



European Maritime and Fisheries Fund

Call for proposals

Environmental monitoring of ocean energy devices
EMFF-OM-2019¹

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European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
Environmental monitoring of ocean energy devices
EMFF-OM-2019²

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² Call ID in 2019 EMFF Work Programme: EMFF-2019-1.2.1.1

0. Introduction

This is an EU call for grants in the field of environmental monitoring of wave and tidal devices under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.

This call for proposals is launched in accordance with the 2019 Work Programme for the implementation of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) (section 1.2.1.1 of the annex to the Work Programme)³.

Grant agreements will be concluded in relation to the following topic:

- **OM (Topic 1)** – Ocean-Monitoring

We invite you to read the call documentation carefully, i.e. this **call for proposals** and the **guide for applicants**. These documents provide clarifications and answers to questions you may have when preparing your application:

- The call for proposals outlines the:
 - Objectives and types of activities that can be financed and the expected results of the call
 - timetable and available budget
 - eligibility, exclusion, selection and award criteria
 - evaluation procedure.
- The guide for applicants outlines the:
 - procedures to register and submit proposals online via the [EU Funding & Tenders Portal](#) ('Portal')
 - recommendations for the preparation of the proposal
 - explanation on the application form (Proposal Template (Part A and B)), which describes the project
 - overview of the cost eligibility criteria.

Applicants are encouraged to take into account the principles of the [EASME Environmental Policy Charter](#) when preparing their proposals. More information about the environmental policy of EASME is provided in Annex to this call.

You also are encouraged to visit the [EASME website](#) to consult the list of projects funded previously under the EMFF.

1. Background to the call

Ocean energy could provide clean, predictable, indigenous and reliable energy and contribute to the EU's objective of reaching a share of renewables of at least 32% of the EU's gross final consumption by 2030 ⁴.

The EU is currently the global leader in ocean energy technologies⁵.

³ Commission Implementing Decision C(2018) 8395 final of 13 December 2018 on the financing of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and the adoption of the work programme for 2019, and its annex.

⁴ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2018/2001/oj>

The Commission adopted in 2014 a Communication on Blue Energy⁶, which recognised the immense potential of harnessing the power of our seas and oceans. It is also one of the sectors that were identified in the Commission's Blue Growth Communication⁷ as an area where EU action can complement initiatives by the Member States to help this nascent industry develop faster and establish a new industrial sector.

The Ocean Energy Strategic Roadmap "Building Ocean Energy for Europe"⁸ published in November 2016 identified de-risking environmental consenting as a key challenge. The development of fit-for-purpose, effective and efficient licensing systems for ocean energy projects across Member States is essential at this stage of development of the sector. This was further confirmed as a priority area for cooperation with member states in the SET Plan Ocean Energy implementation plan adopted by the adopted by SET plan steering committee in March 2018⁹.

Strategic planning is necessary to prevent future conflicts with other sea users and to ensure minimal impact of ocean energy deployment on the marine environment. Early and coordinated environmental assessment procedures under applicable environmental legislations (Directives on Strategic Environmental Assessment¹⁰, Environmental Impact Assessment¹¹, Marine Strategy Framework¹², Habitats¹³, Birds¹⁴, NATURA 2000¹⁵ and Maritime Spatial Planning¹⁶) and the respective national legal rules are fundamental in ensuring compliance and stakeholders' involvement.

Developers' application for consent requires a sound understanding of environmental assessment and processes applied to ocean energy. However, deployments of ocean energy devices are without precedent and there is limited empirical data that could inform the regulatory process. Obtaining consent for an emerging technology such as ocean energy can be time consuming and costly. This also entails the need for public information, consultation and support. Consenting processes, thus, need to be anticipated, tailored and proportionate.

Close environmental monitoring and impact assessment and an early understanding of these aspects will benefit the current and future deployments of the ocean energy sector as a whole, by putting in place a guiding framework within which to establish protocol for regulatory assessments, licensing, control and monitoring. This will help to steer the transition from research and development to commercial deployment of new technologies.

This is the second call for proposals in this area launched with support of the EMFF.

