

## *“Environment, Climate Change and Low Carbon Economy” Programme*

**PROGRAMME OPERATOR:** Secretary General for Environment

**PROGRAMME PARTNER OF DONOR COUNTRIES:** *Innovation Norway*

### **OPEN CALL**

#### **Call#3 – Projects to ‘Enhance sustainable development in Biosphere Reserves’**

The ‘Environment, Climate Change and Low Carbon Economy Programme’, shall finance innovative and structuring projects in the areas of Environment, Climate Change and Low Carbon Economy, with the aim of promoting the good environmental state of the eco-systems and reducing the adverse effects of pollution and other human activities, being a balanced territorial development one of the main concerns accordingly with the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), signed in Lisbon on 22 May 2017.

The UNESCO's Man & the Biosphere Programme (MaB), initially focused on nature conservation, has evolved to new global challenges and currently has as its main objectives the conservation of biodiversity, the improvement of the quality of life of populations and the promotion of sustainable social and economic development of territories classified as Biosphere Reserves.

The World Network of Biosphere Reserves, associated with UNESCO's MaB Programme, has currently 701 Biosphere Reserves located in 124 countries, 11 of those on national territory. Biosphere Reserves are territories where initiatives for the promotion and sustainable use of endogenous resources are tested in cooperation with populations and local development actors in order to find innovative operating models that can be replicated in other areas. For this reason, they are often referred to as pilot areas or living sustainability laboratories.

Portugal has a national commitment to meet the objectives of the MaB Programme Strategy 2015-2025, reflected in the actions set out in the Lima Action Plan 2016-2025 and, adapted to the national context through the Portugal Action Plan 2018-2025, approved in November 2018.

Recently, a Cooperation Protocol was signed on 14 May 2019 in Castelo Branco between the Secretary General of the Ministry for Environment and Climate Action, the national MaB Committee and the 11 Biosphere Reserves whose scope is to ‘Enhance sustainable development in Biosphere Reserves’.

The major challenges facing the Portuguese Biosphere Reserves are the acknowledgment of their significance, the increase in their visibility, the need to use new forms of communication, the strengthening of all local actor's commitment and the promotion of the quality and attractiveness of these territories. In this context, Knowledge, Capacity Building and Communication are the three essential domains for affirming the identity of Biosphere Reserves, in order to:

- a) Value the territories of the Biosphere Reserves as living sustainability laboratories, promoting the quality of life of their inhabitants;
- b) Increase the visibility, knowledge and management capacity of these spaces through instruments that promote the affirmation and identity of the 11 territories classified as Biosphere Reserves.

Within the scope of the EEA Grants 2014-2021, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, in the capacity of Donors, have financed initiatives and projects in 15 European Union Member States with the aim of reducing social and economic disparities and strengthening bilateral relations with beneficiary states.

The Secretary General for Environment (SGE) was appointed Operator of the Environment, Climate Change and Low Carbon Economy Programme (Environment Programme) in accordance with the MoU, with a total allocation of €28,235,294 (€ 24,000,000 EEA Grants + €4,235,294 from SGE).

The project under this Call will contribute to the implementation of outcome 2 of the 'Environment Programme' "Enhance sustainable development in Biosphere Reserves" and the respective Output 2.1 'Increased Biosphere Reserve Management Capacity', through the development of various categories of actions and materials that will serve as working tools for better management and implementation of Biosphere Reserves in the territory, in accordance with Annex I of the Programme Agreement signed on 27 May 2019.

The following table describes the indicators and goals to which the project to be funded will contribute.

| PA Number      | Expected programme results                             | Indicator  | Unit of measurement | Source of Verification     | Frequency of reporting | Baseline value | Baseline year | Target value |
|----------------|--|--|---------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| PA11 Outcome 2 | Enhance sustainable development in Biosphere Reserves' | Number of persons benefitting from the promotion of sustainable development in Biosphere Reserves. | Number              | Project Promoter's Records | Annual (APR)           | 0              | N/A           | 314967       |
| Output 2.1     | Increased capacity to manage Biosphere Reserves        | Number of Biosphere Reserves where the measures were implemented.                                  | Number              | Project Promoter's Records | Semi-annually          | 0              | N/A           | 6            |
|                |  | Number of professional staff trained (disaggregated by gender).                                    | Number              | Project Promoter's Records | Semi-annually          | 0              | N/A           | 22           |
|                |  | Number of sustainable development plans for Biosphere Reserves developed.                          | Number              | Project Promoter's Records | Semi-annually          | 0              | N/A           | 11           |

The present Open Call establishes the specifications applicable to the submission of applications. The electronic application platform can be found at the website <https://www.eegrants.gov.pt/en/calls/>.

**PROGRAMME OPERATOR:** Secretary General for Environment (SGE).

**DONOR PROGRAMME PARTNER:** *Innovation Norway* (IN).

## 1. PRIORITY AREAS

Within the scope of the present Open Call applicants are not allowed to submit more than one application, which must include all the three Priority Areas described below. This limitation does not apply to project partners.

Through this Call, several measures and working tools will be implemented and developed for the sustainable management of Biosphere Reserves in the national territory.

The applicant's project must find the most appropriate response in the 3 Priority Areas indicated below.

