



European Maritime and Fisheries Fund

Call for proposals

Blue Economy call – EMFF Work Programme 2018

EMFF-BlueEconomy-2018¹

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² Call ID in 2018 EMFF Work Programme: EMFF-2018-1.2.1.7

0. Introduction

This is an EU call for grants in the area of Blue Economy under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.

This call for proposals is launched in accordance with the 2018 Work Programme for the implementation of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) (section 1.2.1.7 of the annex to the Work Programme)³.

Grant agreements will be concluded in relation to the following three specific topics:

- **EMFF-01-2018 (Topic 1)** – Blue Labs: innovative solutions for maritime challenges
- **EMFF-02-2018 (Topic 2)** – Blue Careers in Europe
- **EMFF-03-2018 (Topic 3)** – Grants for the Blue Economy: investing in innovation.

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, themes and priorities, 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 Participant 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.

³ Commission Implementing Decision C(2017) 8146 final of 8 December 2017 concerning the adoption of the work programme for 2018 and the financing decision for the implementation of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.

1. Background to the Blue Economy call

This call for proposals aims to accelerate the development and implementation of the EU Maritime Policy and the sustainable development of the blue economy across Europe. This general objective is further divided into specific objectives as described under each of the 3 topics that are part of this call for proposals.

Our oceans, seas and coasts are key drivers for economic development. The EU's first annual economic report on the blue economy⁴ describes the blue economy which covers a wide range of interlinked established and emerging sectors related to oceans, seas and coasts. The report discusses the current status and recent trends of established sectors – such as ports, shipbuilding, fisheries, tourism – and of innovative sectors now emerging – such as ocean energy, blue bioeconomy, desalination, coastal and environmental protection – to gain insight in the areas where new opportunities and sustainable competitive advantage may be found. In 2016 the blue economy generated € 174 billion of value added and created jobs for nearly 3.5 million people in the EU, although the report notes that these estimates could be understated for emerging sectors due to lack of data. The report also echoes the OECD's Ocean Economy report⁵, which underlines that realising the full potential of the ocean will demand responsible, sustainable approaches to its economic development.

But what are the challenges or barriers and opportunities for the future development of the blue economy? What prevents the growth for the innovative emerging sectors that have a high potential for future growth?

The 2014 Commission Communication on Innovation in the Blue Economy⁶ identified the following key challenges of the blue economy:

- a gap between the available skills of workers and the needs of the labour market;
- diffuse research efforts in marine and maritime science hindering interdisciplinary learning and slowing the progress of innovation;
- the existence of considerable funding gaps in scaling up promising projects from pilot to demonstration phase.

The Commission is working on overcoming such barriers through its policies and investments. Already a significant amount of funds such as those coming from Horizon 2020 and the EU's Structural and Investment Funds are earmarked for innovation in the maritime economy. Some of these initiatives seek to build bridges between the results of research on one hand and the potential investors on the other, taking innovation out of the lab and onto the market.

This call also contributes to tackling these challenges, with its 3 topic areas, aiming to support:

- *multi-disciplinary approaches and innovative partnerships between maritime stakeholders to drive innovation in the blue economy (Blue Labs);*
- *the development of blue and smart skills, fit for purpose to meet the evolving needs of the labour market in the blue economy (Blue Careers);*

⁴ The 2018 Annual Economic Report on EU Blue Economy: https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/sites/maritimeaffairs/files/2018-annual-economic-report-on-blue-economy_en.pdf.

⁵ OECD (2016) The Ocean Economy in 2030, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/9789264251724-en>

⁶ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions "Innovation in the Blue Economy: realising the potential of our seas and oceans for jobs and growth" /* COM/2014/0254 final/2 */

- *innovative technologies and/or maritime services to improve their market readiness, advance towards market entry and to facilitate access to finance to blue economic players (grants in the blue economy).*

Action grants under this call will build on and complement work already executed under other programmes such as the EU programmes for research and innovation FP7 and Horizon 2020, including the SME instrument, LIFE, the European Structural and Investment Funds and Erasmus+. The call takes a more targeted approach than other programmes covering marine and maritime topics, by focusing on the specificities and needs in the maritime economy and environment and in line with the EU's sea basin strategies and regional initiatives⁷.

2. Objectives — Themes & priorities — Activities that can be funded — Expected Results

EMFF-01-2018 - Blue Labs: innovative solutions for maritime challenges

Objectives

This action aims at promoting innovative laboratories ("Blue Labs") to pilot new and economically viable solutions addressing selected maritime and marine challenges and opportunities. The focus of this action is to support young scientists supported by experienced researchers, industry and local stakeholders, to team up and develop innovative technologies, products and services in support of a sustainable blue economy, preserving marine resources and ecosystems.

The Blue Labs concept works at the interface between research and commercial exploitation, testing and piloting innovative products and services so that results from research are taken forward closer to the market.

In order to ensure the EU added value of supported activities, the development of solutions has to be tailored to the specific problems or needs of one or more sea basins or sub-sea basin surrounding the EU coasts (e.g. Mediterranean, Western-Mediterranean, Adriatic-Ionian Seas, Atlantic, North Sea, Baltic Sea, Black Sea).

The proposals submitted under this topic must develop the following specific elements:

- solid partnerships between maritime stakeholders and fostering multidisciplinary approaches and combination of competences from businesses, the public sector and research bodies;
- enhanced cooperation and coordination amongst maritime stakeholders at local, regional or even sea basin levels.

