



# European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF)

## Call for proposals

Regional flagships projects supporting sustainable blue economy in EU  
sea basins  
(EMFAF-2023-PIA-FLAGSHIP)

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**EUROPEAN CLIMATE, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT EXECUTIVE AGENCY (CINEA)**

CINEA.D – Natural Resources, Climate, Sustainable Blue Economy and Clean Energy  
**CINEA.D.3 – Sustainable Blue Economy**

## **CALL FOR PROPOSALS**

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## 0. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU **action grants** in the field of maritime affairs under the **European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF)**.

The regulatory framework for this EU Funding Programme is set out in:

- Regulation 2018/1046 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))
- the basic act (EMFAF Regulation [2021/1139](#)<sup>1</sup>)
- the Commission Implementing Decision C(2022) 371 final of 26.01.2022 concerning the adoption of the work programme for 2022-2023 and the financing decision for the implementation of the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund.<sup>2</sup>

The call is launched in accordance with the 2022-2023 EMFAF Work Programme<sup>3</sup> and will be managed by the **European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA)** ('Agency').

The call covers the following **topics**:

- 1. EMFAF-2023-PIA-FLAGSHIP-1-ATLANTIC — Diversification of fisheries activities in the Atlantic area (Topic 1)**
- 2. EMFAF-2023-PIA-FLAGSHIP-2-BLACK — Harnessing preparedness and response to marine pollution in the Black Sea (Topic 2)**
- 3. EMFAF-2023-PIA-FLAGSHIP-3-MED — Sustainable transport and ports in the Mediterranean (Topic 3)**
- 4. EMFAF-2023-PIA-FLAGSHIP-4-MED — Maritime clusters as an innovative enabler for a Sustainable Blue Economy in the Mediterranean (Topic 4)**
- 5. EMFAF-2023-PIA-FLAGSHIP-5-OR — Sustainable maritime and coastal tourism in the Outermost Regions (Topic 5)**
- 6. EMFAF-2023-PIA-FLAGSHIP-6-BALTIC— Regenerative ocean farming in the Baltic Sea Region (Topic 6)**

Each project application under the call must address only one of these topics. Applicants wishing to apply for more than one topic must submit a separate proposal under each topic.

We invite you to read the **call documentation** carefully, and in particular this Call Document, the Model Grant Agreement, the [EU Funding & Tenders Portal Online Manual](#) and the [EU Grants AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021 establishing the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (OJ L 247, 13.7.2021, p. 1).

<sup>2</sup> [https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-01/c-2022-371-annex\\_en.pdf](https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-01/c-2022-371-annex_en.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Commission Implementing Decision C(2022) 371 final of 26.01.2022 concerning the adoption of the work programme for 2022-2023 and the financing decision for the implementation of the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund.



These documents provide clarifications and answers to questions you may have when preparing your application:

- the Call Document outlines the:
  - background, objectives, scope, activities that can be funded and the expected results (sections 1 and 2)
  - timetable and available budget (sections 3 and 4)
  - admissibility and eligibility conditions (including mandatory documents; sections 5 and 6)
  - criteria for financial and operational capacity and exclusion (section 7)
  - evaluation and award procedure (section 8)
  - award criteria (section 9)
  - legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements (section 10)
  - how to submit an application (section 11)
- the Online Manual outlines the:
  - procedures to register and submit proposals online via the EU Funding & Tenders Portal ('Portal')
  - recommendations for the preparation of the application
- the AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement contains:
  - detailed annotations on all the provisions in the Grant Agreement you will have to sign in order to obtain the grant (*including cost eligibility, payment schedule, accessory obligations, etc*).

You are also encouraged to visit [EMFF Projects & Results](#) to consult the list of projects funded previously.

## **1. Background**

In 2021, the European Commission adopted two important Communications addressing a sustainable blue economy:

- "A new approach for a sustainable blue economy in the EU" (May 2021)<sup>4</sup> that sets out an agenda vision for the blue economy to play a major role in achieving the European Green Deal's objectives.
- "The European Missions" (September 2021)<sup>5</sup>, including the EU mission "Restore our ocean, sea and waters by 2030", with the aim to provide a systemic approach for the restoration, protection and preservation of our ocean, seas and waters.

In addition, the Commission also adopted strategic guidelines for sustainable and competitive aquaculture<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> [COM\(2021\)2024 final](#)

<sup>5</sup> [COM\(2021\)609 final](#)

<sup>6</sup> [COM\(2021\)102 final](#)



In this context, the development of all sea-related activities in a sustainable manner calls for a coherent policy framework based on the involvement of all stakeholders. Seas are shared among different countries, therefore regional cooperation, including with non-EU countries, is essential. Moreover, there are specific conditions, opportunities and challenges for each sea basin, which require a targeted approach.

To this end, the European Commission has developed in parallel to the EU macro-regional strategies, three sea basin strategies in the Atlantic, the Western Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

### *The Atlantic Maritime Strategy*

The **Atlantic Maritime Strategy**<sup>7</sup> dates back to 2011. Further to a bottom-up consultation process, the Atlantic Member States jointly agreed to focus on four thematic areas for the future. Accordingly, in July 2020, the European Commission adopted a revised Atlantic action plan – the AAP 2.0 - which identifies the following four priority areas for cooperation between the four participating Member States (France, Ireland, Portugal and Spain):

- Atlantic ports as gateways and hubs for blue economy;
- Blue skills and ocean literacy;
- Marine Renewable Energy;
- Coastal resilience and healthy ocean.

Although the AAP 2.0 is thematically focussed on the above four priority areas, other sectors such as fisheries and tourism also play a very important role in terms of job creation and gross value added (as shown by the latest Blue Economy Report<sup>8</sup>).

The purpose of this Call is to target the segment of the blue economy related to diversification of fisheries activities in the Atlantic to complement the actions undertaken by the Common Fisheries Policy.

### *The Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea*

In 2019, the **Common maritime agenda (CMA) for the Black sea**<sup>9</sup> was adopted by Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova, Ukraine, Russia, Georgia and Turkey. The CMA sets the following goals and a number of priority areas for regional cooperation:

- Healthy marine and coastal ecosystems;
- A competitive, innovative and sustainable blue economy for the Black sea;
- Fostering Investment in the Black Sea blue economy.

The Black Sea and its coastal and marine ecosystems are at risk. This is partly due to climate change effects, such as sea-level rise, erosion, ecosystem changes, acidification, natural meteorological effects, and increase of water temperature at sea. At the same time, unsustainable past and existing maritime, coastal and terrestrial activities - pollution, marine litter and waste water and unsustainable practices - have a direct impact on the marine and coastal ecosystem.

In this framework, the war in Ukraine is provoking new environmental damages that are exacerbated by the semi-closed nature of the Black Sea, while the capacity and the actions to respond to specific sea pollution caused by, for example, ammunitions,

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<sup>7</sup> [Atlantic Ocean \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&plugin=1)

<sup>8</sup> [The EU blue economy report 2022 - Publications Office of the EU \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&plugin=1)

<sup>9</sup> [Black Sea \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&plugin=1)

oil leaks, and sunken vessels, need to be identified and adapted to the new challenges.

*The Initiative for the sustainable development of the blue economy in the Western Mediterranean*

The **Initiative for the sustainable development of the blue economy in the Western Mediterranean (WestMed)**<sup>10</sup> was launched in 2017 to support cooperation between 5 EU Member States (Portugal, Spain, France, Italy and Malta) and 5 non-EU countries (Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya). This initiative sets the following goals:

- A safer and more secure maritime space;
- A smart and resilient blue economy;
- A better governance of the sea.

The western Mediterranean plays a strategic role with respect to short- and long-haul shipping routes, as it connects African and European countries, while it also provides an essential link between Atlantic routes and Asian destinations, via the eastern Mediterranean and including through the Black Sea.

Green shipping, sustainable transport and alternative fuels are components of the first of the technical working Groups created within the WestMed Initiative in 2020. Additionally, the 2021 revision of the Trans European Transport Network (TEN-T)<sup>11</sup> embeds a specific reference to the expansion to Partner Countries. Moreover, the impacts of the Fit for 55 package, and the preparation of a new Regional Transport Action Plan for the Mediterranean under the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) framework in 2022, make maritime transport one of the main established sectors of interest for WestMed stakeholders.

Maritime clusters can facilitate the transition to a sustainable blue economy by accelerating innovation. They engage different stakeholders from the private sector, public authorities and research or academia, and can support the emergence of innovative partnerships and smart value chains. The northern shore of the western Mediterranean hosts a high number of active and experienced maritime clusters while some developments are also emerging in the southern shore, with one increasingly active in Tunisia and emerging ones in Algeria and potentially in Morocco and Mauritania.

Moreover, the WestMED Maritime Clusters Alliance<sup>12</sup> is accelerating cooperation and joint actions by maritime clusters in the western Mediterranean through exchanges of knowledge and practices on sustainable innovative investments, new businesses, and by promoting the development of southern maritime clusters, the upgrade of cluster management skills and attract new private investments across the region and under the framework of the WestMED Initiative.

