



19 December 2007:

## OPEN CALL FOR PROPOSALS

for the award of Framework Partnership Agreement(s) concerning the

### European Topic Centre on

### Biological Diversity 2009-2013 (2 lots) EEA/BSS/08/001<sup>1</sup>

#### 1. Background information

##### 1.1 The European Environment Agency and the European Environment Information and Observation Network

The European Environment Agency (EEA) is the main source of information of the European Union and its Member States in developing environment policies. The Agency aims to support sustainable development and to help achieve significant and measurable improvement in Europe's environment through the provision of timely, targeted, relevant and reliable information to policy-making agents and the public.

Established in 1990 and operational in Copenhagen since 1994, the EEA is the hub of the European Environment Information and Observation Network (Eionet), a network of around 300 institutes across Europe through which it collects and disseminates environment-related data and information. This information is made available through various report series, briefings and the EEA website<sup>2</sup>. The European Commission, the European Parliament, national and regional authorities in the member countries, and a wide range of non-governmental organisations are among the regular users of the databases and information products.

Institutionally, the EEA is one of the Agencies of the European Union. The functioning of the EEA and Eionet are described in the EEA founding regulation<sup>3</sup>. The Agency, which is open to all nations sharing its objectives, has currently 32 member countries. These are the 27 EU Member States; Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway; Switzerland and Turkey.

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<sup>1</sup> The successful *consortium/a* will be proposed (a) Framework Partnership Agreement(s) (FPA(s)) covering the period from 2009 to 2013 (coinciding with the next EEA Strategy 2009-2013).

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.eea.europa.eu/>.

<sup>3</sup> (EEC) No. 1210/90 of 7 May 1990 as last amended by (EC) No. 1641/2003 of 22 July 2003, see: <http://org.eea.europa.eu/documents>.

Part of Eionet are currently five European Topic Centres (ETCs) covering the following topics: 'Air and Climate Change', 'Biological Diversity', 'Land Use and Spatial Information', 'Resource and Waste Management' and 'Water'.

Having regard to the expiry of the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) concerning the ETC Biological Diversity on 31 December 2008, the EEA launches this call with a view to identifying the *consortium(a)* which will continue the work in the respective area from 1 January 2009 to 31 December 2013.<sup>4</sup>

Subject to available funds from the General Budget of the EU, the estimated total annual budget for Specific Agreements (SAs) to be awarded on the basis of the Framework Partnership Agreement(s) (FPA(s)) to be awarded following this call is estimated at:

**Biological Diversity (total): 1 300 000 EUR, of which:**

**Lot 1 – Biological Diversity: 900 000 EUR;**

**Lot 2 – Ecosystem Assessment: 400 000 EUR;**

*Consortia* may submit proposals for **one or two** lots (**Lot 1 and/or Lot 2**).

In accordance with the instructions in the **invitation letter** (section 4.1), *consortia* are required to **indicate on the inner envelop** containing their proposals, whether they are bidding for **Lot 1, Lot 2 or both lots**.

*Consortia* bidding for both lots are required to present **separate proposals per lot** following the structure and order of Annex 1.

## **1.2 Role of European Topic Centres (ETCs)**

ETCs are, according to the EEA founding regulation<sup>5</sup> and in practice, an important instrument supporting the EEA through the execution of sizeable, continuous, well-defined tasks with the involvement of member countries. ETCs are involved in the work of EEA as data centres for the issues air, climate change, water, biodiversity and land use. Tasks focus on the harmonisation of monitoring of the environment in the member countries, the compilation of the resulting data in international databases, the processing of the information including the use of models to describe and analyse the present and future state of the environment, and the production of indicators to communicate the findings to various users.

ETCs are a part of and support to Eionet. Their activities have an important networking-component involving experts in the member countries in the harmonisation, quality assessment and exchange of data, capacity-building in

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<sup>4</sup> This call is subject to the EEA Financial Regulation and its Implementing Rules as determined by the EU's Financial Regulation (EC) No. 1605/2002 as last amended by (EC) No. 1995/2006 and its Implementing Rules (EC) No. 2342/2002 as last amended by (EC) No. 478/2007, in particular their respective Titles VI on Grants (Articles 108-120 FR and 160-184a IR).