Definitions

- *Blue Lab* — For the purpose of this call, a "Blue Lab" is the collective endeavour to develop a new idea and to apply it in the maritime domain and/or marine environment. It provides the organizational space for collaborative and multidisciplinary work. A Blue Lab must be:
 - Result-oriented: resulting in a tangible deliverable, such as a pre-marketable service, product or prototype;

⁷ EU Atlantic Strategy, EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian region, Black Sea Synergy, EU strategy for the Baltic Sea region, Union for the Mediterranean, Strategic cooperation on Blue Growth in the North Sea, National or regional research and innovation strategies for smart specialisation (RIS3), etc.

- Multidisciplinary: developed by involving businesses, researchers, young scientists (e.g. post-graduate students, recent post-graduates, other students) and, if relevant, other entities such as local authorities, NGOs etc.; and bringing different disciplines together into a common project idea development.
- Stakeholder driven: being designed and implemented in cooperation with at least one private partner and in consultation with a group of relevant partners (e.g. research bodies, businesses and local authorities).

Themes & priorities

For this topic, we seek to fund projects that will develop innovative solutions relating to one of the following themes. Applicants must select only one of the following specific themes per proposal:

1. Blue bio-remediation: e.g. exploiting metabolites, biomolecules, enzymes and genes from micro-organisms living in extreme marine environments in order to develop new technologies, products or services which can solve problems such as pollution, disposal of hazardous materials, etc.;
2. Unexploded ordnances at sea: e.g. development of innovative solutions and tools (algorithm, artificial intelligence systems, methods and standards) to identify and recognize different types of unexploded ordnances, to detect their deterioration (e.g. corrosion state, release of toxins, movement) and their impact on the environment, to disarm, safely remove and demolish ammunition from the sea, including to sense and neutralise chemical agents;
3. Innovative marina and leisure boat design: e.g. development of technological solutions/products and services for marinas to adapt to changing demand from customers (e.g. access to marinas and boats for an ageing population; ICT-oriented requirements from young people) and/or address environmental challenges (e.g. safe dismantling and recycling of leisure boats);
4. Marine biomass and blue-bioeconomy: e.g. development of new technological solutions/products and approaches to add value to otherwise low value marine biomass, including jellyfish, algae, mollusc shells, and fish (also fish products for non-direct human consumption);
5. Ecofriendly aquaculture⁸: e.g. establishment of new markets, product support, and adaptation of existing production towards the most eco-friendly and sustainable practices such as multi-species, multi-product production (e.g. Integrated MultiTrophic Aquaculture and aquaponics).

EASME intends to fund at least one project for each of the above themes.

As part of the evaluation process, priority will be given to proposals that build on the outcome of prior research or applied research projects, whether EU-funded or supported from other sources. In this context, proposals should describe how they build on, complement and differ from finalised or ongoing research and innovation projects, including from EU programmes, if relevant. Where a proposal will operate in a particular sea basin in which a sea basin strategy or similar initiative exists⁹, priority will be given to proposals that explain how they contribute to the objectives of the relevant sea basin strategy or initiative.

Activities that can be funded

⁸ freshwater/inland aquaculture is included.

⁹ Sea basins strategies and other relevant sea basin information for the Atlantic, Baltic Sea, Black Sea, Mediterranean or North Sea: https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/sea_basins_hr

Applicants must explain in their proposal how they will implement the targeted activities below, resulting in concrete and measurable results within the project's duration.

Core activities

Projects must undertake all of the following activities as part of the project implementation:

- Designing, developing and testing of the innovative services/products/tools;
- Field work necessary for the development of the solutions;
- Measures to ensure the sustainability and continuation of the project activities/results after the end of the EU support (i.e. other funding sources, profit making activities, etc.);
- Training, awareness raising and dissemination activities on the marine/maritime topic or theme the project focuses on;
- Measures to facilitate the transferability of the project activities and results to other sea basins or regions of the EU facing similar challenges.

Complementary activities

In addition to the core activities, applicants should include in their project at least one or more of the following complementary activities to support the above core activities:

- Market analyses, studies and business plans;
- Legal and financial counselling (including crowdfunding and fund raising);
- Training in entrepreneurial skills;
- Patent registration;
- Where applicable, conduct activities that will increase complementarity and synergies with relevant projects funded under other EU programmes (e.g. H2020, LIFE programme, European Structural and Investment Funds) as well as with relevant initiatives and transnational programmes or policies (e.g. Sea basin and macro-regional strategies).

The list of complementary activities is non-exhaustive and aims at providing guidance to applicants. Applicants may propose other activities, as long as the choice is justified and establishes a coherent link with the project objectives and the objectives of this topic.

Networking with other EU projects

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

Expected results

Applicants have to list the main results¹⁰ expected from the project. The expected results to be achieved by the end of the project must be concrete, realistic and quantified as far as possible.

Proposals must clearly describe the specific results of the project for each of the following elements:

- New services/products/tools relating to selected marine/maritime challenges/opportunities developed at pilot or pre-commercial stage;
- Partnerships combining multidisciplinary competences from businesses, the public sector and research bodies, and integrating local knowledge, resulting in an increased capacity to drive innovation forward;

The list of expected results above is non-exhaustive and applicants may add other expected results if relevant.

Monitoring and evaluation of the project activities and project results

Beneficiaries will have to monitor and evaluate the progress of the project, notably in terms of realising the project objectives and reporting on the results of their project.

Applicants should select and explain which quantitative and qualitative indicators they will use for monitoring and evaluation:

- For each project objective, they must define appropriate indicators for measuring achievement (including a unit of measurement, baseline value and target value).
- Beneficiaries will have to report on the project results achieved by the end of the project taking into account the EMFF project indicators provided in the Project Indicators table¹¹. These indicators will contribute to evaluating the results of the proposed project.

Proposals have to include a specific activity/task to monitor and measure the project activities and the project results with a defined budget. Information on monitoring and assessing project results has to be submitted at the time of the periodic reports.

