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Terms of reference for the European Topic Centre on Inland, Coastal and Marine waters (2019-2021)

Reference: Open call for proposals No OCP/EEA/NSS/18/002-ETC/ICM

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1. Background information

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

The European Environment Agency (EEA) is a main source of information of the European Union (EU) and its Member States (MS) in developing, implementing and evaluating European environment policies. The EEA 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 ⁽¹⁾), a partnership network consisting of the EEA itself, six European Topic Centres (ETCs) and a network of around 1000 experts from 39 countries in over 350 national environment agencies and other bodies dealing with environment information. These are the National Focal Points (NFPs) and the National Reference Centres (NRCs). Through Eionet, the EEA collects environment-related data and information, which is made available through various report series, briefings and the EEA website ⁽²⁾. The European Commission, the European Parliament, national and regional authorities in the member countries, the scientific world 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 EU. The functioning of the EEA and Eionet are described in the EEA regulation ⁽³⁾. The EEA, which is open to all nations sharing

⁽¹⁾ <http://www.eionet.europa.eu>

⁽²⁾ <https://www.eea.europa.eu>

⁽³⁾ (EC) Regulation No. 401/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on the EEA and Eionet (codified version, OJ L126 of 21 May 2009, p13, see: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32009R0401>)

its objectives, currently has 33 member countries ⁽⁴⁾ and 6 cooperating countries ⁽⁵⁾ in the West Balkans, jointly referred to as the EEA39.

The EEA and Eionet contribute to the European Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS), a distributed, integrated, web-enabled information system based on a network of public information providers sharing environmental data and information. It builds on existing e-infrastructure, systems and services in the member countries, EU institutions and main international and regional partner organisations.

As stated above, part of Eionet are currently six European Topic Centres (ETCs) covering the following topics: 'Air pollution and Climate change Mitigation', 'Climate Change impacts, vulnerability and Adaptation', 'Inland, Coastal and Marine waters', 'Urban, Land and Soil systems', 'Biological Diversity', and 'Waste and Material in a Green Economy'.

Having regard to the expiry of the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) concerning the ETC Inland, Coastal and Marine waters on 29 July 2018, the EEA launches this call with a view to identifying the consortium that will take up the work in the topic area from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2021.

1.2 Role of European Topic Centres (ETCs)

ETCs are, according to the EEA regulation ⁽⁶⁾ and in practice, an important instrument supporting the EEA through the execution of sizeable, continuous, well-defined tasks with the involvement of EEA countries. Tasks focus on the harmonisation of monitoring of the environment in EEA countries, the compilation of the resulting data in 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 EEA countries in the harmonisation, quality assessment and exchange of data and/or information, capacity-building in EEA 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 EEA countries also includes their involvement in indicator analysis and assessment. Under the overall guidance of the EEA, leading, steering and supervising their work, ETCs are also expected to cooperate amongst themselves on crosscutting projects.

The role of ETCs in supporting EU legislation implementation has been also a key element of EEA activities towards its support to Commission work. In some cases some capacity building with MS is involved in these reporting and assessments activities.

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 topic areas and analyse environmental and climate change data with regard to societal and

⁽⁴⁾ These are the 28 EU MS of the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey.

⁽⁵⁾ Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia as well as Kosovo under the UN Security Council Resolution No 1244/99.

⁽⁶⁾ The EEA regulation, see footnote 3, describes in Article 4(4)-(6) European Topic Centres and their tasks as part of Eionet.

economic developments relevant to environmental, climate change and sectoral policies and achieving sustainable development.

1.3 Agreements

The successful consortium will be awarded an FPA for a maximum period of 36 months, starting from the date of signature and not exceeding 31 December 2021. The FPA will be implemented through specific grant agreements (SAs), which shall be valid for a period of 12 months. Annexes to such SAs will include a detailed description of the tasks to be performed and of the deliverables to be provided and shall be decided upon by the EEA and ETCs taking into account the requirements of all parts of Eionet and other stakeholders.

The total value of the FPA ranges between EUR 4,200,000.00 and EUR 4,600,000.00 over a maximum period of 36 months. However, the total value of the annual budget for each SA will be subject to available funds from the general budget of the EU and the priorities set in the EEA's annual work programme.

All grants are subject to co-financing by the consortium concerned (minimum 10% of the total eligible costs ⁽⁷⁾).

The FPA will be signed between the EEA and the appointed coordinator of the consortium to whom the other consortium partners confer power of attorney for the purposes of submission of the proposal and signature of the FPA and SAs and any subsequent amendments thereto.

For further details, reference is made to the draft FPA and draft SA attached as annex 5.

2. Future demands on EEA work in the area of inland, coastal and marine waters 2019-2021

2.1 Policy context

EEA contributions to the policy process entails a multifaceted knowledge base and the management of large amounts of data, information and their concise quality assurance, interpretation and assessment. In the following, the wider policy context, of which the ETC needs to be aware, is scoped. The concrete roles of the EEA and ETC are described in section 2.2, and specific ETC tasks in section 3. The proposal submitted in response to this call is expected to demonstrate the capability of the consortium to work with all the specific tasks targeted in the relevant policy context.

At global level, the UN 2030 Agenda is increasingly framing EEA's work with regard to contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG6 and SDG14.

At the European level, the 7th Environment Action Programme (7th EAP) has set out the key elements of the future environment policy linked to the Europe 2020 Strategy and is expected to further shape the policy context of the EEA work in our strive for 'living well within the limits of our planet'. Together with the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 ⁽⁸⁾ (in the following BD2020), the focus is on ecosystem assessments and a circular, green economy as an answer to the dual challenge of resource efficiency within the boundaries of ecosystem

⁽⁷⁾ 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.

⁽⁸⁾ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52011DC0244&from=EN>

sustainability. Furthermore, the BD2020 also calls for improving the knowledge on the state of ecosystems by mapping and assessing ecosystems and the services they provide.

The main specific policy context for the work of the EEA in the freshwater and marine domains is set by a number of policies and directives calling for an ambitious and compelling 2050 vision for an inclusive, green and competitive European economy, safeguarding the environment and health for present and future generations for inland, coastal and marine water management. For the freshwater domain, this includes the Water Framework Directive (WFD), the Floods Directive (FD), and the water industry directives (Bathing Water Directive (BWD), Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (UWWTD), Drinking Water Directive (DWD) and Nitrates Directive). For the marine domain, it is set the by Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) with special focus on its environmental pillar - the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), and the spatial approach dimension to ecosystem-based management as represented by the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive (MSPD).

The implementation of the freshwater and marine policies supports the BD2020 and the ecosystem-based management approach, the resource efficiency roadmap, and critically relies on coordination with closely-related policies and initiatives, such as the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).

As the policy frameworks are largely developed now, the challenge for EU and Member States is an effective implementation with the timely and targeted information management at all levels in terms of monitoring, reporting and assessment to ensure an effective, efficient and streamlined achievement of the environmental objectives. EEA and its ETCs are to support this agenda.