<sup>5</sup> The EEA founding regulation, see footnote 2, describes in Article 4(4)-(6) European Topic Centres and their tasks as part of Eionet.

member countries through country visits and meetings with all Eionet country experts. ETCs are sparring partners for countries discussing options for improving national information systems. Networking with member countries also includes their involvement occurs in indicator analysis and assessment. Regardless of the EEA leading, steering and supervising the work of the ETCs, ETCs are also expected to cooperate amongst them selves on crosscutting projects.

In order to assume this role, ETCs are expected to assemble the best expertise in Europe covering the full geographical area of EEA member countries, to handle data in their areas and analyse environmental data with regard to societal and economic developments relevant to environmental and sectoral policies. ETCs are thus important resources for the EEA, its member countries and the EU institutions.

### **1.3 Agreements**

All activities of ETCs are based on Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs) and Specific Agreements (SAs) awarded to implement the former. Work programmes (mostly annual implementation plans) which form part of the SAs are decided upon by the EEA taking into account the requirements of all parts of Eionet and other stakeholders.

All grants are subject to co-financing by the *consortium* concerned (minimum 10% of the total eligible costs).

## **2. Future EEA work and demands in the area of Biological Diversity 2009-2013**

### **2.1 Policy context**

The policy priorities for biodiversity in the EU can be characterized under three strands:

1. The protection of key species and habitats of most interest as provided by the Birds<sup>6</sup> and the Habitats<sup>7</sup> Directives (the ‘nature directives’).
2. The commitment to halt the loss of biodiversity in the EU by 2010.
3. A longer-term vision within which to frame future policy around maintaining the ‘ecosystem services’ that natural systems provide and on which Europe’s well-being depends.

### **2.2 The “nature directives”**

The EU policy recognizes that certain habitats and species are more at risk than others. Consequently, it affords special attention to the creation and protection of a substantial network of sites of highest nature value — Natura 2000. However, the approach also recognizes that much biodiversity resides outside these sites. Action in the wider environment outside Natura 2000 is provided for by dedicated nature

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<sup>6</sup> Directive 79/409/EC, OJ L 103, 25.4.1979, p.1

<sup>7</sup> Directive 92/43/EEC, OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p.7

policy (for example, action for threatened species, and for connectivity of the Natura 2000) and by integration of biodiversity needs into agricultural, forests, fisheries and other policies.

While the nature directives have not yet been fully implemented in all Member States, substantial progress has been made towards designation of the Natura 2000 network, with finalization of the designation process for terrestrial sites across the EU27 scheduled for 2009. The network now covers some 20% of the territory of the EU. At the same time, work is underway with EU Member States on reporting under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive on the conservation status of all habitats and species. This exercise is expected to continue through to 2009 when the Commission is scheduled to report to the European Council and Parliament on overall progress.

Outstanding challenges include the absence, as yet, of designation of the Natura 2000 network within the marine environment, the management of the Natura 2000 network, following the development and evolution of the network including the regular updating of the EU lists of designated sites, the development of a consolidated and streamlined information system on biodiversity based inter-alia on the information collected under the nature directives, trends in the conservation status of the species and habitats covered under the birds and habitats directives, assessment of the damaging impacts of developmental activities on Natura 2000 sites, and a wide range of actions needed under the Birds Directive.

### **2.3 The 2010 target**

At Community level, the policy framework to halt biodiversity loss in the EU is now largely in place. Biodiversity objectives are, for example, integrated in the Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS)<sup>8</sup> and the Lisbon partnership for growth and jobs and in a wide range of environmental and sector policies. EU Heads of State or Government agreed in 2001 “to halt the decline of biodiversity in the EU by 2010”<sup>9</sup> and to “restore habitats and natural systems”<sup>10</sup>. In 2002, they joined some 130 world leaders in agreeing “to significantly reduce the rate of biodiversity loss globally by 2010”<sup>11</sup>.