2. Objectives — Activities that can be funded – Expected Outputs

⁵ JRC Ocean Energy Status Report 2016 Edition <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/eur-scientific-and-technical-research-reports/jrc-ocean-energy-status-report-2016-edition>

⁶ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Blue Energy Action needed to deliver on the potential of ocean energy in European seas and oceans by 2020 and beyond (COM/2014/08 final).

⁷ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Blue Growth opportunities for marine and maritime sustainable growth (COM/2012/0494 final).

⁸ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/maritimeforum/sites/maritimeforum/files/OceanEnergyForum_Roadmap_Online_Version_08Nov2016.pdf

⁹ https://setis.ec.europa.eu/system/files/set_plan_ocean_implementation_plan.pdf

¹⁰ <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eia/sea-legalcontext.htm>

¹¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eia/eia-legalcontext.htm>

¹² http://ec.europa.eu/environment/marine/eu-coast-and-marine-policy/marine-strategy-framework-directive/index_en.htm

¹³ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/habitatsdirective/index_en.htm

¹⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/birdsdirective/index_en.htm

¹⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/index_en.htm

¹⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/maritime_spatial_planning_en

OM – Ocean-Monitoring

Objectives

General objectives

The general objectives of this call for proposals are:

- To increase the amount of environmental data and improve knowledge on assessing possible impacts of ocean energy devices (wave, tidal and ocean thermal energy conversion) deployed at sea;
- To contribute to reducing uncertainty in modelling potential impacts of future ocean energy devices;
- To provide guidance to ocean energy developers and to public competent authorities in charge of licencing and maritime planning;
- To inform stakeholders and help feed the public debate.

Information from the selected projects will be publicly available including for use by other developers and regulators to inform the consenting of ocean energy deployments.

Specific objectives:

Action Plan 4 of the Ocean Energy Strategic Roadmap and action 3.2 of the SET Plan Ocean implementing plan recommend an integrated programme of measures on planning and consenting processes, on knowledge gaps and environmental demonstration strategy to reduce the burden on early developers and inform consenting of future projects.

This call for proposals aims at supporting and implementing these recommendations.

The specific objectives of this call are to:

- collect, process, analyse and share all environmental data and information on the positive, negative or absence of impacts of ocean energy devices;
- initiate strategic research to address gaps in knowledge to improve the modelling of potential impacts of future deployments and to develop mitigation measures;
- develop recommendations and actions for engaging with relevant stakeholders and sectors (public authorities, fishing, tourism, NGOs, maritime transport, sailing ...) and informing the general public.
- Suggest a planning and consenting procedure based on a risk-based approach to ocean energy licensing.

Activities that can be funded

Projects must undertake the following activities.

It should build up on existing knowledge, in particular developed in recent projects such as MaRVEN¹⁷, RiCore¹⁸, MUSES¹⁹, SOWFIA²⁰, SI Ocean²¹ and coordinate with the two ongoing projects WESE²² and SEA WAVE²³.

1. Research, data collection and analysis

To assess potential environmental impact of ocean energy devices and support efficient decision-making, a strong baseline is needed with validated and consolidated empirical data.

There are various types and sizes of devices and installations, in different locations and local conditions. However, the combined and cumulative data generated by monitoring them can contribute to a better overall understanding of environmental impact and reducing uncertainty. This in turn can populate modelling on the level and significance of potential impacts of future ocean energy devices, arrays and farms (seabed, noise, collision, avoidance, displacement...).

This activity should seek to generate and gather effectively data from as many deployed and tested devices as possible. In that context, use of private data from companies should be considered.

It should be considered complimentary to the ongoing activities supported under the EMFF call 2017/1.2.1.1 – Environmental monitoring of wave and tidal energy devices and the related two projects WESE and SEA WAVE. Integration of data and monitoring from different receptors or locations than the currently tested ones would be beneficial.