The Western Mediterranean is also piloting projects and actions aiming to generate positive impact<sup>13</sup> in the entire Mediterranean Sea basin, including in cooperation with the Union for the Mediterranean. Thus, the [2<sup>nd</sup> UfM Ministerial Declaration on the Sustainable Blue Economy](#), adopted on 2 February 2021, reaffirmed the commitments of the countries to cooperate closely and address challenges and opportunities for the sustainability of the Mediterranean Sea and the Blue Economy sectors.

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<sup>10</sup> [Mediterranean Sea \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>11</sup> [COM/2021/812 final](#)

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.westmed-initiative.eu/westmed-maritime-clusters-alliance/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://ufmsecretariat.org/what-we-do/projects/>



### Strategy for the EU's outermost regions

The implementation of the Blue Economy Strategy in the **nine EU Outermost Regions**<sup>14</sup> complements the regional cooperation framework in place.

Specific support to Outermost Regions (ORs) is in line with Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), to develop and implement a sustainable blue economy in a variety of sectors (both established and innovative and emerging ones), according to the priorities identified in their respective blue economy ongoing strategic planning exercise.

Moreover, the recent EC Communication on the renewed Strategy for Outermost Regions<sup>15</sup> expressly includes, in its measures, the launch of a call for proposals to support outermost regions (ORs)' blue economy under the EMFAF.

### Regenerative Ocean Farming in the Baltic Sea Region

In February 2021, the European Commission adopted a new Action Plan for the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)<sup>16</sup>, that includes the objective "save the sea" and specific actions set under the policy area Bioeconomy focussing on "alternative sources of proteins".

In addition, the Communication on a new approach for a sustainable blue economy calls for a transformation of the blue economy along the priorities of the European Green Deal and, notably, the Farm to Fork Strategy, which underlines the potential of farmed seafood as a source of protein for food and feed with a low-carbon footprint having an important role to play in the transition to a sustainable food system.

In the Communication on Strategic Guidelines for a More Sustainable and Competitive EU Aquaculture for the period 2021 to 2030, it is highlighted how aquaculture, in addition to create jobs and economic development opportunities, can also help: decarbonise the economy, fight climate change and mitigate its impact (through carbon sequestration and nature-based coastal protection), reduce pollution, contribute to better preserving biodiversity and ecosystems (in line with the objectives of the Biodiversity strategy and the Zero-pollution ambition for a toxic-free environment), and be part of a more circular management of resources.

In this context, regenerative ocean farming can play an important role. Regenerative ocean farming is a form of mariculture<sup>17</sup> that involves restoration and regeneration<sup>18</sup> of seaweed habitats and/or other marine habitats in nearshore or offshore ocean environment, following sustainable mariculture principles, e.g. marine permaculture, with zero feeds and fertilisers inputs in the system, with the effect of sequestration of carbon and nutrients and restoration of coastal and marine ecosystems. Regenerative ocean farming may include seaweed and/or combinations of seaweed, shellfish and/or other low trophic organisms.

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<sup>14</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/policy/themes/outermost-regions/](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/themes/outermost-regions/)

<sup>15</sup> [COM\(2022\) 198 final](#)

<sup>16</sup> [SWD\(2021\) 24 final 15.2.2021](#)

<sup>17</sup> Mariculture is the cultivation of aquatic animals and plants in natural marine and estuarine (brackish) waters ([https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/11349/rsocr\\_printedition.compressed\\_Part2\\_2.pdf?sequence=23&isAllowed=y](https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/11349/rsocr_printedition.compressed_Part2_2.pdf?sequence=23&isAllowed=y))

<sup>18</sup> Regeneration is understood as the ability of an ecosystem – specifically, the environment and its living population – to renew and recover from damage, among others through photosynthesis which results in increased plant biomass in the ecosystem.



## **2. Objectives – Themes and priorities – Activities that can be funded – Expected impact**

### **EMFAF-2023-PIA-FLAGSHIP-1-ATLANTIC – Diversification of fisheries activities in the Atlantic area (Topic 1)**

Many fishing vessels experience more and more periods of time without operations in the Atlantic throughout the year. To compensate income losses, diversification of fisheries through other sustainable blue economy activities, e.g. tourism, regenerative ocean farming, etc., are needed. This would not only provide fishers with an additional, complementary income source, but it would also diversify the tourism activities of the region. Furthermore, diversification of fishing activities could also contribute to promote cultural heritage, biodiversity and environmental protection and provide additional ecosystem services. Finally, it could also improve the image of fishers as a profession and make it more attractive for young people, while raising the profile of the region at the same time.

#### Objectives

The main objective of this topic is to support the diversification of the income sources for fisheries communities in the Atlantic area by promoting activities related to the sustainable blue economy.

#### Themes and priorities (scope)

This topic will focus on:

- Integration of tourism products and services provided by fishers and fisheries associations into the local/regional/sea basin tourist offers;
- Support fishers and other interested stakeholders, to assess the interest and feasibility to set up new regenerative ocean farms or restore coastal marine ecosystems, including by testing these approaches;
- Promotion of job creation in the field of sustainable blue economy.

#### Activities that can be funded

Selected projects should carry out to the maximum extent possible the indicative (not exhaustive) activities listed below:

- Awareness raising and increasing social acceptance by showcasing results of existing projects related to fisheries diversification and benefits derived from them;
- Engaging local stakeholders and communities;
- Coaching, advisory services, mentoring, training for fishers in areas as for example pesca-tourism, eco-tourism, cultural heritage, shellfish and/or regenerative ocean farming, etc.;
- Promoting entrepreneurial activities amongst local fishers, offering the fishers initial training on maritime-coastal cultural and natural heritage or regenerative ocean farming;
- Providing training programmes on sustainability (green skills), digital skills, entrepreneurial and soft (customer service, languages) skills, communication

and awareness-raising, tutoring services for new businesses, and the development of series of good practices guides and protocols;

- Matchmaking activities or other forms of support for cooperation among related blue economy SMEs/start-ups and other stakeholders;
- Developing and promoting marketing of coastal-maritime tourism routes including fisheries/aquaculture tourism products/services or demonstrating and test-base innovative methods for regenerative ocean farming, of either local seaweed species or seaweed in combination with shellfish;
- Creating local and regional networks to foster interaction between fisheries communities and economic operators in close cooperation with the local and regional government authorities.

Applicants shall explain in the proposal the added-value of their projects compared to similar actions implemented under national EMFAF Operational Programmes (shared management).

### Expected impact

Applicants will describe in their proposals the concrete and measurable results within the duration of the project and their expected impact, including indicators for the monitoring and measurement of progress.

Projects are expected to achieve the following impacts to the maximum extent possible in line with the proposed activities:

- New product/services integrated in the local/regional/sea basin tourism offer;
- New jobs created;
- Set up of new tourist routes including Pesca-tourism and eco-tourism;
- Increased awareness and engagement of coastal stakeholders (including public authorities and tourism offices) in relation to fisheries diversification activities and environmental protection;

And/or

- Proven technical feasibility of regenerative ocean farming;
- Measure and quantify economic and environmental benefits of regenerative farming, including:
  - market potential and job opportunities;
  - the capacity of reversing degradation of ocean ecosystems and restoring their ecological functionality;
- Increased awareness among coastal communities of the opportunities offered by regenerative ocean farming, including social acceptance.

The above list of expected impacts is non-exhaustive and applicants may add others if deemed relevant to achieve the objectives of this topic.



## **EMFAF-2023-PIA-FLAGSHIP-2-BLACK – Harnessing preparedness and response to marine pollution in the Black Sea (Topic 2)**

### Objectives

The overall objective of this topic is to prepare and adapt the capacities for a coordinated response to new challenges linked to marine pollution, with particular attention to pollution caused by armed conflicts, by authorities/organisations in charge of marine environmental pollution response activities.

This will be done by developing and testing new training curricula, based on the identification of the specific characteristics and response needs linked to sea pollution caused by, for example, ammunitions, oil leaks, and sunken vessels, as well as on the analysis of the current training offer on marine pollution response.

This topic will complement the activities implemented in the region by the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), in particular under its Component 4 'Protection of the marine environment'.

### Themes and priorities (scope)

Building on the Goal I of the Common Maritime Agenda (CMA) for the Black Sea, and in particular on Priority 5 'Encourage the production, management and sharing of marine and coastal environmental knowledge for effective environmental monitoring and observation', the focus of this topic is twofold:

- Identifying specific types and impacts of marine pollution, including pollution caused by armed conflicts, that should be tackled, and prioritize the potential environmental risks (including hazardous substances, eutrophication, litter, noise) and the threats to marine and coastal biodiversity.
- Define training curricula for tackling the issues referred to in the above point, provided that these curricula are complementary and do not overlap with the existing ones.

The selected projects are expected to take stock and build on relevant experiences from EU competent authorities/organisations active in other sea basins and that have already developed experience on the objectives and activities specified in this topic.

