

**Iceland**   
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DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR MARITIME POLICY

**Blue Growth Programme**

**Call nr #4 – Research**

Call for Proposals



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## Reference Information

### BLUE GROWTH

**BLUE GROWTH objective** – Increased value creation and sustainable growth

**BLUE GROWTH expected outcome #3** – Enhanced performance of Portuguese research organisations;

**Call nr #4** – Research

**Description** – 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 and social capital and ecosystems services.

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## **1. FRAMEWORK**

### **1.1 AREA OF INTERVENTION**

The Blue Growth Programme will contribute to the overall objective of reducing economic and social disparities and strengthen bilateral relations through funding of different projects within five outcomes under the following three Programme areas: 'Business development, Innovation and SMEs'; 'Research' and 'Education, Scholarships, Apprenticeships and Youth Entrepreneurships'.

The Programme's goal is to increase value creation and sustainable growth in the Portuguese blue economy. In addition, it has the ambition to increase the research activity and promote education and training in the marine and maritime areas.

The Programme will explore synergies between the business, research and education areas, and will contribute to a sustainable blue growth in Portugal.

The EEA Grants Regulation as well as the Guideline for Research Programmes applies to this call. In particular, the principles outlined in Article III of the Guideline for Research Programmes will apply to this call and projects funded through it.

The main objective of this Call is 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 and social capital and ecosystems services. It is also an objective of this Call to fund projects aiming at technological development and promote cooperation between research organizations and business sector.

The Blue Growth Programme, and this call in particular, aims to establish and strengthen cooperation between Portugal and Donor States (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein).

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The Programme shall also promote network between project promoters and project partners for further research cooperation within the European Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe programmes.

### 1.2 OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES OF THE PROJECTS:

Ocean economy and Blue Growth are broad concepts that include traditional and emergent sectors. Common to all sectors of blue growth is the need for new knowledge. The following research priorities under the Blue Growth Programme constitute the basis for the thematic areas under this call, which are listed in section 1.3.

Support of marine biotechnology, sustainable fisheries, coastal and offshore aquaculture are of high priority for Portugal and Donor States. Additional research is needed to overcome knowledge gaps, enhance competitiveness and improve environmental sustainability of these sectors.

Ocean economy includes commercial activities as well as natural capital and marine ecosystem services that are not traded in markets (see definitions in national policy documents and OECD). In this context marine protected areas are very relevant management instruments. Protection of the natural capital is very important for maritime activities, such as sustainable fisheries, as it allows biodiversity maintenance and protects stocks biomass. Portugal published recently a report<sup>1</sup> on marine protected areas which supports the establishment of a coherent network of marine protected areas. To support decision-making on designation of new marine protected areas, additional data and knowledge are needed with respect to costs, benefits and new management schemes.

This call will support research and innovation into blue biotechnology and coastal and offshore aquaculture innovative projects, among other thematic areas (see 1.3 section), focusing on technology development and innovative problem solving solutions,

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<sup>1</sup> RCM nº 143/2019 (29 August 2019) <https://dre.pt/application/conteudo/124283154>

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including bigdata and Artificial Intelligence, new models and tools and digitalization solutions for these activities.

In the case of proposals for projects in the blue biotechnology and aquaculture sectors all the 3 pillars of sustainability should be taken into consideration and addressed in a adequate manner. This concerns in particular projects handling circularity and bioeconomy concepts, biorefineries and zerowaste solutions and integrated multilayer concepts.

In addition to direct support of blue growth research and innovation, this call will also support research and knowledge that contributes to better ocean policy instruments, like the ones related to marine space and marine resources management, including monitoring and surveillance. There is also a need for climate change forecasts based on better modelling of the atmosphere-ocean system, knowledge of the potential impacts of climate change and climate solutions, nature marine ecosystem based solutions and blue carbon.

