

DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR MARITIME POLICY

Blue Growth Programme

Call nr #4 - Research

Guide for Applicants







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1. INTRODUCTION

The terms and conditions of the Guide for Applicants have been developed on the basis of the Regulation on the implementation of the EEA Grants 2014-2021. The Guide for Applicants specifies in detail the responsibilities of the participants in the Blue Growth Research call and is prepared in accordance with the Guideline for Research Programmes – Rules for the establishment and implementation of programmes falling under the Programme Area "Research". The Guide for Applicants complements the Blue Growth Research call Document.

2. GENERAL INFORMATION

2.1 About the Blue Growth Programme

There are two main objectives of the Norway and EEA grants: (i) to reduce economic and social disparities in Europe; and (ii) to strengthen bilateral cooperation of the Beneficiary countries and the Donor States (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein). The main goal of the Blue Growth Programme implemented by the Directorate General for Maritime Policy (DGPM) objective is to increase value creation and sustainable growth in the Portuguese blue economy through cooperation with the Donor States.

The Blue Growth research call will contribute to this objective, by supporting collaborative research projects to enhance the performance of Portuguese research organizations in Blue Growth, including technological development, and promote monitoring and knowledge improvement of marine environmental issues, including natural capital and ecosystems services. It is also an objective of this Call, funding projects aiming at technological development with and promote cooperation between research organizations and business sector.

The Blue Growth programme is designed, through competitive and open calls for project proposals, and a single research call is foreseen.

2.2 Allocation for projects in the Blue Growth Research Call

The budget of the call is EUR 5,423,529.

The minimum amount of project grant is EUR 500,000 and the maximum amount is EUR 1,0000,000.







It is expected that the eligible costs claimed by the Donor countries entities participating in the project will normally not exceed 40% of the total eligible costs of the project.

2.3 Expected results of the Blue Growth Research Call

The projects supported by this call will contribute to the Blue growth programme's Outcome #3

- Enhanced performance of Portuguese research organisations as follows:
 - 5-7 joint research projects
 - 10 joint articles submitted to peer-reviewed publications together by Portuguese and Donor State authors.
 - 20 articles submitted to peer-reviewed publications
 - enhanced performance of 10 Portuguese research organizations
 - 7 new products/ technologies or services developed

2.4 Areas of the call

The Blue Growth Research call is dedicated to research on "Sustainable Exploitation of Marine Resources and Global Changes" aiming to foster blue growth by bringing together ecologic and economic dynamics.

Priority areas of research under this call will be:

- a) Sustainable fisheries, aquaculture and blue biotechnology to improve added value from fishing products and other marine resources;
- Develop and standardize new methodologies to assess the status of Portuguese national fishery resources, not evaluated by international scientific fora;
- c) Approaches to develop integrated ecological-economics fisheries management.
- d) Improve aquaculture in open offshore conditions in Portuguese maritime areas, including bio-economic modelling;
- e) Marine natural capital and ecosystem services in order to fulfill gaps of data and knowledge on new areas with potential natural value for conservation¹ (including economics, human activities pressures, legal regimes or

¹ To consider the new areas with potential natural value for conservation see RCM nº 143/2019 (29 August 2019) https://dre.pt/application/conteudo/124283154



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management solutions), with emphasis on deep sea habitats, and/or restoration solutions, namely through seaforestation;

- f) Social impact of Blue Growth, concerning sustainable fisheries, aquaculture, namely offshore, marine biotechnology, and local communities, in Portugal;
- g) Climate change forecasts, climate change impacts on marine ecosystems services and natural capital, including economic impacts in Portuguese maritime zones, and climate solutions, nature marine ecosystem based solutions and blue carbon;
- Data analysis and methodologies/tools for multidimensional assessment of cumulative environmental and socioeconomic impacts to support decision making on marine spatial planning and/or on localization of maritime activities in the Portuguese maritime zones;
- i) New technologies for environmental monitoring and maritime surveillance, development and/or transfer, namely in deep-sea habitats and resources, to improve data and knowledge.

3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

3.1 Project partnerships

Proposals for collaborative research projects shall be submitted by a partnership comprising at least one research organisation from Portugal and at least one research organization from a Donor State (i.e. Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein).

Beyond this minimum condition, there is no limitation on the number of partners, and any public or private entity can be a project partner. However, only partners from Portugal and Donor States can be supported by the Blue Growth Programme project grant.

