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Department A - COSME, H2020 SME and EMFF
Unit A3 - EMFF

Call for Proposals
For EU Grants
under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund

Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP)

EMFF Work Programme 2016

Call for Proposals EASME/EMFF/2016/1.2.1.6

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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" or "EC"), is launching a call for proposals with a view to concluding grant agreements for the implementation of projects on Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP).

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 1.2.1.6 of the annex I C(2016)4575), 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(b).

1.2. General information concerning the call for proposals

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

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

1.3. Background

1.3.1. *The concept of Maritime Spatial Planning*

Marine and maritime sectors are crucial drivers for growth and jobs for the EU economy: they represent roughly 5.4 million jobs and generate a gross added value of almost 500 billion euros per year⁴. The European Commission seeks to promote a sustainable path for the development of EU's Blue Economy⁵.

One of the challenges is that maritime space is in high demand, and increasingly so. The competing needs of renewable energy installations, oil and gas exploration and exploitation, maritime shipping and fishing, ecosystem and biodiversity conservation (Marine Protected Areas), extraction of raw materials, tourism, aquaculture installations and underwater cultural

¹Annex 1, C(2016) 4575 final, to the Commission Implementing Decision amending Decision C(2015) 8729 of 11.12.2015 concerning the adoption of the work programme for 2016 and the financing for the implementation of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, section 1.2.1.6.

²Regulation (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.

³Act of Delegation: Commission Decision C(2013)9414 of 23 December 2013 delegating powers to the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises with a view to performance of tasks linked to the implementation of Union programmes in the field of energy, environment, climate action, competitiveness and SMEs, research and innovation and ICT, comprising, in particular, implementation of appropriations entered in the general budget of the Union as amended by Commission Decision C(2014)4636 of 11.07.2014 with a view to the performance of tasks linked to the implementation of the EMFF.

⁴Declaration of the European Ministers responsible for the Integrated Maritime Policy and the European Commission, on a Marine and Maritime Agenda for growth and jobs - "The Limassol Declaration" of 2012

⁵Communication from the Commission: Innovation in the Blue Economy: realising the potential of our seas and oceans for jobs and growth - COM(2014) 254/2 (13.05.2014)

heritage, as well as the multiple pressures on coastal resources by an increasing population, call for an integrated planning and management approach⁶.

Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) is described⁷ as a process to analyse and organise human activities in marine and maritime space in order to achieve specific ecological, economic and social objectives.

As a planning process, MSP has a vital role to play both in terms of maximising the development potential for crucial activities, such as offshore renewable energy production, and arbitrating between human activities to ensure that the cumulative and combined effect of current and future activities does not compromise our marine ecosystems.

By providing long-term stability, predictability and transparency, MSP both secures existing activities and encourages investment for growth and jobs.

1.3.2. *Action on MSP at EU level*

On the basis of preparatory actions⁸ the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive⁹ entered into force in September 2014, with the deadline for transposition and for the designation of the competent authorities set for September 2016.

The Directive sets overarching principles and common requirements by which to organise human activities in the EU maritime space to achieve environmental, economic and social objectives. The MSP Directive requires the implementation of MSP in all EU waters and the establishment by Member States of cross-sectoral maritime spatial plans by 2021.

The European Commission's intention is to support the development of MSP processes throughout the EU, by facilitating cooperation between Member States in the management of maritime space in EU waters.

In order to do so, the Commission has co-financed since 2009 a number of preparatory actions on MSP in the Baltic Sea, the North Sea, the Atlantic and the Adriatic Sea¹⁰. This was followed by the launch in 2014 of initiatives to establish lasting MSP mechanisms for cross-border MSP cooperation in the Baltic, the Black and the Celtic Seas¹¹.

In the same context, EASME published in 2016 another call for proposals for projects to support the launch and implementation of concrete cross-border MSP cooperation initiatives between Member States in the Northern European Atlantic, the Western and the Eastern Mediterranean¹².

⁶ Directive 2014/89/EU Of The European Parliament And Of The Council of 23.07.2014 establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning

⁷ *ibid*

⁸ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Maritime on Spatial Planning in the EU - Achievements And Future Development - COM/2010/0771 final and the Roadmap for Maritime Spatial Planning: Achieving Common Principles in the EU - COM(2010) 771 final

⁹ Directive 2014/89/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23.07.2014 establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning

¹⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/maritime_spatial_planning/index_en.htm

¹¹ Calls for proposals MARE/2014/22 and MARE/2014/46

¹² Call for proposals EASME/EMFF/2015/1.2.1.3

In parallel, an Assistance Mechanism has been set up in 2016 to support Member States in the implementation of the MSP Directive through a dedicated online platform and a team¹³ of MSP experts.

The Commission has also concluded a number of studies on various aspects of MSP:

- A study on the legal aspects of MSP (2008)¹⁴;
- A study on the economic effects of MSP (2010)¹⁵, which concluded that economic effects of MSP are reduced transaction costs for new maritime activities and an improved investment climate;
- A study looking into the potential of MSP in the Mediterranean (2011)¹⁶.

1.3.3. *Cross-border cooperation on MSP*

Maritime activities tend to have a cross-border dimension, insofar as the world's oceans and seas are interconnected. As a consequence, planning at national scale cannot fully capture and address the impacts of economic activities at sea.

This is why under the MSP Directive, Member States are required to cooperate and ensure that their maritime spatial plans are coherent and coordinated throughout the cross-border marine region concerned. Coordinating efforts across borders can further strengthen the positive impacts of MSP. For example, MSP can create the necessary framework for transnational installations or the devising of unified licensing procedures in bordering regions.

However, cross-border cooperation is very challenging to set up even for countries with well-developed MSP processes. The countries need to reconcile differences in approach, mandates and capacity, while managing uncertainties. This requires political commitment and significant financial and human resources.