### A. Knowledge

This Priority Area has two components:

**A1. Develop local sustainable development plans or strategies based on endogenous resources and the mapping and valuation of ecosystem services, including the implementation and evaluation of pilot management measures.**

#### **Description:**

Based on natural capital, the natural resources present in each Biological Reserve identify, assess the condition/state, map, quantify and value the ecosystem services present, identifying the relationship with the different economic sectors existing or to be promoted (considering the illustrative example of the methodology to be adopted, which is indicated in Chapter 16 - Additional information).

Based on the information requested on previous paragraph, as well as on current activities and others that may potentially be developed, enhancing the endogenous resources, draft a sustainable development plan for each of the 11 territories, classified under the same participatory planning methodology. Green, blue, circular and low carbon economy initiatives should be explored. It includes the development and subsequent evaluation of a concrete action/measure (pilot) in each of the 11 Biosphere Reserves.

#### **Expected results:**

#### Working tools:

- Characterisation of ecosystem services in each Biosphere Reserve, including their condition, mapping, quantification and valuation;
- Participatory planning methodology for Biosphere Reserves;
- Sustainable development plans prepared for each Biosphere Reserve;

Measures:

- Pilot action measures implemented and evaluated in each Biosphere Reserve.

**A2. Develop monitoring guidelines and a system of sustainable development indicators to the Portuguese Biosphere Reserves.**

**Description:**

Create a system of sustainable development indicators and respective monitoring plan for the Portuguese Biosphere Reserve Network.

The system of sustainable development indicators of the Biosphere Reserves should be structured to:

- (1) provide an instrument to support decision-making and land management;
- (2) provide data needed for replying to requests for information from national and international bodies, particularly with regard to the Sustainable Development Goals;
- (3) transmit perceptible information to the general public;
- (4) assess the integration of sustainability in the different sectors of environmental, economic and social activity;
- (5) actively involve the different stakeholders in the assessment and reporting of sustainability;
- (6) take into account the indicators foreseen in the Portugal Action Plan (2018-2025) for Biosphere Reserves;
- (7) assess the UNESCO classification's impact on the territory;
- (8) be user friendly on filling the data and extracting information.

Their preparation should be based on a participatory method so that the different sectors (environmental, economic, social, cultural and institutional) and entities (public and private) involved perceive the importance and usefulness of completing such indicators (evaluation and reporting) This will allow a better quality of the management and sustainability of these territories, as well as promoting closer links between the results of their monitoring and decision-making.

**Expected results:**

Working tools:

- Sustainable development indicators system;
- Description of the reference data levels for the indicators defined for each Biological Reserve;
- Monitoring plan to be applied in each Biological Reserve and to be applied in the Portuguese Network;

Measures:

- Training actions to build the capacity of Biosphere Reserves to collect the information required for sustainability indicators, in accordance with the protocols and methodologies that are defined;
- Citizen Science Project - to create a network of ordinary citizens who collaborate and collect useful information for sustainability indicators based on a pre-defined protocol for this purpose.

**B. Training**

This Priority Area has two components:

**B1. Knowledge transfer and training of partner entities and Biosphere Reserve managers.**

**Description:**

Encourage knowledge transfer and training of public entities and managers on the major challenges Biosphere Reserves face and promote greater training for conflict resolution and participatory management. Promote an intersectoral vision of the territory, the emergence of partnerships, as well as new companies/sustainable activities.

Thus this component will identify the key economic, cultural and development actors of each Biosphere Reserve and develop different categories of training actions (local dynamics, workshops, etc.) for different target audiences (managers of Biosphere Reserves, greater participation of public sector and economic, social and cultural actors present in these territories) that address, among others, the following aspects:

- relation between the activity developed and the existence of a Biosphere Reserve;
- common benefits and how to use and communicate them;
- business/entrepreneurship opportunities;
- tools for the management of a Biosphere Reserve;
- techniques for conflict/interest management;
- climate change adaptation and mitigation measures;
- search for national and international funding;
- measures to make the territory of a Biosphere Reserve more accessible and inclusive.

**Expected results:**

Working tools:

- Guidelines and manuals;

Measures:

- Training actions;
- Partnerships created;
- New companies/sustainable activities created.

**B2. Promote experiences sharing through bilateral cooperation and networking between national and international Biosphere Reserves.**

**Description:**

The promotion of networking is one of the key pieces of UNESCO's MaB Programme, according to which sharing and cooperation are essential to achieve sustainable development models, to create tools for climate change mitigation and adaptation, and to strengthen and promote scientific research, capacity building and collaboration in the field of education, among many others.

In this context, this component will promote contacts and visits with the countries associated with the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism - EEA Grants that currently, have no Biosphere Reserve classified but are developing projects in this regard and want to take advantage of the knowledge that Portugal has.

It will also be promoted exchange visits within the Portuguese Biosphere Reserves network, hosting people from other Biosphere Reserves for 2- to 3-day periods, providing direct contact with other territorial realities and ways of working and managing this specific type of territory.

**Expected results:**

Measures:

- Field visits;
- Final project seminar.

**C. Communication**

This Priority Area has two components:

**C1. Prepare a Communication Plan for the Portuguese Biosphere Reserves.**

**Description:**

Prepare a Communication Plan for the Portuguese Biosphere Reserves, which guides their managers on how to communicate and provide visibility to these territories at local, national and international levels, and which integrates a marketing strategy and the creation of a common identify, in order to reach a wider dissemination and visibility of these territories and the attraction of visitors.

