



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries  
Fisheries Policy: Atlantic, North Sea, Baltic and Outermost  
Scientific Advice and Data Collection

Call for proposals

MARE/2016/22

Strengthening regional cooperation in the area of  
fisheries data collection

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## **CALL FOR PROPOSALS – MARE/2016/22**

### **STRENGTHENING REGIONAL COOPERATION IN THE AREA OF FISHERIES DATA COLLECTION**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This call for proposals is published under the terms of Article 86.2 (f) of Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1198/2006 and Council Regulation (EC) No 861/2006 and Council Regulation No 1255/2011 on Integrated Maritime Policy.

The relevant Commission Implementing Decision concerning the adoption of the 2016 work programme for grants and procurement under the maritime affairs and common fisheries policy, serving as a financing decision was adopted on 11/12/2015 (C(2015) 8729).

This document provides detailed information on the content, the selection process and the implementation of projects to strengthen regional cooperation in the area of fisheries data collection.

All the relevant information to this call for proposals can be found and downloaded in the following website:

[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/maritimeaffairs\\_fisheries/contracts\\_and\\_funding/calls\\_for\\_proposals/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/maritimeaffairs_fisheries/contracts_and_funding/calls_for_proposals/index_en.htm)

#### **2. OBJECTIVE(S) – THEME(S) – PRIORITIES**

##### **2.1. Background**

Reliable and complete data are central to the well-functioning of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)<sup>1</sup>. For this reason, an EU framework for the collection and management of fisheries data was established in 2000<sup>2</sup>, and then reformed in 2008 resulting in the Data

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1954/2003 and (EC) No 1224/2009 and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2371/2002 and (EC) No 639/2004 and Council Decision 2004/585/EC. OJ L354, 28.12.2013, p.22

<sup>2</sup> Council Regulation (EC) No 1543/2000 of 29 June 2000 establishing a Community framework for the collection and management of the data needed to conduct the common fisheries policy

Collection Framework (DCF). The DCF establishes a harmonized set of EU rules governing the collection, management and use of biological, environmental, technical, and socio-economic data on the fisheries, aquaculture and processing sectors. It strives to ensure the availability of data to scientists, so that these data can be used to provide advice to end-users including the Commission.

The DCF consists of the following legal instruments:

- **Council Regulation (EC) No 199/2008** of 25 February 2008 concerning the establishment of a Community framework for the collection, management and use of data in the fisheries sector and support for scientific advice regarding the Common Fisheries Policy framework for fisheries, OJ L60, 5/03/2008, p.1-12.
- **Commission Implementing Decision (EU)2016/1251** of 12 July 2016 adopting a multiannual Union programme for the collection, management and use of data in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors for the period 2017-2019 (notified under document C(2016)4329), OJ L 207, 1.8.2016, p. 113–177
- **Commission Implementing Decision (EU)2016/1701** of 19 August 2016 laying down rules on the format for the submission of work plans for the data collection in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors (notified under document C(2016)5304), OJ L 260, 27.9.2016, p. 153–228

The Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2016/1251 sets out the data to be collected in the form of an EU Multiannual Programme (EU-MAP). This EU-MAP initially covers the period 2017-2019.

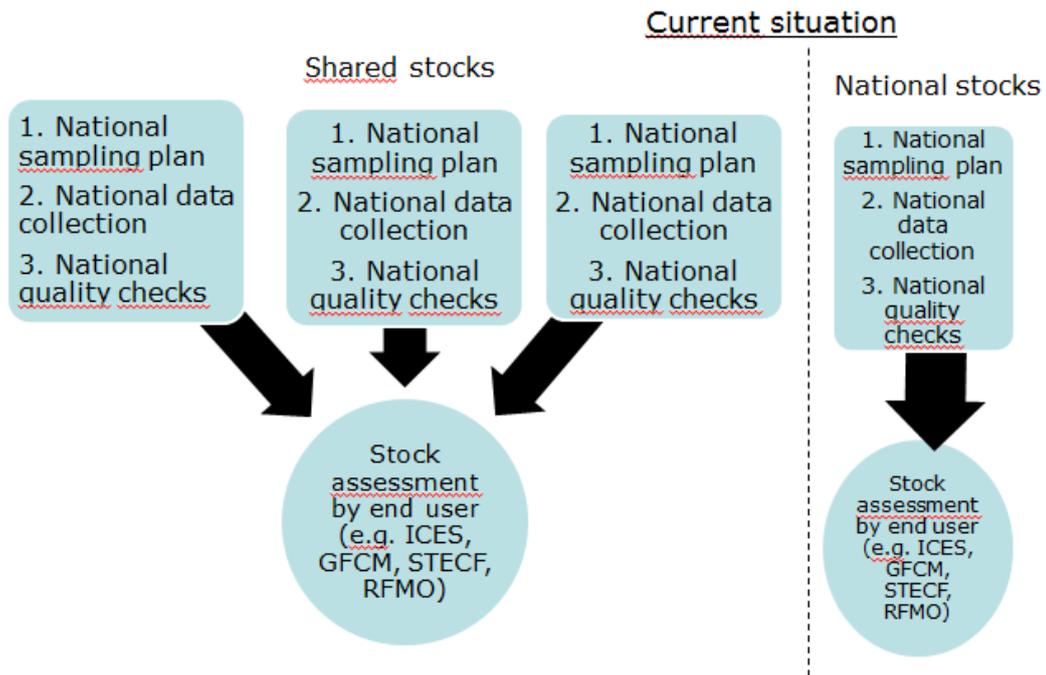
The Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2016/1701 lays down the format for the Member States to implement the EU-MAP.