Work on data must at least include:

- a monitoring plan with data mapping and gap analysis;
- detailed and operational data collection, validation and dissemination process based on existing, developed and agreed methodologies and monitoring equipment. It shall address how such information will integrate currently available data-sharing platforms and used by authorities, regulators, stakeholders, researchers and developers; Information and coordination with competent public authorities will be necessary in this context;
- development of impact assessment methods;
- modelling of possible and cumulative impacts at larger scale.

2. Environmental demonstration strategy

This activity should:

- Monitor the effects of ocean energy devices on the marine wildlife by deploying monitoring equipment around devices and arrays operating at sea. This should include different technologies and locations;

¹⁷ [Environmental impacts of noise, vibrations and electromagnetic emissions from marine renewable energy](#)

¹⁸ <http://ricore-project.eu/>

¹⁹ <https://muses-project.eu>

²⁰ <https://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/projects/en/projects/sowfia>

²¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/projects/en/projects/si-ocean>

²² <http://wese-project.eu/>

²³ Strategic Environmental Assessment of Wave energy technologies ([SEA WAVE](#))

- develop a set of practical mitigation measures following the monitoring, taking into account site specificities and cumulative impacts;
- draw conclusions and recommendations for future devices and larger scale arrays taking into account different technologies and geographic considerations.

3. Public engagement

Projects such as SOWFIA, SI Ocean and Muses have brought forward recommendations that early-stage engagement with local communities and relevant stakeholder groups are beneficial to ensure that projects are well received and to obtain consent.

This activity should

- Develop best practices, methods and tools on reaching out to and engaging with:
 - local communities and stakeholders
 - stakeholders across a broad range of sectors simultaneously
 - the public at large
- Develop best practices, methods and tools for dissemination of results of ocean energy projects to inform the general public of key interactions with marine life and possible risks, as well as mitigation measures.

4. Consenting and planning

- Expand information related to risk-based consenting applied to ocean energy, based on the results from activity 1-2-3.
This activity will be based on a review of existing practices and experience of consenting and licensing processes in EU Member States and elsewhere. It could include analysis of licencing strategies in other marine sectors (offshore wind, aquaculture...);
- Develop guidance, recommendations and tools to share best practices building on existing studies and projects;
- Guidance, recommendations and tools should be developed on how to apply maritime spatial planning to facilitate the selection of sites for deploying ocean energy devices and the provision of infrastructure, while ensuring compliance with environmental legislations and stakeholders consultations.

Complementary activities

Projects may propose other activities complementary to the core activities set out above. Such complementary activities should contribute to realise the project objectives and be in line with the objectives of this call for proposals. Complementary activities could comprise for instance training activities, expert workshops, stakeholders engagement meetings, measures to seek synergies with other sectors or relevant projects as well as with other relevant initiatives or policies (e.g. sea-basin strategies, Smart Specialisation Platforms and macro-regional strategies).

Networking with other projects

During the lifetime of the projects financed under this action, a number of meetings will be organised at EU level for the grant beneficiaries to facilitate the exchange of experience and good practices, to foster mutual learning and to enhance the

European dimension of environmental monitoring. Project beneficiaries are expected to participate in these meetings, which will be held in Brussels or other relevant locations.

Expected outputs

Projects under this action should achieve concrete outputs within the project duration. The proposal must clearly describe the specific outputs of the project in terms of:

- Improved environmental information on deployments of ocean energy devices at sea condition in test centres or commercial sites;
- Identified and covered gaps in knowledge in the area of consenting and licencing;
- Increased exchange of information on environmental status and possible impacts of ocean energy devices between EU Member States consenting authorities;
- Increased awareness of and education in environmental monitoring, control and maritime spatial planning;
- Increased public awareness, engagement and social acceptance of ocean energy projects;
- Development and integration of publicly available recommendations and tools (for decision makers, developers, stakeholders, etc.), which will be used to improve and streamline processes and reduce duplication of efforts;
- Facilitate the identification and selection of sites as well as future consenting;
- Integration/Updating environmental data platform aligned with relevant existing legislation and initiatives (e.g. EMODnet²⁴, Inspire Directive²⁵, Marine Strategy Framework Directive, Maritime Spatial Planning, etc.).

