required 10 points)</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><i>Sub-criterion 5.1 – methodology (8)</i></p> <p>This will be assessed on the basis of the extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - relevant methods and techniques are proposed which will lead to project-specific outputs and solutions; - the expected results and outputs of the project are clearly identified; - appropriate qualitative and/or quantitative indicators have been provided to assess the expected outputs and impacts (short and long term) of the project. <p><i>Sub-criterion 5.2 – implementation (12)</i></p> <p>This will be assessed on the basis of the extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - there is a clear description of the planned activities and appropriate allocation of tasks and resources to be committed; - the proposed budget is consistent with the actions proposed and that the project is cost-efficient and represents value for money; - 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; - there is a clear management structure and decision-making mechanisms (clear management responsibilities and communication arrangements within the consortium); - there is a risk management plan, identifying potential risks and providing risk mitigation measures.
<p>6. Dissemination, transferability and sustainability</p> <p>Max. score – 15 points (minimum required 7,5 points)</p>	<p><i>Dissemination, transferability and sustainability of the expected results</i></p> <p><i>Sub-criterion 6.1 – Dissemination and transferability (7)</i></p> <p>This will be assessed on the basis of the extent to which the proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provides a clear plan for the dissemination of project results and activities, with a description of appropriate activities, tools and channels to reach the project target group(s); - describes which steps it will take to effectively spread the

	<p>results and benefits of the project to the stakeholders and non-participating audience within and after the project lifetime;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - promotes the transferability of the project activities and results to other territories or other sea basins facing similar challenges. <p><i>Sub-criterion 6.2 – Sustainability (8)</i></p> <p>This will be assessed on the basis of the extent to which the proposal provides appropriate measures to ensure the sustainability of project activities, results and impacts after the end of the project (including other funding sources, crowdfunding, business plan, etc.).</p>
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The EASME may call upon external experts in support of the evaluation of the proposal.

10. LEGAL COMMITMENTS⁴⁵

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 award⁴⁶

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.⁴⁷

b) Non-retroactivity⁴⁸

No grant may be awarded retrospectively for actions already completed.

⁴⁵ Art. 121 FR, 174 RAP.

⁴⁶ Art. 129 Financial Regulation.

⁴⁷ Art. 196.4 Rules of Application.

⁴⁸ 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-financing⁴⁹

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 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.⁵⁰

d) Balanced budget⁵¹

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 of the application form.

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-contracting⁵²

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/EC⁵³ or contracting entities in the meaning of Directive 2004/17/EC⁵⁴ 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;

⁴⁹ Art. 125 Financial Regulation, 183 Rules of Application.

⁵⁰ Art. 127 Financial Regulation.

⁵¹ Art. 196.2 Rules of Application.

⁵² Art. 137 Financial Regulation, 209 Rules of Application.

⁵³ Directive 2004/18/EC on the coordination of procedures for the award of public work contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts.

⁵⁴ Directive 2004/17/EC coordinating the procurement procedures of entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors.

- 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 grant 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/request 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.

Note that 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.

f) Financial support to third parties

Financial support to third parties is not an eligible expenditure.

11.2. Form of funding⁵⁵

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 11.1c).

➤ Contributions in kind⁵⁶

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.

⁵⁵ Art. 123 Financial Regulation, 181 Rules of Application.

⁵⁶ Art. 127 Financial Regulation.

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

➤ **Eligible costs**⁵⁷

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 11.1b);
- 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 in the annex VI of the model grant agreement;
- 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;

⁵⁷ Art. 126 Financial Regulation.

- 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 (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 foresee 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 by the relevant articles of the FR⁵⁸).

➤ **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 documents⁵⁹, 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 arrangements⁶⁰

11.3.1. Pre-financing payment

A pre-financing payment⁶¹ corresponding to 40% of the maximum grant amount will be transferred to the beneficiary within 30⁶² days of the date when the last of the two parties signs the grant agreement.

11.3.2. Interim payment

An interim payment⁶³ 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.

⁵⁸ Article 126(3)(c) of the FR

⁵⁹ Art. 135 FR

⁶⁰ Art. 90, 135 Financial Regulation, 207 Rules of Application.

⁶¹ Art. 109, 110 RAP

⁶² Art. 92 FR

⁶³ Art. 207.1 RAP

11.3.3. *Final payment*

A balance payment will be made within 60 days of receipt and approval by the EASME of the final report on the project implementation including a final technical report, a final financial statement and a payment claim, as well as all other supporting documents that may be requested in accordance with the grant agreement.

The amount of the final payment to be made to the beneficiary will be established on the basis of the calculation of the final grant amount. If the total of earlier payments received is higher than the final grant amount, the beneficiary will be required to reimburse the amount paid in excess through a recovery order⁶⁴.

11.4. **Pre-financing guarantee**⁶⁵

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 as 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:

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

The first progress report shall cover the period from month 1 to month 6 and the second progress report shall cover the period from month 13 to month 18. **Progress reports** shall be submitted to the EASME within 15 calendar days of the end of the reporting periods in question.

An **interim report** is due within 60 days of the end of the first year of the project and a **final report** within 60 days of the end of the project duration.

➤ **Reporting format**

Progress reports shall be submitted to the EASME in electronic format. They shall explain the progress made on the milestones provided for by the grant agreement. Progress reports are requested for project monitoring purposes and do not result in any

⁶⁴ Art. 109, 110 RAP

⁶⁵ Art. 134 Financial Regulation, 206 Rules of Application.

payment. Deliverables due for the corresponding period should be submitted with the progress reports.

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 assessment of 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 done, the outputs delivered and the final results achieved. 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 (max 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 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.

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 level⁶⁶ if he/she is domiciled within EU or equivalent if domiciled outside EU,
- subject of the grant,

⁶⁶ European Union Official Journal L 39, of 10 February 2007.

- 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)⁶⁷ 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)⁶⁸ (for more information see the Privacy Statement on http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm)

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

⁶⁷ 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.

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.

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 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 process⁶⁹.

Applicants will be informed in writing about the result of the selection process⁷⁰.

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

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

⁶⁹ Art. 96 Financial Regulation.

⁷⁰ Art. 133 Financial Regulation, 205 Rules of Application.

➤ **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 on honour);
- Estimated budget of the action (budget form);
- Information on the applicants:
 - documents as specified in section 8.1
 - 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/2016/1.2.1.4). It must be submitted in a sealed envelope and must be either⁷¹:

- sent **by registered mail**, posted or dispatched no later than **31st of May 2016** to the address indicated below:

Post:

European Commission
EASME
Ref.: EASME/EMFF/2016/1.2.1.4
Unit A3 – EMFF
Madou
Place Madou, 1
B-1210 - Saint-Josse-Ten-Noode, 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 **31st of May 2016 at 16.00 Brussels time** to the address indicated below:

Hand delivery/Express mail:

European Commission
EASME
Mail Service
Ref. EASME/EMFF/2016/1.2.1.4
Avenue du Bourget 1

⁷¹ Art. 195.3 Rules of Application.

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 "2016/1.2.1.4 Blue Labs".

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 form⁷² (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:

⁷² The application will become Annex I of the Grant Agreement (GA) once approved by the contracting authority.

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 downloaded and used 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

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

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