#### From data collection to stock assessment

The main aim of the DCF is to ensure that scientific data are available to end users to support scientific analysis as a basis for fisheries management. Concretely, one of the main ways in which the DCF contributes to fisheries management is by providing the data for stock assessments, which are carried out by organizations such as the International Council for Exploration of the Seas (ICES) for stocks in the North Atlantic and the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) as well as the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) for stocks in the Mediterranean and Black Sea. Regarding the international dimension of the CFP, the DCF provides the data to be used by the relevant scientific committees of the Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) to which the EU is a Contracting Party and for the Joint Scientific Committees established in the framework of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements (SFPAs).

From 2017 onwards, under their DCF Work Plans, Member States shall collect data on the stocks which they fish, assess the quality of these national data sets, and then provide them to end users such as those mentioned above, who in turn carry out stock assessments. Stocks in the North Atlantic are typically "shared" between several countries that fish a given stock and collect data on the stock. For such "shared" stocks, stock assessments require data from the different countries that exploit these stocks. In the Mediterranean Sea, in contrast, many stocks assessments are carried out at the GFCM-Geographical Statistical Areas (GSAs) level, so that only the data of a single Member State are used in the assessment (see Figure 1 below).

**Figure 1**



From 2017 onwards, whether for "national" or "shared" stocks, the data collection will be planned nationally (under a Work Plan), the data will be collected at a national level, and quality assessment of the data will be done at a national level. For shared stocks, the national data sets will then be combined to carry out scientific assessments at the stock level.

#### Current regional coordination

Although the emphasis of the current DCF is essentially a national one, the DCF Regulation (EC) No 199/2008 contains provisions whereby Member States should coordinate their national programmes with other Member States in the same marine region. For this purpose the Commission may organise Regional Coordination Meetings (RCMs) in order to assist Member States in coordinating their national programmes/ work plans and the implementation of the collection, management and use of the data in the same region. The recommendations of the RCMs are aimed to encourage Member States to align their national programmes/ work plans and to share tasks at regional level. In practice, regional coordination for data collection applies almost exclusively to biological data, for which differences across the marine regions are more pronounced.

There are currently the following RCMs operating in the context of the DCF: Baltic, North Sea & Eastern Arctic, North Atlantic, Mediterranean/Black Sea, Large Pelagics and Long Distance fisheries in external waters.

Concretely, RCMs discuss regional issues, with the aim to move, in the future, towards a regional sampling design. Main issues include: revision of feedback and recommendations relating to data collection from end-users in their region; how regional tools can improve efficiency of DCF process; regional analysis of biological data to identify such things as which métiers should be sampled; establishment of bilateral or multilateral agreements to share tasks among Member States of the region; how data quality can be further improved; impact of implementation of European Commission policies on regional fisheries (eg. landing obligation); informed opinion on European Commission policies.

Regional coordination for data collection is applied largely to biological data. Coordination of methodologies for socio economic data has been carried out on an EU level by the Planning Group of Economics (PGECON), a subgroup of the Expert Group on Fisheries Data Collection<sup>3</sup>.

### Regional coordination under the recast of the DCF Regulation

The new DCF Regulation<sup>4</sup> takes into account new policy developments such as the Lisbon Treaty, the CFP Basic Regulation<sup>5</sup> adopted in 2013, the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund adopted in 2014, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the Marine Knowledge 2020 initiative. The revision of the DCF aims to simplify the current rules in line with the Commission's REFIT<sup>6</sup> policy. It also addresses needs identified through experience with implementation of the previous DCF, such as improving the quality and availability of data as well as the relevance of the data for end-users. It seeks to introduce flexibility into the system and to allow adaptation in a timely fashion to emerging data collection needs.

One of the big achievements of the DCF over the past years has been the strengthening of Regional coordination and co-operation. In line with strengthened provisions on regionalisation contained in the CFP Basic Regulation, Member States have expressed the wish, both in RCMs and further to Stakeholder consultations, to provide regions with a greater scope in tasks regarding planning and implementing data collection at a regional level.

This could be achieved through the establishment of Regional Coordination Groups (RCGs) that would increase cooperation between Member States over and above the current annual RCMs, in which Member States consider already established national programmes/ work plans and coordinate their implementation.

Such RCGs could play a broader role than the current RCMs in coordinating regional aspects of data collection, such as:

- A. **Identifying what data should be collected at regional level.** In addition to core data that is defined in the new EU MAP, Member States in RCGs would agree on additional data that should be collected for their region, in consultation with end users of the data.
- B. **Planning and coordinating how data should be collected, processed and managed at regional level.** Member States in RCGs would coordinate the preparation of Work Plans on a regional level (this applies essentially to biological data) and then allocating tasks and effort between Member States. Member States in RCGs should also agree on the

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<sup>3</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=2750>

<sup>4</sup> Commission Proposal: COM/2015/0294 final - 2015/0133 (COD): Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL concerning the establishment of a Union framework for the collection, management and use of data in the fisheries sector and support for scientific advice regarding the Common Fisheries Policy (recast). Adoption of the new DCF Regulation foreseen in May 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1954/2003 and (EC) No 1224/2009 and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2371/2002 and (EC) No 639/2004 and Council Decision 2004/585/EC