The projects supported by this call are expected to contribute to the defined result targets, in the Outcome #3 - Enhanced performance of Portuguese research organisations:

- 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

## 1.3 THEMATIC AREAS:

In order to be eligible for funding, project proposals under the Research Call should address at least one of the following topics :

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- a) Sustainable fisheries, aquaculture and blue biotechnology to improve added value from fishing products and other marine resources, considering sustainability and circular principles;
- b) 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 conservation<sup>2</sup> (including economics, human activities pressures, legal regimes or 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;
- h) 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.

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<sup>2</sup> 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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## 1.4 AVAILABLE FUNDS:

The total amount available in the Research Call under the Blue Growth Programme is € 5.423.529

## 1.5 MAXIMUM AND MINIMUM DURATION AND GRANT AMOUNTS FOR EACH PROJECT:

The duration of the projects's implementation shall be no less than 24 months and no longer than 36 months.

**Minimum Grant Amount:** € 500.000

**Maximum Grant Amount:** : € 1.000.000

## 1.6 GRANT RATES:

The maximum funding rate can go up to 100% of total eligible project costs.

The project grant rate shall be set at a level that complies with the State Aid rules in force and takes into account any and all other forms of public support granted to projects and/or the Project Promoter or partner, where relevant.

Regarding the State Aids rules, the grant rate of projects to be implemented shall be set in accordance with EU and national legislation, mainly the Commission Regulation (EC) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty (General Block Exemption Regulation – GBER) and the Commission Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to De Minimis aid. The grant rate may vary from 50% to 100%, depending on the type of the state aid awarded, size of the Applicant and other elements included in the provisions of the Regulation which are relevant for the respective project.

This Regulation shall not apply to aid granted in the fishery and aquaculture sector, as covered by Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013 of the European Parliament and of the



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Council of 11 December 2013 on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1184/2006 and (EC) No 1224/2009 and repealing council Regulation (EC) No 104/2000 (1), with the exception of training aid, aid for SMEs' access to finance, aid in the field of research and development, innovation aid for SMEs and aid for disadvantaged workers and workers with disabilities.

According to Article 25 of GBER, the aid intensity for each beneficiary shall not exceed:

- a) 100 % of the eligible costs for fundamental research;
- b) 50 % of the eligible costs for industrial research;
- c) 25 % of the eligible costs for experimental development;
- d) 50 % of the eligible costs for feasibility studies.

The aid intensities for industrial research and experimental development may be increased up to a maximum aid intensity of 80 % of the eligible costs as follows:

- I. by 10 percentage points for medium-sized enterprises and by 20 percentage points for small enterprises;
- II. by 15 percentage points if one of the following conditions is fulfilled:
  - the project involves effective collaboration between undertakings among which at least one is an SME, or is carried out in at least two Member States, or in a Member State and in a Contracting Party of the EEA Agreement, and no single undertaking bears more than 70 % of the eligible costs, or;
  - the project involves effective collaboration between an undertaking and one or more research and knowledge-dissemination organisations, where the latter bear at least 10 % of the eligible costs and have the right to publish their own research results;
  - the results of the project are widely disseminated through conferences, publication, open access repositories, or free or open source software.

The aid intensities for feasibility studies may be increased by 10 percentage points for medium-sized enterprises and by 20 percentage points for small enterprises.



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The remaining funding shall be provided or obtained by the Project promoter/partners. The project promoter/partners must document their co-financing ability.

Pursuant to Article 6.4.2 of the Regulation when deciding on the grant rate of the project, the Programme Operator shall take into account the economic benefits that are expected to be generated in the course of the project as a result of receiving a financial contribution.

## 1.7 DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

The call is open from 28/07/2020 and remains open until to 12:00:00 GMT 30/10/2020.

## 2. ELIGIBILITY

### 2.1 ELIGIBILITY OF PROJECT PROMOTERS AND PROJECT PARTNERS

**Eligible project promoters:** 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.

**Eligible project partners:**

Any public or private entity, commercial or non-commercial, as well as non-governmental organisation established as a legal person either in Portugal, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein or any international organisation or body or agency thereof, actively involved in, and effectively contributing to, the implementation of a project, (in accordance with article 7.2.2 of the EEA Grants 2014-2021 Regulation).