EMFF-02-2018 – Blue Careers

Objectives

This topic promotes innovative approaches to strengthen the cooperation between industry and education in order to bridge the gap between skills' offer and demand.

The applicant's choice of sector and action has to be based on an analysis of the needs of the labour market and of the industry, including at cross-border level. In order to ensure that supported activities take due account of clearly identified needs, projects should bring together stakeholders from both the industry, education and training providers (both at higher and vocational level).

Furthermore, projects should enhance the visibility and attractiveness of the different career opportunities in the blue economy, especially for young people.

In the context of the above general objectives, proposals submitted under this topic

¹⁰ **Results:** capture more direct, short to medium term changes in a situation, which are achieved by the end of the project. E.g. If four FTE jobs are expected to be created by the end of the project, this will be an expected project result.

¹¹ Annex 3 to the Proposal Template (part B)

must provide concrete and effective responses to at least one of the following challenges:

- a) Lack of entrepreneurial skills, including social entrepreneurial skills of graduates at both higher education and vocational education and training (VET) levels. Students need to be better equipped with advanced technical¹² as well as soft skills¹³ enabling them to develop new ideas and products, and possibly launch their own start-up. Lack of profiles with strong adaptation capacity, able to update their skills to future needs that are still unknown;
- b) Lack of structured, defined and continued collaboration between industry and education/training in order to ensure that curricula and training programmes are actually meeting industry needs; lack of industry involvement and leading companies to re-train internally the graduates; difficulties in attracting a sufficient number of competent lecturers with work experience in the maritime industry; difficulties in keeping employees as full-time workers in the companies;
- c) Lack of “skills ecosystems” at sea basin level between education, industry and public authorities (knowledge triangle), to support trans-regional innovation strategies.

Themes & priorities

For this topic, we seek to fund projects that will develop innovative solutions relating to at least one of the following themes. Projects may cover more than one of these themes:

1. Introducing innovative teaching and training methodologies to boost entrepreneurial skills and equip graduates with suitable soft skills to develop their own ideas, products and start-ups. Links with incubators, innovation hubs, social enterprises and early-stage investors are encouraged. Industry should be involved from the start of the project by shaping together the actions, putting forward a social or technological challenge and following it up with the most successful students;
2. Promoting structured and permanent collaboration frameworks between industry and education, whereby the most recent technological and market developments are directly integrated into the educational offer, enabling to reply to labour market needs. Training should be more practice-oriented and flexible. Qualitative apprenticeships should be promoted, combining substantial work based learning in companies and other workplaces with learning based in education or training institutions that lead to nationally recognised qualifications¹⁴. Professionals from industry should be constantly present during the educational path of students and more synergies between teachers and professionals from industry should be foreseen (for example through hybrid teaching¹⁵);
3. Creating education-industry-public authorities networks at sea basin level to map existing educational activities, enable pooling and sharing of best practices as well as of human and physical capital (e.g. training simulators), develop common training programmes, and foster transnational mobility of learners and teachers.

¹² Example of advanced technical skills are IT tool management, artificial intelligence, augmented reality, robotics, mechanics, 3D printing, big data management, remote operation of new devices.

¹³ Examples of soft skills are communication, analysis of complex issues and problem solving, working in team, resilience, leadership.

¹⁴ Council Recommendation on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2017%3A563%3AFIN>

¹⁵ Hybrid teaching allows employees from the industry to become certified teachers at VET or higher educational institutes, through an accreditation process depending on national systems. This process allows employees to work part time in the company and part-time in the educational institute.

These networks could be set up within already established ones.

Activities that can be funded

Applicants must explain in their proposal how they will implement the targeted activities below, resulting in concrete and measurable results within the project's duration.

Core activities

Projects must undertake the following core activities as part of the project implementation.

Applicants must implement a set of core activities depending on the theme(s) they are applying for:

- for theme 1: courses/programmes to develop entrepreneurial skills

Applicants must explain how they will develop courses and programmes possibly leading to competitive actions, such as hackathons, to develop entrepreneurial and social entrepreneurial skills and to engage students in developing their business plan in out-of-classroom and hands-on way. The programmes should include a preparation, an implementation, an evaluation and a follow-up phase for both students and companies.

- for theme 2: collaboration frameworks between industry and education

Applicants must explain how they will develop structured and permanent collaboration frameworks between industry and education (for example hybrid teaching or well-designed apprenticeships schemes), in order to: (i) encourage employees from companies to follow certain courses to get a certification to become teachers/trainers in VET or higher education; (ii) encourage teachers to boost their skills by undertaking a job shadowing/training in a company; (iii) support the establishment of qualitative and effective apprenticeships schemes.

- for theme 3: industry-education networks

Applicants must explain how they will establish industry-education networks at sea basin level, develop common training and/or curricula, map and share human and resources capital, such as simulators, campus facilities and teachers/trainers. Projects should not build new institutions from scratch, but instead bring together a number of relevant partners.

In addition to the above, the below core activities/measures are required for all themes:

- Measures to ensure the sustainability and continuation of the project activities/results after the end of the EU support (e.g. continuation of project deliverables, other funding sources, accreditation, recognition aspects etc.);
- Measures to facilitate the transferability of the project activities and results to other sea basins or regions of the EU facing similar challenges.

Complementary activities

In addition to the core activities, applicants should include in their project at least one or more of the following complementary activities to support the above core activities:

- Awareness raising and dissemination activities on relevant ocean-related issues and the maritime economy with a view to raise the public appeal and knowledge

of careers at sea (there is a multitude of different jobs in as many different sectors, including those related to e.g. tackling marine litter or climate change challenges); examples of activities include the organisation of fairs, the presentation of real-world success stories in schools, as well as allowing students to observe professionals in their job place;

- Where applicable, conduct activities that will increase complementarity and synergies with relevant projects funded under other EU programmes, in particular Erasmus+, as well as with relevant initiatives and transnational programmes or policies (e.g. Sea basin and macro-regional strategies).