While important progress has been made three particular threats to EU biodiversity are highlighted. First, that of ill-considered land use and development and the need to reconcile land use and development needs with the conservation of biodiversity and maintenance of ecosystem services. Second, the increasing impact of climate change on biodiversity and the need for effective action on greenhouse gas emissions beyond the Kyoto Protocol targets, including adaptation to climate change. Third the threat by Invasive Alien Species and the need to develop warning and monitoring systems, under consideration by a Commission Communication on the matter. Worldwide, progress is not encouraging. The EU shares responsibility for this. Our lifestyles rely heavily on imports from developing countries, the production and transport of which may often accelerate loss of biodiversity.

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<sup>8</sup> COM (2001) 264 final

<sup>9</sup> Presidency Conclusions, Göteborg European Council 15 and 16 June 2001

<sup>10</sup> COM (2001) 264 final

<sup>11</sup> World Summit for Sustainable Development, Plan of Implementation

Finally, halting biodiversity loss by 2010 is not an end–point in itself. The Commission intends to launch a debate on a longer–term vision within which to frame future policy — on the kind of nature we want in the European Union and on the EU’s role in safeguarding nature worldwide, to be followed by EEA by a wider debate relating to its pan-European perspective and involvement.

## **2.4 Longer-term vision**

The Communication from the European Commission in 2006 on “Halting the loss of Biodiversity by 2010 — and beyond” states that: “Over recent decades, humanity has benefited enormously from development<sup>12</sup>, which has enriched our lives. However, much of this development has been associated with a decline in both the variety and extent of natural systems — of biodiversity.<sup>13</sup> This loss of biodiversity, at the levels of ecosystems, species and genes, is of concern not just because of the important intrinsic value of nature, but also because it results in a decline in ‘ecosystem services’ which natural systems provide. These services include production of food, fuel, fibre and medicines, regulation of water, air and climate, maintenance of soil fertility, cycling of nutrients. In this context concern for biodiversity is integral to sustainable development and underpins competitiveness, growth and employment, and improved livelihoods.”

From an economic perspective, therefore, biodiversity provides benefits for present and future generations by way of ecosystem services. It is difficult to put precise monetary values on these services worldwide, but initiatives are underway to do so, such as that launched by Germany and the European Commission at the G8+5 meeting in Potsdam in March 2007. According to the 2005 Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, some two-thirds of ecosystem services worldwide are in decline, compromised by over–use and loss of the species richness which ensures their stability. In support of policy, it is crucial to map ecosystem services, their health and resilience in Europe, as well as Europe’s impacts on services outside Europe.

## **2.5 EEA role in support of policy**

The EEA is currently in the process of preparing its next multi-annual Strategy for the period 2009-13. It is expected that biodiversity will continue to be one of the major components of this Strategy and that the EEA’s role will continue to be to support the EU’s policy priorities through the provision of timely, targeted, reliable and relevant information and assessments, and to underpin these processes with the requisite data management, networking and technical support as needed by major stakeholders as EEA member countries, European Commission and European Parliament.

Currently the bulk of available resources on biodiversity give priority to support the first policy strand on implementation of the nature directives, continuing a long-standing support by EEA to the Commission and Member States since the late 1990s. Recent years have seen increasing emphasis given to supporting the

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<sup>12</sup> See, e.g. Human Development Index trends, in UNDP *Human Development Report 2005*  
<sup>13</sup> CBD Secretariat (2006) *Global Biodiversity Outlook 2*.

monitoring of progress towards the 2010 target through the Streamlining European Biodiversity Indicators 2010 (SEBI2010). In the last year, increasing consideration has been given to analyzing ecosystems and in particular the health, resilience and value of ecosystem services in Europe through the European Ecosystem Assessment (Eureca!) project established in January 2007 and scheduled for completion by 2012.

Over the course of the next strategy it is expected that available resources will be allocated in a more balanced way to support each of the three main policy strands. The challenges for the EEA in the period 2009-2013 will therefore be on the one hand to ensure continuity with respect to the first two policy strands and on the other to ensure that expertise and resources are mobilized sufficiently to support Biodiversity assessments, namely the Eureca! process, including aligning Europe's contributions to any future Millennium Ecosystem Assessment follow-up at the global level.

