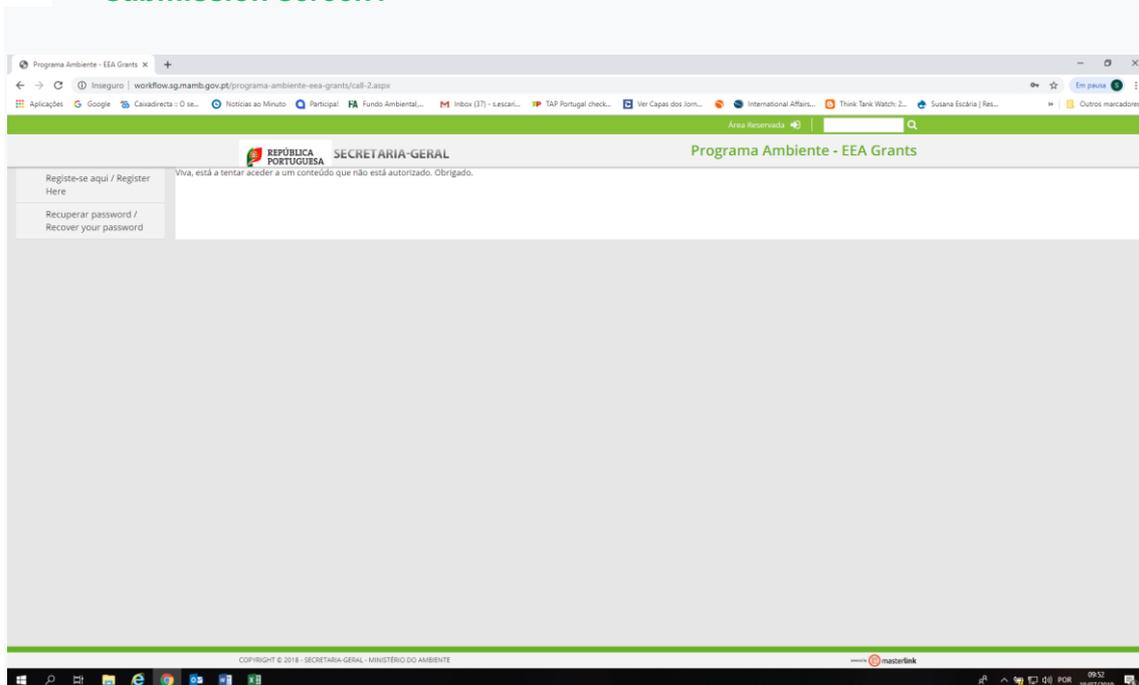


## Environment Programme, Climate Changes and Low Carbon Economy

# Frequent Questions - FAQ

### Part I – PROGRAMME

#### 1. What should you do when this message appears on the application submission screen?



You should click on the message that appears on the left side of the screen and proceed to registration. Only then you will be able to submit your application.

#### 2. What is a Partnership Agreement?

A Partnership Agreement is a deal established between the Project Promoter and its partner(s) for the partnership development, regulating the rights, duties and responsibilities of the parties, as well as the budget and expenses allocated to each member of the partnership.

### **3. Who is the Audit Authority of the Environment Programme?**

The Audit Authority of the Environment Programme is IGF – Finance General Inspection, national public entity, functionally independent of the National Focal Point, the Certifying Authority and the Programme Operator, designated by the Beneficiary State and responsible for verifying the effective functioning of the previously approved management and control system.

### **4. Who is the Certifying Authority of Environment Programme?**

The Certifying Authority of Environment Programme is ADC – Agency for Development and Cohesion, national public entity, functionally independent of the Audit Authority and the Programme Operator, designated by the Beneficiary State to certify financial information.

### **5. Who is the Irregularities Authority of Environment Programme?**

The Finance General Inspection, national public entity, functionally independent of the National Focal Point, the Certifying Authority and the Programme Operator, designated by the Beneficiary State to be responsible for the record and report of irregularities to the FMO.

### **6. What does it mean by expenses' certification?**

Expenses' certification is the formal procedure by which the Certifying Authority declares to the FMO that the submitted expenses for reimbursement are eligible, and justified by paid invoices, or other accounting documents of equivalent probative value, or physical indicators for simplified costs, and which were carried out within the scope of approved activities for financing.

### **7. What is the Project Contract?**

The Project Contract is an agreement between the Programme Operator and the Project Promoter regulating the implementation of a particular project.