The list of complementary activities is non-exhaustive and aims at providing guidance to applicants. Applicants may propose other activities as long as the choice is justified and establishes a coherent link with the project objectives and the objectives of this topic.

Networking with other EU projects

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

Expected results

Applicants have to list the main results¹⁶ expected from the project. The expected results to be achieved by the end of the project must be concrete, realistic and quantified as far as possible.

Proposals must clearly describe the specific results of the project from the list below, according to the theme(s) pursued:

- New synergies and structured cooperation between education and training institutions on the one hand and maritime industry on the other;
- Improved employability of students thanks to acquisition of entrepreneurial and soft skills, and to better mentoring and career guidance schemes;
- Development of new ideas from students that could be further developed within incubators or companies;
- New and accessible pathways facilitating career advancement and job mobility within the blue economy;
- New and highly visible training opportunities (including career guidance) allowing professionals to acquire the right skills to find a job in the blue economy;
- Better pooling and sharing of resources between different educational institutes and companies and national and trans-national level;
- Increased awareness of ocean issues and increased visibility and attractiveness of blue career opportunities for students from secondary and higher education in general.

¹⁶ **Results:** capture more direct, short to medium term changes in a situation, which are achieved by the end of the project. E.g. if four FTE jobs are expected to be created by the end of the project, this will be an expected project result.

The list of expected results above is non-exhaustive and applicants may add other expected results if relevant.

Monitoring and evaluation of the project activities and project results

Beneficiaries will have to monitor and evaluate the progress of the project, notably in terms of realising the project objectives and reporting on the results of their project.

Applicants should select and explain which quantitative and qualitative indicators they will use for monitoring and evaluation:

- For each project objective, they must define appropriate indicators for measuring achievement (including a unit of measurement, baseline value and target value).
- Beneficiaries will have to report on the project results achieved by the end of the project taking into account the EMFF project indicators provided in the Project Indicators table¹⁷. These indicators will contribute to evaluating the results of the proposed project.

Proposals have to include a specific activity/task to monitor and measure the project activities and the project results with a defined budget. Information on monitoring and assessing project results has to be submitted at the time of the periodic reports.

EMFF-03-2018 – Grants for the Blue Economy: investing in innovation

Objectives

As outlined in the policy background in section 1, recent reports¹⁸¹⁹ underlined the existence of considerable funding gaps in scaling up projects from pilot to demonstration projects and moving from demonstration to flagship/first-of-a-kind and industrial-scale projects in different blue growth sectors.

In this context, this topic aims to support demonstration projects based on innovative technologies testing/deploying/scaling-up of new industrial or service applications and solutions for the blue economy²⁰.

Such support is important to:

- a) Help innovative technologies and/or maritime services improve their market readiness and advance towards market entry, allowing economic players, in particular SMEs, to apply new ideas and research results in marketable goods and services;
- b) Facilitate scaling up business models and service concepts;
- c) De-risk the deployment of these demonstration projects and provide the necessary credibility for these projects to enable them to access other financing for the development of their activities.

Going beyond research/applied research, applicants must explain how their proposals will help innovative technologies and/or maritime services improve their market-

¹⁷ Annex 3 to the Proposal Template (Part B)

¹⁸ Commission Staff Working document Report on the "Blue Growth Strategy Towards more sustainable growth and jobs in the blue economy", SWD(2017) 128 final.

¹⁹ [EIB - Study on Access to Finance Conditions for Investments in Bio-based Industries and the Blue Economy](#).

²⁰ See page https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/sites/maritimeaffairs/files/2018-annual-economic-report-on-blue-economy_en.pdf

readiness and advance towards the commercial phase demonstrating the benefit of a new product, service, process, and system to potential clients in a real environment.

The Technology Readiness Level (TRL) of the proposed actions must be between 6 ("technology demonstrated in relevant environment") and 9 ("actual system proven in operational environment")²¹, as defined in the [General Annex G of H2020 Work Programme](#).

Moreover, proposals must have a completed proof of concept and early field trials under way.

Definitions

- *Value chain* — the entire range of activities that (one or more) actors engage in to bring a product from its conception to its end use, ranging from design, production and marketing to distribution and support to the final consumer²².
- *Demonstration project* — a pre-commercial pilot project that ensures a full-scale demonstration of a new solution with a high potential. The new solution can be a new technology, process, service or a new application of an existing solution.
- *Technology Readiness Levels (TRL)*²³ — Scale applied by many public and industry stakeholders to assess the maturity of evolving technologies/applications in terms of their feasibility and commercial potential. A TRL level 6 and higher refers to a technology/application/service demonstrated in a relevant concrete environment.
- *Key enabling technologies* — KETs comprise micro and nanoelectronics, nanotechnology, industrial biotechnology, advanced materials, photonics, and advanced manufacturing technologies²⁴. They provide the basis for innovation in a wide range of industries such as automotive, food, chemicals, electronics, energy, pharmaceuticals, construction, and telecommunications. They can be used in emerging and traditional sectors.
- *First of a kind (FOAK)* — First of a kind also known by its acronym FOAK is used in engineering economics where the first item or generation of items using a new technology or design can cost significantly more than later items or generations.
- *Elaborated business plan* — General business practices apply to the content of the business plan. An elaborated business plan means that the business plan will include all necessary details to address the way forward in terms of additional work to be done, resources to be committed and budget needed, pre-requisites and framework conditions, outline of an underlying business model, dissemination, exploitation and sustainability plans.