The cooperation in research projects is to be based on equal partnerships between entities involved in research and development in Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein and

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entities involved in research and development in Portugal, with the leading role of the latter.

Participation in the research call projects shall be open to participants established in Third Countries (i.e. any country other than Portugal, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein), if such participation is justified in terms of the enhanced contribution made to the aims of the research call. However, participants from third countries cannot be supported by the grant.

## Eligible consortia

- 1) The proposal must include:
  - at least one Portuguese research organization
  - at least one research organization from Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein<sup>3</sup>
- 2) It is mandatory to present letters of Commitment by all partners.

## Formal criteria for Project Promoters and partners

Grants cannot be awarded to potential participants, who at the time of grant award procedure, are in one or more of the following situations:

- bankrupt, have entered in judicial administration or are under liquidation, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation, convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct,

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<sup>3</sup> 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.forskingsradet.no/en/apply-for-funding/who-can-apply-for-funding/research-organisations/approved-research-organisations/>.

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- 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 organisation, 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 European Free Trade Association (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.

The Project Promoter must designate a Principal Investigator – a researcher who provides the scientific lead for the research project on a daily basis and complies with the following criteria:

- the Principal Investigator must be researcher with at least a doctoral degree and show relevant professional and/or academic experience in the field related to the project research area;
- 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;
- the Principal Investigator cannot be the authorised representative of the Project Promoter;
- the involvement of the Principal Investigator must be significant and sufficient for proper implementation of the project;
- a researcher can be Principal Investigator for only one proposal in the Blue Growth Research call.



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## 2.2 ELIGIBILITY OF EXPENDITURES

The assessment of the eligible expenditures for a specific project will be made based on 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:

Eligible expenditures of projects are those actually incurred within the project, which meet the following criteria:

- Are incurred between the first and final dates of eligibility of a project as specified in the project contract<sup>4</sup>;
- 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

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<sup>4</sup>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.

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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.

## Eligible direct expenditures in a 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;
- **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;
- **Cost of new or second hand equipment**, 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; 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

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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.
- **Costs of consumables and supplies**, provided that they are identifiable and assigned to the project;
  - **Costs entailed by other contracts awarded by the Project Promoter**, for the purposes of carrying out the project, provided that the awarding complies with the applicable rules on public procurement and this Regulation; and;
  - **Costs arising directly from requirements imposed by the project contract**, for each project. (publicity, evaluation, interpretation, translation and reproduction, open access, others).
  - **Indirect Costs**, shall 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)

## PERIOD OF ELIGIBILITY OF EXPENDITURES

The maximum period of eligibility will be set in the project contract, and shall be no less than 24 months and no longer than 36 months from the date Programme Operator signs the granting decision. Extensions may be authorized, subject to the approval of the Programme Operator. But under no circumstance shall exceed the date mentioned in art 8.13.3 of the Regulation (30 April 2024).

### 3. SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications must be submitted in English, with title and summary also in Portuguese, to the Programme Operator by the deadline stipulated in paragraph 1.7, 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.

The application form and the check list of all documents to be submitted are available on the website: <https://www.eeagrants.gov.pt/en/programmes/blue-growth/calls/call-4-research/>

The applications shall contain a Communication plan in line with Annex 3 to the EEA Grants 2014-2021 Regulation (template available on the website <https://www.eeagrants.gov.pt/en/programmes/blue-growth/documents/>).

In case of any technical problem with the submission of the application must be communicated through the email: [eeagrants@dgpm.mm.gov.pt](mailto:eeagrants@dgpm.mm.gov.pt)

It is suggested that before submitting your application to read the information on the EEA Grants Fund 2014-2021, namely, the following documents:

- Regulation of the EEA Grants 2014-2021  
<https://eeagrants.org/resources/regulation-implementation-eea-grants-2014-2021>
- Guideline for Research Programmes  
<https://eeagrants.org/resources/2014-2021-guideline-research-programmes>
- Guideline for Applicants

<https://www.eeagrants.gov.pt/en/programmes/blue-growth/calls/call-4-research/>

Indicate if there were any external consultants involved in the preparation of the application. If yes, please indicate which external consultant.