This component shall identify the best forms of communication to be adopted in the dissemination of the 'value' of each UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and in the promotion of its different initiatives and activities. Shall also identifying the target audience, the means to be mobilised both externally with the different interface entities and internally in communication between partners.

In addition, the aim is to raise awareness and appreciation of local populations for the natural (and cultural) values that have led to the classification and distinction of each territory and its international integration into the Man & the Biosphere Programme and UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

In order to implement the Communication Plan and the marketing strategy, promotional materials should be produced in Portuguese, English and Spanish (for different target audiences - children, locals and tourists) that are specific to each Biosphere Reserve, as well as other materials of general support for the promotion of UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

**Expected results:**

Working tools:

- Communication Plan and marketing strategy;

- Promotional materials:

- Promotional film about the MaB Programme, its objectives and the identification of national Biosphere Reserves (approximately 15-20 minutes);
- Short documentaries (11) on t each Biological Reserve (5-10 minutes each);
- '30 second a day' - the sounds of the Biosphere Reserves - a radio show;
- An audio-visual piece for environmental education, adaptable to specific stakeholders;
- Reports - one on how to promote the Portuguese Network and another about each Biological Reserve, to be published in leading magazines;
- A book about the Portuguese Biosphere Reserve Network (Portuguese and English);
- Travelling exhibitions - one to promote the Portuguese Network and others about each Biosphere Reserve;
- Maps with interpretative routes for each Biosphere Reserve, adapted for people with special needs and linked to a smartphone application with this information;

- Porticos at the main gate of each Biosphere Reserve and one information plate, per parish council, targeted at people with special needs.

## **C2. Raise awareness among local populations and local development actors to the importance of Portuguese Biosphere Reserves.**

### **Description:**

Raise awareness of local populations and local development actors to the importance of Portuguese Biosphere Reserves as a way of increasing their perception and knowledge of these territories.

Thus, this component aims to develop different categories of action, depending on the opportunities and availability that each Biosphere Reserve has to offer, aimed at different target audiences (children, junior, senior, private sectors of activity, public sector, among others).

The actions to be implemented may include artistic expressions (for example, a play representing a journey through the 11 territories), lectures, local dynamics, a national competition, school competitions, exhibitions on natural heritage, workshops with the involvement of specific economic sectors, a walking trail, among others.

A science project should also be developed at the level of the Biosphere Network and biosphere Festivals (one on the mainland, one in the Madeira Archipelago and one in the Azores archipelago), lasting two or three days. There should be found stands featuring products and services from each territory and a programme of various actions to be developed by each Biological Reserve, aimed at different target audiences (for example, general population, school population, administration and economic agents), and, finally, the creation of a Biosphere Olympiad.

The actions to be developed should address, among others, the following aspects, adapting the script to the specificities of each territory:

- (1) how is living in a Biosphere Reserve;
- (2) the Portuguese Network and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves;
- (3) what natural, patrimonial and cultural values stand out in each Biosphere Reserve;
- (4) how to make each Biosphere Reserve an accessible territory;
- (5) how does each citizen benefit) from this classification and what each citizen can do for the Biosphere Reserve and the territory.

### **Expected results:**

#### Working tools:

- Awareness Plan for different target audiences;

#### Measures:



- Actions to be implemented: Biosphere Festivals - with various categories of activities, depending on the opportunities and availability that the Biosphere Reserves have to offer, the national Biosphere Olympics, a citizen science project and various local actions to promote and publicise the territory in each of the 11 Portuguese Biosphere Reserves.

## 2. PERIOD FOR SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS

(in accordance with Article 7.3, no. 2.b. of the of the “Regulation on the implementation of the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism 2014-2021” – EEA FM 2014-2021 Regulation)

Applications must be submitted using the electronic application platform available on the EEA Grants website <https://www.eeagrants.gov.pt/en/programmes/environment/calls/> between 29.11.2019 until 12:00:00 (GMT) of 15.05.2020.

## 3. TOTAL AVAILABLE ALLOCATION: 2.200.000€

Minimum grant amount of financing for each project: 500.000€.

Maximum grant amount of financing for each project: 2.200.000€.

## 4. DURATION OF THE PROJECTS

Between 18 and 30 months. The deadline for expenditure eligibility is 30 April 2024.

## 5. TERRITORIAL SCOPE

The Environment Programme will finance a project that must cover the 11 UNESCO Biosphere Reserves existing on the date of the publication of this Call, located in the territories of mainland Portugal and the Autonomous Regions of the Azores and Madeira. The activities to be developed in an international partnership may also take place in the territories of the Donor States (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) through the partnerships established in the selected project.

## 6. FINANCING RATE

The eligible costs of the selected project will be financed up to 100% grant amount.

The project rate shall, in all cases, be set at a level that complies with state Aid rules in force and takes into account any and all other forms of public support granted to projects.

Accordingly, with Article 6.4 Grant rates and minimum size of project grants “Regulation on the implementation of the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism 2014-2021”, Co-financing shall be in the form of cash, including electronic transfers.

## 7. ELIGIBLE PROMOTER ENTITIES

According to Article 7.2.1 of the “Regulation on the implementation of the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism 2014-2021”, public or private entities, whether commercial or non-commercial, and non-governmental organizations that have been legally established in Portugal are considered eligible.