Crucial to success will be to work efficiently and transparently with a wide range of actors involved in order to ensure that the requisite data and methodologies needed to support the above activities are secured in the most cost-effective way. Two recent initiatives are important in this regard. The first concerns the designation to EEA of responsibility for coordination of the European Biodiversity Data Centre as part of the Technical Arrangement signed in 2005 by the Group of Four – EEA, DG Environment, Eurostat and the Joint Research Centre – to ensure effective allocation of EU resources on data management. The second concerns the ongoing development of a Commission Communication on a concept known as the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) that is expected to greatly increase availability and transparency of environmental information at all levels, and which is underpinned by the following principles:

- information will be managed as close as possible to its source;
- information will be provided once, and shared with others for many purposes;
- information will be readily available to public authorities and enable them to easily fulfill their reporting obligations vis-à-vis Community environmental policies and legislation as well as multilateral environmental agreements to which the Community and its Member States are parties;
- information will be readily accessible to end-users, primarily public authorities at all levels from local to European, that need this information to enable them to assess in a timely fashion the state of the environment and the effectiveness of their policies, and to design new policy;
- information will also be accessible to enable end-users, both public authorities and citizens, that need the information to make comparisons at the appropriate geographical scale (e.g. countries, cities, catchment areas) and to participate meaningfully in the development and implementation of environmental policy; and,
- information will be fully available to the general public, after due consideration of the appropriate level of aggregation, subject to appropriate confidentiality constraints, and at national level in the relevant national language(s).

Already in 2005-2007, consolidating work done in previous years, the EEA has made significant contributions on improving the information base for biodiversity. Some of the most notable contributions are listed below in order to allow potential bidders to understand some of the basis on which future activities will be built:

A key task will be to build further on reporting on species-habitat types and existing reference databases which currently can be queried and viewed in the European Nature Information System. (<http://eunis.eea.europa.eu/gis-tool.jsp>)

It will also be important to build further on data flows like Nationally Designated sites (CDDA) <http://dataservice.eea.europa.eu/atlas/viewdata/viewpub.asp?id=2364> and Natura 2000 sites <http://dataservice.eea.europa.eu/atlas/viewdata/viewpub.asp?id=2250> which can be downloaded from the EEA Data Service. The development of such information will enable support and feed back to the policy cycles, most notably to the EU policy on nature conservation, as well as input to the assessment of the EU 2010 biodiversity target.

The EEA 2006 report "Progress in halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010", has already addressed the 2010 target progress and for the first time the role of ecosystems in Europe in supporting biodiversity and human well-being objectives combining a quantitative/qualitative approach [http://reports.eea.europa.eu/eea\\_report\\_2006\\_5/en](http://reports.eea.europa.eu/eea_report_2006_5/en).

The EEA 2007 report on SEBI 2010 has proposed 26 headline indicators for assessing progress on the 2010 target for halting biodiversity loss. These indicators will be assessed and data sets developed in collaboration with a range of partners and data holders. [http://reports.eea.europa.eu/technical\\_report\\_2007\\_11/en](http://reports.eea.europa.eu/technical_report_2007_11/en).

The EU Biodiversity Clearing House Mechanism Portal will be amongst the tools to be further used for this type of information, with the aim of increasing the potential of information harvesting amongst data providing organisations (<http://biodiversity-chm.eea.europa.eu/>), and as a broad networking tool from the country to European and CBD level, complementing in an integrated way the EEA web based tools.

Developing the scientific basis and managing the knowledge for Ecosystem Services is right at the heart of ecosystem assessments and strategic thinking on biodiversity conservation policies, especially in the face of adaptation to climate change. This task will involve testing assessment methodologies with existing data and organisation of the 2012 Ecosystem Assessment for Europe – a communication on the Eureka! objectives, planning and expected outcomes will be published at the beginning of 2008.

In the period 2009-13, EEA activities (subject to foreseen discussions on the next strategy) are likely to be centered on **four main clusters of activities**:

- **Support to the European Commission and EU Member States on implementation of the nature directives.** Activities in this cluster will focus on further Natura 2000 sites designation support as needed (including marine sites), completion and follow-up of the Article 17 reporting under the habitats directive and the development of tools for following trends in the

conservation of species and habitats covered by the birds and habitats directives and technical and data management support to both the birds directive and the habitats directive.