## **4. SELECTION AND DECISION PROCEDURES**

Only applications meeting the conditions in accordance with national and Community legislation, the Rules of the EEA Grants 2014-2021 and with this Call are acceptable in this procedure.

The project's selection and approval process is carried out in two sequencing phases, as follows:

### **1st phase – Administrative and eligibility criteria check**

The Programme Operator shall review the applications for compliance with administrative and eligibility criteria of the Programme. Applicants whose applications are rejected at this stage shall be informed and given 10 working days to appeal that decision.

#### **a) Administrative criteria**

Completeness of the proposal, i.e. the presence of all requested administrative forms and documents as well as the proposal description (application form and the check list of all documents to be submitted). 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.

#### **b) Eligibility Criteria**

Proposals must fulfil all the eligibility criteria if they are to be retained for evaluation.

The following eligibility criteria apply to all proposals submitted under a call:

- a) Receipt of complete proposal files by the Programme Operator until the deadline date and time established in these call (paragraph 1.7);
- b) Eligibility of promoters and partners in accordance with the paragraph 2.1;
- c) Proof of non-existence of debts to the tax authority and Social Security;

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### 2nd phase – Peer Review Evaluation

The Programme Operator evaluates proposals with the assistance of international experts to ensure that only those of the highest quality are selected for funding. International experts must be resident and working outside the Portugal, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

The final score will be assigned to the project by applying the evaluation criteria approved by the Programme Operator and published in this Call for Proposal.

Each application will be scored on a scale of **0 to 20 points**, according to the evaluation criteria set out in section 5.

The evaluation criteria allow assessing the applicant's ability to complete the proposed action, namely the:

- Relevance in relation to the objectives and priorities of the call;
- Scientific and/or technical excellence;
- Quality and efficiency of the implementation and management, including quality and implementation capacity of the applicants and contribution to capacity and competence building;
- Potential impact through the development, dissemination and use of project results.

Experts examine the issues to be considered comprising each evaluation criterion and score these on the scale from 0 to 5. Half point scores may be given.

At least three international independent and impartial experts (must be resident and working outside the respective Beneficiary State and the Donor States), are chosen from a pool of international experts containing the details of suitable candidates in cooperation with the Donor Programme Partner and regarding their skills and knowledge appropriate to the areas within the scope of this Call, shall (separately) score the project in accordance with the selection criteria provided in section 5 of this Call for proposal. After the individual evaluation of a proposal, the expert completes an Individual Evaluation Report confirming his/her individual reading and assessment.

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Their consolidated assessment by a designated rapporteur, the consensus report, is considered the final assessment of a given project proposal and forms the basis for establishing the ranking lists of eligible grants applications.

The Programme Committee (PC) has decided that the criterion "Scientific and/or technical excellence" will be weighted by a factor of 2. So that the maximum score for this criterion will be 10, while the maximum scores for criteria "Quality and efficiency of implementation" and "Potential impact" will be 5 for each.

Applications falling below the thresholds defined below will not be supported:

1. Scientific and/or technical excellence: threshold - **8 points**
2. Quality and efficiency of the implementation and management, including quality and implementation capacity of the applicants and contribution to capacity and competence building: threshold - **3 points**
3. Potential impact through the development, dissemination and use of project results: threshold - **3 points**

The Programme Operator provides the Programme Committee (PC) with the list of ranked projects, individual reviews, consensus reports and evaluated proposals.

The PC shall review the Programme Operator's preliminary ranking list and on the basis of this, draw up a final ranking list. The PC will examine and compare the consensus reports and confirm consistency of the scores. The PC may decide to change the final score of the proposal received in the consensus report. This right shall be reserved only to cases in which the PC unanimously agrees that there is an unjustified discrepancy between the numerical score and written evaluation of the proposal in the consensus report or unjustified discrepancy between the consensus report and individual reviews.