Article 7.2.3 of the “Regulation on the implementation of the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism 2014-2021” is not applicable to this Call.

## 8. PARTNER ENTITIES

According to Article 7.2.2 of the “Regulation on the implementation of the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism 2014-2021”, a project partner shall be any public or private entity, commercial or non-commercial, along with non-governmental organizations that have been legally established as a legal person in the donor states or any international organization that is actively involved in implementing the proposed project.

## 9. ELIGIBILITY OF EXPENDITURE

(According to Articles 8.2 and 8.3 of the “Regulation on the implementation of the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism 2014-2021”).

### 9.1. Eligible project costs:

9.1.1. Eligible project costs must meet the following criteria:

- a) they are incurred between the first and final dates of eligibility of a project as specified in the project contract;
- b) they are connected with the subject of the project contract;
- c) they are proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the project;
- d) they must be used for the sole purpose of achieving the objective(s) of the project and its expected outcome(s), in a manner consistent with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness;
- e) they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular through being recorded in the accounting records of the Project Promoter and/or project partner, according to the current standards;
- f) they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation.

9.1.2. Expenditures are considered to have been incurred when the cost has been invoiced, paid and the subject matter delivered (in case of goods) or performed (in case of services and works). Exceptionally, costs in respect of which an invoice has been issued in the final month of eligibility are also deemed to be incurred within the dates of eligibility if the costs are paid within 30 days of the final

date for eligibility. Overheads and depreciation of equipment are considered to have been incurred when they are recorded on the accounts of the Project Promoter and/or project partner.

**9.1.3.** Where new or second hand equipment is purchased, provided that it is depreciated in accordance with the applicable accounting standards, only the portion of the depreciation corresponding to the duration of the project and the rate of actual use for the purposes of the project may be considered eligible expenditure.

**9.1.4.** The Project Promoter's internal accounting and auditing procedures must permit direct reconciliation of the expenditures and revenue declared in respect of the project with the corresponding accounting statements and supporting documents.

## **9.2. Eligible direct expenditure:**

**9.2.1.** The eligible direct expenditures for a project are those expenditures that are identified by the Project Promoter and/or the project partner, in accordance with their accounting principles and usual internal rules, as specific expenditures directly linked to the implementation of the project and which can therefore be booked to it directly. The following direct expenditures are eligible provided that they satisfy the criteria set out in 9.1.1:

(a) the cost of staff assigned to the project, comprising actual salaries plus social security charges and other statutory costs included in the remuneration, provided that this corresponds to the Project Promoter's and project partner's usual policy on remuneration. The corresponding salary costs of staff of national administrations are eligible to the extent that they relate to the cost of activities that the relevant public authority would not carry out if the project concerned were not undertaken;

(b) travel and subsistence allowances for staff taking part in the project. Having regard to the principle of proportionality, travel costs, including subsistence allowance, may be calculated as a lump sum, on the basis of defined rules approved by the Programme Operator;

(c) cost of new or second hand equipment. In case the Programme Operator determines that the equipment is an integral and necessary component for achieving the outcomes of the project, the entire purchase price of that equipment may, by way of exception from the rule contained in 9.1.3., be eligible;

d) costs of consumables and supplies, provided that they are identifiable and assigned to the project;

(e) costs entailed by other contracts awarded by a Project Promoter for the purposes of carrying out the project, provided that the awarding complies with the applicable rules on public procurement and "Regulation on the implementation of the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism 2014-2021";

(f) costs arising directly from requirements imposed by the project contract for each project.

**9.2.2.** Where the entire purchase price of equipment is eligible in accordance with point (c) of paragraph 9.2.1., SGE shall ensure that the Project Promoter

a) keeps the equipment in its ownership for a period of at least five years following the completion of the project and continues to use that equipment for the benefit of the overall objectives of the project for the same period;

b) keeps the equipment properly insured against losses such as fire, theft or other normally insurable incidents both during project implementation and for at least five years following the completion of the project; and

c) sets aside appropriate resources for the maintenance of the equipment for at least five years following the completion of the project.

**9.3. Indirect eligible costs in projects (overheads):** indirect costs shall be eligible in accordance with Article 8.5 of the “Regulation on the implementation of the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism 2014-2021”.

**9.4. Non-eligible costs:** the costs mentioned in Article 8.7 of the “Regulation on the implementation of the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism 2014-2021” are not eligible.

## 10. SUBMISSION OF THE APPLICATION

**10.1.** Applications should be submitted using the electronic application platform available on the EEA Grants website <https://www.eeagrants.gov.pt/en/programmes/environment> between 29.11.2019 until 12:00:00 (GMT) of 15.05.2020.

**10.2.** It shall be noted that in what the Term of Responsibility is concerned, in case the applicant entity is not capable of using digital signature shall instead send the original copy of the Term of Responsibility duly signed and initialled by the person who has powers to legally bind the company with one copy of the electronic application form (in Portuguese or in English), to the Programme Operator via registered mail with acknowledgement of receipt stamped no later than the date of 15.05.2020.

**Address:** Secretary General for Environment (SGE) – EEA Grants 2014- 2021, Rua de "O Século" n.º 63, Piso 3, 1200-433 Lisbon, PORTUGAL.