This specific call will build on these first results including any lessons learnt and best practices with the double aim to enhance cross-border cooperation where it already exists and help initiate it where it is yet to be put in place.

1.4. **Other EU relevant legislation and complementary actions**

At EU level, other relevant EU policies and legislation needs to be considered in the context of MSP. This includes among others, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)¹⁷, Natura 2000¹⁸ and related legislation, the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)¹⁹, the Recommendation on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)²⁰, the Renewable Energy Directive²¹ and the INSPIRE Directive²², amongst others.

¹³ <http://www.msp-platform.eu/>

¹⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/documentation/studies/spatial_planning_en.htm

¹⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/documentation/studies/study_msp_en.htm

¹⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/documentation/studies/study_msp_med_en.htm

¹⁷ Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17.06.2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy

¹⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/index_en.htm

¹⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp_en

²⁰ Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30.05.2002 concerning the implementation of Integrated Coastal Zone Management in Europe (2002/413/EC), OJ L 148, 6.6.2002

²¹ Directive 2009/28/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23.04.2009 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources and amending and subsequently repealing Directives 2001/77/EC and 2003/30/EC

The results of relevant INTERREG projects and other Research Framework Programmes²³ (such as DEVOTES, COEXIST, MESMA, Knowseas or PERSEUS among others) or by other international organisations should also be taken into account in so far as possible, and wherever relevant proper coordination has to be established. Due regard should be given to EU and international obligations of Member States to establish Marine Protected Areas.

Applicants should bear in mind the European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODnet)²⁴ initiative by the European Commission. EMODnet is expected to have a role in providing the necessary data and assessing current data gaps for effective implementation of MSP. For example, the sea basin checkpoints are currently assessing data adequacy (availability and quality) for the evaluation of Marine Protected Areas for the Baltic, the Black Sea, the Atlantic and the Arctic sea basins.

To facilitate this screening task, a comprehensive database of MSP projects, studies and MSP practices is available at the European MSP Platform²⁵.

2. OBJECTIVES – PRIORITIES – ACTIVITIES – OUTPUTS/IMPACTS

2.1. Objectives

The overall objective of this Call for Proposals is to support the establishment and implementation of Maritime Spatial Plans in line with the EU Directive²⁶ on MSP.

The specific objectives of this call are: 1) **to support concrete actions in Member States** helping to build capacity for the implementation of the Directive and; 2) to provide support for the **establishment of lasting mechanisms for cross-border cooperation on MSP**.

The geographical areas covered by this call include the Baltic Sea, North Sea, Black Sea and the Outermost Regions.

2.2. Priorities

In order to fulfil the requirements established in the Directive²⁷ and therefore the objectives of this call, applicants are required to address the following priorities in their proposals:

- Support the work of competent authorities and/or inter-ministerial bodies in charge of developing and implementing maritime spatial plans;

²² Directive 2007/2/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 March 2007 establishing an Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community (INSPIRE)

²³ http://ec.europa.eu/geninfo/query/index.do?queryText=maritime+spatial+planning&query_source=RTD&summary=summary&more_options_source=restricted&more_options_date=*&more_options_date_from=&more_options_date_to=&more_options_language=en&more_options_f_formats=*&swlang=en

²⁴ <http://www.emodnet.eu/>

²⁵ <http://www.msp-platform.eu/msp-practice/msp-projects>

²⁶ Directive 2014/89/EU of The European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2014 establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning, Official Journal of the European Union, L 257/135, 28.8.2014.

²⁷ *ibid*

- Use a scenario-based method which should allow identifying and evaluating future potential uses, needs and maritime spatial development options. Such work should feed the establishment of maritime spatial plans;
- Support the coherent application of an ecosystem-based approach and the integration of land-sea interactions;
- Ensure an effective engagement with and participation of stakeholders in the design and implementation of MSP processes;
- Develop, review and/or implement a monitoring and evaluation framework designed to ensure effective and sustainable use of maritime spaces;
- Make use of the best available data and information by encouraging sharing of information.

2.3. Activities²⁸

In order to realise the objectives and priorities outlined above, projects should implement targeted activities resulting in concrete and measurable outputs and results.

In all cases, the proposed activities must:

1. Be in line with and contribute to ongoing national MSP processes. The proposals must put forward concrete actions to support national MSP processes and demonstrate their added value;
2. Wherever relevant consider the different state of progress of MSP in the Member States involved in the selected area. Proposed actions must be adapted to meet specific issues and needs linked to the specific state of progress of MSP;
3. Build on prior experiences from past MSP projects, promote good MSP practices within the targeted sea basins/marine areas and where feasible make use of existing governance mechanisms and structures.

Within the activities, 3 core components are distinguished, as follows:

Component 1: applicants are invited to select the outputs and activities that best meet the needs of the selected sea basin/marine region. All proposals have to address **both national and cross-border aspects** in line with the specific objectives of the call (section 2.1). However cross-border MSP aspects **do not need** to be taken into account for proposals submitted by Outermost Regions **that do not border other EU Member States**.

Components 2 and 3: all outputs and activities are compulsory as their completion is considered indispensable to accomplish the objectives of this call.

²⁸ Activities performed outside the duration of the grant agreement are not co-fundable and any costs associated cannot be reimbursed.

2.3.1. *Component 1: Maritime Spatial Planning*

2.3.1.1. *Development of Maritime Spatial Plans: MSP as an efficient and coherent cross-sectoral tool for planning maritime activities.*

As a tool for planning and integrating different uses of the sea, MSP is rooted in pre-existing legislation, national and local structures and procedures²⁹. Legal requirements and operational procedures under international, EU and national law have a direct impact on how MSP can be framed and implemented. Moreover, the elaboration of MSP requires a comprehensive integration of all maritime sectors, which can include technical specificities for each of the concerned sectors. In most cases, the management of marine areas also involves different levels of public authorities, economic operators and sectors, as well as relevant stakeholders.