Themes & priorities

In order to achieve the objectives above, proposals must:

²¹ The limit to the frame of intervention of the proposed actions is to pre-commercial activities

²² <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/value-chains>

²³ Technology Readiness Levels (TRL): scale applied by public and industry stakeholders to assess the maturity of evolving technologies/applications in terms of their feasibility and commercial potential. The Technology Readiness Level (TRL) of the proposed actions must be from 6 to 9 (see [General Annex G of the H2020 Work Programme](#) to assess the TRL of your innovation):

TRL 6 - Technology demonstrated in relevant environment

TRL 7- System prototype demonstration in operational environment

TRL 8 - System complete and qualified

TRL 9 - Actual system proven in operational environment

²⁴ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - "Preparing for our future: Developing a common strategy for key enabling technologies in the EU" {SEC(2009) 1257}/* COM/2009/0512 final */

- tackle innovation that goes beyond research and aims at helping innovative maritime technologies and/or maritime services close to market-readiness to advance towards the commercial phase;
- contribute to at least one of the EU priority areas of the Circular Economy²⁵, the (Blue) Bioeconomy²⁶, as well as the Energy union and climate²⁷, and
- demonstrate a clear link/application of enabling technologies such as imaging and physical sensors, satellite technologies, advanced materials, ICT, big data analytics, autonomous systems, biotechnology, nanotechnology, subsea engineering and/or are based on transferring technology from outside the maritime industry.

To promote the involvement of third-party investment, in particular by private financing bodies or National Promotional Banks²⁸ (NPBs), priority will be given to proposals that are at a sufficiently advanced stage in terms of securing financing from third party investors, e.g. as demonstrated by, for instance, a letter of intent by an investor to support the project.

As part of the evaluation process, priority will be given to proposals that build on the outcome of prior research or applied research projects, whether EU-funded or supported from other sources. In this context, proposals should describe how they build on, complement and differ from finalised or ongoing research and innovation projects, including from EU programmes, if relevant. Where a proposal will operate in a particular sea basin in which a sea basin strategy or similar initiative exists²⁹, priority will be given to proposals that explain how they contribute to the objectives of the relevant sea basin strategy or initiative.

Applications submitted by a consortium are eligible (see eligibility criteria in section 5) but the partners of the consortium need to be an essential part of the demonstration activity and expected results (see award criteria in section 6). Partners could potentially be clusters, research organisations, innovation agencies, first clients, etc. providing services within the project that the main beneficiary, the company, cannot easily provide themselves or that are not easily subcontracted.

Activities that can be funded

Applicants must explain in their proposal how they will implement the targeted activities below, resulting in concrete and measurable results within the project's duration.

Core activities

Projects must undertake concrete activities in at least one of the following categories as part of the project implementation:

- Produce new materials, products or devices, and/or install new processes, systems and services, and/or improve substantially those already designed, produced and/or installed; and/or operating pre-commercial pilot manufacturing system; and/or test and validate the manufacturing process of first small series

²⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/jobs-growth-investment/circular-economy/docs/communication-action-plan-for-circular-economy_en.pdf

²⁶ <http://ec.europa.eu/research/bioeconomy/index.cfm?pg=policy&lib=strategy>

²⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/energy-union-and-climate_en

²⁸ <http://www.eib.org/fr/about/partners/npbis/index.htm>

²⁹ Sea basins strategies and other relevant sea basin information for the Atlantic, Baltic Sea, Black Sea, Mediterranean or North Sea: https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/sea_basins_hr

of pre-commercial products³⁰;

- Consult, obtain feedback and validate with relevant stakeholders the technologies/services/products being tested/deployed/scaled-up and/or prepare internal and external organisations for full manufacturing, including development of a value chain; and/or prepare for full commercialisation, e.g. market/competitor/investment analyses, elaborated business plans (including risk management, intellectual property rights, access to financing, replication potential to other industrial/commercial application or to other sectors, entities, regions etc.).

Complementary activities

In addition to the core activities, applicants should include in their project at least one or more of the following complementary activities to support the above core activities:

- Undertake activities that will increase the likelihood of market uptake from the demonstration projects such as business development activities involving end users, potential customers and investors, workshops BtoB, BtoC outreach;
- Perform activities linked to technology licensing, patents registration and deposit; knowledge management and protection, performance verification and validation;
- Support innovation activities and/or channel a mix of different targeted business and innovation support measures (including crowdfunding, fund raising mentoring, coaching, training, investment readiness support, other advisory and financial planning);
- Where applicable, conduct activities that will seek to increase complementarity and synergies with relevant projects funded under other EU programmes (e.g. H2020, LIFE programme, European Structural and Investment Funds) as well as with relevant initiatives and transnational programmes or policies (e.g. sea basin and macro-regional strategies).

The list of complementary activities is non-exhaustive and aims at providing guidance to applicants. Applicants may propose other activities as long as the choice is justified and establishes a coherent link with the project objectives and the objectives of this topic.

Networking with other EU projects

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

Expected results

Applicants have to list the main results³¹ expected from the project. The expected results to be achieved by the end of the project must be concrete, realistic and

³⁰ Please note this does not include routine or periodic changes made to existing products, production lines, manufacturing processes, services and other operations in progress, even if those changes may represent improvements.

³¹ **Results:** capture more direct, short to medium term changes in a situation, which are achieved by the end of the project. E.g. if four FTE jobs are expected to be created by the end of the project, this will be an expected project result.

quantified as far as possible.

The list of expected results below is non-exhaustive and applicants may add other expected results if relevant.