Freshwater, and coastal and marine waters

The main policy development in the freshwater area is the evaluation of key directives (including the WFD, the FD and the UWWTD by 2019), new or revised policy proposals on water reuse and the DWD, and the 3rd reporting cycle of River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) under the WFD in 2021.

The main policy development in the marine area regards the MSFD implementation and the IMP/MSPD sustainable blue economy agenda.

The MSFD aims to achieve good environmental status of the marine environment while promoting the sustainable use of Europe's seas ⁽⁹⁾. Important milestones are the 2nd cycle of data reporting in October 2018, the 2017 Revised Good Environmental Status (GES) Decision 2010/477/EU, and the preparation by the European Commission of an MSFD evaluation report, to which the EEA contributes with a state of the environment report.

The MSFD establishes important links to a broad portfolio of EU policies that relate to the coastal and marine environment, and primarily the WFD, the nature directives (birds and habitats), the BD2020, climate change and resource efficiency, and the IMP/MSPD, Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and the CFP.

The MSPD provides a key tool to support planning of the various human activities at sea while ensuring a sustainable use of the marine environment (1st reporting cycle is for 2021), and the MSFD therefore supports the environmental pillar of the IMP/MSPD and CFP policies.

⁽⁹⁾ It encompasses a six-year cycle of activities including characterisation of the marine ecosystems and their current state. Targets are set to reach good environmental status, monitoring programmes are established to assess progress towards good environmental status and environmental targets, and programmes of measures for achieving the targets are identified and implemented.

2.2 EEA role in support of policy

To secure the knowledge and evidence base for developing the policy framework in line with EU policies, the EEA Multiannual Work Programme 2014-2018, that has been extended to 2020, is aimed at informing the policy implementation. The overall objective is providing feedback and input to long-established and emerging policy frameworks, objectives and targets through reporting on progress in recognised environmental themes, including links to those sectors that are the primary sources of environmental pressures, and through reporting on the state and trends for natural environment systems using the DPSIR assessment framework (Driver, Pressure, State, Impact, Response).

The main objectives of EEA's freshwater and marine environment work, with the contributions and support of the ETCs, are to deliver streamlined data and information, and prepare policy and thematic relevant assessments of aquatic/water bodies and marine ecosystems to track progress towards the corresponding targets, as defined in relevant EU and international policies, and supporting the evaluation of the effectiveness of European policies and measures.

EEA's 2016-2022 freshwater and marine roadmaps ⁽¹⁰⁾ provide the strategic approach to the multi-annual planning of EEA activities on freshwater and marine environments. The EEA role in support of the implementation, development and evaluation of EU freshwater and marine related policies focuses on (1) Strengthening the knowledge base and addressing the synergies across directives and policies, (2) Supporting the implementation of the ecosystem-based management approach, (3) Undertaking work that addresses topics cutting across the freshwater, marine and nature domains, and (4) Networking.

Strengthening the knowledge base and addressing the synergies across directives and policies

In 2017, the European Commission published, further to the Fitness Check of Reporting and Monitoring of EU Environment Policy, a report on 'Actions to Streamline Environmental Reporting'. This aims at streamlining reporting under the environmental legislation, for example in connection with frequency of reporting cycles and content of monitoring.

This provides an opportunity to further enhance the reporting of data and information and the assessment of the topics, issues and pressures that continue to impact Europe's environment. In this context, it is important to further address topics that are of common relevance across directives, such as diffuse sources of pollution (e.g. water and agriculture, emissions to water, urban wastewater treatment and water quality, urban run-off, atmospheric deposition), ecosystem assessments or hydromorphology.

Freshwater

The European Commission's 2018 Implementation report on the WFD 2nd RBMPs together with EEA's 2018 State of Water report (WFD art. 18) show the progress in the implementation of the WFD and highlight remaining challenges and pressures causing European water bodies to fail to achieve good status. In that regard, diffuse sources of pollution (i.e. water and agriculture nexus, atmospheric deposition) and hydromorphological changes are key remaining pressures on European water bodies, and they will continue to be the focus of EEA's work. Further to the 2012 and 2018 State of Water reports and building upon the 3rd reporting cycle of RBMPs under the WFD in 2021,

⁽¹⁰⁾ Available upon request.

the EEA will publish in 2022/23 a third State of Water report, which will report the status of European water bodies and pressures.

The European Commission (DG ENV and DG AGRI) has also initiated work on freshwater and agriculture ⁽¹¹⁾, which aims at addressing the remaining challenges and pressures causing European water bodies to fail to achieve good status and at exploiting synergies between directives.

Furthermore, the EEA will undertake work addressing the synergies across directives (e.g. chemicals in the environment, emissions to water, UWWT and the European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (E-PRTR)), which can inform the evaluation by the European Commission of key freshwater directives (primarily the WFD, the FD and the UWWTD by 2019).

The Water Information System for Europe (WISE) ⁽¹²⁾, with its WISE-Freshwater part, is a key component of the knowledge base provided by the EEA to its stakeholders. On the data input side, it refers to supporting or managing the reporting of mandatory (e.g. WFD, FD, UWWTD, BWD) and voluntary (i.e. WISE-SoE) data reporting flows. On the output side, it includes the online data viewers that constitute the base of EEA's assessment work.

Coastal and marine waters

EEA's work on the 2019 State of the Marine Environment consists of a series of thematic assessments that are building blocks to EEA's contribution to Art. 20.3b of the MSFD, i.e. EEA's support to the European Commission's 2019 MSFD Evaluation report. EEA's thematic assessments will also allow the update in 2019 of its 2015 Marine Messages, contribute to EEA's 2020 State and Outlook of the Environment report (SOER 2020), and support the BD2020 (including the Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and Services (MAES) process).

Further to the 2nd cycle of data reporting of October 2018, EEA will prepare for updating in 2022, taking into account the data and information reported by Member States in 2018, its 2015 State of Europe's Seas report.

EEA's assessment work, which supports the environmental pillar (MSFD) of the IMP, will also increasingly inform its blue economy pillar, i.e. the MSPD. The MSPD addresses the planning of the various human activities at sea while supporting a sustainable use of the marine environment, for example by providing contributions to the spatial dimension of the ecosystem-based management approach.

The Water Information System for Europe (WISE) ⁽¹³⁾, with its WISE-Marine part, is a key component of the knowledge base provided by the EEA to its stakeholders. On the data input side, it refers to supporting or managing the reporting of mandatory (e.g. MSFD) and voluntary (i.e. WISE-SoE) data reporting flows. On the output side, it includes the online data viewers that constitute the base of EEA's assessment work.

Supporting the implementation of the ecosystem-based management approach

This stream of work focuses on supporting the implementation of the ecosystem-based management approach, which is at the core of the WFD and MSFD (as well as of the

⁽¹¹⁾ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/index_en.htm;
https://circabc.europa.eu/sd/a/abff972e-203a-4b4e-b42e-a0f291d3fdf9/SWD_2017_EN_V4_P1_885057.pdf

⁽¹²⁾ <http://water.europa.eu>

⁽¹³⁾ <http://water.europa.eu>

Common Agricultural and Fisheries Policies), and contributing towards the implementation and evaluation of the BD2020 and follow-up processes.