### **8. Which are the Partner Entities?**

Partner Entities are all entities participating in the project, other than the project leader; organizations that are committed to contribute to the project outcome whose participation is necessary to achieve its objectives and which are actively involved in project preparation, implementation and/or evaluation. In the terms of Article 7.2.2 of the 'Regulation on the implementation of the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial

Mechanism 2014-2021' *'any public or private entity, commercial or non-commercial, as well as non-governmental organisations established as a legal person either in the Donor States, Beneficiary States or a country outside the European Economic Area that has a common border with the respective Beneficiary State, or any international organisation or body or agency thereof, actively involved in, and effectively contributing to, the implementation of a project, are considered eligible project partners'.*

### **9. What is the Financial Mechanism Committee (FMC)?**

The FMC is the committee established by the Standing Committee of the EFTA States to manage the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021, composed by representatives of the respective Ministries of Foreign Affairs.

### **10. What is the Financial Mechanism Office (FMO)?**

The FMO is the office assisting the FMC in managing the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 and also serves as a contact point.

### **11. What does it mean an Irregularity?**

An Irregularity is a Violation of the legal framework of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014- 2021, and of other applicable legislations, in particular, with respect to public procurement.

### **12. What is the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)?**

It is the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Portugal, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein, considering the implementation in Portugal of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism (EEAFM) 2014-2021. It is a document that defines the entities, the Programmes, the donor programme partners, the bilateral ambitions and the financing amounts.

### **13. What is the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism: (EEAFM)?**

The EEA Financial Mechanism established under the Agreement of the European Economic Area in which Donor Countries finance, in 15 Beneficiary Countries, initiatives and projects in a number of programme areas, to reduce economic and social disparities and strengthening bilateral relations between Donor Countries and Beneficiary Countries.

### **14. Who is the Programme Operator (PO)?**

The Programme Operator is a public or private entity designated in the MoU, having the responsibility for preparing and implementing the Programme. For the Environment Programme, Climate Changes and Low Carbon Economy (Environment Programme) the PO is the Secretary General for Environment and Energy Transition.

### **15. What is the Environment, Climate Changes and Low Carbon Economy Programme?**

The 'Environment, Climate Change and Low Carbon Economy Programme' - created following the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Portugal, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein, considering the implementation in Portugal of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism (EEAFM) 2014-2021 in the programmatic areas of Environment and Ecosystems (PA11), Mitigation and Adaptation to Climate Change (PA13).

The Environment Programme contributes to the pursuit of the priorities of Environment Policy in Portugal: transition to a circular, resilient and carbon-neutral economy and valorisation of the territory.

### **16. Which are the Beneficiary Countries of the EEAFM?**

The Beneficiary Countries of the EEAFM are the 15 Member States of the European Union with the largest deviations from the European average of GDP per capita, eligible as beneficiaries of the EEA Financial Mechanism.

### **17. Which are the EEAFM Donor States?**

Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, countries belonging to the EFTA, and which contribute funding for the EEA Financial Mechanism.

### **18. Who is the National Focal Point (NFP)?**

The UNG-FM (National Management Unit of the EEAFM) is the national public entity designated by the Beneficiary State to have the overall responsibility for reaching the objectives of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 and implementing the MoU. In Portugal (RCM n.º 39/2017, 10 March, revised by nº14/2017, 24 April).

### **19. Which is the Legal Framework of the EEAFM 2014-2021?**

The Legal Framework of the EEAFM is composed by the Regulation on the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021, Protocol 38c to the EEA Agreement on the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021, the Memorandum of

Understanding on the Implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 (hereinafter referred to as the MoU), entered into between the Donor States and the Beneficiary State, the programme agreements and any guidelines adopted by the FMC after consultation with the Beneficiary States.

### **20. What is the Project financing rate?**

The financing rates are variable, and it can reach 100% for the pre-defined projects.

### **21. What are the Programme grant rate and co-financing?**

The financing rate is the contribution of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 for the implementation of approved programmes, projects and initiatives, corresponding to a percentage of the total eligible cost, established in each Call. For the Environment Programme it corresponds to 85% of the EEAFM and 15% of National Contribution, in National territory.

### **22. Who is the National Management Unit of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism (UNG - EEAFM)?**

The National Management Unit was created by Council of Ministers Resolution N<sup>o</sup>. 39/2017 of March 10th, rectified by the Rectification Declaration No. 14/2017 of April 24th, as the National Focal Point, has the overall responsibility to ensure the achievement of objectives defined in the EEAFM 2014-2021 Regulation and MoU.