A list of relevant indicators (qualitative/quantitative) to measure the expected outputs and impacts of the project must be included in the proposal²⁶.

3. Timetable & available call budget

Time-table

Timing (planned)	
Call publication:	16 September 2019
Opening of submissions:	17 September 2019
Deadline for applications:	15 January 2020 – 17:00 CET
Evaluation:	February-March 2020
Information on evaluation result:	April-May 2020
Grant agreement signature:	June-August 2020
Starting date:	September-October 2020

²⁴ <http://www.emodnet.eu/>

²⁵ <https://inspire.ec.europa.eu/about-inspire/563>

²⁶ See section III 1.c) of the application form.

Call budget

The available call budget is **EUR 2,300,000**.

This budget might be increased by maximum 20%.

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

EASME considers that proposals requesting a contribution in the ranges between 800,000 and EUR 1,500,000 would allow the objectives of this call for proposals to be addressed appropriately. The amount requested should be consistent and proportional with the scope of the proposal (number of applicants, number of Member States involved, activities proposed, etc.). Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

The EU reserves the right not to award all available funds or to redistribute them between the call topics, depending on the applications received and the evaluation results.

4. Admissibility conditions

Admissibility

Applications must be submitted before the call deadline (*see time-table section 3*).

Applications must be submitted electronically via the Participant Portal Electronic Submission System (accessible via the Call Topic page in the [Search Funding & Tenders](#) section). Paper submissions are no longer possible.

Applications (including annexes and supporting documents) must be submitted using the forms provided inside the Electronic Submission System (not the documents available on the Call Topic page — these are only for information).

Your application must be readable, accessible and printable and contain all the requested information and all required annexes and supporting documents (*see section 10*).

5. Eligibility conditions

Participants

General eligibility conditions for participants:

1. In order to be eligible for a grant, the applicants must:

- be legal persons
- belong to one of the following categories: private entities, public entities, or international organisations²⁷
- be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the project with the other applicants, i.e. not acting as an intermediary
- be established in an EU Member State (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs²⁸))

²⁷ For the definition, see Article 156 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

²⁸ The Overseas Countries and Territories (as per Annex II of the Treaty on the functioning of the EU) are: Anguilla (UK), Aruba (NL), Bermuda (UK), Bonaire (NL), British Antarctic Territory (UK)*, British Indian Ocean Territory (UK)*, British Virgin Islands (UK), Cayman Islands (UK), Curaçao (NL), Falkland Islands (UK), French Polynesia (FR), French Southern -and Antarctic Territories (FR)*, Greenland (DK), Montserrat (UK), New Caledonia and Dependencies (FR), Pitcairn (UK), Saba (NL), Saint Barthelemy

or

be established in non-EU countries provided their involvement is necessary in view of the nature of the action and in order to reach its objectives.

Natural persons are NOT eligible EXCEPT self-employed persons or equivalent (i.e. sole traders) where the company does not possess legal personality separate from that of the natural person. EU bodies (with the exception of the European Commission Joint Research Centre) can NOT be part of the consortium.

Special rules may apply for entities from certain countries (e.g. *countries covered by Council sanctions, entities covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)*²⁹).

To prove eligibility, all applicants must register in the [Participant Register](#) — before the call deadline — and upload the necessary documents showing legal status and origin.

Linked third parties (i.e. affiliated entities³⁰ that participate in the project with funding, but do not become beneficiaries) are allowed.

For UK applicants: Please note that until the United Kingdom leaves the EU, nothing changes with regard to the participation in EU programmes. Please be aware however that the eligibility criteria must be complied with for the *entire* duration of our grants. If the United Kingdom withdraws from the EU during that period (without an agreement ensuring eligibility for UK beneficiaries), you will cease to receive EU funding or be required to leave the project on the basis of the contractual provisions on termination.

2. The consortium coordinator has to be established in an EU Member State³¹.

3. Applicants must be active at least in one of the following fields: marine biology, renewable energy, marine energy, maritime spatial planning, marine engineering, offshore activities, environmental legislation, environment monitoring and consenting, or any other field if its relevance for the project is duly justified in the proposal.