**Email:** [ambiente.eeagrants@sgambiente.gov.pt](mailto:ambiente.eeagrants@sgambiente.gov.pt).

**10.3.** Only fully completed applications including the Term of Responsibility shall be considered for assessment and selection purposes.

**10.4.** The applicant entities are responsible for the veracity and authenticity of all the submitted documents and are expressly informed that they may be obliged to submit the original documents to the Programme Operator during any phase of the application process.

## 11. PROJECT SELECTION AND DECISION

The project selection procedures follow Chapter 7 of the ‘Regulation on the implementation of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism 2014-2021’ (EEA FM 2014-2021 Regulation).

**11.1.** Administrative and eligibility criteria: the application must be accompanied by the following documents (for project promoters and partners):

- a) Statement containing the name of the entity, tax number, taxation address, name of the legal representatives and copy of the statute;
- b) Statement attesting to the fact that there are no debts to the Taxation Authorities and Social Security Authority;
- c) VAT situation;
- d) Copy of the latest Annual Report;

**11.2.** The application shall contain the following information:

- a) Project title;
- b) Activities, including execution indicators of the project (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, relevant and time limited) and proposed targets to be attained;
- c) Geographic coverage and partnerships, particularly between local authorities (individually or in the form of public associations) leveraging the geographic expression of the applicant projects;
- d) Expected results and forecast of the impact on the organization, territory and/or target group, as applicable, including a forecast of the contribution to the output and outcome level indicators of the 'Environment Programme';
- e) Communication Plan;
- f) Project and activities timeline;
- g) Budget (included in Part D of the electronic form);
- h) Summary (Part B of the electronic form);
- (i) Please indicate if there were any external consultants involved in the preparation of the initiative application. If yes, who included in part A.
- j) Annexes, which contain supplementary information for the application:
  - Part A – Administrative Information (including CV of the members of the team allocated to the project, namely if there were any external consultants involved in the preparation of the application);
  - Part B – Description and Summary of the project drafted in Portuguese and in English, maximum 500 words (including a brief description of the entity's experience and the team of the project in the priority areas of this Open Call, along with the identified needs);
  - Part C – Detailed Technical Description;

- Part D – Financial Information (including the detailed version of the Budget broken down by year and a statement attesting to the fact that the amounts stated are those that are normally practiced by the entity, e.g., salaries that correspond to the average remuneration of the Promoters; statement pertaining to the partnership commitment between the applicant entity and the respective partner entities, and the Term of Responsibility).

**11.3.** The Programme Operator shall review the applications in order to verify compliance with the administrative and eligibility criteria. Applicant entities whose applications are rejected during this phase may file a complaint in accordance with article 121 and 122 of the Code of Administrative Procedure.

## 12. SELECTION CRITERIA

Applications shall be assessed in accordance with the **following criteria**, which shall be awarded a score of 0 points (min.) to 100 points (max.):

A - Technical know-how of the project team;

B - Inclusion of partner entities of the Donor State(s);

C – General quality of the submitted application;

D – System of indicators to be implemented and targets to be reached; and

E - Specific criteria.

The overall score of each application is obtained with the following formula:

**Overall Score (OS) =**

$$[(A \times 0,20) + (B \times 0,05) + (C \times 0,30) + (D \times 0,10) + (E \times 0,35)] = 100$$

Only applications where A, C, D and E value is at least 50 points shall be eligible for allocation of financing. The Overall Score (OS) shall be equal to or greater than 50 points.

**12.1.** The selection criteria and their weighting shall be as follows:

| Selection criteria   | Weighting (%) | Score |
|--|---------------|-------|
| <p><b>A - Technical know-how of the project team:</b> applicant entity and partner entities involved (including partner entities from Donor States).</p> <p>This criterion is intended to assess the technical know-how and proven experience of the project team members in the management and implementation of projects where they developed activities with regard to the Priority Areas in question.</p>                      | 20            | 0-100 |
| <p><b>B - Inclusion of partner entities from the Donor State(s)</b></p> <p>This criterion is intended to evaluate the inclusion of partner entities of the Donor State(s) on the team.</p>   | 5             | 0-100 |
| <p><b>C - General quality of the submitted application:</b></p> <p>This criterion is intended to assess the quality of the application submitted, considering the following aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Activities (10 percentage points);</li> <li>- Budget (5 percentage points);</li> <li>- Communication Plan (10 percentage points);</li> <li>- Proposed schedule (5 percentage points).</li> </ul> | 30            | 0-100 |
| <p><b>D - System of indicators</b></p> <p>This criterion is intended to assess the system of indicators to be implemented and the targets to be achieved, including an estimate of the number of jobs created (if applicable) and a balanced representation of women and men on the project team (2 percentage points).</p>  | 10            | 0-100 |
| <p><b>E - Specific criteria</b></p> <p>This criterion assesses particular aspects arising from the category of projects covered by the Call and considering the three priority areas in question.</p>  | 35            | 0-100 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | 100           | -     |

**12.2.** In the event of a tie, the highest score will be used based on the criteria with the highest weighting and in the following order:

1. Criterion E;
2. Criterion C;
3. Criterion A.

**12.3.** The detailed description of the application selection and evaluation model can be found in Annex I.

## 13. SELECTION PROCEDURES

**13.1.** The Programme Operator shall be responsible for evaluating the project and granting funding.

**13.2.** The Programme Operator shall establish a Selection Committee that shall recommend the projects to be funded within the programme. The Selection Committee shall consist of at least three environment experts, two from Programme Operator and one from DPP, *Innovation Norway*.