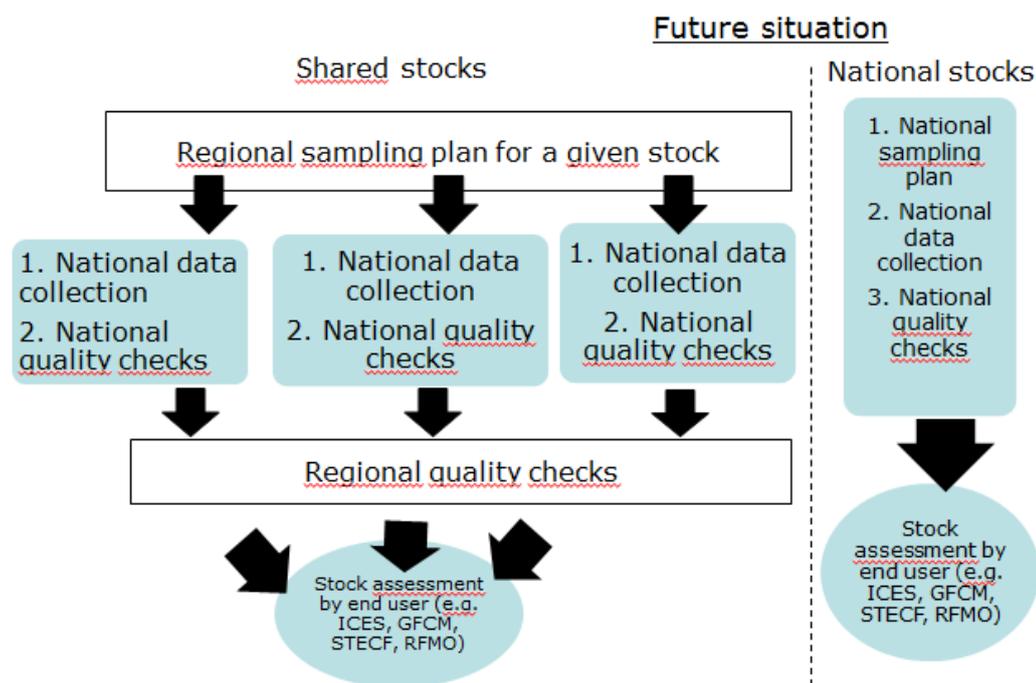
<sup>6</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/refit/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/refit/index_en.htm)

methodologies that should be followed to ensure that coherent regional data sets, of sufficient quality for end user needs, can be produced. Concretely, this involves agreeing on a) reference lists with standard codes on e.g. harbours, species and metiers, to ensure that Member States in a region report in a standardized way on their data collection and b) on best practice methodologies for data collection, processing and management to be followed by the Member States in the region. These reference lists and best practice methodologies may already have been developed in other fora, such as ICES, GFCM, RFMOs, STECF etc or they may need to be developed within the RCGs.

- C. **Evaluating the quality of biological data sets at the regional level** and sharing this quality evaluation with end users. This may require the development of methodologies and quality checks for regional data sets. In addition, RCGs could contribute to harmonizing and improving national data quality evaluations by developing a list of minimum quality checks that Member States should carry out on national data sets before the data are brought together in regional data sets. Issues linked to data quality, like data coverage, risk analysis linked to stock assessment processes, assumptions associated with assessment models etc., should be also addressed.
- D. When end users express needs for **new data** to be collected (not falling under the EU MAP), Member States in RCGs may already start to trial the collection of certain variables in a coordinated manner.

These aspects are delineated in the new EU MAP and described in the Work Plan template. In such a set-up, for shared stocks, even though data collection itself would continue to be carried out by Member States at a national level, it would be based on a regionally agreed plan. Furthermore, beyond the national quality checks currently carried out, quality checking of the regional data sets would be envisaged, to ensure that the data received by end users is of a similar quality across the region (see **Figure 2**). Moreover, by planning the samples at the regional level, more efficient sampling can be planned, by identifying the minimum number of samples to be taken and the most advantageous division of labour per sea basin.

**Figure 2**



In 2014-2016 two grants were carried out<sup>7</sup> for the strengthening of regional cooperation: one for the North regions (including North Sea & Eastern Arctic, North Atlantic and Baltic) and one for the Mediterranean region and the Black Sea. These grants were structured in 6 similar Workpackages. The results of these projects are examples of regional sampling plans using case studies, including sampling design for commercial fisheries (demersal and pelagic), protected, endangered and threatened species (PETS) and stomach sampling. The North Sea & Eastern Arctic grant also proposed sampling plans for small scale fisheries (SSF) and recreational fisheries (RF). In addition to sampling plans, much work was done towards the direction of harmonising exchange formats and coding systems (see Table 1).

Table 1. Main outcomes of two regional grants for the strengthening of regional cooperation (Call for proposals MARE/2014/19). The final reports can be found at: <https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/docs-links/mare-2014-19>. Each deliverable is indicated in the table below between parentheses.

<b>WP Requirements</b>	<b>Med &amp; BS Deliverables</b>	<b>North Sea &amp; EA Deliverables</b>
<b>WP1</b> Analysis of current situation	SWOT analysis of regional cooperation (D1.1) Analysis of data storage and dissemination (D1.2) Critical elements for data collection (D2.1) Survivability in relation to LO (D2.1) Collection of transversal data (SSF) (D2.4)	Main activities and tools for regional cooperation (1.1)
<b>WP2</b> RSP on commercial fisheries  4 case studies Guidelines, Methodologies Reference, code lists Costs	Difficulty in getting data Optimisation of sampling effort (D2.5)  4 case studies in Med, 1 case study in BS (D2.6) Handbook on aging and maturity (D2.3) Common data exchange formats (D2.2) Common reference lists (D2.7)  Comparison of costs (D 2.8)	Data sharing agreement Compared different sampling designs (simulation tests) to achieve better sampling design per case study (results in re-allocation of national effort) 4 case studies (2.3) Principles of sampling design (2.1) csPi exchange format (2.2)
<b>WP3</b> RSP on ecosystem data Stomach analysis Methodology  1 case study MS task allocation  PETS Methodology  1 case study MS task allocation  New elements	Mapping of fisheries and stocks (D3.1) <u>Stomach analysis</u> (D3.3) 3 size classes/season, sample size Surveys and commercial sampling Guidelines, scoreboard 2 case studies MS task allocation (D3.5)  <u>PETS</u> (D3.2) Dedicated sampling by observers + logbooks, sample size, raising procedures Identification guide for PETS  2 case studies MS task allocation (D3.5)  <u>New ecosystem indicators</u> (D3.4)	<u>Stomach analysis</u> (D3.2) Stepwise regional sampling programme scheme, identify priority stocks Stomach sampling protocol 1 case study  <u>PETS</u> (3.1) Stepwise regional sampling programme scheme, risk-based assessment to identify 'hot-spots', improve on-board sampling protocols to ensure PETS are captured within data recording system, common DB 2 case studies  <u>SSF &amp; RF</u> (3.3) need for separate design (not necessarily the same methodology but harmonized and statistically sound) Need to consider the management needs for both internationally shared stocks and inshore fisheries