Observers

It is possible for other relevant parties to participate with an observer status e.g. from non EU Member States or other regional or international organisations active in the field of renewables and marine energy, environmental monitoring and related sectors.

However, these entities shall not be entitled to receive Union financial support. Thus participation in any project activity will be at the observer's own expenses. Moreover, these entities will not be taken into consideration for determining compliance with the eligibility conditions for consortia set out above.

Geographical scope

The geographic area covered by the action includes the whole of the EU.

Activities outside of the EU may be included if relevant to achieving the overall and specific objectives of this call.

(FR), Sint Eustatius (NL), Sint Maarten (NL), South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands (UK)*, Saint Helena, Ascension Island, Tristan da Cunha (UK), St. Pierre and Miquelon (FR), Turks and Caicos Islands (UK), Wallis and Futuna Islands (FR). (*) OCTs without a permanent local population.

OCTs have a specific status since they are not part of the territory of a Member State but closely linked to it and not a fully independent state.

²⁹ 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).

Note that these guidelines extend to third parties receiving financial support within the meaning of Article 204 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

³⁰ See Article 187 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

³¹ It has to be an entity from an EU Member State; in this case, an entity from an OCT is not valid.

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 proposal (Part B of the Proposal Template).

Financial support to third parties is not allowed.

Duration

Depending on the scope of the project, EASME expects projects to run for a duration of 36 months.

6. Award criteria

Admissible and eligible applications will be evaluated and ranked against of the following award criteria:

1. Relevance and added value (max. 30 points):	<p>The relevance and added value will be assessed on the following basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Relevance and scope of the proposal and its expected results to achieving the objectives of the action;– Added value of the proposal in terms of innovation, synergies/complementarity with other relevant initiatives or national and EU policies;– Capacity to involve and promote dialogue and cooperation with relevant stakeholders.– Degree of involvement of different partners bringing a transnational dimension into the proposal.
2. Project implementation (max. 50 points):	<p>Project implementation will be assessed on the following basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Effectiveness and coherence of the work plan;– Feasibility in terms of activities and timetable;– Appropriate and balanced allocation of tasks and human resources;– Appropriate project management set-up;– Complementarity of partners, where applicable;– Adequate risk management.– Clearly presented and appropriate budget representing cost-effective allocation of financial resources in relation to the planned activities and

	outputs.
3. Impact (sustainability and long-term impact) (max. 20 points)	<p>Impact will be assessed on the following basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Expected outputs and impact; – Dissemination, sustainability and transferability of the expected results and potential multiplier effect.

Maximum points: 100.

Individual thresholds (per award criterion): 15 points out of 30 for criterion 1, 25 points out of 50 for criterion 1, 10 points out of 20 for criterion 1. Half points can be given.

Overall threshold: 60 points.

Highest scored proposals that pass the individual threshold AND the overall threshold will be considered for funding — within the limits of the available indicative budget per topic.

Other applications will be rejected.

The evaluation procedure is explained further in section 8.

7. Other conditions

Financial capacity

All project participants must have stable and sufficient resources to successfully implement the project and contribute their share. Organisations participating in several projects must have sufficient capacity to implement several projects.

The financial capacity check will be done by us on the basis of the documents you will be requested to upload in the [Participant Register](#) (profit and loss account and balance sheet for the last two closed financial years, or for newly created entities possibly the business plan; for applicants requesting more than EUR 750 000: audit report produced by an approved external auditor, certifying the accounts for the last closed financial year).

The analysis will take into account elements such as dependency on EU funding and deficit and revenue in previous years.

It will normally be done for all applicants, 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 (low-value grant).

If needed, it may also be done for linked third parties.

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

- further information
- an enhanced financial responsibility regime, i.e. full joint and several responsibility for all applicants (*see below, section 9*)
- pre-financing paid in instalments
- (one or more) pre-financing guarantees (*see below, section 9*)

or

- propose no pre-financing
- reject your participation or, if needed, the entire application.

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

Operational capacity

All participants must have the know-how and qualifications to successfully implement the project. This capacity will be assessed on the basis of the experience of the applicants.