A representative of the National Management Unit of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 and a representative of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism Committee may attend the meetings of the Selection Committee as observers.

The Programme Operator shall review the applications for compliance with administrative and eligibility criteria. Applicants whose applications are rejected at this stage shall be informed and given a reasonable time to appeal that decision.

Applicants will be notified by email of their admission for assessment or exclusion of the respective projects within 20 working days.

Each application that meets the administrative and eligibility criteria shall be reviewed by two experts appointed by the Programme Operator, who shall be impartial and independent of the Programme Operator and the Selection Committee.

The experts shall separately score the project according to the selection criteria published with the Open Call. For the purposes of ranking the projects, the average of the scores awarded by the experts shall be used.

If the difference between the scores given by the two experts is more than 30% of the higher score, a third expert shall be commissioned by the Programme Operator to score the project independently. In such cases, the average score shall be used for the ranking of the projects.

The Programme Operator shall provide the Selection Committee with a list of the ranked projects. The Selection Committee shall review the ranked list of projects. It may modify the ranking of projects in justified cases. The justification for the modifications shall be detailed in the minutes of the meeting of the Selection Committee. If such a modification results in a project's rejection, the affected applicant shall be informed in writing about the justification for the modification. The Selection Committee shall submit the list of recommended projects to the Programme Operator.

The Programme Operator shall verify that the selection process has been conducted in accordance with the "Regulation on the implementation of the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism 2014-2021" and that the recommendations from the Selection Committee comply with the rules and objectives of the programme, following such verification, the Programme Operator shall, based on the decision of the selection Committee, make a decision on which projects shall be supported. If the Programme Operator modifies the decision of the Selection Committee, it shall inform the applicants affected and provide them with a justification.

The Programme Operator shall notify the applicants about the results of the selection process within a reasonable time and publicise the results.

**13.3.** In accordance with Article 21 of the 'Applicants Guide for Financing of Projects Supported by Environment, Climate Change and Low Carbon Economy Programme', notification shall be provided concerning the reasons, duly justified and substantiated, for rejection of applications based on the verification of the formal admissibility and eligibility requirements. The decision may be appealed within 10 working days.



**13.4.** In accordance with Article 23 of the ‘Applicants Guide for Financing of Projects Supported by Environment, Climate Change and Low Carbon Economy Programme’, after the technical assessment of the accepted applications, the Programme Operator will provide the Selection Committee with a list of projects classified for review. In duly justified cases, the Selection Committee may decide to change the ranking of projects and the ordering of applications. The justification for the changes will be detailed in the Selection Committee meeting minutes. If the change results in the rejection of a project, the applicant will be informed in writing. The Selection Committee will submit the list of projects recommended for funding to the Programme Operator.

**13.5.** The Programme Operator shall verify that the selection process has been conducted in accordance with the “Regulation on the implementation of the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism 2014-2021” and that the Selection Committee's recommendations are in accordance with the rules and objectives of the Programme. After such verification, the Programme Operator shall decide, on the basis of the decision of the Selection Committee, which projects will be selected. If the Programme Operator modifies the Selection Committee's decision, the affected applicants will be informed.

## 14 COMMUNICATION OF RESULTS

**14.1.** Within 90 days, the results of the selection process will be communicated individually to each applicant by the Programme Operator and the final list of selected projects will be disclosed.

**14.2.** If the project is approved, a draft contract shall be sent to the promoter, specifying all the terms and conditions of the approved funding.

**14.3.** The draft contract must be returned to the Programme Operator, duly signed and initialled by the applicant's legal representatives, within a maximum period of 20 working days, counted from the date of its receipt, under penalty of revocation of the approval decision.

**14.4.** All rejected applications will be notified to respond within a maximum of 10 days in accordance with the Portuguese Administrative Code of Procedure.

**14.5.** Projects must start no later than 30 working days after the date of signature of the project contract.

**14.6.** Upon receipt of all signed contracts, the Programme Operator will prepare the final list of selected projects and promoters and publish it on the EEA Grants website <https://www.eegrants.gov.pt/en/programmes/environment/calls/>.

## 15. PAYMENT METHODS

**15.1.** The Programme Operator shall be responsible for processing payments to projects in a timely manner. Interim and final payments will be made after the approval of the respective project reports.

**15.2.** Payments to the promoter shall take the form of advance payments, interim payments and final payment. The level of advance payment shall be set out in the project contract.

The maximum level of payment shall be as follows:

- first advance payment, up to 25%,
- interim payments 65% and
- final payment 10%.

The first advance instalment shall be paid following the signature of the project contract. Subsequent payments shall be paid after the approval of the interim reports. The final payment will be paid after the approval of the final report.

Upon approval of the final project report a balance payment, if applicable, shall be made within 1 month. The approval of project interim and final reports take place 2 months from the submission of the required information.