<sup>7</sup> <https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/docs-links/mare-2014-19>

		1 Case study for regional cooperation in the case of Recreational fisheries (Sea Bass data for stock assessment)
<b>WP4</b> Data quality National quality checks Regional quality checks Annual calendar	Review of existing guidelines (D4.1) List of quality checks (D4.1) Quality control of data format (D4.2)  Annual Calendar (D4.1)	Review of quality checks and data validation (4.1) List of quality checks List of functions (4.2)  Annual Calendar (4.1)
<b>WP5</b> RWP	(D03) Optimization of effort based on CV using the current sampling procedures implemented by MS, to cater for regional sampling plans	Short term plan for Regional sampling plans (RSP;1.2) Identify fisheries for RSP Re-distribution of effort Compilation of guidelines, protocols defined at RCMs Need for team work on statistics at regional level
<b>WP6</b> Consultation	(D5.1) 2 day workshop Work on sampling optimization to avoid overload Improve cooperation with end users By catch and stomach sampling should be pilot	(1.3) Written consultation General consensus on the general concepts of regional sampling plans based on statistical designs Balance between national-regional (not <i>everything can be regionalized</i> ) Need to map expertise Data on landings in foreign ports can be problematic Need for further development of Regional Data Bases (RDB)

Further work is needed to make these designs, formats etc. applicable to all sea basins, to improve data processing management, raising and storage in regional storage systems and to design methods for the monitoring of discards and unwanted catch fractions under the landing obligation.

Apart from expanding to the other sea basins that were not or insufficiently covered so far, also long distance fisheries and fisheries on highly migratory species should be covered. Finally, methods to improve and harmonise socio economic data collection, collection of environmental data and methods for combining data to enable bio-economic analysis are also needed.

## 2.2. Objectives of this call for proposals

Establishing Regional Co-ordination Groups to replace the (annual) Regional Coordination Meetings represents a big step for Member States. Building on the first call for proposals launched in 2014, this call for proposals aims to further support projects to enable Member States to build up experience in new areas of: (i) regional (in case of biological data) and (ii) EU wide (in case of socio economic data) cooperation along the possible evolutions set out above. **The purpose of this call for proposals is to provide Member States with the tools to accomplish regional/EU coordination but not to finance on a recurrent basis such activities.** So far, different RCMs have advanced at different speeds with regards to regional cooperation. The grants are meant to help each region (in the case of biological data collection) proceed with the realization of the regional sampling plan in the *specific RCM aspects* that need to be finalised. In this regard, it is not intended to support activities which already take place as part of the current RCMs/ PGECON or developments of regional data storage that are currently covered in other agreements. Therefore, the deliverables of these grants should not be a compilation of existing work – carried out in ongoing or finalized

studies, scientific working groups of end users, such as ICES and STECF - but should demonstrate novelty and added value and be complementary to the existing accomplishments.

The regions and topics covered by this call for proposals are the following:

a) Biological data: the Baltic Sea, the North Sea & Eastern Arctic, the North Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean & Black Sea, as well as fisheries in external waters (Large pelagic fisheries and long distance fisheries on demersal and small pelagic stocks) , and

b) socio-economic and environmental data collection on fisheries, aquaculture and processing industry for all EU regions and fisheries.

This call for proposals may cover 4-7 grants, depending on cooperation between sea basins. As in the first call for proposals launched in 2014, cooperation between adjacent sea basins is strongly encouraged. The grants cannot take place in the same region for the same subject (as defined above). However, the applicants receiving each grant should coordinate their work to ensure, as far as possible, that the outputs produced are compatible among the regions in which the projects take place.

The description of the work packages for each grant category can be found in the Annexes 1 to 4.

### 3. TIMETABLE

The *indicative* planning foresees:

	Stages	Date and time or indicative period
a)	Publication of the call	May 2017
b)	Deadline for submitting applications	<b>(7 July 2017 – 17h00 Brussels' Time)</b>
c)	Evaluation period	July – August 2017
d)	Information to applicants	September 2017
e)	Signature of grant agreement or notification of grant decision	October 2017
f)	Starting date of the action/ work programme	October - November 2017

### 4. BUDGET AVAILABLE

The total budget earmarked for the co-financing of the projects is estimated at 2,000,000 € (two million euros) and shall be financed from budget line 11.066201 of the General Budget of the European Union for 2016.

The indicative maximum grant per project will be 500,000 (five hundred thousand euros), depending on the number of applications received.

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

## 5. ADMISSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Applications must be sent no later than the deadline for submitting applications referred to in section 3 (**7 July 2017 – 17h00 Brussels' Time**).
- Applications must be submitted in writing (see section 16), using the application form in Annex 5.
- Applications must be drafted in one of the EU official languages. For practical reasons a translation into English would be appreciated.