- New market opportunities for European industry and SMEs in high potential and innovative blue growth technology areas, domains or value chains;
- More rapid market uptake of new technologies or industry applications, processes or services;
- New transnational business and investment opportunities and value chains in high potential blue growth domains across a sea basin(s).

Monitoring and evaluation of the project activities and project results

Beneficiaries will have to monitor and evaluate the progress of the project, notably in terms of realising the project objectives and reporting on the results of their project.

Applicants should select and explain which quantitative and qualitative indicators they will use for monitoring and evaluation:

- For each project objective, they must define appropriate indicators for measuring achievement (including a unit of measurement, baseline value and target value).
- Beneficiaries will have to report on the project results achieved by the end of the project taking into account the EMFF project indicators provided in the Project Indicators table ³². These indicators will contribute to evaluating the results of the proposed project.

Proposals have to include a specific activity/task to monitor and measure the project activities and the project results with a defined budget. Information on monitoring and assessing project results has to be submitted at the time of the periodic reports.

3. Timetable & available call budget

Time-table

Timing (planned)	
Call publication:	16 October 2018
Opening of submissions:	23 October 2018
Deadline for applications:	31 January 2019 – 17:00 CET
Evaluation:	February-May 2019
Information on evaluation result:	June-July 2019
Grant agreement signature:	August-October 2019
Starting date:	01 November 2019

Call budget

The available call budget is **EUR 18,700,000**.

This budget might be increased by maximum 20%.

³² Annex 3 to the Proposal Template (Part B)

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

EASME considers that proposals requesting a contribution in the ranges indicated below per topic would allow the specific objectives per topic to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

Topic	Indicative budget	Estimated EU contribution per project and number of projects to be funded
1 — Blue Labs: innovative solutions for maritime challenges	EUR 5,000,000	Between EUR 500,000 and EUR 1,000,000. EASME expects to fund approximately six proposals.
2 — Blue Careers	EUR 5,500,000	Between EUR 500,000 and EUR 1,000,000. EASME expects to fund approximately seven proposals.
3 — Grants for the Blue Economy: investing in innovation	EUR 8,200,000	Between EUR 500,000 and EUR 1,000,000. EASME expects to fund approximately nine proposals.

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 [Funding Opportunities](#) 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 (applicable to all 3 topics):

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 organisations³³
- 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 (OCTs³⁴))

or

for projects with activities extending to neighbouring waters outside the territory of the EU³⁵:

- be established in one of the following eligible non-EU countries:
 - for activities related to the EU Atlantic Sea Strategy: Canada and United States of America;
 - for activities related to the EU Baltic Sea Strategy: Belarus, Iceland, Norway and Russia;
 - for activities related to the Adriatic-Ionian Macro-regional Strategy: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia;
 - for activities related to the Union for the Mediterranean (including the Western Mediterranean Framework for Action): Algeria, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia, Turkey;
 - for activities related to the Black Sea Synergy: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine;
 - for activities related to the waters of an EU Outermost Region: the countries with neighbouring waters.

and

- be necessary for the implementation of the project (in view of its nature and its objectives).

Natural persons are NOT eligible.

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](#)*³⁶).

³³ For the definition, see Article 156 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

³⁴ 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 Barthélemy (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.

³⁵ 'Neighbouring waters' is to be understood in the geographical sense, e.g. countries with a common border of their territorial waters, contiguous zones or EEZ. They must be neighbouring waters to EU territory (i.e. not neighbouring waters to OCTs or other territories which are not part of the EU territory).

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 entities³⁷ 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 (or, for Topic 3, the single applicant submitting the application) has to be established in an EU Member State³⁸.

Specific eligibility conditions for participants (per topic):

For Topic 1— Blue Labs:

3. The applications must be submitted by a consortium complying with the following conditions:

- Minimum two legal entities from two different countries. One of these must act as the consortium coordinator, while the others will act as partners.

Applications by single applicants are NOT allowed.

- The consortium must comprise at least:
 - a) one scientific/research body/institution (such as a higher education institution³⁹, research centre, technology institute) and
 - b) one business entity (such as companies, business associations).

Other entities such as local authorities, NGOs, public and financial institutions etc. can also be included based on the scope and the expected results of the project proposal.

International organisations are eligible as additional partners.

For Topic 2 — Blue Careers:

3. The applications must be submitted by a consortium complying with the following conditions:

- Minimum two legal entities from two different countries. One of these must act as the consortium coordinator, while the others will act as partners.

Applications by single applicants are NOT allowed.

³⁶ 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](#).

³⁷ See Article 187 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

³⁸ It has to be an entity from an EU Member State; in this case, an entity from an OCT is not valid.

³⁹ I.e. any type of higher education institution which, in accordance with national law or practice, offers recognised degrees or other recognised tertiary level qualifications, whatever such establishment may be called, or any institution which, in accordance with national law or practice, offers vocational education or training at tertiary level.

- The consortium must comprise at least:
 - a) an educational/training organisation such as higher education institution or an organisation providing vocational training; and
 - b) a business entity, company or chamber of commerce or legally established maritime cluster.

Other participants may be public authorities and other public or private stakeholders.

International organisations are eligible as additional partners.

For Topic 3 — Grants for the Blue Economy: investing in innovation:

3. The applications can be submitted by a consortium of partners or a single applicant complying with the following conditions:

- for single applicants: a business partner in the sense of a profit making legal entity;
- for consortia: the consortium must comprise at least one business partner in the sense of a profit making legal entity.
- Applicants must be active in the field of blue economy sectors and related value chains (such as marine renewable energies, blue biotechnology, coastal tourism, aquaculture, maritime transport, shipbuilding and ship repair, shipping, offshore oil and gas, fisheries or aquaculture);

International organisations are eligible as additional partners.