### **15.3 Structure of the Reports (interim and final)**

The Project Report must contain:

- i. Detailed description, namely: summary of the activities carried out; information regarding the involvement of partners, in particular with regard to partners from Donor Countries; information regarding the participants in the Project;
- ii. Results achieved, namely: evaluation of the Project's results (at each reporting date);
- iii. Description of costs and financial impact assessment;
- iv. Description of the Project's contribution to achieving the overall objectives of EEA Grants and the 'Environment Programme'.

**15.4** The frequency and deadline of all reports (interim and final) to be submitted will be semi-annually and both must be sent within 30 (calendar) days after the respective reference period.

## **16. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Prior to submitting applications, applicants are encouraged to consult the EEA Grants website (<https://www.eeagrants.gov.pt/en/programmes/environment>) for information on the Environment, Climate Change and Low Carbon Economy Programme, particularly the following documents:

- Electronic Application Form, Annexes and Promoter's Manual;
- 'Memorandum of Understanding on the Implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021';
- 'Regulation on the implementation of the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism 2014-2021';
- 'Applicants Guide for Financing of Projects Supported by Environment, Climate Change and Low Carbon Economy Programme'.

- Information contacts:

e-mail address: [ambiente.eegrants@sgambiente.gov.pt](mailto:ambiente.eegrants@sgambiente.gov.pt)

Telephone: (+351) 213 231 644 (José Manuel Pinto) – Available from Monday to Friday, from 10:00 to 12:00 and 14:30 to 16:30.

- Any changes made to the contents of this Call shall be announced on the website of the Programme Operator (<https://www.eegrants.gov.pt/en/programmes/environment/calls/>)

- A section of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) will be published on the Website of the Program Operator (<https://www.eegrants.gov.pt/en/programmes/environment/calls/>) and frequently updated based on the queries from the potential applicants and partners.

- Any information regarding this Call will be published in the EEA Grants Website within its specific area (<https://www.eegrants.gov.pt/en/programmes/environment/calls/>).

- All questions shall be answered by email in a timeframe of 3 working days.

## 17. DATA PROTECTION

All personal data will be processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) of 25 May 2018 and the Data Protection Act (LPD) – Law No 67/98 of 26 October, as amended.



## ANNEX I. Application's Selection Framework. Detailed description of the application selection and evaluation model.

For Criteria A, B, C, D and E, the respective score will be awarded according to the following tables:

**A - Technical know-how of the project team: applicant entity and partner entities involved** (including partner entities from Donor States).

| Description   | Score |
|---|-------|
| There are not enough elements to evaluate this criterion.   | 0     |
| The project team is multidisciplinary.  | 20    |
| The project team demonstrates knowledge in the areas identified for the three Priority Areas.   | 40    |
| The project team demonstrates knowledge and experience for the three Priority Areas.  | 60    |
| The project team demonstrates knowledge, proven experience and projects implemented in the areas identified for the three Priority Areas.   | 80    |
| The project team demonstrates knowledge, proven experience and projects implemented in the areas identified for the three Priority Areas, as well as in relevant areas in the field of sustainable development in Biosphere Reserves. | 100   |

In addition, a detailed description of what is valued in terms of knowledge and experience required, for each of the three Priority Areas:

- A. The project team demonstrates knowledge and experience in conservation and management of habitats, flora and fauna, ecosystem services, spatial planning, participatory planning, mapping, geographical information systems and indicators and monitoring systems, specifically in areas relevant to sustainable development in Biosphere Reserves.
- B. The project team demonstrates knowledge and experience in capacity building and training, specifically in relevant areas in the field of sustainable development in Biosphere Reserves.
- C. The project team demonstrates knowledge and experience in communication, dissemination and awareness, specifically in relevant areas in the field of sustainable development in Biosphere Reserves.

**B. Inclusion of partner entities from the Donor State(s).**

| Description  | Score |
|--|-------|
| The applicant project does not include partner entities from the EEA FM Donor State(s) (Norway, Iceland and/or Liechtenstein). | 0     |
| The applicant project includes partner entities from the EEA FM Donor State(s) (Norway, Iceland and/or Liechtenstein).         | 100   |

**C - General quality of the submitted application.**

For this criterion, the score to be awarded to each project proposal results from the weighted average of the four sub-criteria:

$$C = (0,10*CA) + (0,05*CO) + (0,10*CP) + (0,05*CC),$$

where: CA – Activities; CO – Budget; CP – Communication Plan; CC – Schedule.

**- Communication Plan (CP)**

| Description   | Score |
|---|-------|
| There is not enough information to assess this sub-criterion.   | 0     |
| The Communication Plan does not comply with the requirements stipulated in the Promoter Manual and graphic norms, namely the use of logos.  | 20    |
| The Communication Plan complies with the requirements, but does not meet the communication objectives of the 'Environment Programme' stipulated in the Promoter Manual, nor does it correctly identify the target audience and the means of communication and dissemination.  | 40    |
| The Communication Plan complies with the requirements and meets the communication objectives of the 'Environment Programme' defined in the Promoter Manual, but does not correctly identify the target audience and groups of the project, nor does it correctly identify the means of communication and dissemination.                     | 60    |
| The Communication Plan complies with the requirements and meets the communication objectives of the 'Environment Programme' stipulated in the Promoter Manual and correctly identifies the target audience and groups of the project, but does not offer adequate means of communication and dissemination.                                 | 80    |
| The Communication Plan complies with the stipulated requirements and meets the communication objectives of the 'Environment Programme' defined in the Promoter Manual and the graphic norms, as well as correctly identifying the target audience and groups of the project and offering adequate means of communication and dissemination. | 100   |