For each proposal, the Project Partners shall designate a leading entity called the Project Promoter, which has the scientific and administrative responsibility for the project and shall electronically submit the proposal on behalf of the entire consortium. The Project Promoter has to be a Portuguese research organization. The Project Partners have to supply a Letter of Intent for the implementation of the research project, which has to be submitted together with the proposal. Please note that adding Project Partners during the project is not allowed. The Project Promoter and Project Partners must sign a partnership agreement for the implementation of the research







project before the Project Contract is signed. The partnership agreement template is available in: https://www.eeagrants.gov.pt/en/programmes/blue-growth/documents/

3.2 Eligibility of Project Promoter

The eligible project promoters are Research Organizations, defined in the Community Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation (2014/C 198/01), established in Portugal.

Natural persons are not eligible.

The Project Promoter (the applicant) is the leading entity which has the scientific and administrative responsibility for the project, and should electronically submit the proposal on behalf of the partnership. The Project Promoter must be a Portuguese research organization. The Project Promoter has to sign the Project Contract with the Programme Operator. The Project Promoter is responsible for submitting annual reports and a final report to the Programme Operator.

3.3 Eligibility for project partners

The eligible project partners may be any public or private entity, commercial or noncommercial as well as non-governmental organizations, established as a legal person in Portugal or Donor countries (Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein).

As stated in art. 3.1, the minimum condition for an eligible partnership requiers the presence of at least one Donor State Partner research organization:

- In the case of a Donor State partner from Iceland or Liechtenstein, the definition of Research Organisation in the Community Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation (2014/C 198/01) applies.
- In the case of a Donor State Partner from Norway, the definition of Research Organisation at the Research Council of Norway applies. For list of RCN-approved Research Organisations, criteria and conditions for approval of status see here: https://www.forskningsradet.no/en/apply-for-funding/who-can-apply-for-funding/research-organisations/approved-research-organisations/.







Entities established in third countries can participate, but they cannot receive funding from the project grant. The Project Partners authorize the Project Promoter to sign and submit the proposal on their behalf. The Project Promoter and Project Partners must sign a partnership agreement for the implementation of the research project before the Project Contract is signed. The Project Partners are responsible for providing to the Project Promoter the complete and reliable information which is necessary for submitting the annual reports and final report. Please note that adding Project Partners during the project is not allowed.

3.4 Principal Investigator

For each project, the Project Promoter designates a Principal Investigator – a researcher who provides the scientific lead for the research project on a daily basis and comply with the following criteria:

- a) The Principal Investigator must be researcher with at least a doctoral degree in the field related to the project research area;
- b) The Principal Investigator (of any nationality) has to be employed full time in the Project Promoter, with a permanent position or with a fixed term contract covering at least the duration of the project;
- c) The Principal Investigator cannot be the authorised representative of the Project Promoter:
- d) The involvement of the Principal Investigator must be significant and sufficient for proper implementation of the project;
- e) A researcher can be Principal Investigator for one proposal in the Blue Growth Research call only.

Please note that the evaluators will pay particular attention to the qualification and scientific record of the PI. She/he is responsible for monitoring the technical direction and scientific quality of the project and ensures that the project is carried out in compliance with the terms and conditions of the call as well as with those specified in the Guidelines for Research Programmes – Rules for the establishment and implementation of programmes falling under the Programme Area "Research".







3.5 Project Promoters and Partners excluded from the possibility of receiving funding Project

Promoters or Partners excluded from the possibility of receiving funding cannot submit proposals. This eligibility criterion shall be verified during the eligibility check based on the Project Promoter's statement. According to article 9.2 of the Guidelines for Research Programmes, grants may not be awarded to potential participants who are, at the time of the grant award procedure, bankrupt or being wound up, convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct, not in compliance with their obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes, the subject of a judgment for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organization, money-laundering or any other illegal activity, subject to a conflict of interests or guilty of misrepresenting information.

Any potential participant who has committed an irregularity in the implementation of any other action under financing provided by the European Union or under financial contributions provided by the EFTA States in relation to the EEA Agreement may be excluded from the selection procedure at any time, with due regard being given to the principle of proportionality.

Any proposal that contravenes fundamental ethical principles or which does not fulfil the conditions set out in the Programme Agreement or in the call for proposals shall not be selected for funding.

3.6 Eligible duration of the projects

The maximum eligible duration of the projects is 36 months.

Duration of the projects (36 months) may be extended up to 12 months, without additional funds. The end of the period for eligibility of expenditures in the Blue Growth Research projects is 30 April 2024.

4. COSTS AND EXPENDITURES

It is expected that the eligible costs claimed by the Donor State entities participating in the project **shall normally not exceed 40%** of the total eligible costs of the project.

Please note that there must be no double financing of any part of the project by any other source of funds.