### Activities that can be funded

Selected projects should carry out to the maximum extent possible the indicative (not exhaustive) activities listed below:

- Mapping of the authorities/organisations that are in charge of the marine environmental pollution response in the different Black Sea countries and the existing training plans;
- Identification of specific type of pollution, sea and land based, that can be considered as peculiar of specific events, including armed conflicts;
- Identification and monitoring of relevant indicators;
- Definition of the structure/elements of a regional database with comparable information/indicators;

- Mapping and analysis of the existing training programmes/curricula provided by EU based authorities/organisations related to sea pollution caused by armed conflicts;
- Definition of new specific training curricula for sea pollution, including the one caused by armed conflicts, both at Black Sea and at national level;
- Test new specific training curricula at national level;
- Implementing a regional training module, facilitating the exchange of lesson learned and best practices;
- Elaboration of recommendations on training needs to respond to sea pollution, including pollution caused by armed conflicts, in the Black Sea and on how, in the medium-long term perspective, these training courses can be adapted in order to integrate the existing training programmes/curricula on marine environmental pollution response.

### Expected impact

Applicants will describe in their proposal the concrete and measurable results within the duration of the project and their expected impact, including indicators for the monitoring and measurement of progress.

Projects are expected to achieve the following impacts to the maximum extent possible in line with the proposed activities:

- Better understanding of roles and activities of authorities/organisations in charge of the marine environmental pollution response in the different Black Sea countries and the training schemes/offer;
- Defined causes of sea pollution, including pollution from armed conflicts, also land/rivers based;
- Training opportunities adapted to the new marine environmental challenges the Black Sea developed;
- Reinforced capacity of responsible authorities/organisations to cooperate at regional level;
- Improved/differentiated marine environmental pollution response activities skills;
- Improved capacities of the authorities/organisations to cooperate at sea basin level on defining and implementing training scheme on sea pollution, including pollution caused by armed conflicts, while integrating the expertise and best practices from other EU sea basins/countries.
- Increased knowledge about the impacts of the pollution caused by armed conflicts on marine environment and ecosystems.

The above list of expected impacts is non-exhaustive and applicants may add others if deemed relevant to achieve the objectives of this topic.



## **EMFAF-202120232-PIA-FLAGSHIP-3-MED – Sustainable transport and ports in the Mediterranean (Topic 3)**

### Objectives

The main objectives of this topic are to reduce emissions by ports and ships and promote the transition towards carbon neutrality of the maritime transport sector in the Mediterranean, while ensuring synergies with the Horizon Europe Co-Programmed Partnership on Zero-Emission Waterborne Transport.<sup>19</sup>

This topic aims at contributing to the Goal 2 “A smart and resilient blue economy of the strategy” (Priority Sustainable consumption and production: ports and maritime transport) of the WestMED initiative.<sup>20</sup>

Green shipping, sustainable transport and alternative fuels are high on the agenda of WestMED stakeholders. Several actions to tackle these issues have been identified by a dedicated technical group created within the WestMed Initiative in 2020.

Moreover, the UfM Ministerial Declaration on the Sustainable Blue Economy pays special attention to sustainable, climate-neutral and zero-pollution maritime transport and port. It calls for strengthening expertise and boosting investments in infrastructure taking duly into account the specific needs and priorities of Mediterranean countries; and to actively cooperate and participate in the implementation of joint projects in the provision of clean energy and technology.

### Themes and priorities (scope)

Proposals should focus on one of the following themes:

1. Monitoring and technology foresight on green shipping in the Mediterranean, including energy consumption, technological chains in maritime alternative fuels, and practices and opportunities for strategic development of infrastructures to boost sustainable sources for green shipping;
2. Promotion of energy communities in ports of the Mediterranean, e.g. by supporting/anticipating the transition to LNG, or from LNG towards a wider choice of alternative fuels/technologies, including green hydrogen, electrification, wind, etc.;
3. Promote commercial vessels (including local small-scale ferries and service vessels) and fishing boats transition to LNG, or from LNG towards a wider choice of alternative fuels-propulsion/technologies (green hydrogen, electrification, wind).

### Activities that can be funded

Selected projects should carry out to the maximum extent possible the indicative (not exhaustive) activities listed below:

Building on the above priorities/themes the main activities that can be funded are divided in three areas:

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.waterborne.eu/partnership/partnership>

<sup>20</sup> Initiative for the sustainable development of the blue economy in the western Mediterranean ([SWD\(2017\) 130 final](#))

1. Monitoring and technology foresight on green shipping in the Mediterranean, including for example:
  - Assessment of green shipping challenges and potentials at a regional level;
  - Economic, financial, environmental and technological assessment and methodological issues, also based on the results of EU funded projects (state of the art, challenges, potentials);
  - Market analysis and supply chain mapping;
  - Localisation and sizing of facilities and infrastructures (assess development potentials) and challenges, including impact and management of pandemic crises in ports (i.e. health protocols);
  - Assessment at Regional and National level (especially in North African countries);
  - Monitoring of emissions (GHG, sulphur and particle matter, etc.);
  - Assessment of projected demand from ships for (sustainable) energy in the Mediterranean;
  - SWOT analysis of a full sustainable energy transition, including an evaluation of the demand for sustainable energy and the driving factors for attracting investors in the region.
2. Promoting energy communities in ports of the Mediterranean, e.g. by supporting/anticipating the transition from LNG towards a wider choice of alternative fuels/technologies (e.g. green hydrogen, electrification, wind, etc.), including for example:
  - Assess the state-of-art of EU and non-EU projects dealing with relevant information of ports that could help build Energy Communities;
  - Identify which local stakeholders (businesses, agencies, private operators) could have suitable port data/technologies – as a basis to further engagement and involvement with them;
  - Understand the governance structures under which ports are organised (public lease of land to private operators);
  - Share data on potential energy consumption per port;
  - Discussion of potentials of sharing of real time data (monitoring of the efficiency);
  - Carry out baseline study of current/future regulation of energy usage across (participating) countries;
  - Set-up of “Living Labs” for Pilot Ports, intended as structured multi-stakeholder groups aimed at discussing the specific patterns, challenges and opportunities related to sustainable energy supply and consumption, including overall legal/policy framework;
  - Setting-up concrete micro action-plans towards the piloting and establishment of Energy Communities in each port involved;
  - Coordinating pilot actions to test the feasibility of such plans and sharing results throughout the project implementation across the various ports and beyond.
3. Promoting commercial vessels (including local small-scale ferries and service vessels) and fishing boats transition from LNG towards a wider choice of alternative fuels-propulsion/technologies (green hydrogen, electrification, wind), including for example:

- Assessment of adaptation costs for greening local infrastructures and vessels and gain their transition to fully sustainable sources of fuel and other energy/propulsion means;
- Analysis of alternatives and which financial tools could be used towards decarbonisation;
- Analysis of what operators are looking for and what are the available alternatives of fuels for operators;
- Assess the options for energy investments, addressing the need for short-term investments and cost structure for adaptation (towards a clear strategy for sustainable fuel bunkering);
- Study on regulatory aspects building on current consultations, aimed at the support of fleet transition (particularly south);
- Capitalise on experiences/models being developed in EU ports/shipping companies.

### Expected impact

Applicants will describe in their proposal the concrete and measurable results within the duration of the project and their expected impact, including indicators for the monitoring and measurement of progress.

Projects are expected to achieve the following impacts to the maximum extent possible in line with the proposed activities:

- Full mapping of needs and capacities across the two shores of the Mediterranean with a systemic view of maritime transport (multimodal network, logistic systems, bunkering, energy efficiency and renewable energy production potential, etc.);
- Setting the basis for the creation of energy communities aiming to achieve carbon neutrality in Mediterranean ports;
- Establishment of an observatory on technologies and sources to be used for green shipping (e.g. methanol, ammoniac, green hydrogen and related technologies, including electrification), including monitoring of most advanced practices (technological, infrastructural, managerial, etc.);
- Training capacity, technical and managerial skills on Sustainable Maritime Transport and Energy Efficiency in shipping fostered across the Mediterranean, both in the north and south;
- Harmonization and standardisation of technologies and regulations, as well as sharing of knowledge, good practices and capacity across the region.

The above list of expected impacts is non-exhaustive and applicants may add others if deemed relevant to achieve the objectives of this topic.





## **EMFAF-2023-PIA-FLAGSHIP-4-MED – Maritime clusters as an innovative enabler for a Sustainable Blue Economy in the Mediterranean (Topic 4)**

### Objectives

The overall objective of this topic is to foster an effective network of maritime clusters<sup>21</sup> across the Mediterranean in order to support medium, small and micro enterprises in the blue economy.

This topic aims at contributing to the Goal 2 “A smart and resilient blue economy” of the WestMED Initiative<sup>22</sup> (Priority 2.2. “Maritime Clusters Development”), by building up on clusters currently cooperating (e.g. WestMED Clusters Alliance) or similar co-operation agreements and actions in the region developed by EU networks for industrial policy, interregional collaboration and integration of SMEs into EU and global value chains.

The referred second UfM Ministerial Declaration on SBE also calls for the establishment of blue economy clusters - including transnational ones, the strengthening of existing clusters, and increased cooperation between national clusters in the Mediterranean.