Lessons learned from the implementation of MSP in some countries have shown that having a well-defined legal base and clear administrative and operating procedure can help significantly to move the MSP process forward. MSP can benefit therefore from the establishment of inter-ministerial bodies or interdisciplinary MSP teams (so called “MSP body”), responsible for planning and establishing Maritime Spatial Plans, and its subsequent implementation³⁰.

Expected outputs (non-exhaustive list): as explained in section 2.2, applicants are invited to select the outputs that best meet the needs of the targeted area:

1. A description of the most MSP relevant information of the selected area: geographical demarcation, habitat description, oceanographic characteristics (spatial and temporal), legal frameworks and existing governance arrangements;
2. Identification and analysis of current spatial uses and needs including ecological, economic and social uses, as well as potential future demands by maritime sectors and future maritime uses (future scenarios) and envisaged benefits of MSP. Description of existing mechanisms and options for organising maritime space and uses;
3. An analysis of whether cross-border planning is considered relevant and necessary for the area(s) and which Member States are concerned. If relevant, assessment of existing governance structures or mechanisms in place for strengthening and fostering cross-border cooperation on maritime activities;
4. Definition of national MSP objectives and a draft roadmap for the establishment of MSP in national waters. If relevant, agreement on common objectives with bordering Member States for cross-border MSP activities in the sea basin or marine region;
5. Set-up of an appropriate structure (MSP body) and procedures to be used for the development of the Maritime Spatial Plan, including when the Plan covers cross-border areas. It should include if possible a description of the instruments and data to be used, including the process for involving stakeholders, as well as for assessing environmental impacts;

²⁹ Legal Aspects of Maritime Spatial Planning - 2009

³⁰ CALAMAR project – Expert Paper on Integrated Marine Policies and tools Working Group

6. A fully-fledged maritime spatial plan for the area identified above, with full involvement of stakeholders;
7. A monitoring and evaluation framework (from guidelines to a fully functional framework as relevant and to the extent possible) for MSP for the region concerned including a well-defined timetable for evaluation and appropriate governance structures. Where monitoring and evaluation measures for MSP are already in place, actions may be oriented to testing, assessment and enhancement of such measures. In addition, the availability and quality of data sources and relevance of proposed indicators may also be assessed. Financial resources to be used for monitoring and evaluation purposes should also be clearly identified;
8. If an evaluation has already taken place, an updated maritime spatial plan and management process incorporating the outcomes of this evaluation.

In order to reach the relevant expected outputs, applicants may implement the following activities (non-exhaustive list):

- Consult and organise interdisciplinary workshops with different national authorities and stakeholders;
- Assess existing methodologies for stakeholder consultation and engagement whether at the planning or implementation stage, and reflect on which methodologies could be appropriate;
- Collect evidence from relevant maritime actors to identify administrative, technical, legal and/or other relevant barriers and opportunities that might prevent the blue economy activities to be fully developed;
- Identify specific inter-sectorial barriers and potential economic benefits for users/sectors of using common approaches and tools. This could include the undertaking of a socio-economic analysis on the benefits of MSP;
- Elaborate recommendations for creating synergies and improving the efficiency of regulatory processes governing national maritime activities (including cross-sectorial processes);
- Undertake activities aimed at ensuring that environmental requirements (under national, EU or international legislation) are taken into account from the initial stage of elaborating a MSP through to its effective implementation. This also includes the entire decision making process;
- Create, test, assess and/or enhance MSP monitoring and evaluation frameworks and tools.

2.3.1.2. Connecting cross-border to national MSP processes

As ecosystems and maritime activities do not stop at borders, one of the main provisions of the MSP Directive calls for the establishment of appropriate cross-border cooperation between Member States.

Member States are required to consult with bordering states and coordinate their plans, in order to ensure that the collective pressure resulting from the cumulative and combined impact of all maritime activities remains in line with environmental requirements for Good Environmental Status (Good Environmental Status) set by the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. Cross-border cooperation can help reduce conflicts between activities at bordering regions but also help maximise synergies, bring additional benefits and improve the smooth running of activities in cross-border regions.

*NB: Cross-border MSP aspects **do not need** to be taken into account for proposals submitted by Outermost Regions **that do not border other EU Member States**.*

Expected outputs (non-exhaustive list): as explained in section 2.2, applicants are invited to select the outputs that best meet the needs of the targeted area:

1. Common approaches for the management of maritime activities between bordering Member States. This can range from sharing information on MSP plans at cross-border regions to consulting actively between Member States and stakeholders (maritime activities involved);
2. Improved cross-border cooperation between MSP competent authorities but also with and between other stakeholders including the different industries active within the cross-border region;
3. Improved mutual understanding between bordering Member States of their different MSP processes including the different national MSP objectives, priorities, actions and activities being undertaken;
4. Identification of common resources which could be used for joint MSP cross-border activities and management, and for meeting common marine conservation objectives³¹;
5. A cooperation mechanism to improve data and knowledge sharing and exchange between bordering Member States.

In order to reach the relevant expected outputs, applicants may implement the following activities (non-exhaustive list):

- Develop a proposal for a consultative process for developing MSP plans in cross-border regions. This could either be e.g. an informative process whereby each bordering Member State informs the others MS in due time of its MSP plans or closer consultation during the development of MSP in the cross-border regions;
- Analyse cooperation gaps between different sectors in the cross-border region;
- Develop a cooperation mechanism to facilitate common sectoral approaches between bordering Member States;
- Organise workshops, working groups or other consultative mechanisms to encourage cooperation of stakeholders with activities in cross-border regions;

³¹ In line with MSFD and on the ecosystem-based approach.