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

## 6. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applications will only be evaluated if all documents mentioned in section 16 of this call are submitted and if they comply with the following eligibility criteria:

### 6.1. Eligible applicants

1. The following applicants of Member States are eligible:
  - Public authorities (national, regional, local);
  - Research centres;
  - Universities;
  - Educational institutions;
  - Non-profit organisation (private or public).
2. Legal entities having a legal or capital link with applicants, which is neither limited to the action nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation, may take part in the action as affiliated entities, and may declare eligible costs as specified in section 13.3. For that purpose, applicants shall identify such affiliated entities in the application form. The affiliated entities will have to comply with the eligibility and exclusion criteria.
3. In order to assess the applicants' eligibility, the following supporting documents are requested:
  - **private entity**: extract from the official journal, copy of articles of association, extract of trade or association register, certificate of liability to VAT (if, as in certain countries, the trade register number and VAT number are identical, only one of these documents is required);
  - **public entity**: copy of the resolution or decision establishing the public company, or other official document establishing the public-law entity;
  - **affiliated entities**: shall demonstrate their legal/capital link with the applicant.
4. Minimum composition and eligibility conditions for consortia
  - (a) Only an application of a consortium of partners established in several Member States of the same marine region will be considered eligible:

- For biological data collection, the consortium must include at least three Member States fishing in one, and the same, of the following regions: Baltic Sea, North Sea & Eastern Arctic, North Atlantic, Mediterranean & Black Sea, Large pelagic fisheries on highly migratory species, Long distance fisheries beyond EU waters.
  - For economic data collection, the consortium must include at least six Member States showing a balanced representation of EU countries (i.e. spanning all sea basins).
- (b) The application must be submitted by one Lead Partner (Coordinator). Among the number of Partners who carry out the project, one is appointed to act as Lead Partner and thus forms the link between the project Partners and the European Commission.
- (c) Moreover, the Lead Partner is responsible for the management, communication, implementation and coordination of activities amongst the Partners in the selected regions. All partners of the consortium, including affiliated entities, will provide the Lead Partner with a power of attorney in writing through a mandate signed for that purpose (Annex 7). The mandate shall fully empower the coordinator to act on the partners' behalf in the context of the grant agreement.
- (d) Applicants, whether the Lead partner or the others, must be public authorities or bodies of an EU Member State. However, specifically for:
- the long distance fisheries grant the main contractors may obtain assistance from third countries;
  - the large pelagics grant the main contractors may obtain assistance from Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs).

This assistance may take the form of letter of wiling or even subcontracting for specific data supply or processing or for any other action within the proposal.

- (e) Only applications from legal entities established in the EU Member States are eligible.

The Lead Partner must fill in the "Legal entity form" (if they are not already registered as service providers of the Commission) and the "Financial identification form" available at the following addresses:

Legal entity form:

[http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts\\_grants/info\\_contracts/legal\\_entities/legal\\_entities\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm)

Financial information form:

[http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts\\_grants/info\\_contracts/financial\\_id/financial\\_id\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/financial_id/financial_id_en.cfm)

## **6.2. Eligible activities**

- (a) The project must address the objectives defined in section 2 above and meet the requirements of this Call.

- (b) Applications should demonstrate the cross-border nature of the proposed project, inter alia through the proposed Partnership composition and the selected region, which must be characterised by multiple and cross-border activities (existing or potential).
- (c) The activities under these projects may not be included in the EU co- Maritime and financed activities covered by a member States' Operational Programme under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund<sup>8</sup>.
- (d) Activities under these projects should go beyond the activities covered by the national work plans for data collection for 2017-2019 of the Member States.

## 7. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

### 7.1. Exclusion from participation

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

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

### 7.2. Exclusion from award

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

- (a) are subject to a conflict of interest;
- (b) are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the Commission as a condition of participation in the grant award procedure or fail to supply this information;
- (c) find themselves in one of the situations of exclusion, listed in the declaration of honour referred to in section 7.1.

Administrative and financial penalties may be imposed on applicants who are guilty of misrepresentation.

## 8. SELECTION CRITERIA

### 8.1. Financial capacity

*For public entities:*

On the basis of article 131(3) FR and given the eligibility criteria set for applicants under section 6.1 of this call for proposals, such applicants are considered to have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activity throughout the period during which the action is being carried out and to participate in its funding.

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<sup>8</sup> REGULATION (EU) No 508/2014 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 15 May 2014 on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2328/2003, (EC) No 861/2006, (EC) No 1198/2006 and (EC) No 791/2007 and Regulation (EU) No 1255/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council

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

***For other bodies:***

Applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activity throughout the period during which the action is being carried out or the year for which the grant is awarded and to participate in its funding. The applicants' financial capacity will be assessed on the basis of the following supporting documents to be submitted with the application:

- a declaration of honour (to be provided by each of the applicants);
- the profit and loss account and the balance sheet for the last financial year for which the accounts were closed;
- the simplified balance sheet for the same year as per template provided in the grant application form;
- for newly created entities, the business plan might replace the above documents.

On the basis of the documents submitted, if the responsible authorising officer (RAO) considers that financial capacity is not satisfactory, he may:

- request further information;
- propose a grant agreement without pre-financing;
- propose a grant agreement with a pre-financing paid in instalments;
- propose a grant agreement with a pre-financing covered by a bank guarantee (see section 13.7 below);
- where applicable, require the joint and several financial liability of all the co-beneficiaries;
- reject the application.

**8.2. Operational capacity**

The partners, whether the Lead Partner or the others, shall be engaged in activities that involve DCF data collection planning, implementing, managing, processing, analysing or transmitting and must have the technical competencies as well as appropriate qualifications necessary to complete the proposed projects. In this respect, applicants have to submit a declaration of honour that they have the operational capacity to carry out the project and to provide the following supporting documents:

- An inventory of staff (scientist, technicians, IT staff, etc..) and the curriculum vitae or description of the profile of the people primarily responsible for managing and implementing the project (accompanied where appropriate, like in the field of research and education, by a list of relevant publications);
- an exhaustive list of previous projects and activities performed and connected to the actions to be carried out;
- a description of the technical equipment and tools or facilities at the disposal of the applicant.

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

## 9. AWARD CRITERIA

The Grant will be awarded to the proposal which reaches the highest score on the basis of the following award criteria and which demonstrates efficiency and cost-effectiveness. A maximum of 100 points will be awarded for the quality of the proposal. The minimum overall score required is 60 points and the minimum for each criterion is 50%. The criteria for the assessment of the quality are:

1. *Relevance (minimum required 20 points - maximum 40 points)*: the relevance of the proposals to the objective of the action will be assessed on the basis of the following:

- the extent to which all activities proposed within the project meet the overall and specific objectives of the call (as defined in section 2)
- the extent to which the proposal includes the elements of all work packages to be carried out as described in Annexes 1 to 4.