4.1 General principles on the eligibility of expenditures

Eligible expenditures of projects are those actually incurred within the project, which are in accordance to the applicable state aid legal basis, as well as Article 8.2 and 8.3 of the Regulation of the EEA Grants 2014 – 2021, namely:

- Are incurred between the first and final dates of eligibility of a project as specified in the project contract²
- Are connected with the subject of the project contract and they are indicated in the
 detailed budget of the project (template available on the website:
 https://www.eeagrants.gov.pt/en/programmes/blue-growth/documents/
- Are proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the project;
- 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;
- Are identifiable and verifiable, in particular through being recorded in the accounting records of the Project Promoter and/or project partner and determined according to the applicable accounting standards of the country where the Project Promoter and/or project partner is established and according to generally accepted accounting principles; and
- Comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation.

The inclusion of an expenditure item in a project budget template approved by the PO, cannot be considered as confirmation of eligibility of that expenditure item.

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.

The eligibility of expenditures is checked during the proposal evaluation. The evaluators will pay attention to the composition of the budget. Please note that eligibility of expenditures is also verified during the evaluation of the annual reports and the final report and during the external control and audit.

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.







All costs budgeted in the project (e.g. equipment, consumables and supplies, etc.) will be charged to the programme, VAT included. However, VAT is not considered an eligible cost in case the entity can reclaim the VAT from the national tax authorities in conformity with national indirect tax regulations.

4.2 Eligible direct expenditures

The eligible direct expenditures for a project are those expenditures which 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

4.2.1 Costs of staff assigned to the project

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 which the relevant public authority would not carry out if the project concerned were not undertaken.

Most partners (such as universities, university colleges, enterprises) from Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein, shall set ut budgets using the same rates for personnel costs as in H2020 projects, combined with a 25% overhead.

However, some Norwegian research institutes (such as IMR, Sintef, NILU, NIVA, NPI) which report personnel rates to the Research Council of Norway, may use those as Standard scales of unit costs (ref. Regulation art. 8.4.b). It is important to note that in such cases, no indirect or overhead costs should be included in the budget, as they are already included in the personnel rates. Entities that are unsure if this rule applies to them are asked to contact the Research Council of Norway for confirmation.

4.2.2 Travel and subsistence allowances for staff taking part in the project

The travel and subsistence allowances for staff taking part in the project must be in accordance with the applicable national rules. As a general rule, travel costs should be limited to the project's







necessities and calculated on the basis of economy class travel on public transport. The Programme 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.

4.2.3 New or second-hand equipment

Where new or second-hand equipment is purchased, 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. 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 paragraph 4 of Article 8.2, be eligible. Requirements of the applicable public-procurement law must be complied with.

Where the entire purchase price of equipment is eligible in accordance, the Programme Operator 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;
- c) Sets aside appropriate resources for the maintenance of the equipment for at least five years following the completion of the project.

4.2.4 The costs of consumables and supplies

The costs of consumables and supplies must be identifiable and assigned to the project. The type of consumables (reagents, office supplies, small laboratory equipment, etc.) should be indicated, with justification for the estimated total costs. Requirements of the applicable public-procurement law must be complied with.







4.2.5 Costs entailed by other contracts

The costs of other contracts linked to the implementation of the project are eligible for the Project Promoter and/or Partner, provided the awarding complies with the applicable rules on public procurement and the Regulation.

4.2.6 Costs arising directly from requirements imposed by the project contract for each project

The costs of the Project Promoter's opening and maintaining a separate bank account dedicated to the payments of the project grant are eligible. All reported publications should have Green or Gold access³. Open Access costs are eligible under the Blue Growth Research call. Also costs with publicity, evaluation, interpretation, translation and reproduction, and others are elegible.

4.3 Indirect costs in projects

Indirect eligible costs will be determined by applying a flat rate of 25% of the total direct eligible costs, excluding direct eligible costs for subcontracting and the costs of resources made available by third parties which are not used on the premises of the beneficiary, as well as financial support to third parties. In case the project grant takes the form of standard scales of unit costs, the flat rate of 25% for indirect costs shall not be applied. (Guideline for Research Programmes, art.10.8).