- Map existing decision supporting tools and their use as joint management tools;
- Assess the benefits, potential issues and approach towards developing common decision supporting tools between bordering Member States;
- Activities aimed at increasing the dialogue between bordering Member State authorities such as setting up a dedicated expert group or providing common resources to finance such activities in a long term perspective;
- Develop recommendations on how to set up automated data exchange mechanisms between MSP information management systems or other cooperation mechanisms aiming at setting up a continuous knowledge exchange mechanism;
- Assess the possibilities to set up a common database, information system or other mechanism for pooling resources to be used for common marine conservation objectives or cross-border management activities;
- Improve the compatibility of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) between bordering Member States;
- Align existing national GIS datasets, maps and products at relevant spatial and temporal scales for the cross-border region concerned;
- Develop new GIS datasets, maps and products at relevant spatial and temporal scales for the cross-border region concerned.

2.3.2. *Component 2: Management and coordination*

This component encompasses the activities related to the operational, administrative, legal and financial activities which are necessary to implement the project.

Applicants shall describe the project management structure that will be set up in order to ensure that the expected deliverables and results will be produced at the necessary quality level and in due time.

This includes on the one hand, the internal project management, notably how the beneficiaries will cooperate and coordinate their work throughout the project duration (e.g. organisation of coordination meetings, information exchange, data sharing, etc.), how exchange of information will be ensured between the beneficiaries to produce the expected deliverables and how the internal management of the project will be set up (e.g. monitoring and control of the incurred expenditure and preparation of the progress, interim and final reports).

This also includes on the other hand, the general and more strategic overseeing of the project by a Steering Committee (e.g. discussion on direction and priorities, strategic approaches, how the project can better feed into national and cross-border processes, etc.) including the relevant external stakeholders of the project.

Expected outputs:

Internal project management structure:

1. An **internal cooperation agreement** regarding the internal operation for the proper performance of the project. This should include a Project group comprising representatives from all beneficiaries. The EASME may request a copy of such agreement;
2. Appropriate mechanisms for information exchange at cross-sector and cross-border level that is viable and sustainable over time for the project (beneficiaries meetings, thematic workshops, video and teleconferences, SharePoint platform, etc.).
3. An adequate monitoring and evaluation system to ensure proper follow-up of tasks and deliverables;
4. If needed, project sub-groups to work on specific MSP topics;

Overall project steering (Steering Committee):

5. Establishment of a Steering Committee (SC) to ensure the overall strategic steering of the project. The SC shall comprise relevant representatives of the Member States where the action takes place, of the beneficiaries involved, as well as representatives from the Commission and EASME;
6. Working procedures defining how the SC will operate, including whether the SC is to be chaired on a permanent or rotating basis, assigning clear roles and responsibilities, describing the decision-making process, frequency of meetings (1-2 times per year, more may be scheduled if required), etc.

The above monitoring and decision-making processes must be clearly described in the project proposal.

In order to allow for appropriate discussion and feedback on the project implementation, the Coordinator should include provisions for regular contact with the Commission and the EASME, including attendance of a **kick-off meeting** in Brussels (which is additional to the project kick-off or launch event).

2.3.3. Component 3: Communication and Dissemination

This component aims at disseminating the project outputs and activities and other MSP related achievements outside the project to the relevant stakeholders in Europe (e.g. bordering States, Regional Sea Conventions, specialised agencies, other sea basins etc.).

While the overall approach is left open to the applicants, they must deliver at the very least the following outputs:

- A repository of best practices and lessons learnt from the project;
- A project website, including a workspace, regular updates of this website with progress made, intermediate results. The existing website of the coordinator or one of

the involved partner organisations can also be used for this purpose, especially if the organisation is the Competent Authority identified to implement the MSP Directive³²;

- An opening and a closing conference. The opening conference must aim to publicise the project and work to be done to a maximum of MSP stakeholders while the closing conference should present the outcomes of the project. The format and details are left for the applicant to decide but the events must be organised with the aim to reach out widely and to a large number of attendees;
- Promotional material, including its production and distribution (at relevant events, workshops, etc.). The type of materials to be developed and the format is left open to the applicants, but the project must produce at least:
 - A form of leaflet or hand-out to distribute at events presenting the project (to be ready within the first 3 months of the project)
 - A final leaflet or hand-out to distribute at events presenting the outcomes of the project (at the end of the project)
 - A poster to display at events (to be ready within the first 3 months of the project)

N.B. EASME reserves the right to request some examples of the leaflet/hand-out, the poster and other communications material developed by the project.

In addition, applicants are encouraged to **go beyond the minimum outputs described above** and to **develop additional products and events** to maximise the impact of the project and promote the benefits of MSP.

Additional outputs may include (non-exhaustive list):

- Workshops, trainings and other hands-on activities to inform and build the capacity of MSP stakeholders during the project;
- Additional features of the website, such as online training courses, interactive exchange tools for stakeholders, etc.;
- Additional communication and information material such as leaflets, newsletters, etc. in particular if addressed to specific and defined target groups;
- Maps, tables, plans etc. to support the visualisation and dissemination of results, possibly feeding into the Maritime Forum³³ and/or the European Atlas of the Seas³⁴;
- Appropriate mechanisms to contribute to the development of the EU MSP Platform³⁵.

³² Directive 2014/89/EE Of The European Parliament and of the Council of 23.07.2014 establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning, Official Journal of the European Union, L 257/135, 28.8.2014.

³³ <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/maritimeforum/>

³⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/atlas_en

³⁵ <http://www.msp-platform.eu/>

2.4. Expected outputs/impacts

Projects are expected to produce the outputs as described for the three components in section 2.3 of this call for proposals within the project's duration.