- **Implementation of the EU biodiversity data centre and SEIS.** This activity will focus on working with data providers, through agreements and other mechanisms to ensure European level data are secured in support of policy objectives around the directives and the 2010 target, based on the SEIS principles. The information resources to be managed will include the Natura 2000 data base developed by the Commission and information provided by Member States under the nature directives, information resulting from the Article 17 exercise, from the CDDA, as well as all information supporting the SEBI2010 process. Particular attention will be paid to links with data providers in Eionet, NGOs, sectoral policy domains and framework programme activities at the European level that directly contribute to implementation of the nature directives and SEBI 2010. One output from this work should be the Biodiversity Information System for Europe (BISE) within which the data centre will be a core component.
- **Assessment of progress towards the 2010 target on halting biodiversity loss.** Activities in this cluster will include delivering an assessment in 2010 using the SEBI indicator framework including a scorecard on progress by countries that will be linked to a parallel process in the Commission on a policy action scoreboard under the Biodiversity Action Plans process. The objective will be to connect both processes so as to inform as far as possible on the effectiveness of various policy actions. The outcome(s) of this area of work will fully support the preparation of the SOER2010 report and the Astana report.
- **Assessment of the state, resilience and value of ecosystem services in Europe and beyond.** The overall objective will be to deliver the Eureka! project by 2012 by gathering data, methods and analysis of the distribution of ecosystem services in Europe and their state and resilience with respect to socio-economic pressures and impacts. Methods to be developed include spatial mapping services, resilience thresholds and measures, global footprint impacts, accounting for ecosystems economic value, scenarios for future policy options and policy effectiveness analysis.

### **3. Main elements of the work programme to be carried out by the European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity (ETC/BD)**

#### **3.1 Overview**

The European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity (ETC/BD) shall support the work of the EEA on this area in the period 2009-13. In recognition of the very different expertise needed for the various types of work to be done under this topic and in order to ensure the best allocation of available resources, the expected work is divided into **two lots** inviting proposals for either one or two lots.

#### **3.2 Specific tasks**

##### **Lot 1 – Biological Diversity:**



## **Support to the biodiversity data centre, nature directives and 2010 target**

The ETC shall support the EEA, on the delivery of quality assured data and indicators in support of the data centre (and SEIS) and the Pan-European SEBI2010 process. It shall also through the EEA provide concrete support to DG ENV on the continuing implementation and evaluation of the habitats and birds directives. Tasks could include for example:

- The delivery of quality assured European level data sets around habitats and species in collaboration with identified data providers and consistent with the objectives of the directives and SEBI 2010.
- To support the development of a consolidated and streamlined Biodiversity Data Centre as a core contribution to the Biodiversity Information System for Europe (BISE), a constitutive part of the biodiversity Data Centre and incorporating inter alia the Natura 2000 data base and the information submitted by Member States under the directives.
- Capacity building with Eionet and others on the implementation of SEIS principles in this regard.
- Regular updating and further development of the SEBI2010 indicators for publication by EEA either through the EEA Indicator Management System, or reporting formats.
- Technical support to DG ENV and Member States on the implementation of the birds directive and the habitats directive including the completion of the Natura 2000 network (with particular attention to the designation of marine site under the habitats directive,) and thereafter the regular updating of the site information designation issues under the birds directive and the conservation of habitats and species.
- Cross-working with other ETCs to ensure that biodiversity-relevant data are fed into analysis relevant to water, climate change, land use, sustainable consumption and production and air quality (EEA's other data centre responsibilities) and that data from these centres feed biodiversity assessments as appropriate.
- Cross-linking to other data centres managed by Eurostat and JRC as appropriate.

## **Lot 2 – Ecosystem Assessments:**

The ETC shall support the EEA in its work to analyse ecosystem services in Europe and beyond with particular focus on the science of ecosystem services – state, impacts, health, resilience. Tasks could include for example:

- Develop methods for and mapping ecosystem services in Europe.
- Develop methods for and analyse impacts on ecosystem services from a wide range of socio-economic activities.
- Develop methods for and analyse the health and resilience of ecosystems and services in Europe and beyond.
- Develop methods for and measure Europe's footprint on ecosystems and services elsewhere in the world.