4.4 Subcontracting

As a general rule, the expertise and resources needed to implement a project should be available within the project partnership. However, the subcontracting of research tasks is possible as long as it is clearly stated and justified in the project proposal and contract. Subcontracting may cover only a limited part of the planned research tasks. Examples of subcontracting are contracts with public or private entities or natural persons for a clinical study, opinion survey, testing or analysis of samples, measurements using equipment not available within the consortium, etc. Subcontracting is based on business conditions and, therefore, is eligible provided that the awarding of the contract complies with the applicable rules on public procurement and the Regulation. Subcontractors have no direct obligations under the project contract. Therefore, it is the Project Promoter or Partner who must ensure that the subcontractors comply with obligations

³ Gold open access is where an author publishes the article in an online open access journal. Green open access is where an author publishes the article in any journal and then self-archives a copy in a freely accessible institutional or specialist online archive known as a repository, or on a website.







under the Basic Research Programme. In the case of contracts with natural persons, costs qualify as subcontracting when the work is done without the direct supervision of the Project Promoter or Project Partner. Typically, contracts for the commission are regarded as subcontracting. Contracts to purchase goods, works or services, which are necessary for the implementation of the project, but are not scientific services, needed to carry out the research activities in the project, are not considered subcontracting. The transfer of project costs intended to increase the eligible costs for "subcontracting" is considered to reflect a significant change in the project, and normally requires an amendment. The Project Promoter and partners may NOT subcontract tasks to each other.

4.5 Excluded costs

The following costs will not be considered eligible:

- a) interest on debt, debt service charges and late payment charges;
- charges for financial transactions and other purely financial costs, except costs related to accounts required by the FMC/NMFA, the National Focal Point or the applicable law and costs of financial services imposed by the project contract;
- c) provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- d) exchange losses;
- e) recoverable VAT;
- f) costs that are covered by other sources;
- g) fines, penalties and costs of litigation, except where litigation is an integral and necessary component for achieving the outcomes of the project;
- h) excessive or reckless expenditure.

4.6 Co-financing requirements

The maximum funding rate ranges from 50% to 100% of total eligible project costs, provided all applicable National and EU rules on State aid are complied with. Any remaining costs of the project have to be provided or obtained by the Project Promoter and the Project Partners, according to their respective shares of the project budget. Co-financing cannot be in-kind.

4.7 Budgetary flexibility

Applicants should note that during the course of the project, budgetary flexibility is given in order to allow for appropriate project management. Reallocation of funds among the cost categories does not require the prior approval of the Programme Operator and would not result in an







addendum to the contract. Cost categories are defined as one of the main sub-heads of the budget which are the cost of staff assigned to the project; the cost of new and second-hand equipment and other costs. However, such reallocation cannot exceed 15% of the total eligible costs of a Project.

For reallocation above this limit, a contract amendment will be required before the date the modification should take place. The request must be fully substantiated and justified. If the request is deemed unfunded by the Programme Operator, the Project Promoter will be advised in writing. The 15% rule is NOT applicable to the budget sub-head of indirect costs.

Please note, that if funding a research project constitutes State aid for the Project Promoter and/or Project Partners, each cost reallocation (also below the 15% limit) will require the approval of the Programme Operator.

5. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSAL

5.1 Rules and procedures for submission of proposals

The proposals must be written in English, with title and summary also in Portuguese. The proposals shall be submitted electronically to https://www.dgpm.mm.gov.pt/eea-grants-candidaturas using the applications forms and having attached all documents that constitute the application folder.

Only the Project Promoter is authorized to submit a proposal on behalf of the the partnership. The application deadline **is 30/10/2020, at 12.00 GMT.** Correcting or revising proposals after this deadline will not be possible. Each application will receive an identification code (assigned by the Programme OPerator) which will remain until the sign of the project contract. In case of any technical problem with the submission of the application must be communicated through the email: eeagrants@dgpm.mm.gov.pt. For aditional information the phone number contact is (+351) 218 291 000 - available Mondays to Thursdays, from 10:00 to 12:30. If the applicant plans to submit a proposal in the Blue Growth Research call, he/she should:

 review, in particular, the specimen proposal form, where you can find out about information and the annexes needed to complete the electronic proposal form. The application form and the check list of all documents to be submitted are available on the website







https://www.eeagrants.gov.pt/pt/programas/crescimento-azul/concursos/call-4-research;

- 2) decide how long the project is to be: 24 or 36 months;
- 3) obtain any data from the applicant that is required to complete the proposal and find out about the internal procedures that may affect the proposal and project performance (cost planned in the project, procedure for acquiring signature(s) or authorised representative(s) of the institution to confirm submission of the proposal);
- 4) draw up: a summary of the research project as well as a full project description (in English); an abstract of the project for the general public (in Portuguese and in English);
- 5) assist partners in drawing up a Letter of Intent for the commitment of completion of the requested research project;
- 6) prepare acceptance letters from publishers confirming that the work has been accepted for publication (when the scientific achievements section includes papers accepted for publication that have not been published yet);
- 7) prepare annexes required in the event that the Project Promoter and/or Project Partner are applying for State aid;
- 8) prepare a statement that the project complies with the principle of equal opportunities and non-discrimination, including accessibility for people with disabilities and the principle of equality between women and men;
- 9) prepare a statement that the applicant and partners are not excluded from the possibility of receiving funding according to the template available in https://www.eeagrants.gov.pt/en/programmes/blue-growth/documents/.