2. *Methodology (minimum required 10 points - maximum 20 points)*: appropriate and clear methodology ensuring that the project implementation is coherent, realistic and feasible in terms of actions and timetable, will be assessed on the following basis:

- the extent to which applicants describe their proposed working methodology to achieve a timely and successful implementation of the project;
- the extent to which a detailed timetable and work plan are provided;
- the extent to which the expected project makes reference to existing work and demonstrates a clear understanding of the work carried so far (duplication of the work foreseen, especially concerning the previous grants shall be excluded);
- the extent to which outputs/deliverables are described (as much as possible based on quantitative terms/indicators rather than descriptive).

3. *Project management (minimum required 10 points - maximum 20 points)*: the project management of the proposals will be assessed on the following basis:

- The extent to which applicants demonstrate that the organisation and management structure proposed for the project are sufficient and adequate to achieve the required quality, meet the deadlines and establish a real partnership between the members of the consortium, and possibly beyond;
- The extent to which as many Member States (MS) as possible for each sea basin(s) participate/are involved in the project including MS that have shown difficulties in data collection or regional cooperation;
- The extent to which an appropriate distribution / balance of tasks and workload between partners is envisaged to ensure an active commitment of all parties towards successful implementation of the project
- The extent to which different expertise per partner are clearly demonstrated.

4. *Dissemination, sustainability and transferability of the expected results (minimum required 10 points - maximum 20 points)*: this criterion will be assessed on the following basis:

- The extent to which the proposed plan for dissemination of the project's results and benefits is clear and comprehensive (with description of activities, tools and channels)
- the extent to which the proposal describes how the sustainability of the project will be ensured within the region, once the project is completed (long-lasting impact);

- the extent to which the proposal will produce outcomes that can also be used by other marine regions, where applicable (measures to facilitate the transferability);
- The extent in which the expected results are compatible with other relevant initiatives in the field of fisheries and socio-economic data collection.

## 10. LEGAL COMMITMENTS

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

The 2 copies of the original agreement must be signed first by the beneficiary on behalf of the consortium and returned to the Commission immediately. The Commission will sign it last.

The award of a grant does not establish any entitlement for subsequent years.

## 11. DURATION OF THE GRANT AGREEMENT

The grant agreements will be concluded for a period of up to 15 months (depending on agreement) with effect from the date on which it is signed by the last contracting party (the Commission).

## 12. TIMETABLE AND REPORTS

All reports are to be submitted in English (at CEFR<sup>9</sup> C2 level). Electronic files must be provided in Microsoft Word. Additionally, the final report must be delivered in Adobe Acrobat pdf format. All meetings are to be held on premises of the Commission in Brussels.

- **Kick-off meeting**: The grant holders shall present the detailed approach and a work plan for the implementation of the project. The kick-off meeting shall be held within one month of the signature of the contract, allowing for public holidays. The minutes of the meeting shall be drafted by the grant holders and sent back to the Commission for review and approval with 10 working days after the meeting.

- **Inception report**: The inception report shall be submitted within four (4) weeks from the kick-off meeting. The inception report shall take into account all issues raised during the kick-off meeting. It shall be composed of maximum 30 pages (15 double sided pages). It must contain at least: (i) a detailed roadmap of the work based on the call for proposals, the proposal offer and the documents and information received from DG MARE during or following the kick-off meeting, (ii) the detailed methodology to be followed, (iii) the areas considered to be of high risk.

- **Interim report**: an interim report shall be submitted 7 (seven) months after the signature of the grant agreement. This report shall include the work plan for the duration of the project, developed by the grant holders in order to prepare the report and the 6 elements contained therein, as specified in the Objectives of this call for proposals. The interim report shall also

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<sup>9</sup> Common European Framework of Reference for Languages [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/cadre1\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/cadre1_en.asp).

present, where relevant: i) problems that arose in the interim period and how these were addressed; ii) mitigation measures and adjustment resulting from unforeseeable events, iii) an updated timeline, if needed. It shall be composed of maximum 50 pages (25 double sided pages) excluding annexes and graphs.

- **Mid-term meeting**: the grant holders shall present the interim report at the mid-term meeting to be held maximum one month from the submission of the interim report at a date and time to be mutually agreed with the Commission services. The minutes of the meeting shall be drafted by the grant holders and sent back to the Commission for review and approval with 10 working days after the meeting.

- **Final report**: a final report shall be submitted by the end of the 15 (fifteen) months period. It shall provide details of the implementation and results of the project, including the 6 elements specified in the Objectives of this call for proposals. In addition, it shall contain a complete overview of the difficulties encountered throughout the project. It shall be composed of maximum 60 pages (30 double sided pages) excluding annexes and graphs.

- **Final meeting**: the grant holders shall present the outcomes of the project at a meeting to be held maximum one month after the submission of the final report, at a date and time to be mutually agreed with the Commission services. The minutes of the meeting shall be drafted by the grant holders and sent back to the Commission for review and approval with 10 working days after the meeting.

Signature of the contract	
Kick-off meeting	Within 1 month after the signature of the grant agreement
Inception report	Within 4 weeks from the kick-off meeting
Interim report	7 (seven) months after the signature of the grant agreement
Mid-term meeting	Within 1 month after the approval of the interim report
Final report	By the end of the 15 (fifteen) months period
Final meeting	Maximum 1 month after the approval of the final report

## 13. FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

### 13.1. General Principles

#### (a) Non-cumulative award

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

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

The costs claimed under this grant may not be included in the EU co- Maritime and financed activities covered by a member States' Operational Programme under the European Fisheries Fund<sup>10</sup>.

(b) Non-retroactivity

No grant may be awarded retrospectively for actions already completed.

A grant may be awarded for an action which has already begun only where the applicant can demonstrate the need to start the action before the grant agreement is signed or the grant decision is notified.