Geographical scope

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

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

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

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

For each of the individual topics, depending on the scope of the project, EASME expects projects to run for a duration of 24 or 36 months.

6. Award criteria

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

Common heading to the 3 topics	Common for Topics 1 and 2	Topic 3
<p>1. Relevance and added value (max. 10 points):</p> <p>Relevance of the project and its objectives to the topic and extent to which it matches the themes and priorities of the topic (<i>see section 3</i>); needs analysis and advancement compared to status-quo/state-of-the-art; uptake of results from other projects; contribution to a sustainable blue economy; added value of the proposal in terms of synergies/complementarity with other relevant initiatives (eg. sea basin-based initiatives), projects or EU policies.</p>	<p>The relevance and added value of the proposal will be assessed on the following basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the extent to which the proposal is relevant to the objectives of the topic as well as to the themes/priorities defined in section 3; – the extent to which the proposal is based on an appropriate analysis of needs/gaps and that an adequate justification is provided for the proposed solution/approach including identifying the specific needs/challenges of the blue economy domain/sea basin/area targeted; the proposal should explain how it will address specific industrial/ economic/ social/ environmental challenges/priorities; – the extent to which the proposal describes how the project differentiates itself from others and provides added value compared to the status-quo/state-of-the-art/existing solutions (e.g. technologies/approaches/ practices where relevant) and, where relevant, represents an uptake of results of related research and innovation projects from the EU or other programmes; The proposal should explain how it demonstrates synergies/complementarity with other relevant projects; 	<p>The relevance and added value of the proposal will be assessed on the following basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the extent to which the proposal is relevant to the objectives of the topic, as well as to the themes/priorities defined in section 3; – the extent to which the proposal demonstrates an innovation potential and provides added value compared to the state-of-the-art⁴¹/existing solutions and, where relevant, represents an uptake of results of related research and innovation projects from the EU or other programmes. The current stage of development (TRL 6 at minimum) is well described and the steps planned to take this innovation to the market are clearly outlined; – the extent to which the proposal reflects a very good understanding of risks and opportunities related to successful market introduction of the innovation taking into consideration technical, commercial and regulatory aspects; – the extent to which the project will provide added value for the sustainable development of the blue economy and its potential actors (blue economy targeted sector(s)/ customers/investors), including

⁴¹ Quality and justification of the TRL level provided for topic 3 will be assessed

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the extent to which the proposal will provide added value for the sustainable development of the blue economy and its potential actors (blue economy targeted sector(s)/ customers/investors), including in terms of contributing to the objectives of the relevant sea basin strategies or initiatives⁴⁰. 	in terms of contributing to the objectives of the relevant sea basin strategies or initiatives ⁴² .
<p>2. Project implementation (max. 10 points):</p> <p>Technical quality; clarity and consistency of project and objectives; project implementation (structure & methodology, management procedures, timetable, consortium composition and in terms of geographical coverage, risks & risk management, monitoring and evaluation); the proposed budget is sufficient/appropriate for proper implementation and is adequately justified; best value for money (taking into account project set-up, budget and expected results and deliverables)</p>	<p>The quality of the project implementation will be assessed on the following basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the extent to which the proposal provides clear, consistent and realistic objectives that are achievable within the duration of the project and that the proposed activities have a logical link with the objectives and targets; – the extent to which there is a clear description of planned activities, including a coherent and effective work plan, providing a time-efficient planning (Gantt chart or equivalent) clearly showing the progress of each work package, including a timetable of deliverables; – the extent to which the expected results of the project are clearly identified, justified and quantified by providing appropriate qualitative and/or quantitative indicators to assess the expected results of the project⁴³ and includes an appropriate evaluation framework; – the extent to which the partners complement each other in view of delivering the expected results, including demonstrating the real added value of the transnational approach to support the 	<p>The quality of the project implementation will be assessed on the following basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the extent to which the proposal (objectives, approach and activities to be developed) demonstrates that it is consistent with the expected results/impacts (i.e. commercialisation for a new product or deployment resulting in company growth...); the extent to which the proposal provides clear, consistent and realistic objectives that are achievable within the duration of the project; – the extent to which there is a clear description and allocation of planned activities, including a coherent and effective work plan, providing a time-efficient planning (Gantt chart or equivalent) clearly showing the progress of each work package, including a timetable of deliverables; – the extent to which the expected results of the project are clearly identified, justified and quantified by providing appropriate qualitative and/or quantitative indicators to assess the expected results of the project⁴⁴ and includes an appropriate evaluation framework;

⁴⁰ Sea basins strategies and other relevant sea basin information for the Atlantic, Baltic Sea, Black Sea, Mediterranean or North Sea: https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/sea_basins_hr

⁴² Sea basins strategies and other relevant sea basin information for the Atlantic, Baltic Sea, Black Sea, Mediterranean or North Sea: https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/sea_basins_hr

⁴³ The assessment of the long-term impact of the project will be assessed under award criterion 3

⁴⁴ The assessment of the long-term impact of the project will be assessed under award criterion 3