5.2 The project application form

The project application form has the following components:

- Project identification/ Acronym/Thematic Area
- Promotor identification
- Responsable Contact person
- Principal Investigator
- Partners Identification
- leading Donor Project Partner
- Project Description Summary (PT and EN)







- Result Indicators
- Jobs Creation
- Project Location
- Project Duration
- Financial resources
- Detailed Budget
- Documentary Check List

5.3 The project detailed description

The project detailded description template has the following components:

- General Project Framework
- Blue Growth Programme Framework
- Description of the Promoter and Partners
- Project Description
- Project Implementation
- Project Risks
- Budget And Schedule (annex)
- Licenses/Authorizations/Environmental Legislation
- Contribution for the Selection Criteria

6. ELIGIBILITY CHECK

The applicant should check the completeness and correctness of the application form by checking the Documentary Check List in the application form. In order to be retained, the proposals must fulfil all of the following administrative eligibility criteria:

- 1) Proposals must be submitted by an eligible applicant (Project Promoter) a research organization, defined in the Community Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation (2014/C 198/01), established in Portugal.
- Project partners (any public or private entity, commercial or non-commercial as well as non-governmental organizations) have to be established as a legal person in Portugal, Norway, Iceland or Lichtenstein;







- 3) Proposals must meet the criterion concerning the number of Participants at least one Portuguese research organization and one research entity from Norway Iceland or Lichtenstein;
- 4) Proposals must be submitted via electronically to https://www.dgpm.mm.gov.pt/eea-grants-candidaturas before the submission deadline of 30/10/2020, at 12.00 GMT;
- 5) The project implementation period shall be no less than 24 months and no longer than 36 months; '
- 6) The minimum grant amount is €500,000 and the maximum amount is €1,000,000;
- 7) Receipt of the proposal before the deadline date and time established in the call;
- 8) All fields on the proposal application form must be completed;
- 9) All administrative forms specified in the proposal application form (Documentary Checklist) must be present and duly signed by the person(s) authorised to enter into legally binding commitments on behalf of the applicant organisation. The Promoter Principal Investigator's declaration must be present and signed;
- 10) Proposals must comply with the language requirements set out in the proposal application form: all fields must be filled in English unless specifically indicated in the application form;
- 11) The content of the proposal must relate to the scope of the call.

Please note that the completeness of the information contained in the proposal will be for the experts to evaluate; the eligibility checks only apply to the presence of the appropriate parts of the proposal.

If it becomes clear that one or more of the eligibility criteria have not been fulfilled, the proposal is declared ineligible and withdrawn from any further evaluation.

A negative decision by the Programme Operator may be appealed against within 10 working days from the date of receiving the decision. If a proposal fails to meet the requirements, then the applicant will be notified of that including information of the reasons for rejection.







7. EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

The evaluation process is based on a number of well-established principles:

- > **Excellence** the projects selected for funding must demonstrate high quality in the context of the key topics and criteria set out in the call.
- > **Transparency** the funding decisions must be based on clearly described rules and procedures, and applicants should receive adequate feedback on the outcome of the evaluation of their proposals;
- Fairness and impartiality all proposals submitted to the call are treated equally. They are evaluated impartially on their merits, irrespective of their origin or the identity of the applicants;
- Confidentiality all proposals and related data, knowledge and documents communicated to PO are treated in confidence;
- Efficiency and speed evaluation, award and contract preparation should be as rapid as possible, commensurate with maintaining the quality of the evaluation and respecting the legal framework;
- ➤ **Ethical and security considerations** any proposal which contravenes fundamental ethical principles may be excluded at any time from the process of evaluation, selection and award.

The proposals will be evaluated by panels composed of internationally recognized experts. The experts will be invited to evaluate the proposals that are closely related to their field of expertise. They must be resident and working outside of Portugal, Norway, Iceland or Lichtenstein.

The Programme Operator draws up a list of appropriate experts using as main selection criteria their high level of expertise and their appropriate range of competencies. The Programme Operator will, whenever possible, take into account the need for gender balance among the experts. The evaluation process consists of the following steps: individual evaluation, consensus assessment, panel review and Programme Committee selection meeting.