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

Examples of pre-defined indicators ³⁶	
1/ Development of Maritime Spatial Plans	
<u>Output indicators</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivery of rationale for the selection of the chosen sea area(s).• Description of the characteristics of the selected area.• Number of coordination meetings between governmental bodies.• Production of a description of human activities (both present and predictable future) assessed and analysed in the chosen sea area(s).• Delivery of model for maritime spatial plan.• Number of relevant and high quality maps produced.• Number of coordination meetings with stakeholders.• Description of methodology developed to establish MSP.• Description of experience and best practice in applying the requirements of the Directive on Maritime Spatial Planning.• Delivery of concept for a suitable monitoring and evaluation process.• Delivery of methodology for stakeholder involvement.• Analysis of the interactions between different human activities in the marine region selected.

³⁶ **Outputs** are the tangible deliverables of the project. They directly result from the activities carried out in the project. They report on 'what' the main 'products' delivered by the project are. They do not lead to a qualitative judgment of the project's outcomes. In other words, it is not because the project organises a high number of workshops that it will necessarily be successful. Output indicators are typically measured in physical units such as the number of seminars, site visits, conferences, participants, publications, good practices identified, or policies addressed.

Results are direct and clearly identifiable. They are a product of the project and its outputs. Outputs, such as the organisation of events, the identification and dissemination of good practices, the production of policy recommendations etc., are carried out in order to achieve specific effects that the result indicators should be able to assess and measure, preferably in quantified terms.

<p><u>Result indicators</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of recommendations for set-up of procedures and processes for Maritime Spatial Planning in the marine region selected. • Development of a vision and definition of a set of common and coherent objectives for Maritime Spatial Planning in the marine region selected. • Description of the experience gained in the development of a maritime spatial plan. • Identification of current spatial uses and needs and potential benefits of MSP. • Evaluation of whether cross-border planning is relevant and beneficial. • Description of the effectiveness of the applied methodology to develop MSP. • Degree of involvement of stakeholders in the methodology proposed for stakeholder engagement. • Delivery of the identification of additional requirements and gaps. • Suggestion for a monitoring and evaluation process, including estimation of resources needed. • Suggestions to improve integration of different human activities at sea within the marine region selected. • Degree of involvement of relevant stakeholders/stakeholder groups through the planning and implementation phases.
<p>2/ Connecting cross-border to national MSP processes</p>	
<p><u>Output indicators</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of high quality recommendations for set-up of coordination procedures for cross-border MSP. • Delivery of a model test case of the function and usefulness of a maritime spatial plan in the cross-border area(s) involvement of relevant ministries/authorities. • Analysis of the interactions between different human activities in the cross-border region. • Description of specific needs and challenges of the MSP process in the cross-border area(s). • Accurate description of procedural steps followed within the development of cross-border MSP. • Report produced on best practices for MSP in the cross-border area(s).

<u>Results indicators</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set-up of consistent and lasting mechanism to ensure cross-border planning at sea basin level. • Identification and evaluation of best practices for MSP in cross-border areas. • Description of experience gained in developing a coordinated and coherent approach to Maritime Spatial Planning in the cross-border region. • Delivery of a lasting mechanism to exchange information between Member States. • Process for stakeholder involvement in cross-border MSP and degree of involvement within this process. • Development of lasting cooperation on MSP between Member States involved. • Common approaches adopted for the management of maritime activities in cross-border areas.
3/ Management and coordination	
<u>Output indicators</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of coordination meetings organised by Partners for the period of the project. • Production of adequate documentation of organisation and cooperation mechanisms. • Description of strengthened cooperation on MSP between partners of the project.
<u>Result indicators</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of lasting cooperation on MSP between partners of the project. • Resolution of conflicts and issues during project implementation. • Punctuality of reporting and communication between partners and with EASME and the Commission.
4/ Communication and Dissemination	
<u>Output indicators</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of reports about model cross-border maritime spatial plans. • Number of promotional material produced and distributed. • Number of articles and papers published in relevant media. • Number of relevant events participated in (with presentations/stands about the activities). • Number of stakeholders reached at events or otherwise.
<u>Result indicators</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective dissemination of results to stakeholders including best practices on approaches at events.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of knowledge and experience that can be transferred from the results. • Number of results discussed in the relevant international fora (e.g. Regional Sea Conventions other than Partners, Regional Advisor Councils (RACs)).
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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	December 2016
b)	Deadline for submitting applications	31/03/2017 (in case of hand-delivery by 16:00, Brussels time)
c)	Evaluation period	April-June 2017
d)	Information to applicants	July 2017
e)	Preparation and signature of the grant agreement	Sep-Oct 2017
f)	Starting date of the project	Oct-Dec 2017

3.2. Implementation period

Projects shall not exceed the duration of 24 months.

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

4. BUDGET AVAILABLE

The total budget earmarked for the co-financing of projects is **EUR 5.960.000**.

This budget might be increased by maximum 20%.

It is estimated that proposals requesting a contribution between EUR 500.000 and EUR 2.000.000 would allow the objectives of this call for proposals to be addressed appropriately. The amount requested should be consistent and proportional with the scope of the proposal (number of applicants, number of Member States involved, activities proposed, etc.).

Nonetheless, this does not prevent submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

Within the available budget, the EASME will select for funding at least the highest ranked proposal in each of the eligible geographical areas, provided it has passed the minimum thresholds established in section 9. In case of budget availability, the order of additional projects proposed for funding will be determined by their quality score on the basis of the criteria set in Section 9.

The EASME expects to fund 4 to 6 proposals.

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

5. ADMISSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

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

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

6. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA³⁷

6.1. Geographical eligibility

The geographical area covered by the action includes the Baltic Sea, North Sea, Black Sea and the Outermost Regions. Proposals shall target one of the above areas. They shall involve at least two EU Member States, with the exception of proposals targeting the marine area of Outermost Regions that do not border other EU Member States.