The BD2020 calls for improving the knowledge on the state of ecosystems by mapping and assessing ecosystems and the services they provide (MAES process with member countries), developing ecosystem capital accounting (Target 2/Action 5), and requiring fisheries to respect maximum sustainable yields (MSY) (Target 4). The BD2020 is supposed to draw from the EU-level reporting of the assessments under relevant directives (e.g. MSFD, WFD, BD, HD) and policy (e.g. CFP), which is challenged due to the lack of synchronicity, comparability and spatial support of the reported information as well as of suitable, shared methodologies.

Freshwater

With regard to the BD2020, the mapping of freshwater ecosystems will be extensively based on EEA's 2018 State of Water report (which provides the overview of ecological, chemical and quantitative status of European water bodies), additional work addressing the remaining pressures causing water bodies to fail achieving good status (e.g. water and agriculture), and dedicated work on ecosystem assessments (e.g. floodplains and ecosystems).

Water quantity and water quality accounts (i.e. ecosystem capital accounts) will provide an additional support to the BD2020/MAES and accounting processes as well as to the resource efficiency roadmap that contributes to the objectives of the 'Blueprint to safeguard Europe's water resources' ⁽¹⁴⁾.

EEA's SOER2020 will include data, information and knowledge about the freshwater and marine environments and will primarily be based on the activity streams described above.

Coastal and marine waters

A key aspect of EEA work is to support the characterisation and evaluation of the ecosystem-based approach to the management of human activities in the marine environment, which is embedded in the MSFD and the MSPD. Furthermore, increasing our ability to link state and pressures on the marine environment to specific targets and measures will become an increased focus of EEA activities.

Also, the EEA is developing concepts and methodologies to fill the gaps left by the assessment information reported at the EU-level from the relevant directives and be able to evaluate ecosystem changes as well as express such changes in terms of their impact on marine ecosystem services (i.e. human wellbeing).

This work aims *inter alia* at providing EU-level support to the BD2020. EEA's work will focus on the MAES process on mapping and assessing marine ecosystems, and developing ecosystem capital accounting, as well as supporting Target 4 on maximum sustainable yields. Marine ecosystem accounting can mainly be supported by CFP-reported information and requires a different approach than for terrestrial ecosystems. MSY is mainly being fulfilled for some stocks in the North East Atlantic and Baltic Seas.

EEA's long-term vision is to carry out a bio-physically mapped assessment of marine (seabed) ecosystem condition and service capacity, which would *inter alia* allow the identification of possible trade-offs between long-term maintenance and short-term exploitation of the seas' natural capital and related ecosystem services, e.g. by maritime

⁽¹⁴⁾ COM(2012)673

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52012DC0673:EN:NOT>

industrial uses. EEA legacy work on coastal areas (e.g. status of coastal habitats, Copernicus Land service on coastal monitoring) will be maintained to inform on sea-land interface issues, in cooperation with ETC/ULS in particular.

EEA's SOER2020 will include data, information and knowledge about the freshwater and marine environments and will be based on the activity streams described above. Other sources of information include the Regional Sea Conventions (RSCs) and key EU initiatives such as EMODNET and Copernicus.

Undertaking work that addresses topics cutting across the freshwater, marine and nature domains

It is instrumental to support work that addresses topics cutting across the freshwater and marine domains, such as eutrophication, contaminants, marine litter, biodiversity, and linking to circular economy and transitions to sustainability. It is also important to review and undertake work on common analytical methods (e.g. modelling of outlooks and scenarios) and good practices/win-win measures that can progress the ecosystem-based management concept (e.g. assessing cumulative pressures, water use by key sectors and functions).

Since the freshwater and the marine domains have similarities, there are synergies to be exploited from cross-cutting and integrated activities. Synergies can be summarized as follows:

- There are similarities in the legislative processes of the main policy areas, i.e. the WFD and the MSFD. Both directives build on an ecosystem-based management approach where regional organisations are essential. Both also relate to an objective to achieve good status (good environmental status for marine, good status for freshwater), i.e. general protection of ecosystems and biodiversity.
- While the definition of status and logic of the implementation strategies are different and result in different work and data flows across the WFD and the MSFD, there is an opportunity to tease out lessons learned from each policy process and support their sharing and use across policy streams. There is also an important opportunity for drawing lessons in connection with EEA's activities on data (e.g. WISE-SoE voluntary annual data flows) and information-sharing (WISE web site).
- The WFD assessments of ecological and chemical status in coastal and transitional waters is an important part of the eutrophication and chemical pollution assessments required for the MSFD. Also, the measures designed to reduce eutrophication and chemical pollution problems in transitional, coastal and marine waters will primarily be established within river basin districts, i.e. under the WFD.
- There are a number of topics which are cutting across the water and marine policy domains, for example: eutrophication, contaminants, marine litter, floods, climate change.
- The EEA supports policies through providing an information base along the MDIAK cycle and the DPSIR framework ⁽¹⁵⁾. Much of this information relates to the WFD and MSFD given its focus on achieving an ecosystem-based approach to management of human activities for the freshwater and marine environments. Furthermore, EEA is using various assessment methods such as spatially-explicit assessments, multi-metric

⁽¹⁵⁾ EEA uses analytical frameworks such the MDIAK chain (Monitoring, Data, Indicators, Assessment and Knowledge) and the DPSIR framework (Drivers, Pressures, Status, Impacts and Responses).

indicator-based assessment tools, accounting for ecosystems structures and services as well as their valuation.

- The water and marine domains link to a broad and similar range of policy initiatives, implying a streamlining of the work undertaken within the ETC and with other ETCs, where appropriate, in relation to data management, assessments and indicators, sharing of information and networking.

Networking

It is fundamental to support stakeholder processes in the freshwater and marine domains by providing expertise and institutional and operational knowledge at national, regional and transboundary levels, primarily through strong linkages to the Eionet and the EEA member countries, the European Commission services, as well as Regional Sea Conventions, ICES and international river basin organisations. This includes providing strong, demonstrated expertise and networking capacities on the overarching objective of ecosystem-based management to human activities in the freshwater and marine environment.

3. Specific tasks of the European Topic Centre on Inland, Coastal and Marine Waters

3.1 Organisation of the work

The European Topic Centre on Inland, Coastal and Marine waters (ETC/ICM) shall support the work of the EEA in these inter-connected themes in the period 2019-2021. The key priority working areas are identified in the EEA annual work programmes and tasked in the ETC annual action plans. Where relevant, these areas will also be embedded in rolling plans established between EEA and European Commission services.

In recognition of the different expertise needed for the various types of work to be done under this topic and the continuous need to see freshwater and marine as an integrated work area, and in order to ensure the best allocation of available resources, the expected content work is divided into four main structural areas: Monitoring, data management and information systems; Indicators; Assessments; and Networking and policy support. All are applicable to both the freshwater and marine policy domains, including the MAES initiative.