7.1 Individual evaluation

Each eligible proposal will be evaluated by three international experts. The experts first work with the proposals individually online. They answer Yes/No in criterion 0 and award scores on a scale from 0 to 5 as well as comments for the following selection criteria 1 - 3:







Table I: Thresholds and weight Criteria

Criterion	Points	Weight	Thresholds
O. Relevance in relation to the objectives and priorities of the Blue Growth	N/A	N/A	YES
Research call - If the proposal fails the criterion of the Blue Growth Research call,			
the experts will answer "No" and the			
proposal will fall under the threshold. During the panel evaluation, proposals			
failing this criterion will be discussed and			
may be excluded from the evaluation by the decision of Panel of Experts. A			
justification of the assessment is provided			
to the applicant.			
1. Scientific and/or technical excellence	max. 5	x2	8
2. Quality and efficiency of the	max. 5	x1	3
implementation and management,			
including quality and implementation			
capacity of the applicants and			
contribution to capacity and			
competence building			
3. Potential impact through the	max. 5	x1	3
development, dissemination and use of			
project results			

Score values indicate the following assessments:

Table II: Scoring of the proposal

* Score CC	Explanation
0	The proposal fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information.
1 (poor)	The criterion is addressed in an inadequate manner, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
2 (fair)	While the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses.
3 (good)	The proposal addresses the criterion well, although improvements would be necessary.
4 (very good)	The proposal addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible
5 (excellent)	The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor.







7.2 Consensus assessment

Once all the experts have completed their individual assessments, they meet to compare and discuss their assessment with the objective of establishing a consensus report, representing the common view of the three experts. In the event that it is impossible to reach a consensus, the report sets out the experts' majority view, but also records any dissenting views. The signing of the consensus report completes the consensus step of the evaluation.

7.4 Thresholds and the ranking lists

A proposal can obtain a total number of 20 points in the evaluation procedure. In order to be considered for funding, a proposal must pass all thresholds by: - obtaining answer Yes for criterion 0; - receive at least a total score of 14 (out of 20); - and pass the threshold of 8 points in Criterion 1, and the tresholds of 3 points in Criteria 2 and 3.

Please note that due to budgetary constraints, not all of the proposals passing the thresholds will be funded.

Based on the evaluation results, the Programme Operator draws up the preliminary ranking list.

8. SELECTION MEETING OF THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

The Programme Operator prepares the preliminary ranking list with a requested grant amount for each proposal. Prior to the Programme Committee meeting, the Programme Operator will provide access to the Programme Committee members to the evaluated proposals, individual reviews, and consensus reports. The task of the Programme Committee is to decide about the final ranking order of the proposals on the basis of the total consensus scores assigned to the projects. The Programme Committee will review the proposed preliminary ranked lists of projects and may modify the ranking of the projects in justified cases. The justification for modifications will be detailed in the minutes of the meeting of the Programme Committee. The Chair of the Programme Committee will submit the minutes and the list of recommended projects, together with a reserve list and the list of rejected project applications and the reason for their rejection to the Programme Operator.

While discussing the ranking lists and making recommendation for funding, the Committee takes into consideration the overall quality of the evaluated proposals, indicative budget for the call and number of proposals to be funded.







The Programme Committee will also examine and compare the consensus reports and confirm consistency of the scores. Ultimately, the task of such meeting is to decide about the final ranking order of the proposals on the basis of the total consensus scores assigned to the projects. Within the groups of equally scored proposals, the criteria for ranking are applied in the following order:

- proposals are prioritized according to the scores they have been awarded for the Criterion
 1: Scientific and/or technical excellence;
- proposals are prioritized according to the scores they have been awarded for the Criterion
 Quality and efficiency of the implementation and management, including quality and implementation capacity of the applicants and contribution to capacity and competence building;
- proposals are prioritized according to the scores they have been awarded for the Criterion
 3: Potential impact through the development, dissemination and use of project results.

In the event that the final ranking lists, approved by the Programme Committee, reveal that limitations in the amount of funding prevent the full inclusion of another project into the final list, the Programme Operator may, acting on a proposal from the Programme Committee, apply minor budget cuts uniformly across all projects, not exceeding 3% of the requested budget.

9. FUNDING DECISIONS

The Programme Committee shall submit the final list of recommended projects to the Programme Operator (Decision Body).

The Programme Operator will make the funding decision based on the recommendation from the Programme Committee.

The communication on the final decision of the applications will be made to the beneficiary within 120 working days after the deadline for submission of applications specified in paragraph 5.1 of this Guideline.

The Programme Operator shall notify applicants regarding the results of the selection process within 10 working days from the selection preliminary decision.







All applicants will be notified thereof and have the right to complain during a maximum period of 10 working days, from the date of the notification, in accordance with articles 121 et seq. of the Portuguese Code of Administrative Procedure, approved by the Decree-Law No. 4/2015, of January 7.