Applicants will have to show this via the following information³²:

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

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

³² By filling in the operational capacity fiche (Annex 2 to the Proposal Template (Part B))



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

Exclusion

Applicants that are subject to an EU administrative sanction (i.e. exclusion or financial penalty decision)³³ or in one of the following situations³⁴ are excluded from receiving EU grants and will automatically be rejected:

- 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 misconduct³⁵ (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or natural 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 natural 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 or grant decision (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or natural 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 natural 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 natural persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).

Applicants will also be rejected if it turns out during the grant award procedure that they³⁶:

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

³³ See Article 136(1) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

³⁴ See Articles 136(1) and 141(1) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

³⁵ 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.

³⁶ See Article 141(1) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

**IMPORTANT**

- **Coordinator & consortium** — The coordinator represents the consortium towards the EU. You must have agreement of the other members and their mandate to act on their behalf and will have to confirm this in your application. Moreover you will have to declare that the information in the proposal is correct and complete and that all participants comply with the conditions for receiving funding (especially, eligibility, financial and operational capacity, no exclusion, etc.) and have agreed to participate. Before signing the grant agreement, each participant will have to confirm this again by signing a declaration of honour (DoH). Proposals without full support will be rejected.
- **Linked third parties** — Applicants may participate with linked third parties (i.e. affiliated entities) that receive funding. Linked third parties must comply with all the conditions set out in this call (just like applicants), but they do not sign the grant agreement and do not count towards the minimum eligibility criteria for consortium composition.
- **Subcontractors** — Subcontracting is allowed, but subject to strict limits (*see section 9*).
- **Registration** — All applicants must register in the [Participant Register](#) — before the call deadline — and upload the necessary documents showing legal status and origin. Linked third parties can register later (during grant preparation).
- **Completed/ongoing projects** — Applications for projects that have already been completed will be rejected; applications 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 proposal submission).
- **Balanced project budget** — Applicants 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*). You may be requested to lower the estimated costs, if they are ineligible (including excessive)..
- **No-profit rule** — Grants may NOT give a profit (i.e. surplus of receipts + EU grant over costs). This will be checked by us at the end of the projects.
- **No double funding** — Any given action may receive only one grant from the EU budget. The project must therefore NOT receive any financial support under any other EU funding programme (including EU funding managed by authorities in EU Member States or other funding bodies, *e.g. Regional Funds, Agricultural Funds, EIB loans, etc.*). Cost items may NOT be declared twice under different EU actions.
- **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 the Guide for applicants for the detailed cost eligibility conditions.*
- **Multiple applications** — Applicants may submit more than one application for *different* projects under the same call (and be awarded a grant for them).

Organisations may participate in several applications.

BUT: if there are several applications for the *same/very similar* project, only one application will be accepted and evaluated; the applicants will be asked to withdraw one of them (or it will be rejected).

- **Language** — You can submit your proposal in any official EU language. However, for reasons of efficiency, we strongly advise you to use English. If you need the call document in another official EU language, please submit a request within 10 days after call publication (for the contact information, see *section 10*).
- Applications/applicants that do not comply with these criteria will be **rejected**.

8. Evaluation & award procedure

This call is subject to the standard submission and evaluation procedure (one-stage submission + one-step evaluation).

Applications will be checked by EASME against the formal requirements (admissibility and eligibility), evaluated by an evaluation committee against the operational capacity, the award criteria and ranked in a list according to their quality score. The assessment of the eligibility, operational and financial capacity, and evaluation of the award criteria will be done in no particular order.

Proposals that are outside the scope of the call topic will be marked '0' for the "Relevance and added value" criterion — with the comment 'out of scope of the call'; and will not be further evaluated.

At the end of the evaluation, all the proposals under evaluation will be ranked, according to the scores obtained for each of the award criteria as indicated in section 6 above.

If necessary, a priority order for proposals that have obtained the same score will be determined within the limits of the available budget. The following approach will be applied successively for every group of ex aequo proposals requiring prioritisation, starting with the highest scored group, and continuing in descending order:

The ex aequo proposals will be prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for the criterion "Relevance and added value". 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 "Project implementation".