In such a case the PC awards points for each of the evaluation criteria. The points awarded by the PC for each evaluation criterion cannot exceed the highest and the lowest score given for that criterion in the individual reviews of the proposal. The score awarded by the PC is final and is taken into account while deciding upon the final

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ranking lists. Each such case shall be decided unanimously and justified in writing by the PC.

In the case of project proposals which have received the same number of points from the reviewers, the Programme Committee may take into the consideration the geographical and the thematic distribution of the projects, in order to arrive at a balanced portfolio of financed projects.

The Programme Operator then issues individual decisions to award a grant to projects based on the final ranking list approved by the Programme Committee, for those projects for which grants are available. (Guideline for Research Programmes 8.15).

In case the final ranking list reveals that a small amount of funding prevents the inclusion of another project onto the funded 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.

Further details are provided in section 5 of this Call for proposal.

Applications that have sufficient quality but are not awarded granting because of the limitations in funding set in this call, may be put on a ranked reserve list.

## 5. SELECTION CRITERIA

In the selection of applications of this call will be applied taking into account the assessment criteria and weightings, as the following table:

| Selection Criteria  | Weighting (W) | Description   | Criteria Classification (CC) (points)* |
|---|---------------|---|--|
| 0. Relevance in relation to the objectives and priorities of the call |               | <p>This criterion is considered an elimination criterion.</p> <p>It should be assessed if the project proposal fits in at least one of the call thematic areas. If the answer is “no”, the project is rejected and there is no need for further evaluation. Please note that answer “no” should be given only in clear-cut cases. If the case is not clear-cut, evaluators must write their comments,</p> | (YES or NO)                            |

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|  |   | <p>evaluate the proposal and discuss it during the consensus stage. If a proposal is considered to be out of scope by all individual experts, it may be considered to be ineligible. Thus, a proposal which is not coherent with the scope of the call it is rejected from further evaluation.</p>  |  |
| 1. Scientific and/or technical excellence  | 2 | <p>Under this criterion it should be assessed if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the project topic answering a well-defined problem/question with scientific and/or practical relevance?</li> <li>• Is the project proposal positioning well described with respect to the state of the art or to technological innovation?</li> <li>• Does the project proposal contribute to a significant (clearly identified) progress beyond the state of the art?</li> <li>• Are the objectives, methodologies and technologies of the project appropriate?</li> <li>• Is the project innovative in terms of scientific or technological innovation or prospects of innovation, and challenge?</li> <li>• In the case of proposals for projects in the blue biotechnology and aquaculture sectors: are all the 3 pillars of sustainability taken into consideration and addressed in a adequate manner? This concerns in particular projects handling circularity and bioeconomy concepts, biorefineries and zerowaste solutions and integrated multilayer concepts.</li> </ul>  | <p>CC1<br/>Max 5 points<br/>*2 =10 total</p> |
| 2. Quality and efficiency of the implementation and management, including quality and implementation capacity of the applicants and contribution to capacity and competence building | 1 | <p>Evaluation of to what extent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the coordination plan adequate? Does the task schedule comply with the assumed objectives and deliverables? Is the schedule realistic?</li> <li>• Are the resources adequate to the project (existing research infrastructure and requested upgrade/development of the research infrastructure)? Are the requested equipment purchases well justified and relevant?</li> <li>• Are the person-months resources well justified? In particular, is the involvement of PI significant and sufficient for a proper implementation of the project?</li> <li>• Is the financial part well justified and adequate?</li> <li>• Are the Principal Investigator (PI) expertise and previous achievements sound and suitably related to the project topic? How well qualified is the PI to conduct the project towards its stated objectives?</li> <li>• Are the partner research teams leaders well qualified (with respect to their expertise and previous achievements) to conduct the corresponding activities within the project and fulfill the associated tasks?</li> <li>• Are the partnership and the partner teams' structure correlated with the tasks, within the framework of the technical or scientific objectives? Do the companies involved play an active role in the project (if applicable)?</li> </ul> | <p>CC2 Max 5 points</p>                      |