For the purpose of this call Outermost regions are grouped in the following marine areas:

- ❖ **Caribbean – Amazonia:** Guadeloupe, Saint Martin, Martinique, and French Guyana;
- ❖ **Macaronesia:** Canary Islands, Madeira and Azores;
- ❖ **Indian Ocean:** La Réunion and Mayotte.

³⁷ Art. 131 Financial Regulation, 201 Rules of Application.

6.2. Eligible applicants

1. Applicants must be legal entities. Natural persons are not eligible as applicant for the purpose of the present call.
2. The following types of entities are eligible to participate in the Call as applicants:
 - a) Competent authorities³⁸ in charge of maritime spatial planning of those coastal EU Member States or Outermost regions' authorities which are responsible for MSP in the selected area;
 - b) International, regional or intergovernmental organisations and their members, including relevant regional sea conventions (RSC) (e.g. HELCOM, VASAB, Black Sea Economic Cooperation, North Sea Commission, others) and their members;
 - c) Other public entities shall be considered eligible applicants provided that they are endorsed by Competent Authorities referred in section 6.2.a) as specified in point 5 below.
3. 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 by public sources;
 - In the event that the entity stops its activities, all rights and obligations including financial rights and obligations will be transferred to a public authority.

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

4. Affiliated entities

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

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

³⁸ For the purpose of this call Competent Authorities are defined as the authority or authorities referred to in Article 13 (1) of the Directive 2014/89/EU. In case Member States have not designated yet this authority, then it is defined as the public authority or body in charge of MSP.

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;
- For applicants specified in section 6.2.c), an endorsement letter signed by the relevant MSP competent authority must be submitted with the application;
- 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 of organisations as defined in section 6.2. One of these organisations must act as the consortium coordinator, while the others will act as partners.
2. Applicants from at least two Member States bordering the targeted sea basin/marine region must be involved in each proposal, with the exception of applicants from Outermost Regions that do not border EU Member States.
3. All partners of the consortium, including affiliated entities, will provide the coordinator with a power of attorney in writing through a mandate signed for that purpose³⁹. The mandate shall fully empower the coordinator to act on the partners' behalf in the context of the grant agreement. The mandates will be requested from successful applicants only.

6.4. Observers

In addition to eligible applicants as defined in section 6.2.1., it is possible for other relevant parties to participate with an observer status, e.g. public bodies from non EU Member States, EU Member States from other sea basins than the one targeted by the project, or other regional or international organisations active in the area. Observer status means that the entity will not receive any European Union co-financing and will not join or sign any statements. Thus, participation in any activity or meetings will be at the observer's own expenses (e.g. travel costs for observers are not eligible under this action). Moreover, these entities will not be taken into consideration for determining compliance with the eligibility conditions for consortia set out above.

³⁹ The template for the mandate is available on the EASME website (see section 15).

6.5. Eligible activities

Eligible activities shall be those necessary to carry out the project and to deliver on the expected outputs and impacts, in accordance with the objectives set in section 2.1 and the priorities in section 2.2.

7. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

All applicants, including both the consortium coordinator and other partners, must provide a declaration of honour (see template in the annexed application form), signed and dated by an authorised representative, stating that they are not in one of the situations of exclusion listed in that declaration of honour.

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

8. SELECTION CRITERIA⁴⁰

8.1. Financial capacity

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.

This type of applicants has to submit a declaration of honour that they have the financial capacity to carry out the project, but no additional supporting documents are requested.

For bodies that are governed by private law with a public service mission:

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

A) Total grant value⁴¹ is \leq EUR 60 000:

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

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

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

⁴⁰ Art. 132 Financial Regulation, 202 Rules of Application.

⁴¹ The 'total grant value' is the total grant amount requested for the proposed action, not the portion of the requested grant per applicant.

For all applicants except for public bodies and international organisations⁴², the following additional supporting documents:

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

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

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

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

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

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

8.2. Operational capacity

Applicants must have the professional competencies as well as appropriate qualifications necessary to complete the proposed project. They must also demonstrate their connection to national MSP processes.

However, on the basis of article 131(3) FR and given the eligibility criteria set for applicants under section 6 of this Call for Proposals, eligible applicants are considered to have the professional competencies as well as appropriate qualifications necessary to complete the proposed project.

In this respect, applicants have to submit a declaration of honour that they have the operational capacity to carry out the project.

⁴² 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.

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

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.

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

<p>1. Relevance of the proposal</p> <p>Max. score – 25 points (minimum required 12,5)</p>	<p>The relevance of the proposal to the objectives of the action.</p> <p>This criterion will be assessed on the following basis:</p> <p>Sub-criterion 1.1 - Relevance to the objectives of the call</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the extent to which it meets the objectives of the call defined in section 2.1; – the extent to which activities and expected results will enable to meet the objectives of the call defined in section 2.1; – the extent to which it provides clear, measurable and realistic objectives, activities and results which are achievable within the duration of the project; <p>Sub-criterion 1.2 - Relevance to the EU MSP process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the extent to which it demonstrates how it will address specific challenges of the selected sea basin/marine region; – the extent to which the project and expected results bring added value to the MSP processes in the sea basin/marine region in view of the finalisation of the Member States Marine Spatial Plans in full by 2021.
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⁴³ Art. 132 Financial Regulation, 203 Rules of Application.