### Themes and priorities (scope)

This topic focuses on establishing new national maritime clusters and enhancing cooperation between Northern and Southern clusters across the Mediterranean and among clusters, SMEs, academia and research centres, institutional actors and financial institutions. It also aims to improve the involvement of maritime clusters in policy-making at the regional/national levels, in particular as regards the definition/upgrade of smart specialisation strategies.

### Activities that can be funded

Selected projects should carry out to the maximum extent possible the indicative (not exhaustive) activities listed below:

- Benchmark against best practices and/or use cases to assess maritime clusters’ needs to achieve a critical mass and build sufficient capacity towards internationalisation, and a sustainable blue economy sectoral specialisation and improve cluster management;
- Establish new national maritime cluster organisations across the Mediterranean and enhance cooperation between northern and southern Mediterranean maritime clusters;
- Formulate recommendations to relevant public authorities to harness existing clusters’ practices for the benefit of coastal communities through greater regional cooperation in the Mediterranean;
- Promote cooperation between key actors of maritime clusters (business, research, education and training institutes, public authorities), accelerators, incubators and financial intermediaries;

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<sup>21</sup> [Study on maritime clusters in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea | Maritime Forum \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>22</sup> Initiative for the sustainable development of the blue economy in the western Mediterranean ([SWD\(2017\) 130 final](#))

- Undertake concrete joint activities, e.g. joint investment in research and innovation, developing cluster strategies and practices;
- Strengthen cluster services to business, e.g. promoting start-ups through accelerators and business angel services, developing business services, facilitating access to finance;
- Promote capacity-building and knowledge transfer activities, e.g. exchanging good practices, transferring capacity and enhancing mutual learning;
- Improve the involvement of maritime clusters in the policy-making, including the definition/upgrade of smart specialisation strategies;
- Support policymakers in dealing with cluster policy by creating synergies with the European Cluster Collaboration Platform and the European Network of Maritime Clusters.

### Expected impact

Applicants will describe in their proposal the concrete and measurable results within the duration of the project and their expected impact, including indicators for the monitoring and measurement of progress.

Projects are expected to achieve the following impacts to the maximum extent possible in line with the proposed activities:

- Strengthened competitiveness of the maritime clusters;
- Enhanced cooperation among clusters and financial institutions, and between SMEs, academia and research centres;
- Increased participation of coastal stakeholders (including public authorities) and their engagement into clusters activities, notably linked to market opportunities;
- Improved governance structure of clusters and management of skills;
- National maritime clusters established across the Mediterranean and enhanced cooperation between EU and partner countries;
- Maritime clusters involved in the policy-making, including the upgrade of smart specialisation strategies;
- Increased cooperation between the activities of WestMed Maritime Clusters Alliance<sup>23</sup> and/or other similar cooperation agreements/actions, WestMed National Hubs and clusters.

The above list of expected impacts is non-exhaustive and applicants may add others if deemed relevant to achieve the objectives of this topic.

## **EMFAF-2023-PIA-FLAGSHIP-5-OR — Sustainable maritime and coastal tourism in the Outermost Regions (Topic 5)**

### Objectives

The main objective is to support the blue economy in the EU's Outermost Regions through projects that promote innovative and sustainable solution in coastal and maritime tourism and contribute to protect marine biodiversity, in line with the Commission communication "Putting people first, securing sustainable and inclusive growth, unlocking the potential of the EU Outermost Regions" adopted on 3 May 2022<sup>24</sup>, as well as with the objectives of the Communication on a new approach for a

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.westmed-initiative.eu/westmed-maritime-clusters-alliance/>

<sup>24</sup> [COM\(2022\)198 final](#)

sustainable blue economy in the EU<sup>25</sup> and the report on Transition Pathway for Tourism.<sup>26</sup>

In line with the above priorities, this call topic aims at preserving the marine and coastal environment and marine cultural heritage, and strengthening the attractiveness of coastal areas as a unique asset for competitiveness in the EU outermost regions, by:

- Supporting tourism stakeholders to tap into the growing ecotourism market, while preserving the marine and coastal environment and their rich biodiversity and ecosystems and strengthening the sector's resilience to climate change;
- Boosting innovation and digitalisation in the tourism sector, thus increasing its contribution to economic growth and jobs in their territories and in line with Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3) as far as relevant;
- Improving the business environment for tourism SMEs, mobilising private-public investments, enhancing socio-economic and market intelligence and territorial marketing based on the unique assets of the region, diversifying and increasing the visibility of the tourism offer and products.

#### *Themes and priorities (scope)*

This topic aims at supporting projects that will develop a multidimensional and integrated approach to the tourism offer in the Outermost Regions. Proposals must address at least one of the following themes:

1. Design of smart eco-tourism packages and promotion of biodiversity assets;
2. Innovation in destination management.

#### *Activities that can be funded*

Selected projects should carry out to the maximum extent possible the indicative (not exhaustive) activities listed below:

- Design and testing of new tourism products, providing visitors with a high-quality experience, including new tools and/or EU or other internationally recognized tools, methods, and indicators/standards for sustainable tourism practices, and monitor and assess carbon and environmental footprint;.
- Stimulating new business opportunities which directly or indirectly support ecotourism product experiences in and around protected areas;
- Strengthening destinations through the collaboration of local clusters and communities;
- Promoting less known areas and prolonging the tourism season;
- Integrating different product components (e.g. accommodation, meals, activities, transport) and suppliers (tour operators, lodging, restaurants, canteens, etc.);
- Strategic management of the destination with a long-term orientation and ways of better addressing environmental and social sustainability;
- Marketing activities, including promoting cultural heritage and natural assets;

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<sup>25</sup> [The Communication on a new approach for a sustainable blue economy in the EU stresses the Commission's commitment to continue supporting the Outermost Regions in developing sustainable blue economy strategies.](#)

<sup>26</sup> Commission report published on 4 February 2022: [Tourism transition pathway cocreation \(europa.eu\)](#)

- Accelerating the digital transformation processes including tourism data management and digital skills;
- Promoting synergies between tourism and other productive activities, notably through multi-stakeholder partnerships/hubs/networks/clusters, involving governmental and other public bodies, trade associations, local government, businesses, citizen representatives, local communities, cultural associations, promotion agencies;
- Data collection and monitoring of economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism to local destinations in a harmonized manner which can be aggregated to support regional or national statistics of tourism destinations and businesses, including by engaging tourism observatories;
- Awareness raising and capacity building activities for stakeholders in the coastal and maritime tourism sectors to support uptake of new models and approaches;
- Development of policy recommendations for the chosen theme(s), based on lessons learned during project implementation and recommendations of mechanisms to ensure future sustainability of activities beyond the project duration;
- Contributing to the establishment of or participation in National or Regional Skills partnerships in the partner Member States.

### Expected impact

Applicants will describe in their proposal the concrete and measurable results within the duration of the project and their expected impact, including indicators for the monitoring and measurement of progress.

Projects are expected to achieve the following impacts to the maximum extent possible in line with the proposed activities:

- New product/services integrated in the local/regional/sea basin tourism offer;
- Set up of new tourism routes including eco-tourism;
- Durable partnerships/networks focusing on the chosen theme(s);
- New and applicable policy pathways and recommendations or action plans to support public authorities (national and regional) and services;
- New start-ups, investments and jobs created;
- New eco-tourism packages promoting cross border and interregional cooperation, with replication potential across the Outermost Regions;
- Increased digitalisation and circular economy approaches in the maritime and coastal tourism sector;
- Increased awareness of the targeted Outermost Regions as a sustainable, high quality and safe destination;
- Diversification of, and less seasonally dependent, maritime and coastal tourism products offered in the targeted Outermost Regions;
- Upskilling and reskilling of employees in the tourism sector (both employed and unemployed).

The above list of expected impacts is non-exhaustive and applicants may add others if deemed relevant to achieve the objectives of this topic.



## **EMFAF-2022-PIA-FLAGSHIP-6-BALTIC – Regenerative ocean farming in the Baltic Sea Region (Topic 6)**

### Objectives

As a concrete example of ecosystem restoration, this topic aims at reorienting fishers from extraction to ocean regeneration activities. It will support fishers and other interested stakeholders, to assess the interest and feasibility to set up new regenerative ocean farms or restore coastal marine ecosystems, including by testing these approaches, if possible in connection with marine protected areas.

This topic is specifically addressing the EU Member states in the Baltic Sea Region to support the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)<sup>27</sup>, and in particular the actions set under the policy area Bioeconomy.

### Themes and priorities (scope)

The proposals are expected to gather all relevant players that may facilitate and support the reorientation process towards regenerative ocean farming. These players include, but are not limited to, fishers, coastal communities, local authorities and policy makers, marine planners, industries and SMEs, innovators, research centres, and NGOs.

In line with the above mentioned Strategic Guidelines for a More Sustainable and Competitive EU Aquaculture, the main themes to be addressed are:

- knowledge creation and sharing, and promotion of innovative approaches for regenerative ocean farming, including technical, economic, environmental and social aspects linked to the reorientation process;
- Identification of skills and training needs;
- Access to space and water, and in particular in connection with marine protected areas;
- Permitting and authorisation processes for the installation of new regenerative ocean farms;
- Demonstration activities for setting and operating regenerative ocean farming.