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

(c) Co-financing

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

Co-financing of the action or of the work programme may take the form of:

- the beneficiary's own resources,
- financial contributions from third parties.

Co-financing may also take the form of in-kind contributions from third parties, i.e. non-financial resources made available free of charge by third parties to the beneficiary or to the consortium. The corresponding costs are not eligible.

(d) Balanced budget

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

The budget must be drawn up in euros.

Applicants, who foresee that costs will not be incurred in euros, are invited to use the exchange rate published in the Official Journal of the European Union on the Inforeuro website available at

[http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts\\_grants/info\\_contracts/inforeuro/inforeuro\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro/inforeuro_en.cfm)

(e) Implementation contracts/subcontracting

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

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<sup>10</sup> REGULATION (EU) No 508/2014 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 15 May 2014 on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2328/2003, (EC) No 861/2006, (EC) No 1198/2006 and (EC) No 791/2007 and Regulation (EU) No 1255/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council

In the event of procurement exceeding € 60 000, the beneficiary must abide by special rules as referred in the grant agreement annexed to the call (Annex 6). Moreover the beneficiary is expected to clearly document the tendering procedure and retain the documentation for the event of an audit.

Entities acting in their capacity of contracting authorities in the meaning of Directive 2004/18/EC<sup>11</sup> or contracting entities in the meaning of Directive 2004/17/EC<sup>12</sup> shall abide by the applicable national public procurement rules.

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

- it may only cover the implementation of a limited part of the action (maximum 25%);
- it must be justified having regard to the nature of the action and what is necessary for its implementation;
- it must be clearly stated in the proposal.

### **13.2. Funding form**

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

#### **➤ Maximum amount requested**

The EU grant is limited to a maximum co-funding rate of 90 % of eligible costs. The maximum grant amount is referred to in section 4.

Funding sources other than the EU grant is referred to in section 13.1c.

### **13.3. Eligible costs**

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

- they are incurred during the duration of the project, with the exception of costs relating to final reports;

The period of eligibility of costs will start as specified in the grant agreement.

If a beneficiary can demonstrate the need to start the action before the agreement is signed, expenditure may be authorised before the grant is awarded. Under no circumstances can the eligibility period start before the date of submission of the grant application (see section 3).

- they are indicated in the estimated budget of the project;

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<sup>11</sup> Directive 2004/18/EC on the coordination of procedures for the award of public work contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts

<sup>12</sup> Directive 2004/17/EC coordinating the procurement procedures of entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors.

- they are necessary for the implementation of the project which is the subject of the grant;
- they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular being recorded in the accounting records of the beneficiary and determined according to the applicable accounting standards of the country where the beneficiary is established and according to the usual cost accounting practices of the beneficiary;
- they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation;
- they are reasonable, justified, and comply with the requirements of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency.

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

### 13.3.1. *Eligible direct costs*

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

- **Personnel:** the costs of personnel working under an employment contract with the applicant or equivalent appointing act and assigned to the action, comprising actual salaries plus social security contributions and other statutory costs included in the remuneration, provided that these costs are in line with the applicant's usual policy on remuneration. The costs of the personnel of national administrations to the extent that they relate to the cost of activities which the relevant public authority would not carry out if the project concerned were not undertaken;
- **Travel costs:** (for meetings, including kick-off and mid-term meetings where applicable, conferences etc.), provided that these costs are in line with the beneficiary's usual practices on travel;
- **Subsistence allowances:** (for meetings, including kick-off and mid-term meetings where applicable, conferences etc.) provided that these costs are in line with the beneficiary's usual practices;
- **External expert's costs:** travel and subsistence costs of experts from countries other than those of the applicants but fishing in the region concerned by the project.
- **Depreciation cost of equipment:** (new or second-hand): only the portion of the equipment's depreciation corresponding to the duration of the action/project and the rate of actual use for the purposes of the action may be taken into account by the Commission;
- **Costs of consumable materials and supplies:** provided that they are identifiable and assigned to the action/project;
- **Subcontracting/external assistance:** costs entailed by implementation contracts awarded by the beneficiaries for the purposes of carrying out the project, provided that the conditions laid down in the grant agreement or grant decision are met;
- **Pre-financing guarantee:** costs relating to a pre-financing guarantee lodged by the beneficiary of the grant, where required.

### 13.3.2. *Eligible indirect costs (overheads)*

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

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

Applicant's attention is drawn to the fact that in case of organisations receiving an operating grant, indirect costs are not eligible under specific actions.

### 13.4. **Ineligible costs**

- VAT, value added tax is not eligible
- return on capital;
- debt and debt service charges;
- provisions for losses or debts;
- interest owed;
- doubtful debts;
- exchange losses;
- costs of transfers from the Commission charged by the bank of a beneficiary;
- costs declared by a beneficiary and covered by another action receiving a European Union grant. In particular, indirect costs shall not be eligible under a grant for an action awarded to a beneficiary who already receives an operating grant financed from the Union budget during the period in question;
- contributions in kind;
- excessive or reckless expenditure.
- others (in accordance with the relevant legal base).

### 13.5. **Calculation of the final grant amount**

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

- a final report providing details of the implementation and results of the project ;
- the final financial statement of costs actually incurred,

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

### 13.6. Payment arrangements

- **Pre-financing**: A pre-financing payment corresponding to 30% of the grant amount will be transferred to the beneficiary within 30 days of the date of the Commission signature of grant the agreement.
- **Final payment**: The final payment shall clear 100% of the amount of the pre-financing. The Commission will establish and transfer the amount of the final payment to be made to the beneficiary after approval of the final report and the presentation of the outcomes of the project on the basis of the maximum contribution and of the eligible costs claimed (see section 13.2 above). If the total of earlier payments is higher than the final grant amount, the beneficiary will be required to reimburse the amount paid in excess by the Commission through a recovery order.