If a distinction still cannot be made, 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 for proposals. These factors will be documented in the evaluation report.

Following the selection of proposals following the above principles, the remainder of the total indicative budget for the call for proposals will be used to fund projects in the order of merit based on the evaluation of the award criteria.

Unsuccessful applications will be informed about their evaluation result (*see timetable section 4*).

Successful applications will be invited for grant agreement preparation.

**IMPORTANT**

- **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 receiving the grant.

9. Legal & financial set-up of the grants

If your project is selected for funding, you will be asked to sign a grant agreement (available on [Portal Reference Documents](#)).

This grant agreement will set the framework for your grant and its terms and conditions, in particular provisions on deliverables, reporting and payments.

Starting date & project duration

The project starting date and duration will be fixed in your grant agreement (art. 3). Normally the starting date will be after grant agreement signature. Retroactive application can be granted exceptionally only for duly justified reasons; in such case, the earliest possible starting date is the proposal submission date.

Project duration: 36 months (extensions may be granted only exceptionally, for duly justified reasons and following formal EASME agreement).

Maximum grant amount, reimbursement of eligible costs & funding rate

All grant parameters (maximum grant amount, funding rate, total eligible costs etc.) will be fixed in your grant agreement (art. 5).

Project budget: See section 3 above. The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

The grant will be a reimbursement of actual costs grant. This means that it will reimburse **ONLY** certain types of costs (eligible costs) and **ONLY** those costs you *actually* incurred for your project (NOT the *budgeted* costs).

The costs will be reimbursed at the funding rate fixed in the grant agreement (maximum 80%).

EU grants may NOT produce a profit. If there is a profit (i.e. surplus of receipts + EU grant over costs), we will deduct it from your final grant amount.

The final grant amount you will receive will therefore depend on a variety of criteria (*actual costs incurred and project income; eligibility; compliance with all the rules under the grant agreement, etc.*).

Cost eligibility rules

For the cost eligibility rules, see the model grant agreement (art. 6) and the Guide for applicants.

Specific cost eligibility rules for this call:

- 7% fixed flat-rate for indirect costs
- depreciation costs for equipment
- project activities must take place in one of the eligible countries
- financial support to third parties is not allowed
- subcontracting of action tasks is subject to special rules and must be approved by us (either as part of your proposal or in a periodic/final report)
- in-kind contributions against payment are allowed (in-kind contributions for free are not prohibited, but they are cost-neutral, i.e. cannot be declared as cost and will not be counted as receipts)
- VAT — please note that there are new rules in place since 2013 for public entities (VAT paid by beneficiaries that are public bodies acting as public authority is NOT eligible)
- costs for the introductory meeting (*see section 11*) will be eligible as travel costs (2 persons, return ticket to Brussels, accommodation for one night) — if the meeting takes place after the project starting date set out in the grant agreement.

Reporting & payment arrangements

The reporting and payment arrangements will be fixed in the grant agreement (art. 15 and 16).

After grant signature, EASME will provide you with a float to start working on the project (pre-financing of 40% of the maximum grant amount).

There will be 1 interim payment linked to a periodic report. The interim payment of maximum 40% of the grant amount will be made within 90 days of receipt and approval by the EASME of an interim report on the project implementation including a financial statement and payment claim.

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

At the end of the project, you will be invited to submit a report and EASME will calculate your final grant amount. If the total of earlier payments is higher than the final grant amount, EASME will ask you (your coordinator) to pay back the difference (recovery).

Deliverables

Standard deliverables will be listed in the grant agreement (art. 14). The project-specific deliverables will be listed in Annex 1.

In addition, you will be expected to submit several progress reports not linked to payments (also considered as deliverables):

- 4 progress reports at month 6, month 12, month 24 and month 30.

Progress reports shall be submitted to the EASME within 15 calendar days of the end of the periods in question.

Pre-financing guarantee

If we require a pre-financing guarantee, it will be fixed in your grant agreement (art 16.2). The amount will be fixed by us during grant preparation, and will be equal or lower than the pre-financing 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 that 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.