The proposals should focus on the job maintenance and job creation for local communities, on reskilling needs and development of future business opportunities that will both create added value while regenerating marine ecosystems.

Cross-border cooperation is considered an essential element to learn from each other, and speed up spreading of new sustainable practices in the blue bio-economy and aquaculture in the Baltic Sea region. It will also help address potential challenges like availability of proper expertise, seeds, pest and diseases control etc.

The selected projects should link up with ongoing EU initiatives and projects funded under EU programmes, e.g. EMFF/EMFAF, LIFE, Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe, INTERREG.

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<sup>27</sup> [SWD\(2021\) 24 final 15.2.2021](#)

In particular synergies are expected to be created with the EU4Algae Forum,<sup>28</sup> and the projects resulting from the Horizon Europe call for proposals HORIZON-MISS-2022-OCEAN-01-10: Towards local community-driven business models: regenerative ocean farming.<sup>29</sup>

If projects collect in-situ marine observation data, beneficiaries must make them openly available through the European Marine Observation and Data network (EMODnet), based on FAIR (findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable) principles.

### *Activities that can be funded*

Selected projects should carry out to the maximum extent possible the indicative (not exhaustive) activities listed below:

- Collect quantitative and qualitative data, guidelines, good practice on past and ongoing experiences of regenerative ocean farming in the Baltic Sea Region and in other EU countries to provide evidence of their social, economic, and environmental benefits;
- Develop practical guidelines, training and dissemination materials (including videos and IT tools) to support new seaweed and shellfish farmers, and other interested stakeholders, in the reorientation towards setting and operating regenerative ocean farming;
- Demonstrate and test-base innovative methods for regenerative ocean farming, of either local seaweed species or seaweed in combination with shellfish to prove viability of future business cases while generating positive environmental impacts;
- Set-up local/regional networks by engaging with local communities, in particular with fishers (to examine their willingness and experience) and local authorities, to share knowledge and co-create ad-hoc technical solutions and business models to support a fast deployment of regenerative ocean farming;
- Identify enabling and/or preventing legislative frameworks by discussing with local authorities and maritime spatial planners how to facilitate and remove barriers (e.g. licensing of farms, access to space) to the setting up and operation of regenerative ocean farming without affecting other aspects of ecosystems conservation/restoration;
- Assess the potential of expanding marine protected areas by exploring the full regenerative potential of innovative regenerative ocean farming by testing their viability in connection with marine protected areas;
- Raise awareness campaigns and increase social acceptance among local communities by sharing experience and evidence of the likely positive impacts of regenerative ocean farming.

### *Expected impact*

Applicants will describe in their proposal the concrete and measurable results within the duration of the project and their expected impact, including indicators for the monitoring and measurement of progress.

Projects are expected to achieve the following impacts to the maximum extent possible in line with the proposed activities:

- Elaboration of good practice for permitting procedures for local authorities and

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<sup>28</sup> <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/maritimeforum/en/frontpage/1727>

<sup>29</sup> [HORIZON-MISS-2022-OCEAN-01-10](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/maritimeforum/en/frontpage/1727)

- policy makers, including recommendations for EU legislation;
- Proven technical feasibility of regenerative ocean farming, in particular in connection with marine protected areas;
  - Measure and quantify economic and environmental benefits of regenerative farming, including:
    - market potential and job opportunities;
    - the capacity of reversing degradation of ocean ecosystems and restoring their ecological functionality;
  - Increased awareness among coastal communities of the opportunities offered by regenerative ocean farming, including social acceptance.

The above list of impacts is non-exhaustive and applicants can include others if appropriate for their proposal.

### *For all topics*

#### *Networking with relevant EU projects*

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

#### *Legacy plan*

Proposals must include a legacy (business) plan in their deliverables proposing options on how to continue their activities once the EU funding is over to ensure the sustainability of the proposed actions.

#### *Indicators*

Applicants have to list the main expected results<sup>30</sup> in a concrete, realistic and quantified way, as far as possible. The results should be presented in a format comparable to the relevant EMFAF core performance indicators (KPI)<sup>31</sup> as per below list (only relevant indicators should be considered):

- CR 01 - New production capacity (tonnes/annum)
- CR 03 - Businesses created (number of entities)
- CR 04 - Businesses with higher turnover (number of entities)
- CR 06 - Jobs created (number of persons)
- CR 07 - Jobs maintained (number of persons)
- CR 08 - Persons benefitting (number of persons)
- CR 09 - Area addressed by operations contributing to a good environmental status, protecting, conserving, and restoring biodiversity and ecosystems (km<sup>2</sup> or km)

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<sup>30</sup> Results: capture more direct, short to medium term changes in a situation, which are achieved by the end of the project. E.g. if four FTE jobs are expected to be created by the end of the project, this will be an expected project result.

<sup>31</sup> See Annex I of EMFAF Regulation [2021/1139](#)

- CR 10 - Actions contributing to a good environmental status, including nature restoration, conservation, protection of ecosystems, biodiversity, animal health and welfare (number of actions)
- CR 11 - Entities increasing social sustainability (number of entities)
- CR 13 - Cooperation activities between stakeholders (number of actions)
- CR 14 - Innovations enabled (number of new products, services, processes, business models or methods)
- CR 16 - Entities benefitting from promotion and information activities (number of entities)
- CR 17 - Entities improving resource efficiency in production and/or processing (number of entities)
- CR 18 - Energy consumption leading to CO2 emissions reduction (kWh/tonnes or litres/h)
- CR 19 - Actions to improve governance capacity (number of actions)
- CR 20 - Investment induced (EUR)
- CR 21 - Datasets and advice made available (number)
- CR 22 - Usage of data and information platforms (number of page views)

### 3. Available budget

The available call budget is **EUR 7 600 000**. This budget might be increased by maximum 20%.

Specific budget information per topic can be found in the table below.

Topic	Topic budget
1 — Diversification of fisheries activities in the Atlantic area	<b>EUR 2.000.000</b>
2 — Harnessing preparedness and response to marine pollution in the Black Sea	<b>EUR 600.000</b>
3 — Sustainable transport and ports in the Mediterranean	<b>EUR 2.400.000</b>
4 — Maritime clusters as an innovative enabler for a Sustainable Blue Economy in the Mediterranean	<b>EUR 1.000.000</b>
5. — Sustainable maritime and coastal tourism in the Outermost Regions	<b>EUR 1.000.000</b>
6. — Regenerative ocean farming in the Baltic Sea Region	<b>EUR 600.000</b>

We expect to fund at least one project per topic, provided that for each topic at least one proposal reaches a sufficient quality score following the evaluation of the award criteria.



We reserve the right not to award all available funds or to redistribute them between the call priorities, depending on the proposals received and the results of the evaluation.

#### 4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
Call opening:	13 October 2022
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>31 January 2023 – 17:00:00 CET</u> <u>(Brussels)</u>
Evaluation:	February-April 2023
Information on evaluation results:	May 2023
GA signature:	September/October 2023

#### 5. Admissibility and documents

Proposals must be submitted before the **call deadline** (see *timetable section 4*).

Proposals must be submitted **electronically** via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (accessible via the Topic page in the [Search Funding & Tenders](#) section). Paper submissions are NOT possible.

Proposals (including annexes and supporting documents) must be submitted using the forms provided *inside* the Submission System (⚠ NOT the documents available on the Topic page — they are only for information).

Proposals must be **complete** and contain all the requested information and all required annexes and supporting documents:

- Application Form Part A — contains administrative information about the participants (future coordinator, beneficiaries and affiliated entities) and the summarised budget for the project (*to be filled in directly online*)
- Application Form Part B — contains the technical description of the project (*to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed and then assembled and re-uploaded*)
- **mandatory annexes and supporting documents** (*to be uploaded*):
  - detailed budget table: not applicable
  - CVs of core project team: not applicable
  - activity reports of last year: not applicable
  - list of previous projects: not applicable.

A detailed budget table is available for information on [Portal Reference Documents](#). You are NOT obliged to use it to prepare your project budget, nor upload it with your application, but you will be requested to provide it later on, if you are selected for funding.


Please note that the amounts entered into the summarised budget table (filled in directly online) must correspond to the amounts calculated in the detailed budget table. In case of discrepancies, the amounts in the online summarised budget table will prevail.

At proposal submission, you will have to confirm that you have the **mandate to act** for all applicants. Moreover you will have to confirm that the information in the application is correct and complete and that the participants comply with the conditions for receiving EU funding (especially eligibility, financial and operational capacity, exclusion, etc). Before signing the grant, each beneficiary and affiliated entity will have to confirm this again by signing a declaration of honour (DoH). Proposals without full support will be rejected.

Your application must be **readable, accessible and printable**.

Proposals are limited to maximum **60 pages** (Part B). Evaluators will not consider any additional pages.

You may be asked at a later stage for further documents (*for legal entity validation, financial capacity check, bank account validation, etc*).

 For more information about the submission process (including IT aspects), consult the [Online Manual](#).