- Contribute to how such methods can be applied to other analytical parts of the Eureka! process – ecosystem accounting, economic valuation, scenarios, policy evaluation.
- Contribute to capacity building in the countries on ecosystem services, health/resilience and their assessment through the Eionet.

Possibly contribute to Europe's input to any Millennium Ecosystem Assessment follow-up.

#### **4. Mandatory requirements**

In order to deliver high quality products and services the future contractors shall comply with the following mandatory requirements:

As the working language of the EEA is English, it will also be the working language of the Framework Partnership Agreements and Specific Agreements. More particularly, the ETC is expected to deliver documents (background notes, draft fact sheets and reports, etc.) at a quality level not requiring further language checking prior to publication. Future contractors are required to have a quality control procedure to this effect.

Without exception, the ETC(s) shall report to the EEA, the main contact points being the ETC Manager and the competent EEA Project Manager.

Subject to guidance from the EEA, the ETC(s) shall ensure coherence and integration of its work with the work carried out by the EEA. To this effect and as far as specific tasks are concerned, the EEA Project Manager/s will be in close contact with the future contractors (ETC Manager and partners as needed).

The ETC(s) are also expected to provide input into the initial development of the EEA's annual work programme. Furthermore it shall provide EEA with proposals for the continuous development of the working areas.

While cooperation amongst ETCs is subject to respective requests and coordination from the EEA, ETCs shall be structured in a way which ensures proper linkages with other ETCs as cross-sectoral and cross-thematic cooperation and integration needs further attention in the future. Such integrated cooperation needs highly transparent ETC-management in order to avoid duplication or disintegration of tasks across partners.

Maintaining and improving the links to Eionet<sup>14</sup>, in particular the Primary Contact Points (PCP) and National Reference Centres (NRC) appointed by the member countries, is the basic foundation for the work of the ETCs. This means, e.g., *ad hoc* technical support to member countries, reflecting the specific needs of all countries, to enable them to contribute to the reporting of 'priority data'. The ETCs shall also assist the EEA in organising annual meetings with the Eionet partners.

The EEA is committed to an internal Environmental Policy to ensure that the EEA operates in an environmentally sound manner. Since March 2005 the EEA is EMAS certified. It is thus required that the future contractors take into consideration the reduction of environmental impact of ETC activities and develop Environmental Policies for the ETCs.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.eionet.europa.eu/>.

## 5. Criteria

### 5.1 Eligibility

*Consortia* consisting of at least two partners (natural/legal persons, private or public), these partners being established in different EEA member countries (the 27 EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey), are eligible, subject to 5.2 and 5.3, for submitting proposals for Lot 1, Lot 2 or both lots.

Entities which do not have legal personality under the applicable national law of one of the EEA member countries are also eligible under the same conditions, provided that their representatives have and can prove their capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf and assume financial liability.

To the extent that this is specifically indicated with regard to parts of the work programme specified in section 3 (Pan-European SEBI2010 process and analysis of ecosystem services in Europe and beyond), a *consortium* may also include partners from other countries than the above mentioned, provided that the other eligibility requirements are respected and the share of partners from non-EEA member countries does not exceed 10 % of the total eligible costs.

### 5.2 *Ne bis in idem*

While partners may participate in *consortia* aiming at FPAs concerning different ETCs, (see the parallel Open Call EEA/SKI/08/001), **no partner** may participate **in more than one *consortium*** aiming at the FPA **concerning the ETC of this Open Call**, the ETC on Biological Diversity, **and the very same lot**.

**Examples:** A partner may participate in **one *consortium* bidding exclusively for Lot 1** and in **another *consortium* bidding exclusively for Lot 2**. However, a partner may **not** participate **in more than one *consortium*** bidding for Lot 1; or Lot 2; or both Lots. **Neither** may a partner participate **in one *consortium*** bidding exclusively **for a single lot and in another *consortium* bidding for both** lots.

Disregard of these rules leads to exclusion of all *consortia* concerned.

Similarly it is prohibited for proposed staff to sign letters of intent to participate in more than one *consortium* aiming at one and the same FPA concerning the same ETC and lot. Disregard of this leads to exclusion of all *consortia* concerned.