<p>2. Complementarity of partners Max. score – 15 points (minimum required 7,5)</p>	<p>Quality of the partnership, in terms of composition and capacity to involve and promote dialogue and cooperation with relevant stakeholders, and in terms of number of participating Member States bordering the selected sea basin/marine region.</p> <p>This criterion will be assessed on the following basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the extent to which the partners complement each other in terms of competence and experience in regional cooperation in view of delivering the expected results and impacts; – the extent to which the partners involved are relevant to take up results of the action into national MSP processes; – the extent to which the consortium includes MSP competent authorities as well as knowledge providers in order to strengthen the impact of the project at sea basin or marine area level; – the extent to which partners complement each other in terms of geographical coverage to achieve the expected results and have an impact at sea basin or sub-sea basin level.
<p>3. Added value Max. score – 25 points (minimum required 12,5)</p>	<p>The added value of the project for the selected marine region considering the state of play of MSP processes in terms of implementing Directive 2014/89 and degree to which other EU instruments (CFP, MSFD, INSPIRE, Natura 2000) or results of EU programmes (ETC, LIFE, RTD framework programmes, EMODNet) are taken into account.</p> <p>This criterion will be assessed on the following basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the extent to which it demonstrates the added value of the proposed activities for the implementation of MSP Directive in the selected sea basin/marine region; – the extent to which it intends to improve synergies and cooperation between national institutions, bodies and stakeholders compared to the current status quo; – the extent to which it intends to improve synergies and cross-border cooperation between the different Member States' institutions and bodies compared to the current status quo – this is only relevant for the marine region with several bordering EU Member States; – the extent to which the project integrates or builds on current MSP efforts including projects funded under other EU programmes but also other relevant initiatives (e.g. on the ecosystem based approach).

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

<p>5. Dissemination, sustainability and transferability</p> <p>Max. score – 15 points (minimum required 7,5)</p>	<p>Dissemination, sustainability and transferability of the expected results.</p> <p>This criterion will be assessed on the following basis:</p> <p>Sub-criterion 5.1 – Dissemination and transferability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the extent to which the proposed plan for dissemination of project results and activities (with a description of appropriate activities, tools and channels) is clear and comprehensive; – the extent to which the steps that the applicant will take to effectively spread the results and benefits of the project to the stakeholders and non-participating audience are clearly identified and elaborated; – the extent to which the proposal provides measures to facilitate the transferability of the project activities and results to other sea basins/regions; – the number and quality (impact, relevance) of activities proposed including additional activities to those minimum required. <p>Sub-criterion 5.2 – Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the extent to which the project outputs have the capacity to achieve a long-lasting impact.
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The EASME may call upon external experts in support of the evaluation of the proposals.

10. LEGAL COMMITMENTS⁴⁴

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.

⁴⁴ Art. 121 Financial Regulation, 174 Rules of Application.

11. FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

11.1. General principles

a) Non-cumulative award⁴⁵

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.⁴⁶

b) Non-retroactivity⁴⁷

No grant may be awarded retrospectively for actions already completed.

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

c) Co-financing⁴⁸

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

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

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

Co-financing may take the form of in-kind contributions from third parties, i.e. non-financial resources made available free of charge by third parties to the beneficiary⁴⁹.

d) Balanced budget⁵⁰

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

⁴⁵ Art. 129 Financial Regulation.

⁴⁶ Art. 196.4 Rules of Application.

⁴⁷ Art. 130 Financial Regulation.

⁴⁸ Art. 125 Financial Regulation, 183 Rules of Application.

⁴⁹ Art.127 Financial Regulation.

⁵⁰ Art. 196.2 Rules of Application.

The budget must be drawn up in euros.

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

e) Implementation contracts/sub-contracting⁵¹

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/EC⁵² or contracting entities in the meaning of Directive 2004/17/EC⁵³ shall abide by the applicable national public procurement rules.

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

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

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

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

⁵¹ Art. 137 Financial Regulation, 209 Rules of Application.

⁵² Directive 2004/18/EC on the coordination of procedures for the award of public work contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts.

⁵³ Directive 2004/17/EC coordinating the procurement procedures of entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors.

f) Financial support to third parties

Financial support to third parties is not an eligible expenditure.

11.2. Form of funding⁵⁴

Funding takes the form of mixed financing.

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

➤ Maximum amount requested

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

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

➤ Contributions in-kind⁵⁵

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 costs⁵⁶

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

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

⁵⁴ Art. 123 Financial Regulation, 181 Rules of Application.

⁵⁵ Art. 127 Financial Regulation.

⁵⁶ Art. 126 Financial Regulation.

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

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

The same criteria apply to the affiliated entities.

Eligible direct costs

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

- the costs of personnel working under an employment contract with the applicant or equivalent appointing act and assigned to the action, comprising actual salaries plus social security contributions and other statutory costs included in the remuneration, provided that these costs are in line with the applicant's usual policy on remuneration. Those costs may include additional remuneration, including payments on the basis of supplementary contracts regardless of their nature, provided that it is paid in a consistent manner whenever the same kind of work or expertise is required and independently from the source of funding used. For the calculation of costs of personnel, the calculation sheet is provided on the EMFF webpage⁵⁷ for project implementation;
- costs of the personnel of national administrations to the extent that they relate to the cost of activities which the relevant public authority would not carry out if the project concerned were not undertaken;
- subsistence allowances (for meetings, including kick-off meetings where applicable, conferences etc.) provided that these costs are in line with the beneficiary's usual practices;
- costs of travel (for meetings, including kick-off meetings where applicable, conferences etc.), provided that these costs are in line with the beneficiary's usual practices on travel;

⁵⁷ <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/european-maritime-and-fisheries-fund>

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

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

Eligible indirect costs (overheads)

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

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

➤ **Ineligible costs**

- return on capital;
- debt and debt service charges;
- provisions for losses or debts;

- interest owed;
- doubtful debts;
- exchange losses;
- costs of transfers charged by the bank of a beneficiary;
- costs declared by a beneficiary and covered by another action receiving a European Union grant. In particular, indirect costs shall not be eligible under a grant for an action awarded to a beneficiary who already receives an operating grant financed from the Union budget during the period in question;
- excessive or reckless expenditure;
- deductible VAT (N.B. VAT is eligible where provided for by the relevant articles of the Financial Regulation⁵⁸).