## **Part II – CALLS FOR PROPOSALS**

### **23. Who are the Eligible Project Promoters?**

According to the Article 7.2.1 do '*Regulation on the implementation of the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism 2014*' '*any entity, public or private, commercial or non-commercial and non-governmental organisations, established as a legal person in the respective Beneficiary State are considered eligible project promoters*'. The requesting entity may submit applications to one or more priority areas. Each Call of the Environment Programme must always be consulted.

#### **24. Can projects have more than one promoter?**

No. The Environment Programme finances the eligible expenses of the projects, at a percentage defined in each Call (less than 100%), and the promoter must provide financing for the remainder of the eligible expenses (as well as all expenses considered ineligible). This is a commitment that the Programme requires from the promoters.

#### **25. How are applications submitted?**

Applications must be submitted using the electronic application form and attachments available on the EEA Grants website

<https://www.eeagrants.gov.pt/en/programmes/environment/> during the period defined in each Call.

#### **26. What is the Geographical scope of the Projects?**

The Programme will finance projects in the territory of mainland Portugal and in the Autonomous Regions of the Azores and Madeira. Each Call of the Environment Programme should always be consulted to confirm the geographical scope.

#### **27. Does the Programme support costs incur in other countries?**

Yes. In the terms of Article 7.2.2 of the 'Regulation on the implementation of the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism 2014-2021' *'any public or private entity, commercial or non-commercial, as well as non-governmental organisations established as a legal person either in the Donor States, Beneficiary States or a country outside the European Economic Area that has a common border with the respective Beneficiary State, or any international organisation or body or agency thereof, actively involved in, and effectively contributing to, the implementation of a project, are considered eligible project partners'*. Each Call of the Environment Programme must always be consulted.

#### **28. Does the Programme support projects that have partnerships with public entities?**

Yes. In the terms of Article 7.2.2 of the 'Regulation on the implementation of the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism 2014-2021' *'any public or private entity, commercial or non-commercial, as well as non-governmental organisations established as a legal person either in the Donor States, Beneficiary States or a country outside the European Economic Area that has a common border with the respective*

*Beneficiary State, or any international organisation or body or agency thereof, actively involved in, and effectively contributing to, the implementation of a project, are considered eligible project partners*. Each Call of the Environment Programme must always be consulted.

**29. Does the Programme support applications that have actions already under way?**

No. Only expenses incurred and paid after the date of notification of project approval are eligible. The start and end date of the project are indicated in the Financing Agreement.

**30. Can the remuneration of technicians of the applicant organizations be partially charged to the projects?**

Yes. Human resources costs related to the project, including salaries and social security costs and other contractual subsidies, provided they correspond to the normal remuneration policy of the promoters and partner entities.

**31. If when submitting the online application, the promoter finds that he incorrectly appended administrative documents, is there any time limit to correct the submission error?**

Yes. The promoter may correct the situation within the deadline for the Programme Operator, up to 10 consecutive days, after the closing date of each Call.

**32. Is VAT considered eligible under the Programme?**

If the entity is exempt from VAT, then it is an eligible expense. In cases where the VAT is, partially or totally, reimbursable by the promoter or partner, the amount of the recoverable tax is not eligible.

**33. If the approved funding is lower than the one foreseen in the application by the promoter, is it possible to withdraw the application?**

Once the decision to approve the financing is taken, the promoter is notified. At this stage, the promoter will have the possibility to accept (or not) the conditions of the decision, and if he does not consider sufficient funding to carry out the project, he may not sign the financing contract, without any consequences for future Calls.

**34. Can an entity be a project promoter of an application and at the same time be a project partner in another?**

Yes. Depending on the Call, the entity may submit several applications, with different projects, either as project promoter or as a project partner.

**35. What are the simplified cost options concerning the Programme?**

According to the Article 8.4 of the Regulation:

*‘1. The project grant may take the form of standard scales of unit costs. In such case the amount shall be established in one of the following ways:*

*(a) in accordance with the rules for application of corresponding scales of unit costs applicable in European Union policies for similar types of project and entities involved;*

*(b) in accordance with the rules for application of corresponding scales of unit costs applied under schemes for grants funded entirely by the Beneficiary State where the Project Promoter or partner is located, or the Donor State where the donor project partner is located, for similar types of project and entities involved.’*

**36. If the evaluation states that applications must have at least 50 points in each criteria, if one of these criteria has 0 points and the overall application score is equal or greater than 50 points, then the proposal is excluded?**

If any of the evaluation criteria is below 50 points, the application will be excluded.

**37. In addition of the partnership agreement, will the partners have to provide any other documentation?**

Project partners must submit the same documentation requested to Project Promoters under each Call (Statement attesting to the fact that there are no debts to the Taxation Authorities or Social Security Authority, VAT situation).