Work package 1 – Monitoring, data management and information systems

The ETC is expected to support EEA data monitoring, reporting and management activities, primarily in connection with the UWWTD, the BWD, the MSFD and the marine component of EEA's WISE-SoE data call.

This entails support on data flows in Reportnet, data models as well as data handling so that data and information can be published in a timely manner. This will provide support to the input side of WISE.

The ETC is expected to continue supporting the output side of WISE, primarily with regard to making the results of EEA's 2018 State of Water report accessible and available online on WISE-Freshwater, and making the MSFD data reported in October 2018 accessible in WISE-Marine.

A continuing effort is also needed on data and information on water resources (availability, abstraction, use and consumption) and on the methodologies to model water quantity and water quality accounts. Water resource aspects are important contributions to water efficiency and water scarcity and drought assessments.

The support to WISE development will be in view of the 3rd WISE Implementation Plan jointly developed by the European Commission and the EEA. To further address EEA's stakeholders,

it is instrumental that WISE provides tools allowing the access to and visualisation of data and information across freshwater and marine directives and voluntary data flows.

The ETC support activity will be undertaken in close cooperation and coordination with those addressing other EEA information systems, including BISE and Climate-ADAPT ⁽¹⁶⁾. It will focus primarily on ensuring the quality assurance and quality control of data (QA/QC), reporting schemas, reporting tools and streamlining of data flows.

The ETC will support EEA in connection with the working groups under the freshwater and marine related directives (e.g. WFD: Working Group Data and Information Sharing (WG DIS); MSFD: Working Group Data, Information and Knowledge Exchange (WG DIKE), Technical Group on Data (TG Data)) in which EEA participates and supports the implementation with data information collection and management in WISE (e.g. streamlining of reporting processes).

Work package 2 – Indicators

The EEA develops indicators to support regular environmental assessments that indicate state of the environment and trends. These indicators are developed in the DPSIR assessment framework. The work on indicators is interlinked with data management and integrated assessments and support EU and UN policy processes. Of particular importance is the timely planning of indicators development/updates so as to feed into EEA's assessment work.

Cross-policy coherence is essential and indicators need to be developed and scoped within the framework of the broad set of freshwater and marine related policies they aim to support.

The ETC is expected to provide support to EEA in updating at regular intervals the following indicators ⁽¹⁷⁾:

Freshwater

- CSI018/WAT001 Use of freshwater resources
- CSI019/WAT002 Oxygen consuming substances in rivers
- CSI020/WAT003 Nutrients in freshwater
- CSI024/WAT005 Urban waste water treatment
- WAT006 Water intensity of crop production

Coastal and marine waters

- CSI049/MAR001 Hazardous substances in marine organisms
- MAR002 Trends in marine non-indigenous species
- MAR003 Pathways of introduction of marine non-indigenous species
- MAR004 Marine protected areas in Europe's seas
- CSI021/MAR005 Nutrients in transitional, coastal and marine waters
- CSI023/MAR006 Chlorophyll in transitional, coastal and marine waters
- CSI032/MAR007 Status of marine fish stocks
- CSI033/MAR008 Aquaculture production
- CSI034/MAR009 Fishing fleet pressure
- MAR010 Offshore wind energy

⁽¹⁶⁾ <http://biodiversity.europa.eu/>; <http://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/>

⁽¹⁷⁾ <https://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/indicators> ;
<https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/water/europes-seas-and-coasts/marine-litterwatch>

- MAR011 Distributional shift of fish species

Beyond the specific indicators mentioned above, the ETC is expected to support the EEA in developing the knowledge base that can further inform EU policy implementation, development and evaluation. In this context, EEA's Multiannual Work Programme features prominently the need to strengthen the work on transitions to long-term sustainability and systems thinking. This knowledge base is instrumental to further inform key EU and global policy initiatives that are integrated and cross-cutting, such as the mapping and assessment of ecosystems (e.g. BD2020; MAES process) or the UN 2030 Agenda and the related Sustainable Development Goals.

With regard to the water and marine domain, there will be a need to develop or streamline further indicators in connection with closely related topics (such as biodiversity and the SEBI indicators), with the Copernicus programme (e.g. ocean acidification, ocean heat content, ocean oxygen content), with socio-economic indicators (e.g. coastal tourism, transport, extraction of non-living resources) or indicators linked to citizen-science tools such as EEA's Marine LitterWatch. This will support the assessment work, which is increasingly integrated, and will focus to a larger extent on the land/sea continuum and on key nexuses.

Work package 3 – Assessments

The EEA publishes assessments at regular intervals, which are based to a large extent on the data being reported by member countries under the EU legislation, EEA's voluntary reporting flows and/or other EU funded initiatives, and the related indicators. EEA's assessments also draw on other sources of information, such as the Regional Seas Conventions or Horizon2020 tools and projects.

The ETC will help the EEA in delivering technical support to build up the knowledge base under the EU freshwater, marine and (when relevant) nature directives. In view of the policy context described above, and the key milestones for EEA's support to the implementation, development and evaluation of freshwater and marine policies, the following assessments are planned for the next years, and the ETC is expected to provide support in connection with scoping and drafting of these reports:

Freshwater ⁽¹⁸⁾

- Bathing water quality in Europe
- Floodplains and ecosystem assessment
- Diffuse sources of pollution, e.g. water and agriculture
- Water quantity and water quality accounts
- Water policies and human health
- Preparatory work for EEA's 3rd State of Water report (planned for 2022/2023)

Coastal and marine waters ⁽¹⁹⁾

- 2019 State of the Marine Environment
- Thematic assessments supporting the development of the MSFD 2019 State of the Marine Environment:
 - Biodiversity in Europe's seas

⁽¹⁸⁾ For reference to previous publications, please see: <http://water.europa.eu/>; <https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/water>

⁽¹⁹⁾ For reference to previous publications, please see: <http://water.europa.eu/>; <https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/water>

- Pressures and cumulated impacts on Europe’s seas
- Sustainable use of Europe’s seas.
- Marine protected areas in Europe
- 2019 Marine Messages II
- Assessment of marine ecosystem service capacity and marine ecosystem capital accounting (e.g. seafloor integrity account), including initiating work on a bio-physically mapped assessment of marine ecosystem condition and service capacity at the EU level
- Preparatory work for EEA’s 2nd 2019 State of Europe’s Seas report (planned for 2022)

The SOER2020, EEA’s flagship report, will be developed based on the work done by the EEA over the last 5 years, including the work mentioned above.

This is significant with regard to the water and marine domain as this field of work is increasingly integrated, and will focus to a larger extent on the land/sea continuum and on key nexuses such as water/agriculture/energy/food. The work undertaken gradually extends towards closely connected and holistic policy initiatives, such as the IMP/MSPD and the sustainable blue economy. In addition, the knowledge base to inform a transition agenda needs to include the outlook perspective on the water and marine domain, for example stemming from modelling exercises on socio-economic aspects run by key EEA stakeholders or foresight activities.