	<p>achievement of the project's objectives;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the extent to which appropriate management structures and procedures within the consortium (e.g. clear description of management responsibilities decision-making mechanisms and communication arrangements) are proposed; the extent to which there is a risk management plan identifying potential risks and providing risk prevention and mitigation measures; – the extent to which the budget is clear, consistent with the activities proposed and sufficiently detailed and justified and represents value for money taking into account the project's set-up, budget and expected results and deliverables. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the extent to which the resources (facilities, network, skills and expertise) and the management structure (description of responsibilities, decision making mechanisms and communication arrangements) assigned for the proposal are in line with the objectives, expected results and the activities to be developed; – In the case of a consortium, the extent to which the proposal demonstrates that the partners constitute an essential part of the demonstration activity and expected results; in the case of single applicants, the extent to which the proposal describes how key stakeholders /subcontractors will be involved; – the extent to which there is a risk management plan identifying potential risks and providing risk prevention and mitigation measures; – the extent to which the budget is clear, consistent with the activities proposed and sufficiently detailed and justified and represents value for money taking into account the project's set-up, budget and expected results and deliverables.
<p>3. Impact (sustainability and long-term impact) (max. 10 points)</p> <p>Long-term impact of the results on the blue economy; appropriate dissemination strategy or commercialisation strategy and/or business plan for ensuring sustainability and long-term impact on target groups/general public; sustainability of activities after EU funding ends; transferability and multiplier</p>	<p>The sustainability and long-term impact of the proposal will be assessed on the following basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the extent to which the proposal describes the intended long-term impact of the results on the blue economy sustainable development (sector/domain/actors targeted) beyond the project lifetime indicating the longer term impact on social, economic and environmental parameters⁴⁵; and includes appropriate and 	<p>The sustainability and long-term impact of the proposal will be assessed on the following basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the extent to which the proposal demonstrates financing support from investors. In line with the objectives of this topic, priority will be given to proposals that are at a sufficiently advanced stage in terms of securing financing from investors, e.g. as demonstrated by, for instance, a letter of intent by

⁴⁵ eg. turnover market share, employment creation, profit, environmental benefits, ...

effect.	<p>concrete measures to sustain⁴⁶ the project activities/results after the end of the EU funding;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the extent to which the proposal provides measures to disseminate and exploit the project's results and maximise the impact, including by providing a clear and well-designed strategy for communicating and disseminating the project results and activities, with a description of relevant target group(s), appropriate activities, tools and channels; and including where applicable, measures linked to intellectual property, knowledge protection and regulatory issues (management of IPR if relevant, regulatory and/or standards requirements); – the extent to which the proposed solutions/methodology/approach may be transferable/transferred to other areas/regions/domains; and appropriate concrete measures to facilitate the transferability of the project activities and results are included. 	<p>an investor to support the project;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the extent to which the proposal creates new market opportunity in the blue economy and projects the longer term impact on economic and social and/or environmental parameters⁴⁷ ; including by demonstrating that there will be a realistic demand/market for the innovation proposed, providing a clear business plan; A key aspect is to demonstrate that your project has a European or international dimension; – the extent to which the proposal provides measures to disseminate and exploit the project's results and maximise the impact, including by providing a clear and well-designed communication and commercialisation strategy; and including measures linked to intellectual property, knowledge protection and regulatory issues ("Freedom to operate" measures, management of IPR if relevant, regulatory and/or standards requirements); – the extent to which the proposed solutions/methodology/approach may be transferable/transferred to other areas/regions/domains.
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Maximum points: 30.

Individual thresholds (per award criterion): 6 points out of 10. Half points can be given.

Overall threshold: 21 points.

⁴⁶ This part can cover different aspects of sustainability: financial, economic, institutional/structural (structures/ organisational set-up to allow the results of the action to continue, business plan), policy, etc as indicated in the part B of the Technical Submission Form - section 5.5

⁴⁷ eg. turnover market share, employment creation, profit, environmental benefits, ...

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 information⁴⁸:

- For each applicant, a list of 2 or 3 activities (i.e. projects, publications, products, services and/or other achievements) relevant to the topic content and connected to the subject of the proposal
- Where appropriate, a description of the technical equipment, tools or facilities and patents at the disposal of the applicants.

⁴⁸ By filling in the operational capacity fiche (Annex 2 to the Proposal Template (Part B))



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

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)⁴⁹ or in one of the following situations⁵⁰ 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 misconduct⁵¹ (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 they⁵²:

- 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).

⁴⁹ See Article 136(1) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

⁵⁰ See Articles 136(1) and 141(1) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

⁵¹ 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.

⁵² 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 or 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 SGA project is remains outside the operating grant work programme and you make sure that cost items are clearly separated in your accounting and NOT declared twice.
- **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 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**.

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) and evaluated by an evaluation committee (assisted by independent outside experts) against the operational capacity and award criteria and then listed in a ranked list according to their quality score.

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

At the end of the evaluation by independent external experts, all the proposals under evaluation for the same topic 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 within the same topic 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 within the same topic 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".
- Proposals focusing on a sea basin that is not otherwise covered by higher ranked proposals will be considered to have the highest priority (geographical coverage).

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 within each topic following the above principles, the remainder of the total indicative budget for the call for proposals will be used to fund projects across the different topics in order to ensure a balanced spread of the geographical and thematic coverage of the selected projects while respecting to the maximum possible extent 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.

9. Legal & financial set-up of the grants

If your project is selected for funding, you will be asked to sign a grant agreement with EASME.

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: 24 or 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% for Topics 1 and 2 and maximum 65% for Topic 3).

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)

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 50% 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 90% 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):

- for 24-months projects: 2 progress reports at month 6 and month 18
- for 36-months projects: 4 progress reports at month 6, month 12, month 24 and month 30.

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 Participant Portal Electronic Submission System (accessible via the Call Topic page in the [Funding Opportunities](#) section). Paper submissions are no longer possible.

The **submission process** is explained in the [Participant Portal 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.
- For Topic 3: letters of intent to be uploaded by applicants (not mandatory).
- Applicants are encouraged to take into account the principles of [EASME's Environmental Policy Charter](#).

Contact

For questions on the Participant 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 Participant 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 [Participant 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 [Participant Portal Privacy Statement](#).