### 13.7. Pre-financing guarantee

A pre-financing guarantee for up to the same amount as the pre-financing may be requested in order to limit the financial risks linked to the pre-financing payment.

The financial guarantee, in euro, shall be provided by an approved bank or financial institution established in one of the Member State of the European Union. Amounts blocked in bank accounts shall not be accepted as financial guarantees.

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

The guarantee shall be released as the pre-financing is cleared against the final payment to the beneficiary, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the grant agreement. Amounts overpaid shall be reimbursed to the Commission.

### 13.8. Transfers

Beneficiaries are allowed to adjust the estimated budget of the project by transfers between themselves and between the different budget categories, if the *action* is implemented as described in section 2.2. Such adjustment does not require an amendment of the Agreement, however budget transfers between beneficiaries and/or between budget categories are limited to **25%** of the estimated eligible costs of the *action*.

Beneficiaries may not add costs relating to *subcontracts*, unless such additional *subcontracts* are approved by the Commission.

If beneficiaries want to change the value of the contribution to which each of them is entitled, the Lead Partner must request an amendment to the Commission.

## 14. PUBLICITY

#### **14.1. By the beneficiaries**

Beneficiaries must clearly acknowledge the European Union's contribution in all publications or in conjunction with activities for which the grant is used.

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

To do this they must use the text, the emblem and the disclaimer available at [http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/symbols/flag/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/symbols/flag/index_en.htm)

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

#### **14.2. By the Commission**

All information relating to grants awarded in the course of a financial year shall be published on an internet site of the European Commission no later than the 30 June of the year following the financial year in which the grants were awarded.

The Commission will publish the following information:

- name of the beneficiary,
- address of the beneficiary,
- subject of the grant,
- amount awarded.

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

### **15. DATA PROTECTION**

The reply to any call for proposals involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as name, address and CV). Such data will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the EU institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data. Unless indicated otherwise, the questions and any personal data requested are required to evaluate the application in accordance with the specifications of the call for proposal will be processed solely for that purpose by the Head of Unit MARE.C3. Details concerning the processing of personal data are available on the privacy statement at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/dataprotectionofficer/privacystatement\\_publicprocurement\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dataprotectionofficer/privacystatement_publicprocurement_en.pdf)

Personal data may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System by the Commission, should the beneficiary be in one of the situations mentioned in Article 106(1) and 107 of the Financial Regulation 966/2012<sup>13</sup> (for more information see the Privacy Statement on:

[http://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/explained/management/protecting/privacy\\_statement\\_edes\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/explained/management/protecting/privacy_statement_edes_en.pdf)).

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<sup>13</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex%3A32012R0966>

## 16. PROCEDURE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Proposals must be submitted in accordance with the formal requirements and by the deadline set out under section 5.

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

Applicants will be informed in writing about the results of the selection process.

### ➤ Submission on paper

Application forms are available at [http://www.cc.cec/budg/imp/grants/imp-090\\_014\\_agreement\\_en.html](http://www.cc.cec/budg/imp/grants/imp-090_014_agreement_en.html).

Applications shall be submitted on the correct form, duly completed, dated, showing a balanced budget (revenue/expenditure), submitted in 3 copies (one original clearly identified as such, plus 2 copies), and signed by the person authorised to enter into legally binding commitments on behalf of the applicant organisation.

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

Applications must be submitted as follows:

*The date must be the same in both cases*

**either sent by post (registered mail) or by courier service** to the following address:

#### ***Post:***

European Commission  
Directorate-General for  
Maritime Affairs and Fisheries  
Unit MARE/C3  
(Ref. **MARE/2016/22**)  
Office: J-79 02/022  
B – 1049 BRUSSELS

#### ***Courier service:***

European Commission  
Directorate-General for  
Maritime Affairs and Fisheries  
Unit MARE/C3  
(Ref. **MARE/2016/22**)  
Office: J-79 02/022  
Avenue du Bourget 1  
B – 1140 BRUSSELS (Evere)

In this case, the evidence of the date of dispatch shall be constituted by the postmark (registered mail) or the date of dispatch on the deposit slip (courier service).

**or delivered by hand** (by the tenderer in person or by an agent) to the following address:

European Commission  
Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries  
Unit MARE/C3 (Ref. MARE/2016/22)  
Office: J-99 03/030  
Avenue du Bourget 1  
B – 1140 BRUSSELS (Evere)

no later than **7 July 2017 – 17h00 Brussels' Time**. In this case, a receipt must be obtained as proof of submission, signed and dated by the official in the Commission's central mail department who takes delivery.

The department is open from 08.00 to 17.00 from Monday to Thursday, and from 8.00 to 16.00 on Fridays. It is closed on Saturdays, Sundays and Commission holidays.

➤ Contacts

All questions related to the call may be sent by electronic means (e-mail) to the functional mailbox:

[MARE-2016-22@ec.europa.eu](mailto:MARE-2016-22@ec.europa.eu) , indicating the call reference **MARE/2016/22** and the subject title "**Strengthening regional cooperation in the area of fisheries data collection**".

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

[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/maritimeaffairs\\_fisheries/contracts\\_and\\_funding/calls\\_for\\_proposals/2013\\_09/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/maritimeaffairs_fisheries/contracts_and_funding/calls_for_proposals/2013_09/index_en.htm)

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

In order to ensure equal treatment, questions will only be answered if submitted no later than 10 working days before the deadline for the submission of proposals.

➤ Annexes (documents to be found on the website):

- **Annex 1:** Work Packages for the grant on Biological data collection in EU waters
- **Annex 2:** Work Packages for the grant on Biological data collection for long-distance fisheries in external waters
- **Annex 3:** Work Packages for the grant on Biological data collection for large pelagic fisheries on highly migratory species.
- **Annex 4:** Work Packages for the grant on Socio-economic data collection on an EU level
- **Annex 5:** Application form
- **Annex 6:** Draft grant agreement
- **Annex 7:** Template of a mandate