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|---|---|--|------------------|
|   |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is it clearly demonstrated that the project is developed collaboratively between participating countries/institutions? Is there added value created through this collaboration? Are there complementarities between the partners?</li> <li>Is the work plan structured with clearly identified and adequate milestones and deliverables? Are the project tasks adequately defined and assigned to partners? Is the partners' contribution in the project well balanced with respect to their expertise and previous achievements?</li> <li>Are the young researchers integrated in the project?</li> <li>Are the ethical aspects treated in accordance with standard rules and regulations applicable?</li> </ul>   |                  |
| 3. Potential impact through the development, dissemination and use of project results | 1 | <p>Evaluation of to what extent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the project build the experience and competence of the researchers/organizations involved?</li> <li>Does the project influence a long-term collaboration among the partners concerned? Are the dedicated actions exploring the potential for further applications to other international calls credible?</li> <li>Are the dissemination and exploitation of the expected results clearly stated and realistic?</li> <li>Does the project lead towards distinct improvements of the quality of life, performance and/or efficiency of products, technologies and/or services?</li> <li>Is the project positioning in the industrial strategy of the project partner companies (if applicable)? Is there a strategy for further valorization of the project results?</li> <li>Does the project contribute to the Sustainable Development Objectives (ODS) of the United Nations Agenda 2030?</li> </ul> | CC3 Max 5 points |

| * 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                            |

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|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| 5 (excellent) | The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor. |
|---------------|--|

## 5.1 CLASSIFICATION OF EACH SELECTION CRITERIA

Accepted applications will be classified according to each criteria on a scale of 0 to 5 points. Half points are allowed.

## 5.2 FINAL CLASSIFICATION

The Final Classification (FC) of each application is the sum of the three individual criteria, resulting on the scale of 0 to 20 points for rating criteria aggregation.

The application who obtains a final score per criterion lower than:

8 points – Criteria 1

3 points – Criteria 2

3 points – Criteria 3

will be excluded for the purpose of granting financial support.

Funding of applications also depends on the total available amount previously established in the section 1.4. of this call.

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Applications that meet a final score **higher or equal than the threshold** mentioned before are ranked in descending order according to the scores from the assessment of selection criteria.

## 6. NOTICE OF DECISION TO BENEFICIARY

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 1.7 of this Call.

The Programme Operator (PO) 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 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.

## 7. PAYMENT FLOWS

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 agreed timetable and will normally take place once a year.





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- Advance instalments are offset against incurred expenditure reported in the Project Interim Reports.
- The Project Promoters will receive subsequent advance instalment under conditions established on the Project Contract.
- If any irregularity with financial 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 as in the example below:

| Project Implementation Duration              | First Advance Payment | Interim Payments | Final Payment (reimbursement)           |
|--|-----------------------|------------------|---|
|  |                       |                  | 90 days after the Final Report Approval |
| <b>36 months <math>\geq</math> 24 Months</b> | 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.

## 8. ADITIONAL INFORMATION

E-mail contact for additional information: [eeagrants@dgpm.mm.gov.pt](mailto:eeagrants@dgpm.mm.gov.pt)

An answer will be given by email within 5 working days.

A Frequently Asked Questions section (FAQ) will be published on the PO's Programme website <https://www.eeagrants.gov.pt/en/programmes/blue-growth/calls/call-4-research/> based on questions received from potential applicants and partners. The FAQ will be updated on a regular basis.

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Phone number contact: (+351) 218 291 000 - available Mondays to Thursdays, from 10:00 to 12:30.

**Address:**

Directorate General for Maritime Policy

Av. Dr. Alfredo Magalhães Ramalho, n.º 6 – 1495-006 ALGÉS - PORTUGAL

Phone number:(+351) 218 291 000

**Norwegian partners** may contact the Research Council of Norway in case of questions relating to activities in Norway and national rules and practices.

Aleksandra W. Haugstad: [awh@rcn.no](mailto:awh@rcn.no)

**Icelandic partners** may contact the The Icelandic Centre for Research (Rannís) in case of questions relating to activities in Iceland and national rules and practices.

Egill Þór Nielsson: [egill.thor.nielsson@rannis.is](mailto:egill.thor.nielsson@rannis.is)