## 6. Eligibility

### *Eligible participants (eligible countries)*

In order to be eligible, the applicants (beneficiaries and affiliated entities) must:

- be legal entities (public or private bodies)
- be established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
  - EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs));
  - non-EU countries that are part of the sea basin strategies and/or regional cooperation frameworks targeted in this call for proposals:
    - **For Topic 2:** Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia and Turkey;
    - **For Topic 3 and Topic 4:** Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Turkey, Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Beneficiaries and affiliated entities must register in the [Participant Register](#) — before submitting the proposal — and will have to be validated by the Central Validation Service (REA Validation). For the validation, they will be requested to upload documents showing legal status and origin.

Other entities may participate in other consortium roles, such as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions, etc (*see section 13*).

### *Specific cases*

Exceptional funding — Entities from countries mentioned in the work programme (if any) are only exceptionally eligible, if the granting authority considers their participation essential for the implementation of the action.

Natural persons — Natural persons are NOT eligible (with the exception of self-employed persons, i.e. sole traders, where the company does not have legal personality separate from that of the natural person).

International organisations — International organisations are eligible. The rules on eligible countries do not apply to them.

Entities without legal personality — Entities which do not have legal personality under their national law may exceptionally participate, provided that their representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf, and offer guarantees for the protection of the EU financial interests equivalent to that offered by legal persons<sup>32</sup>.

EU bodies — EU bodies (with the exception of the European Commission Joint Research Centre) can NOT be part of the consortium.

Associations and interest groupings — Entities composed of members may participate as 'sole beneficiaries' or 'beneficiaries without legal personality'<sup>33</sup>. ⚠ Please note that if the action will be implemented by the members, they should also participate (either as beneficiaries or as affiliated entities, otherwise their costs will NOT be eligible).

EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for certain entities (*e.g. entities subject to [EU restrictive measures](#) under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)*<sup>34</sup> and entities covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)<sup>35</sup>). Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).

 For more information, see [Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment](#).

### Consortium composition

Proposals must be submitted by a **consortium of at least 3 applicants** (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities), which complies with the following conditions:

- **for all Topics:** minimum 3 independent entities from 2 different EU eligible countries;
- **for Topics 2, Topic 3 and Topic 4:** at least one independent entity from one non-EU eligible country;
- **for Topic 5:** minimum 2 independent entities from 2 different Outermost Regions.

The coordinator must be established in an EU Member State.

### Eligible activities

Eligible activities are the ones set out in section 2 above.

Projects should take into account the results of projects supported by other EU funding programmes. The complementarities must be described in the project proposals (Part B of the Application Form).

<sup>32</sup> See Article 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

<sup>33</sup> For the definitions, see Articles 187(2) and 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

<sup>34</sup> Please note that the EU Official Journal contains the official list and, in case of conflict, its content prevails over that of the [EU Sanctions Map](#).

<sup>35</sup> Commission guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#) on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards (OJEU C 205 of 19.07.2013, pp. 9-11).

Projects must comply with EU policy interests and priorities (*such as environment, social, security, industrial and trade policy, etc*).

Financial support to third parties is not allowed.

#### Geographic location (target countries)

Proposals must relate to activities concerning one of the following sea basins/areas (depending on the topic): Baltic Sea Region, Black Sea, the Atlantic and the Mediterranean Sea basins as well as the EU Outermost regions marine areas.

Proposals can focus on a part/sub-region of these sea basins/areas.

Activities should normally relate to the EU waters, but may extend into neighbouring waters, if this is necessary for the implementation of the projects (in view of their nature and their objectives).

#### Duration

Projects should normally range between 12 and 36 months (extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment).

#### Project budget

Project budgets (maximum grant amount) are expected to range between 400 000 EUR and 1 000 000 EUR per project, but this does not preclude the submission/selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

#### Ethics

Projects must comply with:

- highest ethical standards and
- applicable EU, international and national law (including Directive 98/58<sup>36</sup>, Regulation 1099/2009<sup>37</sup>, and Regulation (889/2008<sup>38</sup>).

Projects must pay particular attention to the principle of proportionality, the need to ensure protection of the environment and high levels of animal welfare and human health protection.

Applicants must show in their application that they respect ethical principles and applicable regulatory framework.

Projects involving ethics issues may be made subject to specific ethics rules.

## **7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion**

#### Financial capacity

Applicants must have **stable and sufficient resources** to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share. Organisations participating in several projects must have sufficient capacity to implement all these projects.

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<sup>36</sup> Council Directive 98/58/EC of 20 July 1998 concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes (OJ L 221, 8.8.1998, p. 23).

<sup>37</sup> Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 of 24 September 2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing (OJ L 303, 18.11.2009, p. 1).

<sup>38</sup> Commission Regulation (EC) No 889/2008 of 5 September 2008 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products with regard to organic production, labelling and control (OJ L 250, 18.9.2008, p. 1).

The financial capacity check will be carried out on the basis of the documents you will be requested to upload in the [Participant Register](#) during grant preparation (*e.g. profit and loss account and balance sheet, business plan, audit report produced by an approved external auditor, certifying the accounts for the last closed financial year, etc*). The analysis will be based on neutral financial indicators, but will also take into account other aspects, such as dependency on EU funding and deficit and revenue in previous years.

The check will normally be done for all beneficiaries, except:

- public bodies (entities established as public body under national law, including local, regional or national authorities) or international organisations
- if the individual requested grant amount is not more than EUR 60 000.

If needed, it may also be done for affiliated entities.

If we consider that your financial capacity is not satisfactory, we may require:

- further information
- an enhanced financial responsibility regime, i.e. joint and several responsibility for all beneficiaries or joint and several liability of affiliated entities (*see below, section 10*)
- prefinancing paid in instalments
- (one or more) prefinancing guarantees (*see below, section 10*)

or

- propose no prefinancing
- request that you are replaced or, if needed, reject the entire proposal.

 For more information, see [Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment](#).

### Operational capacity

Applicants must have the **know-how, qualifications** and **resources** to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share (including sufficient experience in projects of comparable size and nature).

This capacity will be assessed together with the 'Quality' award criterion, on the basis of the competence and experience of the applicants and their project teams, including operational resources (human, technical and other) or, exceptionally, the measures proposed to obtain it by the time the task implementation starts.

If the evaluation of the award criterion is positive, the applicants are considered to have sufficient operational capacity.

Applicants will have to show their capacity via the following information:

- general profiles (qualifications and experiences) of the staff responsible for managing and implementing the project
- description of the consortium participants.

Additional supporting documents may be requested, if needed to confirm the operational capacity of any applicant.

Public bodies, Member State organisations and international organisations are exempted from the operational capacity check.

### Exclusion

Applicants which are subject to an **EU exclusion decision** or in one of the following **exclusion situations** that bar them from receiving EU funding can NOT participate<sup>39</sup>:

- bankruptcy, winding up, affairs administered by the courts, arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or other similar procedures (including procedures for persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- in breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- guilty of grave professional misconduct<sup>40</sup> (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).

Applicants will also be refused if it turns out that<sup>41</sup>:

- during the award procedure they misrepresented information required as a condition for participating or failed to supply that information
- they were previously involved in the preparation of the call and this entails a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise (conflict of interest).

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<sup>39</sup> See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

<sup>40</sup> Professional misconduct includes: violation of ethical standards of the profession, wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility, false declarations/misrepresentation of information, participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition, violation of IPR, attempting to influence decision-making processes or obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain advantage.

<sup>41</sup> See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).



## 8. Evaluation and award procedure

The proposals will have to follow the **standard submission and evaluation procedure** (one-stage submission + one-step evaluation).


An **evaluation committee** will assess all applications. Proposals will first be checked for formal requirements (admissibility, and eligibility, *see sections 5 and 6*). Proposals found admissible and eligible will be evaluated (for each topic) against the operational capacity and award criteria (*see sections 7 and 9*) and then ranked according to their score.

For proposals with the same score (within a topic or budget envelope) a **priority order** will be determined according to the following approach:

Successively for every group of *ex aequo* proposals, starting with the highest scored group, and continuing in descending order:

- 1) Projects focusing on a theme and/or priority (as indicated in section 2) that is not otherwise covered by higher ranked projects will be considered to have the highest priority.
- 2) The *ex aequo* proposals within the same topic will be prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for the award criterion 'Relevance'. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion 'Impact'. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion 'Quality'.
- 3) If this does not allow to determine the priority, a further prioritisation can be done by considering the overall project portfolio and the creation of positive synergies between projects, or other factors related to the objectives of the call. These factors will be documented in the panel report.
- 4) After that, the remainder of the available call budget will be used to fund projects across the different topics in order to ensure a balanced spread of the geographical and thematic coverage and while respecting to the maximum possible extent the order of merit based on the evaluation of the award criteria.

All proposals will be informed about the evaluation result (**evaluation result letter**). Successful proposals will be invited for grant preparation; the other ones will be put on the reserve list or rejected.