➤ 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 coordinator within 30⁶² days of the date when the last of the two parties signs the grant agreement or of the starting date of implementation of the activities.

⁵⁸ Article 126(3)(c) of the Financial Regulation.

⁵⁹ Art. 135 Financial Regulation.

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

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.

The total amount of pre-financing and interim payment shall not exceed 80% of the grant amount.

11.3.3. *Final payment*

The EASME will establish the amount of the final payment to be made to the coordinator on the basis of the calculation of the final grant amount (see section 11.2 above). If the total of earlier payments is higher than the final grant amount, the beneficiary will be required to reimburse the amount paid in excess by the EASME through a recovery order⁶⁴.

11.4. Pre-financing guarantee⁶⁵

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

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

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

11.5. Reporting requirements

11.5.1 Reporting periods

The coordinator shall submit the following reports to the EASME:

- 4 technical progress reports per year;
- 1 interim technical implementation report and interim financial statement;
- 1 final technical implementation report and final financial statement.

The technical progress reports shall be submitted every three months, from the starting date of the activities and, shall be submitted within two weeks of the end of each covered period.

⁶¹ Art. 109, 110 Rules of Application.

⁶² Art. 92 Financial Regulation.

⁶³ Art. 207.1 Rules of Application.

⁶⁴ Art. 109, 110 Rules of Application.

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

The **interim report** is due within 60 days of the end of the 12th month of project implementation.

The **final report** is due within 60 days of the end of the project.

11.5.2 Reporting format and deadline

The progress report shall be submitted to the EASME in electronic format. It shall explain the progress made on the milestones provided for by the grant agreement. The progress report is requested for project monitoring purposes and does not result in any payment. Deliverables due for the corresponding period shall 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 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 of maximum 10 pages and shall detail all the actions undertaken, the outputs delivered and the final results achieved, as well as the budget implementation during the reporting period. All final deliverables should be submitted with the final report.

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

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

12. PUBLICITY

12.1. By the beneficiary

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

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

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

12.2. By 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.

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;
- 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).

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

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.

14. PROCEDURE FOR ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

14.1. Evaluation Review procedure

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

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

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

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

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

14.2. Admissibility and Eligibility Review procedure

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

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

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

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

complaint is founded, which may lead to the evaluation of the proposals/the participation in the action.

15. PROCEDURE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

The proposal must be submitted in accordance with the formal requirements and by the deadline set out in section 3.1.

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>

➤ **Submission on paper**

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

The application must contain the following documents:

1. Grant application form (including declaration of honour);
2. Estimated budget of the action (budget form);
3. Information on the applicants:
 - documents as specified in section 8
 - a Legal Entity Form⁷¹ and supporting documents as specified in section 6.2 for all participants and affiliated entities
 - a Financial Identification Form (only by the coordinator of the consortium)

The paper version of the application will legally constitute the application. The paper version must include the completed grant application form including the declarations of honour (see point 1 above) and the estimated budget of the action (see point 2 above). The documents providing further information on the applicants (see point 3 above) shall be provided only in electronic format at application stage; a paper version of these documents may be requested later in the award process.

The application shall be submitted using the correct forms and shall be duly completed, dated, showing a balanced budget (revenue/expenditure), submitted in **1 original copy**, signed by the person authorised to enter into legally binding commitments on behalf of the coordinating 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.

⁶⁹ Art. 96 Financial Regulation.

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

⁷¹ http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm

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/2016/1.2.1.6). It must be submitted in a sealed envelope and must be either⁷²:

- sent **by registered mail**, posted or dispatched no later than **31st March 2017** to the address indicated below:

European Commission
EASME
Unit A3 – EMFF
Ref. EASME/EMFF/2016/1.2.1.6 – Maritime Spatial Planning - MSP
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 March 2017 at 16.00, Brussels time** to the address indicated below:

European Commission
EASME
Mail Service
Ref. EASME/EMFF/2016/1.2.1.6 – Maritime Spatial Planning - MSP
Avenue du Bourget 1
B-1140 Brussels

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

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

Applications sent by fax will not be accepted.

➤ **Electronic copy**

In addition to the submission on paper, the applicant is requested to submit an electronic copy of the proposal (i.e. the grant application including the declarations of honour and the estimated budget) and all its annexes (see point 3 above) on a CD-ROM or USB-stick in the same envelope as the paper version.

⁷² Art. 195.3 Rules of Application.

➤ **Contacts**

Requests for further information shall be sent **exclusively** by e-mail to EASME-EMFF-calls@ec.europa.eu indicating as subject title "2016/1.2.1.6 - Maritime Spatial Planning - MSP".

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

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

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

➤ **Annexes to this Call for Proposals**

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

➤ **Templates to be downloaded and completed as part of the proposal:**

- Legal entity form

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

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

- Financial identification form

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

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

⁷³ The application will become Annex I of the Grant Agreement once approved by the contracting authority.

➤ **Templates to be downloaded and used during project implementation:**

- Mandate⁷⁴ (Annex IV to the GA)
- Model technical reports (Annex V to the GA): progress report, interim report and final report
- Model financial statement (Annex VI to the GA)
- Model terms of reference for the certificate on the financial statements (Annex VII to the GA)
- Model Report on the Distribution of the EU Final Financial Contribution (Annex IX to the GA)
- Model for external audit certificate
- Form for calculation of staff costs

These templates can be consulted by applicants at the following address:

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

⁷⁴ Completed mandates will be requested from successful applicants during the grant agreement preparation phase.