Once the prior hearing period has been completed, the Programme Operator will analyze the complaints and prepare a final selection decision, which will be submitted to the Programme Committee.

All applicants will be notified of the final decision and the results will be published on the Blue Growth Programme website where the Call was publised:

https://www.eeagrants.gov.pt/pt/programas/crescimento-azul/concursos/call-4-research

10. NEGOTIATION OF PROPOSALS

The Project Promoters of proposals that have not been rejected, and for which funding is available, are invited to begin negotiations. In addition to any issues raised in the Evaluation Summary Report, the applicants may receive requests for further administrative, legal, technical and financial information necessary for the preparation of the project contract. The Programme Operator may request changes, possibly including modifications to the budget. The Programme Operator must justify all the requested changes. If it proves impossible to reach an agreement with a Project Promoter within a reasonable deadline, the negotiations may be terminated and the proposal rejected by negative decision. Negotiation of proposals from the reserve list may begin once it is clear that sufficient budget has become available to fund one or more of these projects. The Programme Operator may also terminate negotiations if the Project Promoter proposes to modify the project to the extent that it becomes significantly different from the proposal that has been evaluated.

11. APPEALS

Project Promoters who wish to appeal the final results may send their complaints directly to the Programme Operator headquarters, during a maximum period of 10 working days, from the date of the notification, in accordance with articles 121 et seq. of the Portuguese Code of







Administrative Procedure, approved by the Decree-Law No. 4/2015, of January. Once the prior hearing period has been completed, the PO will analyze the complaints and prepare a final selection decision, which will be submitted to the Programme Committee.

The Programme Committee shall submit the final list of recommended projects to the Programme Operator (Decision Body).

All applicants will be notified of the final decision and the results will be publicize on websites where the advertisement was released. The decision of the Programme Operator may be appealed against to the Minister of the SEA or at administrative court. Please note that comments and scores given by experts and members of panels will not be subject to appeals. Grounds for appeals include conflicts of interest and errors in administrative procedure.

12. CONTRACTING OF PROJECTS

With regard to each grant, a bilateral Project contract between the Programme Operator and the Project Promoter will be concluded for the term of the grant. The project contract will set out the terms and conditions of grant assistance, as well as the roles and responsibilities of the parties. It will in particular, include provisions that ensure that the Project Promoter undertakes to comply fully with the provisions of the legal framework of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 referred to in Article 1.5 of the Regulation that is relevant for the implementation of the project, including any obligation that is valid after the project has been completed. The Project contract will contain an explicit reference to the programme agreement and the Regulation and, as a minimum, provisions on the following:

- a) obligations regarding reporting that enables the Programme Operator to comply with its reporting obligations to the FMC and the National Focal Point;
- b) the maximum amount of the project grant in euro and the maximum project grant rate;
- c) the eligibility of expenditures and requirements regarding the submission of proof of expenditure;
- d) the method of calculating indirect costs and their maximum amount;
- e) the first and final dates of eligibility of expenditures;
- f) modifications of the project;







- g) ensuring that the access requested in relation to monitoring, audits and evaluations is provided without delay;
- h) ensuring that obligations regarding information and communication are complied with;
- i) the right of the Programme Operator to suspent payments and request reimbursement from the Project Promoter in case decision on such actions is taken by the FMC, Programme Operator or the National Focal Point;
- j) resolution of disputes and jurisdiction;
- **k)** a detailed budget, which may allow for up to 5% contingency; and a reference to partnership agreements or letters of intent, if relevant.

13. REPORTING AND PAYMENTS

Following the granting of financial support, and after signing the Project Contract by both parties, payments towards the projects will be in the form of advance instalments, up to 100% of the total awarded grant amount.

The Programme Operator may make payments to beneficiaries in the following ways:

- The first advance instalment shall be paid following the signature of the Project Contract.
 Subsequent advance instalments shall be paid after the approval of Project Interim
 Reports (Financial and Progress).
- The frequency of interim reporting to the Programme Operator shall be based on an annual report.
- Advance instalments are offset against incurred expenditure reported in the Project Financial Interim Reports.
- The Project Promoters will receive subsequent advance instalment under conditions stablished on the Project Contract.
- If any irregularity with finantial corrections is detected all payments to the promoters and partners may be canceled, including payments to other projects within the Programme.
- The level of advance instalments to be provided to Project Promoters shall be linked to the project implementation duration according to the overview below:







Table III. Instalments Payments

Project Implementation Duration	First Advance Payment	Interim payments	Final Payment (reimburse ment) 90 days after the Final Report Approval
36 months > 24 Months	35%	55%	10%

Final Payment: The sum of the advance and interim payments cannot exceed 90% of the total project grant at any time during project. The payment of the final balance will be disbursed within 30 calendar days after the approval of the final report.