 No commitment for funding — Invitation to grant preparation does NOT constitute a formal commitment for funding. We will still need to make various legal checks before grant award: *legal entity validation, financial capacity, exclusion check, etc.*

**Grant preparation** will involve a dialogue in order to fine-tune technical or financial aspects of the project and may require extra information from your side. It may also include adjustments to the proposal to address recommendations of the evaluation committee or other concerns. Compliance will be a pre-condition for signing the grant.

If you believe that the evaluation procedure was flawed, you can submit a **complaint** (following the deadlines and procedures set out in the evaluation result letter). Please note that notifications which have not been opened within 10 days after sending are

considered to have been accessed and that deadlines will be counted from opening/access (see also [Funding & Tenders Portal Terms and Conditions](#)). Please also be aware that for complaints submitted electronically, there may be character limitations.

## 9. Award criteria

The **award criteria** for this call are as follows:

- **Relevance:**
  - clarity and consistency of project, objectives and planning; extent to which they match the themes and priorities, and objectives of the call/topic; contribution to the EU strategic and legislative context, including, where relevant, to the objectives of sustainable blue economy and sea basin strategies or initiatives<sup>42</sup>
  - identification of specific needs/challenges of the policy domains/sea basins/areas targeted in the call; European/trans-national dimension
  - extent to which the proposal differentiates from other initiatives in the field and provides added value; quality of proposed coordination and support measures; potential to develop mutual trust/cross-border cooperation (10 points)
- **Quality:** quality and effectiveness of the methodology for implementing the project (concept and methodology, management, procedures, timetable, risks and risk management, monitoring and evaluation); feasibility of the project within the proposed time frame; cost effectiveness (sufficient/appropriate budget for proper implementation; best value for money); quality of the consortium (if applicable) and project teams; appropriate procedures and problem-solving mechanisms for cooperating within the project teams and consortium (if applicable) (10 points)
- **Impact:**
  - extent to which the outputs of the project contribute to each of the expected impacts of the call/topic; suitability and quality of the measures to maximise expected outcomes and impacts
  - possibility to use/transfer the outcomes to other countries/regions; appropriateness of the dissemination and exploitation plan, including communication activities and, if applicable, measures linked to intellectual property and knowledge protection and regulatory issues; sustainability of results after EU funding ends
  - ambition and expected long-term impact of results on target groups/general public (10 points).

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<sup>42</sup> For sea basins strategies and other relevant sea basin information for the Atlantic, Baltic Sea, Black Sea, Mediterranean or North Sea, see [Europa website](#).



Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score
Relevance	6	10
Quality	6	10
Impact	6	10
<b>Overall (pass) scores</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>30</b>

Maximum points: 30 points.

Individual thresholds per criterion: 6/10, 6/10 and 6/10 points.

Overall threshold: 21 points.

Proposals that pass the individual thresholds AND the overall threshold will be considered for funding — within the limits of the available call budget. Other proposals will be rejected.

## **10. Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements**

If you pass evaluation, your project will be invited for grant preparation, where you will be asked to prepare the Grant Agreement together with the EU Project Officer.

This Grant Agreement will set the framework for your grant and its terms and conditions, in particular concerning deliverables, reporting and payments.

The Model Grant Agreement that will be used (and all other relevant templates and guidance documents) can be found on [Portal Reference Documents](#).

### Starting date and project duration

The project starting date and duration will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 1*). Normally the starting date will be after grant signature. Retroactive application can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons — but never earlier than the proposal submission date.

Project duration: between 12 and 36 months (extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment).

### Milestones and deliverables

The milestones and deliverables for each project will be managed through the Portal Grant Management System and will be reflected in Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement.

The following deliverables will be mandatory for all projects:

- a policy brief at the end of each reporting period
- a project factsheet at the beginning of the project

### Form of grant, funding rate and maximum grant amount

The grant parameters (*maximum grant amount, funding rate, total eligible costs, etc*) will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 3 and art 5*).

Project budget (maximum grant amount): *see section 6 above*. The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

The grant will be a budget-based mixed actual cost grant (actual costs, with unit cost and flat-rate elements). This means that it will reimburse ONLY certain types of costs (eligible costs) and costs that were *actually* incurred for your project (NOT the *budgeted* costs). For unit costs and flat-rates, you can charge the amounts calculated as explained in the Grant Agreement (*see art 6 and Annex 2 and 2a*).

The costs will be reimbursed at the funding rate fixed in the Grant Agreement as follows:

- **80%** for Topic 1, Topic 2, Topic 3, Topic 4 and Topic 6;
- **85%** for Topic 5.

Grants may NOT produce a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). For-profit organisations must declare their revenues and, if there is a profit, we will deduct it from the final grant amount (*see art 22.3*).

Moreover, please be aware that the final grant amount may be reduced in case of non-compliance with the Grant Agreement (*e.g. improper implementation, breach of obligations, etc*).

#### Budget categories and cost eligibility rules

The budget categories and cost eligibility rules are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 3 and art 6*).

#### *Budget categories for this call:*

- A. Personnel costs
  - A.1 Employees, A.2 Natural persons under direct contract, A.3 Seconded persons
  - A.4 SME owners and natural person beneficiaries
- B. Subcontracting costs
- C. Purchase costs
  - C.1 Travel and subsistence
  - C.2 Equipment
  - C.3 Other goods, works and services
- D. Other cost categories
  - D.1 Financial support to third parties
- E. Indirect costs

#### *Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:*

- personnel costs:
  - SME owner/natural person unit cost<sup>43</sup>: Yes
- travel and subsistence unit cost<sup>44</sup>: Yes

<sup>43</sup> Commission [Decision](#) of 20 October 2020 authorising the use of unit costs for the personnel costs of the owners of small and medium-sized enterprises and beneficiaries that are natural persons not receiving a salary for the work carried out by themselves under an action or work programme (C(2020)7715).

<sup>44</sup> Commission [Decision](#) of 12 January 2021 authorising the use of unit costs for travel, accommodation and subsistence costs under an action or work programme under the 2021-2027 multi-annual financial framework (C(2021)35).

- equipment costs: depreciation
- other cost categories:
  - costs for financial support to third parties: not allowed
- indirect cost flat-rate: 7% of the eligible direct costs (categories A-D, except volunteers costs and exempted specific cost categories, if any)
- VAT: non-deductible VAT is eligible (but please note that since 2013 VAT paid by beneficiaries that are public bodies acting as public authority is NOT eligible)
- other:
  - in-kind contributions for free are allowed, but cost-neutral, i.e. they cannot be declared as cost
  - kick off meeting: costs for kick off meeting organised by the granting authority are eligible (travel costs for maximum 2 persons, return ticket to Brussels and accommodation for one night) only if the meeting takes place after the project starting date set out in the Grant Agreement; the starting date can be changed through an amendment, if needed
  - project websites: communication costs for presenting the project on the participants' websites or social media accounts are eligible; costs for *separate* project websites are not eligible
- other ineligible costs: the GA specifies other non-eligible costs under article 6.3.

### Reporting and payment arrangements


The reporting and payment arrangements are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4 and art 21 and 22*).

After grant signature, you will normally receive a **prefinancing** to start working on the project (float of normally **40%** of the maximum grant amount; exceptionally less or no prefinancing). The prefinancing will be paid 30 days from entry into force/financial guarantee (if required) — whichever is the latest.

There will be one or more **interim payments** if applicable (with detailed cost reporting).

**Payment of the balance:** At the end of the project, we will calculate your final grant amount. If the total of earlier payments is higher than the final grant amount, we will ask you (your coordinator) to pay back the difference (recovery).

All payments will be made to the coordinator.

 Please be aware that payments will be automatically lowered if one of your consortium members has outstanding debts towards the EU (granting authority or other EU bodies). Such debts will be offset by us — in line with the conditions set out in the Grant Agreement (*see art 22*).

Please also note that you are responsible for keeping records on all the work done and the costs declared.

### Prefinancing guarantees

If a prefinancing guarantee is required, it will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4*). The amount will be set during grant preparation and it will normally be equal or lower than the prefinancing for your grant.

The guarantee should be in euro and issued by an approved bank/financial institution established in an EU Member State. If you are established in a non-EU country and would like to provide a guarantee from a bank/financial institution in your country, please contact us (this may be exceptionally accepted, if it offers equivalent security).

Amounts blocked in bank accounts will NOT be accepted as financial guarantees.

Prefinancing guarantees are formally NOT linked to individual consortium members, which means that you are free to organise how to provide the guarantee amount (*by one or several beneficiaries, for the overall amount or several guarantees for partial amounts, by the beneficiary concerned or by another beneficiary, etc*). It is however important that the requested amount is covered and that the guarantee(s) are sent to us in time to make the prefinancing (scanned copy via Portal AND original by post).

If agreed with us, the bank guarantee may be replaced by a guarantee from a third party.

The guarantee will be released at the end of the grant, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Grant Agreement.

### Certificates

Depending on the type of action, size of grant amount and type of beneficiaries, you may be requested to submit different certificates. The types, schedules and thresholds for each certificate are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4 and art 24*).

### Liability regime for recoveries

The liability regime for recoveries will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet point 4.4 and art 22*).