Work package 4 – Networking and policy support

It is fundamental to support stakeholder processes in the freshwater and marine domains by providing expertise and institutional and operational knowledge at national, regional and transboundary levels. This includes providing strong, demonstrated expertise and networking capacities on the overarching objective of ecosystem-based management to human activities in the freshwater and marine environment.

The primary networks are Eionet and the EEA member countries, the European Commission services, together with Regional Sea Conventions, ICES, and international river basin organisations.

In addition, EEA networking activities include information-sharing and coordination of activities with key EU initiatives that closely link to EEA’s remit in the freshwater and marine domains, and primarily those initiated by European Commission services, such as EMODNET and the European Atlas of the Seas (DG MARE), the Copernicus Marine Environment Monitoring Service (CMEMS; DG GROW), the Marine Competence Centre (DG JRC), OECD/ESTAT Joint Questionnaire (DG ESTAT), H2020 initiatives (DG R&I), by Member States, such as JPI Oceans, and by international organisations, such as UN Water.

Links to and cooperation with the RSC and to the work developed therein will be instrumental, especially in connection with the RSCs ‘Roof Reports’ and the related indicators and assessments.

The ETC will support EEA in its networking activities and stakeholder processes, as and when relevant, by providing organisational capacity, expertise, and institutional and operational knowledge of relevant activities. This also applies to the working groups under the freshwater and marine related directives (e.g. WFD: WG DIS; MSFD: WG DIKE, TD Data) in which EEA participates.

The EEA has 33 member countries and its activities extend beyond those linked to EU reporting, for example by supporting non-EU EEA member countries’ data reporting flows so that EEA assessments appropriately cover all its member countries.

3.2 General activities

Work package 5 – ETC management, capacity-building and cross-ETC cooperation

The organisational set-up and management procedures of the ETC consortium must meet the special and general conditions of the FPA. To ensure this, the management of the ETC requires, for example, clear decision and communication structures within the consortium, and well-functioning links to the EEA, which leads on networking with countries and coordinating with the European Commission, and other relevant organisations.

The ETC management must provide a robust risk management structure and procedures, and maintain procedures for quality assurance – including language-checking and management-level sign-off – of all its deliverables.

Overall, the size of the consortium needs to be small enough to ensure a budgetary distribution that enables some senior staff to work on content-related tasks for the EEA at least 50% of their time.

In order to enable international networking, the consortium should include partners with experience in EU and regional level work and international networks, without necessarily representing all EEA countries.

As the ETCs are part of Eionet, close link to other Eionet members (EEA countries and other ETCs) is instrumental. This needs to be realised through:

- strong communication efforts with the countries, including networking and country visits within defined processes;
- in dialogue with the EEA and the countries, identifying barriers preventing them from optimally performing their tasks (e.g. monitoring and reporting capacities, flows of data, knowledge gaps, indicators developments), developing proposals to solve any issues that may emerge, and providing training and capacity building in the countries as appropriate;
- helping organising regular Eionet workshops and seminars to discuss the outcomes of the work and plan future activities with the countries;
- gathering feedback on the effectiveness of networking and training activities and acting on that feedback;
- engaging actively in co-operation with other ETCs to strengthen the coherence of data and information, in particular regarding geographical reference data sets, cross-cutting topics and synergies between policy areas, and integration in an ecosystem-based management approach. Co-operation could be integrated into the on-going content work and should provide synergies rather than additional work load. Work among ETCs has to be complimentary;
- establishing the relevant interfaces with other key partners, as relevant and defined in the action plans, including the research and scientific communities active in the relevant domains via appropriate projects or networks.

Priority areas for cross-ETC cooperation could include:

- Ecosystem assessment, biodiversity and development of an ecosystem-based management approach throughout sectoral policy in implementation of a green economy;
- Biodiversity: marine protected areas, Natura 2000 and marine habitats and species under the Habitats and Birds Directives and support of ecosystem assessments;

- Synergies in the reporting and assessment of status across directives, such as the status of coastal and transitional waters in both WFD and MSFD;
- Maritime activities: location of human activities at sea, e.g. off-shore wind-farms and oil exploration sites, as well as likely environmental impacts of these activities today and in the future;
- Emissions: synergies in monitoring and status information, gathered e.g. under WFD and WISE-SoE activities, with those under chemical sectoral control, e.g. E-PRTR, Industrial Emissions Directive (IED), REACH, pesticides and biocides legislation;
- Climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation regarding floods, droughts, water scarcity and related hazards and their socioeconomic effects;
- Land use (including coastal areas) and its impact on inland water, coastal and marine environment (including link to land use accounts);
- Diffuse pollution, e.g. atmospheric deposition of pollutants, urban run-off;
- Tools and integration of spatial reference data sets, their respective information structures, and the further integration of WISE with other information systems such as BISE, Climate-ADAPT and the Integrated Data Platform (IDP).

4. General guidance on the organisation and structure of the European Topic Centre on Inland, Coastal and Marine waters

The present and earlier ETCs are consortia of government, research and non-profit organisation, as well as commercial firms. Based upon EEA experience, some general guidance can be given on the structure of a consortium:

- The ETC consortium shall comprise one coordinating organisation and several partners.
- A structure needs to be in place to ensure efficient communication and coordination between and among the ETC coordinator and all partners. This can e.g. be through organisation in teams or with dedicated core staff at the coordinating organisation and/or one of the key partners.
- The consortium should be organised around the following administrative functions:
 - an ETC manager, and a deputy ETC manager or similar function ensuring continuity of services, both having appropriate management and networking capabilities;
 - administrative support, able to work in English and organise European meetings and consultations; and,
 - accounting support, in order to ensure proper financial management.
- The ETC manager, deputy manager and key experts organising and leading on the thematic content should have a high level of senior management expertise, good knowledge of the policy setting, strong integration into the respective scientific community, and interdisciplinary expertise across the different relevant topics. At least 50% of their time should be made available to the work of the ETC.
- The ETC manager, deputy manager, core staff and key experts develop the annual action plans together with the assigned EEA Head of Group and project staff responsible for managing the tasks, in mutual understanding and the agreed iterative process, based on the priorities set by EEA in its multiannual programming documents and annual work programme for the year in question.

- As it can be difficult to manage many small partners (e.g. with contracts of less than EUR 50 000 per year) in a consortium, fewer partners and a dedicated coordination structure can facilitate management and coherence of delivery. However, this has to be balanced against the need to cover the required fields of expertise and to ensure good geographical coverage across Europe.
- The consortium as a whole needs to cover the main work areas with the expertise listed under 5.2 below. It is important to show a wider European expertise, using a consortium spread over different member countries and different national experiences (see also eligibility criterion under 6.1 below). This is particularly important where specific skills are needed, e.g. for certain methodologies, modelling or for wider sector integration etc.
- Therefore, the ETC needs to be structured in a way to ensure the necessary flexibility to be able to adapt to changing needs and to be able to provide experts for specific projects.
- It should also have the capability to network and communicate with countries and with relevant Commission services and/or other international policy and scientific communities.