The guarantee is NOT linked to individual consortium members. You are free to organise how the guarantee amount should be provided (by one or several beneficiaries, for the overall amount or several guarantees for partial amounts). The only thing that is important is that the amount we request is covered and the guarantee(s) are sent by the coordinator before the pre-financing (by PP Communication to the Project Officer or Formal Notification).

If agreed with us, the bank guarantee may be replaced by a joint and several 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.

Special provisions

IPR rules: see model grant agreement (art. 19)

Promotion & visibility of EU funding: see model grant agreement (art. 22)

Cost rejection, grant reduction, recovery, suspension & termination

The grant agreement (chapter 6) provides for the measures we may take in case of breach of contract (and other violations of law).

Liability regime for recoveries

The liability regime for recoveries will be set out in your grant agreement (art. 28), i.e. either:

- limited joint and several liability with individual ceilings — each beneficiary up to *its* 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 its debt.

10. How to submit an application?

All applications must be submitted electronically via the Portal Electronic Submission System (accessible via the Call Topic page in the [Search Funding & Tenders](#) section). Paper submissions are no longer possible.

The **submission process** is explained in the [Online Manual](#) (together with detailed instructions for the IT tool).

Mandatory **annexes & supporting documents** (directly available in the Submission System) for this call:

- Operational capacity fiche (annex 1 to the Proposal Template (Part B))
- EMFF Project Indicators table (annex 2 to the Proposal Template (Part B))

Other annexes

- A detailed budget table is available on the Call Topic page. You are not required to use this template to prepare your proposal, nor upload it with your application, but you will be requested to provide it if you are selected for funding.
- Applicants are encouraged to take into account the principles of [EASME's Environmental Policy Charter](#).

Contact

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

Non-IT related questions should be sent to the following email address: EASME-EMFF-calls@ec.europa.eu.

Please indicate clearly the reference of the call for proposals and the topic to which your question relates to in the subject line (*see call document cover page*).

⚠ IMPORTANT

- **Consult** the Portal Call Topic page regularly. We will use it to publish updates and additional information on the call.
- **Don't wait** until the end.

Questions received later than 7 days before the call deadline cannot be answered.

We strongly advise you to complete your proposal sufficiently in advance of the deadline, to avoid any last minute technical problems. Any problems due to last minute submissions (*e.g. congestion, etc.*) will be at your risk. The call deadline will NOT be extended.

- Before submitting a proposal, all applicants must be **registered** in the [Participant Register](#) and obtain a participant identification code (PIC) (one for each applicant).
- By submitting their proposal, all applicants **accept**:
 - the terms and conditions of this call (as described in this call document and the documents it refers to)
 - to use the electronic exchange system in accordance with the [Portal Terms & Conditions](#).
- After the call deadline, the proposal is locked and can no longer be changed.
- You may be contacted later on if there is a need to **clarify** certain aspects of your **proposal** or for the correction of clerical mistakes.
- You may be asked to submit **additional documents** later on (*e.g. for the legal entity validation, LEAR appointment and financial capacity check*).
- We intend to organise an **introductory meeting** for successful applicants to discuss project management, administrative and financial aspects and reporting obligations. Participation by the coordinator (persons in charge of project coordination and financial matters) will be mandatory.
- We are committed to **transparency**. Each year, information about EU grants awarded is published on the [Europa website](#). This includes:
 - the beneficiaries' names
 - the beneficiaries' 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 the rights and freedoms under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights or harm your commercial interests.

- **Data privacy** — The submission of an application under this call involves the collection, use and processing of personal data (such as name, address and CV). This data will be processed in accordance with Regulation No 45/2001. It will be processed solely for the purpose of evaluating your proposal (and subsequent management of your grant and, if needed, programme monitoring, evaluation and communication). Details are available in the [Portal Privacy Statement](#).
- **Cancellation** — There may be circumstances which may require the cancellation of the call. In this case, you will be informed via a call update. Please note that cancellations are without entitlement to compensation.