**- Schedule (CC)**

| Description   | Score |
|---|-------|
| There is not enough information to assess this sub-criterion.   | 0     |
| The schedule has mismatches in relation to the activities to be developed.  | 20    |
| The schedule is adequate given the activities to be developed and the maximum deadlines set to complete the project.  | 40    |
| The schedule is adequate given the activities to be developed and the maximum deadlines set to complete the project, presenting proper detail and rationale.            | 60    |
| The schedule is adequate to the activities to be developed and to the maximum deadlines set to complete the project, presenting proper detail and rationale, as well as | 80    |

| Description   | Score |
|---|-------|
| due articulation and complementarity between the three Priority Areas.  |       |
| The schedule is appropriate to the activities to be developed, presenting proper detail and rationale, as well as proper articulation and complementarity between the three Priority Areas, also presenting deadlines shorter than the maximum established to finish the project. | 100   |

#### D - System of indicators

| Description  | Score |
|--|-------|
| There is not enough information to assess this sub-criterion.  | 0     |
| The indicators are unclear on activities under the three Priority Areas.   | 20    |
| The indicators are clear and appropriate in view of the activities to be developed under the three Priority Areas, but the targets and sources of verification are not well developed.   | 40    |
| The indicators are clear and appropriate in relation to the activities to be developed under the three Priority Areas and the targets are realistic in relation to the reference situation for the indicators presented.<br>However, the targets are not achievable within the planned project duration and the sources of verification are not adequate for project monitoring.                 | 60    |
| The indicators are clear and appropriate in view of the activities to be developed under the three Priority Areas, and the targets are realistic in view of the reference situation presented and achievable within the planned project duration. However, the sources of verification are not suitable for project monitoring.  | 80    |
| The project indicator system is clear and appropriate for the activities to be developed under the three Priority Areas, with realistic and achievable targets, as well as a well-designed monitoring and verification system. Indicators include an estimate of the number of jobs created with the project (if applicable) and a balanced representation of women and men on the project team. | 100   |

#### E - Specific criteria

The specific aspects listed below will be assessed for each Priority Area under this criterion. Thus, the score to be attributed to each project proposal is the arithmetic mean of the scores assigned to the specific aspects of each Priority Area:

$$E = [(Priority\ Area\ A) + (Priority\ Area\ B) + (Priority\ Area\ C)] / 3.$$

| <b>Priority Area A. Knowledge</b>   |     | <b>Score</b> |
|---|-----|--------------|
| The applicant project demonstrates a relevant contribution to the practical implementation of the Portugal Action Plan (2018-2025) for Biosphere Reserves, and to the Outcome and Outputs of the 'Environment Programme'.                   | No  | 0            |
|   | Yes | 25           |
| The applicant project presents a proposal that includes an adequate diversity of entities that will be involved in the preparation of sustainable development plans for Biosphere Reserves.   | No  | 0            |
|   | Yes | 25           |
| The applicant project presents a proposal for an appropriate work plan, including methodological approaches, indexes of documents to be prepared, measures/actions to be implemented and their timing.                                      | No  | 0            |
|   | Yes | 25           |
| The applicant project presents a set of innovative proposals and a cohesive set of working tools to be used in the preparation of sustainable development plans and the system of sustainable development indicators of Biosphere Reserves. | No  | 0            |
|   | Yes | 25           |
| <b>Priority Area B. Training</b>  |     | <b>Score</b> |
| The applicant project demonstrates a relevant contribution to the practical implementation of the Portugal Action Plan (2018-2025) for Biosphere Reserves, and to the Outcome and Outputs of the 'Environment Programme'.                   | No  | 0            |
|   | Yes | 25           |
| The applicant project presents a proposal that ensures the involvement of an appropriate diversity of target audiences relevant to the sustainable development of Biosphere Reserves.   | No  | 0            |
|   | Yes | 25           |
| The applicant project presents a proposal for an appropriate work plan, including methodological approaches, indexes of documents to be prepared, measures/actions to be implemented and their timing.                                      | No  | 0            |
|   | Yes | 25           |
| The applicant project presents an innovative and cohesive set of work tools to promote knowledge transfer and training of entities with responsibility in the sustainable management of Biosphere Reserves.                                 | No  | 0            |
|   | Yes | 25           |
| <b>Priority Area C. Communication</b>   |     | <b>Score</b> |
| The applicant project demonstrates a relevant contribution to the practical implementation of the Portugal Action Plan (2018-2025) for Biosphere Reserves, and to the Outcome and Outputs of the Environment Programme.                     | No  | 0            |
|   | Yes | 25           |
| The applicant project presents an innovative communication plan proposal that ensures wide dissemination and visibility of Biosphere Reserves.  | No  | 0            |
|   | Yes | 25           |
| The applicant project presents an appropriate work plan, including methodological approaches, indexes of documents to be prepared, measures/actions to be implemented and their timing.   | No  | 0            |
|   | Yes | 25           |
|   | No  | 0            |



|  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| The applicant project presents an innovative and cohesive set of products and services to develop in order to raise awareness of different target audiences to the importance of Biosphere Reserves. | Yes | 25 |
|--|-----|----|