5. Minimum requirements

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

5.1 Organisation and governance

- As the working language of the EEA is English, it will also be the working language of the FPA and SAs. More particularly, the ETC is expected to deliver documents requiring minimal further language checking prior to publication and following the requirements as stated in the EEA Corporate Identity Manual ⁽²⁰⁾ and the EEA writing manual (see annex 7). Future beneficiaries are required to have a quality control procedure to this effect (see also the award criteria under section 6.5 below).
- Without exception, the ETC shall report solely to the EEA, the main contact points being the ETC manager and/or the deputy ETC manager, the Head of Group for Water and Marine, and the assigned EEA Project Managers.
- Subject to guidance from the EEA, the ETC shall carry out the necessary checks in accordance with the terms and arrangements laid down in the FPA and the respective SA or in the consortium agreement in order to ensure the quality and regularity of the implementation of the annual action plans.
- Subject to guidance from the EEA, the ETC 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 beneficiaries (ETC Manager and partners as needed).
- The ETC is also expected to provide input into the development of the EEA annual work programme. Furthermore, it shall provide EEA with proposals for the continuous development of the working areas.

²⁰ <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/eea-corporate-design-manual>

- 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 increasing attention. 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, 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 countries reflecting the specific needs of all countries, *inter alia* to enable them to contribute to the reporting of 'priority data'. The ETC 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 beneficiaries take into consideration the reduction of environmental impact of ETC activities and develop environmental policies for the ETCs (see also section 7 below).

5.2 Technical and scientific expertise

The ETC is expected to have technical and scientific expertise that allows it to undertake the tasks and to provide the deliverables listed above under section 3. In broad terms, technical and scientific expertise and experience in the following areas is specifically needed (which will be appraised by reference to the award criteria listed under section 6.5 below):

- Extensive experience in connection with freshwater, marine and nature EU policies and policy processes, and supporting their implementation, development and evaluation.
- Extensive experience in providing strategic input in view of policy development, needs for support and further development of the knowledge base.
- Understanding of indicator concepts and the skill to perform regular updates, as well as develop new indicators.
- Drafting of high quality contributions to EEA's integrated assessments.
- Integrated assessments in order to ensure that data flows and indicators feed into assessments dealing with cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary aspects. (Tools and methodologies to develop these assessments are not necessarily a core task of the ETC).
- The focus on the ecosystem based approach requires good expertise in ecosystem assessments and biodiversity both in relation to water related species and wider concerns of habitats and hydromorphological issues (including the respective legislation). Here close cooperation and common language need to be ensured with the ETC Biological Diversity.
- Similarly, corresponding expertise is also expected on biodiversity matters and vulnerabilities and adaptation to climate change impacts, which is pertinent to cooperation with ETC Biological Diversity and ETC Climate Change Impacts, Vulnerability and Adaptation.
- Environmental chemistry as it relates to pollution to or via the aquatic environment. Cooperation with work on chemicals sectoral legislation and with broader issues such as circular economy.
- Data management skills and experience in major European concepts like SEIS and INSPIRE, including also expertise in design of information systems and large data

structures with the ability to handle relevant GIS components in cooperation with the European spatial data infrastructure developed at EEA.

- Data work and indicator development. Good knowledge and expertise is needed for data analysis, with strong links between data analysts and to all content aspects mentioned above, water statistics, water accounting methodologies and the relevant technical IT expertise to support efficient data infrastructure and architecture as developed at EEA.
- The EEA aims to develop its ability to perform quantitative, spatially explicit integrated assessments of ecosystem state and cumulative pressures, which requires significant innovative capacity for spatial analysis and the use of multi-metric indicator-based assessment tools. The subsequent link of marine ecosystem state changes to human wellbeing/welfare requires expertise in marine ecosystem services assessment, including valuation in terms of ecosystem capital accounting (economic accounts) and socio-economic analysis.
- Sufficient knowledge on spatial analysis to cooperate with EEA and other ETCs in the area of Spatial Information and Analysis to work on visualisation of data, GIS reference layers and map viewers. Expertise is also needed to make best use of remote sensing services and data as provided via the Copernicus activities together with other geographically based information and data available from in-situ monitoring. This is of particular importance in the marine/maritime area. The inland water area relates closely to the Copernicus land services.
- Effective networking, cooperation and communication with the countries and other stakeholders. This includes capabilities to effectively network also outside the Eionet with all institutions and bodies (e.g. regional sea and river conventions, water professionals, NGOs) associated with providing information for the regions covered by the EEA work programmes.
- Capabilities to go into effective networking also outside the Eionet with all institutions and bodies (e.g. regional sea and river conventions, water professionals, water statistics, water industries, hydrological institutes and NGOs) associated with providing information for the regions covered by the EEA work programmes on data issues as well as insight into scientific knowledge to exploit the needs and possibilities for integrated and cross-sectoral assessments.
- To relate to the EU's green economy priority, sufficient expertise on water related economics and economic aspects of the relevant sectors (e.g. agriculture, energy, water industries, coastal development) is needed together with some insights into the reasonable application of Payments for ecosystem services.
- It is the ETC's responsibility to ensure ETC experts are appropriately equipped to take part in web conferencing (e.g. Skype, Webex).

6. Criteria

The evaluation procedure will consist in three successive stages; only the proposals meeting the requirements of one stage will be examined in the next stage. The procedure foresees

1. to check, in the first stage, whether applicants can take part in the award procedure (eligibility, legal capacity and exclusion criteria);
2. to check, in the second stage, the financial and operational capacity of each applicant who has passed the eligibility stage (selection criteria); and

3. to assess, in the third stage, the quality of each proposal which has passed the eligibility and selection stages (award criteria).

6.1 Eligibility

Consortia consisting of at least two partners (natural/legal persons, private or public), these partners being established in different EEA member countries (the 28 EU MS, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey), are eligible, subject to 6.2 and 6.3 below, for submitting proposals ⁽²¹⁾. Consortia must identify one of their partners as coordinator who will interface with the EEA.

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.

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 estimated total value of the FPA as specified under section 1.3 above.

With a view to assess the fulfilment of the eligibility criteria, the consortium's coordinator is required to submit a proposal submission form (see annex 1) duly filled out and signed.

6.2 Ne bis in idem

While partners may participate in consortia aiming at FPAs concerning different ETCs ⁽²²⁾, **no partner may participate in more than one consortium aiming at the FPA concerning the ETC of this Call for proposals**, i.e. the ETC on Inland, Coastal and Marine waters (ETC/ICM). Disregard of this rule 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 the FPA concerning this ETC, i.e. ETC on Inland, Coastal and Marine waters (ETC/ICM). Disregard of this rule leads to exclusion of all consortia concerned.