### 5.3 Exclusion criteria

Apart from the situations under 5.2, *consortia* shall be excluded from participation in this procedure if any of its partners is in one of the situations referred to in Articles 93(1), 94 and 96(2)(a) of the FR, namely the following:

- (a) they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, 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 or regulations;
- (b) they have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of *res judicata*;
- (c) they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify;
- (d) they have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;
- (e) they have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of *res judicata* for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity detrimental to the Communities' financial interests;
- (f) following another procurement or grant award procedure financed by the Community budget, they have been declared to be in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with their contractual obligations;
- (g) have been excluded (according to Article 96(2)(a) FR) as candidate, tenderer or contractor from the contracts and grants financed by the budget, for a maximum period of ten years.

Every *consortium* partner must provide a declaration on their honour, duly signed and dated, stating that they are not in any of the situations listed above (see Annex 3).

The *consortium* to whom the contract will be awarded must provide evidence confirming the declaration referred to in the previous point.

The contracting authority shall accept as satisfactory the following evidence:

- i) For points (a), (b) and (e) a recent extract from the judicial record, or failing that, a recent equivalent document issued by a judicial or administrative authority in the country of origin or provenance showing that those requirements are satisfied.
- ii) For point (d) a recent certificate issued by the competent authority of the State concerned.

Where the document or certificate referred to above is not issued in the country concerned and for other cases of exclusion, it may be replaced by a sworn or, failing that, a solemn statement made by the interested party before a judicial or administrative authority, a notary or a qualified professional body in his country of origin or provenance.

Contracts may not be awarded to *consortia* who or whose partners, during the procedure:

- (a) are subject to a conflict of interest;
- (b) are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the contracting authority as a condition of participation in the contract procedure or fail to supply this information.

## **5.4 Selection criteria**

### **(a) Legal capacity**

*Consortia* are required to prove that all their partners are authorised to perform the contract under national law, as evidenced by inclusion in a trade or professional register, a sworn declaration or certificate, membership of a specific organisation, express authorisation, entry in the VAT register or any other statutory document allowing verification of the partner's legal status.

All partners of a *consortium* shall provide an identification sheet (Annex 2 to the Terms of Reference) duly filled out and signed, a copy of inscription in a trade register, where applicable, and a copy of inscription in VAT registers.

### **(b) Economic and financial capacity**

Evidence of the *consortium's* economic and financial capacity shall be furnished by the following documents:

- proof of stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain the *consortium's* activity throughout the period 2009-2013;
- for private partners: profit and loss accounts, balance sheet for the last financial year for which the accounts were closed (and audit reports by an approved external auditor certifying the accounts for the last available financial year<sup>15</sup>).

### **(c) Technical and professional capacity**

Evidence of the *consortium's* technical and professional capacity to carry out the envisaged work programme shall be furnished on the basis of the following documents:

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<sup>15</sup> Having regard to Article 173(4) IR and the fact that all *consortium* partners will assume joint and several liability in accordance with the FPA, such audit reports are not required if *consortia* include any public bodies.

1. Detailed CVs (indicating, *inter alia*, the level of English/other language skills) + signed letters of intent of:
  - the ETC Manager and core staff of the *consortium* coordinator; as well as
  - the key experts of all *consortium* partners

proving that the *consortium* as a whole has sufficient technical, scientific and management (including financial) experience to assume the role of an ETC;
2. A list and brief account of similar reference projects carried out by the partners forming the *consortium* in the past five years, with the sums, dates and recipients, public or private;
3. Letters of intent of all *consortium* partners to participate and provide co-financing up to at least 10% of the total eligible cost of the annual work programme;<sup>16</sup>
4. For each partner established in an EEA member country, letters of confirmation from the respective Member of the EEA Management Board that the relevant partner is able to perform the function of an ETC partner within Eionet.
5. Proof and description of the *consortium's*/partners' Quality Assurance and Quality Control systems;
6. Proof and description of the *consortium's*/partners' environmental policy;

## 5.5 Award criteria

Framework Partnership Agreement(s) will be awarded to the *consortium* or the *consortia* whose proposal(s) guarantee best, expressed in points and on the basis of the below criteria, that the EEA's demands as described above are met.