For beneficiaries, it is one of the following:

- limited joint and several liability with individual ceilings — *each beneficiary up to their maximum grant amount*
  - unconditional joint and several liability — *each beneficiary up to the maximum grant amount for the action*
- or
- individual financial responsibility — *each beneficiary only for their own debts*.

In addition, the granting authority may require joint and several liability of affiliated entities (with their beneficiary).

### Provisions concerning the project implementation

Security rules: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 13 and Annex 5)*

Ethics rules: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 14 and Annex 5)*

IPR rules: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 16 and Annex 5):*

- rights of use on results: Yes

Communication, dissemination and visibility of funding: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 17 and Annex 5):*

- communication and dissemination plan: Yes

- additional communication and dissemination activities: Yes

Specific rules for carrying out the action: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 18 and Annex 5)*:

- specific rules for blending operations: No

#### Other specificities

n/a

#### Non-compliance and breach of contract

The Grant Agreement (chapter 5) provides for the measures we may take in case of breach of contract (and other non-compliance issues).



For more information, see [AGA – Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

### **11. How to submit an application**

All proposals must be submitted directly online via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System. Paper applications are NOT accepted.

Submission is a **2-step process**:

#### **a) create a user account and register your organisation**

To use the Submission System (the only way to apply), all participants need to [create an EU Login user account](#).

Once you have an EU Login account, you can [register your organisation](#) in the Participant Register. When your registration is finalised, you will receive a 9-digit participant identification code (PIC).

#### **b) submit the proposal**

Access the Electronic Submission System via the Topic page in the [Search Funding & Tenders](#) section (or, for calls sent by invitation to submit a proposal, through the link provided in the invitation letter).

Submit your proposal in 3 parts, as follows:

- Part A includes administrative information about the applicant organisations (future coordinator, beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners) and the summarised budget for the proposal. Fill it in directly online
- Part B (description of the action) covers the technical content of the proposal. Download the mandatory word template from the Submission System, fill it in and upload it as a PDF file
- Annexes (*see section 5*). Upload them as PDF file (single or multiple depending on the slots). Excel upload is sometimes possible, depending on the file type.

The proposal must keep to the **page limits** (*see section 5*); excess pages will be disregarded.

Documents must be uploaded to the **right category** in the Submission System otherwise the proposal might be considered incomplete and thus inadmissible.

The proposal must be submitted **before the call deadline** (see *section 4*). After this deadline, the system is closed and proposals can no longer be submitted.

Once the proposal is submitted, you will receive a **confirmation e-mail** (with date and time of your application). If you do not receive this confirmation e-mail, it means your proposal has NOT been submitted. If you believe this is due to a fault in the Submission System, you should immediately file a complaint via the [IT Helpdesk webform](#), explaining the circumstances and attaching a copy of the proposal (and, if possible, screenshots to show what happened).

Details on processes and procedures are described in the [Online Manual](#). The Online Manual also contains the links to FAQs and detailed instructions regarding the Portal Electronic Exchange System.

## 12. Help

As far as possible, ***please try to find the answers you need yourself***, in this and the other documentation (we have limited resources for handling direct enquiries):

- [Online Manual](#)
- FAQs on the Topic page (for call-specific questions in open calls; not applicable for actions by invitation)
- [Portal FAQ](#) (for general questions).

Please also consult the Topic page regularly, since we will use it to publish call updates. (For invitations, we will contact you directly in case of a call update).



### *Contact*

For individual questions on the Portal Submission System, please contact the [IT Helpdesk](#).

Non-IT related questions should be sent to the following email address: [cinea-emfaf-calls@ec.europa.eu](mailto:cinea-emfaf-calls@ec.europa.eu).

Please indicate clearly the reference of the call and topic to which your question relates (*see cover page*).

## 13. Important



### IMPORTANT

- **Don't wait until the end** — Complete your application sufficiently in advance of the deadline to avoid any last minute **technical problems**. Problems due to last minute submissions (*e.g. congestion, etc*) will be entirely at your risk. Call deadlines can NOT be extended.
- **Consult** the Portal Topic page regularly. We will use it to publish updates and additional information on the call (call and topic updates).
- **Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Exchange System** — By submitting the application, all participants **accept** to use the electronic exchange system in accordance with the [Portal Terms & Conditions](#).
- **Registration** — Before submitting the application, all beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners must be registered in the [Participant Register](#). The participant identification code (PIC) (one per participant) is mandatory for the Application Form.
- **Consortium roles** — When setting up your consortium, you should think of organisations that help you reach objectives and solve problems.

The roles should be attributed according to the level of participation in the project. Main participants should participate as **beneficiaries** or **affiliated entities**; other entities can participate as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions. **Associated partners** and third parties giving in-kind contributions should bear their own costs (they will not become formal recipients of EU funding). **Subcontracting** should normally constitute a limited part and must be performed by third parties (not by one of the beneficiaries/affiliated entities). Subcontracting going beyond 30% of the total eligible costs must be justified in the application.

- **Coordinator** — In multi-beneficiary grants, the beneficiaries participate as consortium (group of beneficiaries). They will have to choose a coordinator, who will take care of the project management and coordination and will represent the consortium towards the granting authority. In mono-beneficiary grants, the single beneficiary will automatically be coordinator.
- **Affiliated entities** — Applicants may participate with affiliated entities (i.e. entities linked to a beneficiary which participate in the action with similar rights and obligations as the beneficiaries, but do not sign the grant and therefore do not become beneficiaries themselves). They will get a part of the grant money and must therefore comply with all the call conditions and be validated (just like beneficiaries); but they do not count towards the minimum eligibility criteria for consortium composition (if any).
- **Associated partners** — Applicants may participate with associated partners (i.e. partner organisations which participate in the action but without the right to get grant money). They participate without funding and therefore do not need to be validated.
- **Consortium agreement** — For practical and legal reasons it is recommended to set up internal arrangements that allow you to deal with exceptional or unforeseen circumstances (in all cases, even if not mandatory under the Grant Agreement). The consortium agreement also gives you the possibility to redistribute the grant money according to your own consortium-internal principles and parameters (for instance, one beneficiary can reattribute its grant money to another beneficiary). The consortium agreement thus allows you to customise the EU grant to the needs inside your consortium and can also help to protect you in case of disputes.



- **Balanced project budget** — Grant applications must ensure a balanced project budget and sufficient other resources to implement the project successfully (*e.g. own contributions, income generated by the action, financial contributions from third parties, etc*). You may be requested to lower your estimated costs, if they are ineligible (including excessive).
- **No-profit rule** — Grants may NOT give a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). This will be checked by us at the end of the project.
- **No double funding** — There is a strict prohibition of double funding from the EU budget (except under EU Synergies actions). Outside such Synergies actions, any given action may receive only ONE grant from the EU budget and cost items may under NO circumstances declared to two different EU actions.
- **Completed/ongoing projects** — Proposals for projects that have already been completed will be rejected; proposals for projects that have already started will be assessed on a case-by-case basis (in this case, no costs can be reimbursed for activities that took place before the project starting date/proposal submission).
- **Combination with EU operating grants** — Combination with EU operating grants is possible, if the project remains outside the operating grant work programme and you make sure that cost items are clearly separated in your accounting and NOT declared twice (see [AGA — Annotated Model Grant Agreement, art 6.2.E](#)).
- **Multiple proposals** — Applicants may submit more than one proposal for *different* projects under the same call (and be awarded a funding for them).  
Organisations may participate in several proposals.  
BUT: if there are several proposals for *very similar* projects, only one application will be accepted and evaluated; the applicants will be asked to withdraw one of them (or it will be rejected).
- **Resubmission** — Proposals may be changed and re-submitted until the deadline for submission.
- **Rejection** — By submitting the application, all applicants accept the call conditions set out in this this Call Document (and the documents it refers to). Proposals that do not comply with all the call conditions will be **rejected**. This applies also to applicants: All applicants need to fulfil the criteria; if any one of them doesn't, they must be replaced or the entire proposal will be rejected.
- **Cancellation** — There may be circumstances which may require the cancellation of the call. In this case, you will be informed via a call or topic update. Please note that cancellations are without entitlement to compensation.
- **Language** — You can submit your proposal in any official EU language (project abstract/summary should however always be in English). For reasons of efficiency, we strongly advise you to use English for the entire application. If you need the call documentation in another official EU language, please submit a request within 10 days after call publication (for the contact information, see *section 12*).

- **Transparency** — In accordance with Article 38 of the [EU Financial Regulation](#), information about EU grants awarded is published each year on the [Europa website](#).

This includes:

- beneficiary names
- beneficiary addresses
- the purpose for which the grant was awarded
- the maximum amount awarded.

The publication can exceptionally be waived (on reasoned and duly substantiated request), if there is a risk that the disclosure could jeopardise your rights and freedoms under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights or harm your commercial interests.

- **Data protection** — The submission of a proposal under this call involves the collection, use and processing of personal data. This data will be processed in accordance with the applicable legal framework. It will be processed solely for the purpose of evaluating your proposal, subsequent management of your grant and, if needed, programme monitoring, evaluation and communication. Details are explained in the [Funding & Tenders Portal Privacy Statement](#).