6.3 Exclusion criteria

Apart from the situations under 6.2, consortia shall be excluded from participation in this award procedure if any of their partners are in one of the situations referred to in Articles 106(1), 107 and 109(1)(b) of the Financial Rules applicable to the general budget of the European Union ⁽²³⁾.

⁽²¹⁾ For British partners: Please be aware that eligibility criteria must be complied with for the entire duration of the FPA. If the United Kingdom withdraws from the EU during the FPA period without concluding an agreement with the EU ensuring in particular that British partners continue to be eligible, British partners will then cease to receive EU funding (while continuing, where possible, to participate) or be required to leave the consortium on the basis of Article II.12.2(a) of the FPA.

⁽²²⁾ See the parallel calls for proposals No OCP/EEA/ACC/18/001-ETC/ATNI, OCP/EEA/ACC/18/002-ETC/CME, OCP/EEA/ACC/18/003-ETC/CCA, OCP/EEA/IEA/18/001-ETC/WMGE, OCP/EEA/NSS/18/001-ETC/BD and OCP/EEA/NSS/18/003-ETC/ULS, <https://www.eea.europa.eu/about-us/tenders/calls-for-proposals/open>.

⁽²³⁾ Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25.10.2012, OJEU L 298/1 of 26.10.2012. This regulation is currently under revision.

When submitting their application, each consortium partner (including any subcontractor) must provide a declaration on their honour in accordance with the form attached as annex 2, duly signed and dated, stating that they are not in any of the situations specified in the above mentioned provisions.

The partners of the consortium with whom the EEA will enter into an FPA will be required, prior to the signature of the agreement, to provide the evidence specified in the penultimate paragraph of the declaration of honour mentioned above (see annex 2).

6.4 Selection criteria

The selection criteria will be assessed as a first step by the evaluation committee. Failure to comply with these criteria will result in the proposal not being evaluated further by the evaluation committee. Applicants may be asked to provide additional proof, or to clarify the supporting documents, related to the selection criteria within a specific time limit.

(a) Legal capacity

> Requirement:

Any consortium partner is required to prove that it is authorised to perform the FPA under national law.

> Evidence to be provided:

Each consortium partner is required to submit a legal entity form (see annex 3) duly filled out and signed, accompanied by a copy of inscription in a trade or professional register and/or a copy of inscription in the VAT register, or a sworn declaration or certificate, or evidence of membership of a specific organisation, or express authorisation, or any other statutory document allowing verification of the partner's legal status.

(b) Financial capacity

> Requirement:

Consortia must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activity throughout the period of the FPA (2019-2021) and to contribute to its funding.

> Evidence to be provided:

- Each consortium partner shall provide a duly completed and signed simplified Financial Statement, in accordance with the template provided as annex 6
- In addition for private partners: balance sheet, or extracts therefrom, for at least the last two financial year for which the accounts were closed, where publication of the balance sheet is required under the company law of the country in which the consortium partner is established.

(c) Operational capacity

> Requirements:

Consortia must have the following professional competencies and qualifications required to complete the annual action plans:

- Relevant experience in terms of human resources
- Relevant experience in the provision of comparable services to similar clients over the past three years
- Application of quality control processes

- Application of environmental management measures.

> *Evidence to be provided:*

The following documents or information shall be presented as evidence of compliance with the operational capacity selection criteria:

Human resources

1. Detailed CVs of the partner's managerial staff as well as those of the staff designated to carry out the work indicating, *inter alia*, the educational and professional qualifications and statement of language skills, and identification of relevant skills, expertise and experience;
2. Signed letters of intent of:
 - the ETC manager, deputy ETC manager, and other core staff performing the administrative functions listed under section 4 above, as well as
 - the key experts ⁽²⁴⁾ 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;
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 action ⁽²⁵⁾;
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;

Past contracts

5. A list and brief account of work considered relevant and carried out by the partners forming the consortium in the past three years, indicating the value, dates and recipients of the services (public or private).

Quality control

6. For each consortium partner, proof and description of their Quality Assurance and Quality Control systems; namely, details of any quality assurance accreditation that they hold; if no accreditation held, consortium partners shall provide an outline of any quality assurance policy specifying, the status of implementation and details of any quality assurance accreditations for which they have applied.

Environmental policy

7. For each consortium partner, proof and description of their environmental management measures or system, specifying the status of implementation.

6.5 Award criteria

The FPA will be concluded with the consortium whose proposal guarantees best that the EEA demands as described above are met. Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of the

⁽²⁴⁾ i.e. experts from the partners in the consortium who would be entrusted with the performance of activities in the main work areas should dedicate at least 50 % of their time for that purpose. The letters of intent to be provided shall therefore cover at least the staff designated to carry out the work whose CVs have been submitted in accordance with point 6.4(c)(1).

⁽²⁵⁾ 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.

documentation provided to demonstrate that the consortium meets the six award criteria set out below. The allocation of weightings to the six criteria is also given, corresponding to a maximum total score of 100 points:

No	Award criteria	Max. points
1	<p>General understanding of the task</p> <p>Knowledge and understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the policies and stakeholders that the EEA and the Eionet are supporting and cooperating with in the topic area; • how the different dimensions of the topic area (e.g. marine environment and maritime activities or ecological status of water bodies and water resource efficiency) are related, and how they are related to thematic and cross-cutting issues outside the topic area; • how the environmental and policy issues in the topic area vary across the EEA countries and how this impacts on the tasks of the EEA and Eionet; • the roles of data, indicators and assessments in EEA work in the topic area, and the methodologies and frameworks, such as emissions inventories, ecological, chemical and quantitative status analysis, ecological economics and ecosystems accounting, that underpin the work; • the importance of collaboration within and outside Eionet. 	15
2	<p>Data and information systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound knowledge of the actual and potential existence, availability and usefulness of data and information from Eionet sources, and from other official and non-official sources at (sub)national, EU and international levels, including sources such as expert surveys, research, citizen science, utilities and remote sensing; • Experience and expertise in supporting the design, quality control and management of data and information systems in the topic area reflecting SEIS principles and INSPIRE requirements, inter alia exploiting accounting frameworks and data modelling and assimilation techniques. 	20
3	<p>Assessments</p> <p>Experience and expertise in supporting the definition, production, management and use of indicators in the topic area, and in contributing to thematic, sectoral and cross-cutting assessments.</p>	20
4	<p>Policy support</p> <p>Experience and expertise in providing technical and scientific support to the development and implementation of international, EU or national policy processes, including contributions to ex-ante and ex-post analysis</p>	15

	and case studies of the effectiveness of strategies and policies, in the topic area.	
5	<p>Collaboration and networking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound approach to collaborating with and providing capacity-building support to Eionet member organisations in EEA countries; • Experience and expertise in accessing and working together with relevant expert networks and institutes external to the Eionet, including the scientific world; • Experience and expertise in preparing and facilitating in a participatory manner workshops, webinars and similar; 	15
6	<p>ETC management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound arrangements for implementing transparent, effective and quality-assured management of the ETC consortium, including financial management; • Sound approach to managing different dimensions of the topic area individually and as a coherent whole, and to addressing geographical specificities in the topic area across EEA countries; • Sound environmental policy for the consortium; • Adequate level of manpower, resources and output corresponding to the indicative annual budget; • Completeness and quality of the proposed QA/QC procedures and standards that will be applied to ensure the proper quality of the work and deliverables. 	15
Total		100

7. 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 beneficiaries will, therefore, be requested to consider the EEA environmental management guidelines in the implementation of the FPA, 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 website: <https://www.eea.europa.eu/about-us/emas/index.html>.