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<sup>16</sup> The 10%-rule of minimum co-financing is applied towards the *consortium* as a whole. To what extent partners contribute to this co-financing is an internal *consortium* matter. Before awarding any grant through Specific Agreements (SAs) based on Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA(s)), (the) *consortium(a)* must furnish proof of the amount of co-financing to be provided (Article I.6.2 FPA).

**Lot 1:**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Max. points</b>
1. Demonstrated experience and excellent expertise to manage complex data sets, both tabular and spatial data and the interaction between both including quality assurance/control procedures.	20
2. Demonstrated experience and excellent expertise to produce and manage indicators relevant to the 2010 target and to support more broadly EEA assessments of progress towards the target.	20
3. Demonstrated experience and excellent expertise to support implementation of the nature directives, how to translate this information into 2010 target assessments and ecosystem assessments and outreach of both activities	20
4. Demonstrated ability to network and build capacities externally on the above tasks with a wide range of actors and disciplines especially Eionet, NGOs and research <i>consortia</i> .	20
5. A balanced spread of expertise and partners across EEA member countries (possibly with one or more partners outside these countries subject to 5.1), sound arrangements for <b>management</b> of the ETC <i>consortium</i> , and ensuring a smooth transition from the old ETC/BD to the new ETC. The proposal shall also demonstrate plans for sound environmental management of the consortium.	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

**Lot 2:**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Max. points</b>
1. Demonstrated experience and excellent expertise through available expertise to develop and implement (often in partnership with others) methods for mapping ecosystems services, the impacts on them from a range of activities and their resulting health and resilience. Special emphasis will be given to methods that are spatially explicit and consistent with ecosystem analysis and accounting techniques (including the production of maps when appropriate).	35
2. Demonstrated experience and excellent expertise through available expertise to support the EEA's work on the Eureka! assessment for the above issues and how they can be linked to economic analysis, policy analysis and scenarios for ecosystem services.	25
3. Demonstrated ability to network and build capacities externally on the above tasks with a wide range of actors and disciplines especially Eionet, NGOs and research <i>consortia</i> .	20
4. A balanced spread of expertise and partners across EEA member countries (possibly with one or more partners outside these countries subject to 5.1), sound arrangements for <b>management</b> of the ETC <i>consortium</i> , and ensuring a smooth transition from the old ETC/BD to the new ETC. The proposal shall also demonstrate plans for sound environmental management of the consortium.	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

Proposals for Lot 1 and proposals for Lot 2 will be evaluated separately and independently and will be awarded points according to the extent to which the above award criteria are fulfilled.

Two Framework Partnership Agreements will be awarded in case two different *consortia* are successful for Lot 1 and Lot 2.

In case the same *consortium* is successful for Lots 1 and 2, a single Framework Partnership Agreement will be awarded.

## **6. Environmental considerations**

The EEA runs a certified environmental management system (EMAS) and aims to minimise the environmental impact of all its activities, including those carried out under contract. The future contractors will, therefore, be requested to consider the EEA environmental management guidelines in the implementation of the contract, in particular, those relating to business travel/electronic means of communication, paper and energy consumption. Further information on the EMAS system can be found on the EEA homepage: <http://www.eea.europa.eu/documents/emas>.



Moreover, it is strongly recommended that proposals are submitted in an environmentally friendly way, e.g., by choosing a simple and clear structure (list of contents and consecutive page numbering), double-sided printing, limiting attachments to what is required in the Terms of Reference (no additional material in paper) and avoiding plastic folders or binders.

## **7. Further information**

Submitting a proposal implies acceptance by the *consortium* of all terms and conditions of the standard Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) and its Annexes.

## **8. Timing**

**Information briefing: 23 January 2008 (Copenhagen)**

**Deadline for submitting proposals: 21 April 2008**

Following a decision of the EEA Management Board on the designation of the successful *consortia* (foreseen for June 2008), and prior to signature of Framework Partnership Agreement(s) (FPA(s)), all *consortia* will be notified of the outcome of this call.

## **ANNEXES**

Annex 1 – Proposal (model structure)

Annex 2 – Identification sheet

Annex 3 – Declaration exclusion criteria