Each applicant, except third counties applicants mentioned above, shall comply with the maximum funding intensity according to the applicants category and the planned activities in accordance with the Regulation as shown in the following table.

Table IV. Funding intensity acording to the applicants category and the planned activities

	Beneficiaries			
Categories of activities	Small Enterprise	Medium- sized enterprise	Large enterprise	Research organization
Industrial Research	70%	60%	50%	100%
Industrial Research in case of effective cooperation	80%	75%	65%	100%
Experimental development	45%	35%	25%	100%
Experimental development in case of effective cooperation	60%	50%	40%	100%
Innovation for small and medium enterprises	50%	50%	-	-
Process and organisational innovation	50%	50%	15%	100%







13.1 Payment model

The Project Promoter is obliged to open and maintain a separate bank account indicated in the project contract. Payments towards the projects will be in the form of advance payment and interim payment(s). The Programme Operator will ensure the timely transfer of those payments. Payments of the project grant shall take the form of advance instalments and provide the projects with a positive cash flow. The first advance instalment will be transferred to the Project Promoter within 30 days from the signature of the project contract. Further advance instalments (interim payments) will be transferred to the project in accordance with an individual pre-defined schedule of payments based on the project budget, as stipulated in the project contract. These interim payments are made once a year, each corresponding to the planned annual project budget and according to the Table II. The interim payments may be paid when at least 80% of the previous advance instalment(s) has been reported as incurred in the form of a certified statement.

The Programme Operator shall monitor the level of incurred expenditure and amend the annual budget annexed to the project contract when appropriate. The Project Promoter must ensure that all payments to the other project partners are made without unjustified delay, and not later than 15 days after the Project Promoter has received payment from the Programme Operator. The payment model will be specified in the project contract.

13.2 Annual reporting

During the implementation of the project, the Project Promoter submits an annual report within 60 days of the end of each reporting period set out in the project contract. The 1st technical report must contain the progress of the work for at least 6 months of the project's implementation. The annual report must comprise:

A technical report containing:

- an explanation of the work carried out by the participants;
- an overview of the progress of work towards the objectives of the project, including
 milestones and deliverables identified in the project contract. The report must include
 explanations justifying the differences between work expected to be carried out in
 accordance with the project contract and that actually carried out;
- details on the exploitation and dissemination of the results, and







A financial report containing:

• the justification of expenses incurred in the reporting period concerned and the estimate of expenses to be executed for the next period report.

13.3 Final reporting

The Project Promoter submits a final report within 90 days after the project's end. If the implementation of the projects ends in the first 6 months of the year, then the annual report for the previous year is not requested separately. This final report must comprise:

A final technical report containing:

- an overview of the results and their exploitation and dissemination;
- the conclusion on the project;
- a summary for publication by the PO.

A final financial report containing:

- a final individual financial statement from each participant for the final reporting period,
 as defined in the project contract;
- a final summary financial statement from the PP consolidating the individual financial statement for the all reporting periods and including the request for payment of the balance (final payment claim);
- distribution of the financial contribution between the Project Promoter and Project Partners.

13.4 Reporting on scientific publications

During and after the project, the Project Promoter provides references and an abstract of all scientific publications relating to the results of the project no later than 60 days following publication. As part of the final project report, the Project Promoter will be required to submit a full list of publications relating to the results of the project. All reported publications should have Green or Gold access. Gold open access is where an author publishes the article in an online open access journal. Green open access is where an author publishes the article in any journal and then self-archives a copy in a freely accessible institutional or specialist online archive known as a repository, or on a website. Please note that Open Access costs are eligible. All publications must include the following statement to indicate that the results of the project were generated with the assistance of financial support from the EEA Grants 2014-2021 Mechanism:







"The research leading to these results has received funding from the EEA Grants 2014-2021 operated by Directorate General for Maritime Policy under Project No PT-INNOVATION XXX."

14. CONTACT PERSONS

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e-mail address: eeagrants@dgpm.mm.gov.pt

Please contact the DGPM with all queries concerning the Research call. We will endeavour to answer your questions sent by e-mail as soon as possible, within 5 working days at the latest. Answers to the questions will be published in the FAQ to ensure equal access to information for all applicants.

In case of specific issues concerning applicants from Norway, the Donor Programme Partner in the Research Programatic Area is the Research Council of Norway.

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In case of specific issues concerning applicants from Iceland, the Donor Programme Partner in the Research Programme is the Icelandic Centre for Research (RANNIS).

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