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.

8. Further information

8.1 Contractual terms and guarantees

In drawing up their proposal, applicants shall bear in mind the provisions of the draft FPA and draft SA attached as annex 5 to these terms of reference, particularly those on payment

arrangements, performance of the agreement, confidentiality, and checks and audits. Any limitation, amendment or denial of the terms of the draft FPA and draft SA will lead to the automatic exclusion from the award procedure.

The consortium partners shall have internal arrangements regarding their operation and coordination to ensure that the FPA and the annual action plan under an SA are implemented properly. These internal arrangements must be set out in a written consortium agreement between the partners, which may cover all aspects necessary for the management and internal organisation of the consortium, including the business continuity, the distribution of the EEA funding, the settlement of internal disputes, liability and confidentiality between the consortium partners, and, where appropriate, additional rules on intellectual and industrial property rights.

Payments shall be made upon delivery and approval of the services requested, within the deadline stipulated in the SA and upon receipt and approval by the EEA of the relevant cost statements and any supporting documents relating to the tasks undertaken.

No financial guarantee will be required.

8.2 Subcontracting

A consortium partner may subcontract part of the services.

If a consortium partner intends to have recourse to subcontracting for performance of the action, it shall specify the name, address and legal status and provide a document containing a list of the professional qualifications of each envisaged subcontractor as well as a statement of the means of ensuring quality and confidentiality when subcontractors are used. Consortium partners shall bear in mind that subcontract may only cover the execution of a limited part of the action, and that they shall retain sole responsibility for carrying out the action and complying with the terms of the FPA and the corresponding SA.

For more detailed information, reference is made to Article II.10 of the draft FPA (see annex 5).

9. Timing

Deadline for submitting proposals: **30.4.2018**

Opening of proposals: **7.5.2018**

Evaluation of proposals: **From 8.5.2018 to 31.5.2018 (indicative dates)**

Following the decision of the EEA Management Board on the designation of the successful consortium (foreseen for **19 June 2018**) and prior to signature of the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) all consortia will be notified of the outcome of this call.

Signature of the FPA: **by mid-September 2018 (indicative date).**

10. Presentation of the proposal

Proposals shall be submitted in accordance with the ***double envelopes system***:

The outer envelope or parcel should be sealed with adhesive tape and signed across the seal and carry the following information:

- The call for proposals reference No OCP/EEA/NSS/18/002-ETC/ICM
- The call for proposals title "***Framework partnership agreement concerning the European Topic Centre on Inland, Coastal and Marine waters 2019-2021***"

- The name of the consortium's coordinator
- The indication "***Proposal – Not to be opened by the internal mail services***"
- The address for submission of proposals (as specified in the letter of invitation to submit proposals)
- The date of submission shall be legible on the outer envelope or parcel

The outer envelope or parcel must contain three inner envelopes, i.e. Envelopes No 1, 2 and 3, corresponding to the following three sections: Executive summary, Administrative section and Technical proposal.

(a) Envelope No 1 – Executive summary shall include the following information (max. 10 pages):

- ETC name as indicated in the title of these terms of reference
- Full contact details of the partner assuming the role of coordinator of the consortium
- Name and CV (abstract) of the proposed ETC manager, deputy ETC manager and other core staff performing the administrative functions listed under section 4 above
- Presentation of the proposed organisation of the consortium
- Full contact details of each other partners of the consortium
- For each partner, name and CVs (abstract) of key experts expected to contribute at least 50% of their time to the ETC
- Brief summary of the technical proposal (max. 5 A4 pages)

(b) Envelope No 2 – Administrative section shall include the following information:

- The proposal submission form, drawn up in accordance with the template in annex 1
- For each partner, the declaration on exclusion criteria as required under section 6.3, drawn up in accordance with the template in annex 2
- For each partner, the legal entity form as required under section 6.4 (a), drawn up in accordance with the template in annex 3
- For each partner (other than the one assuming the role of coordinator of the consortium), the power of attorney as referred to under section 1.3, drawn up in accordance with the template in annex 8
- For the partner acting as coordinator of the consortium, the financial identification form, drawn up in accordance with the template in annex 4
- The evidence and documentation demonstrating the fulfilment of the selection criteria as required under section 6.4 (b) (financial capacity) and 6.4 (c) (operational capacity)

(c) Envelope No 3 – Technical proposal shall include the following:

The technical proposal addressing the elements described in sections 2 and 3 above and providing all information requested under section 6.5 (award criteria). The technical proposal shall also be provided in PDF searchable format on a USB memory stick.

Proposal shall be drafted in one of the languages of the EEA member countries, **preferably in English** (supporting evidence does not need to be translated) and submitted in **duplicate** (one original unbound and one copy of the executive summary (envelope No 1) and the technical proposal (envelope No 3); the administrative section (envelope No 2) shall be submitted only once in original unbound).

It is important that proposals be presented in the correct format and include all documents necessary to enable the evaluation committee to assess them. Failure to respect these requirements will constitute a formal error and may result in the rejection of the proposal.

Consortia shall observe precisely the indications in points 2, 3, 4 and 6 of the letter of invitation to submit a proposal to ensure their proposal is admissible. Late delivery will lead to non-admissibility of the proposal and its rejection from the award procedure. Proposals sent by e-mail or by fax will also be non-admissible and discarded. Envelopes or parcels found opened at the opening session will also lead to non-admissibility of the proposal. Consequently, consortia must ensure that their proposal is wrapped in such a way to prevent any accidental opening during its mailing.

11. Confidentiality and protection of personal data

For the processing of this award procedure, the EEA observes the rules set in Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 on the protection of individuals with regards to the processing of personal data by Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data (OJEU L 8/1 of 12.1.2001) ⁽²⁶⁾.

For further detailed information, please refer to the privacy statement available on the EEA website at the following address: <https://www.eea.europa.eu/about-us/tenders/privacy-statement>.

ANNEXES

Annex 1 – Proposal submission form

Annex 2 – Declaration and evidence of absence of situation of exclusion

Annex 3 – Legal entity form

Annex 4 – Financial identification form (only for the partner coordinating the consortium)

Annex 5 – Draft framework partnership agreement and specific grant agreement

Annex 6 – Simplified Financial Statement form

Annex 7 – EEA writing manual (November 2017)

Annex 8 – Power of attorney template

⁽²⁶⁾ This regulation is currently under revision.