TERMS OF REFERENCE	European Environment Agency

Framework Partnership Agreement concerning the European Topic Centre on Inland, coastal and marine waters 2014-2018

Reference: Open call for proposals EEA/NSV/13/002-ETC/ICM

Closing date: 30.04.2013

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 and its Member States in developing, implementing and evaluating European 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[1]), a network of around 350 organisations 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[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 European Union. The functioning of the EEA and Eionet are described in the EEA regulation[3]. The Agency, which is open to all nations sharing its objectives, currently has 32 member countries. These are the 27 EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey.

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 States and EU institutions.

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[1] http://www.eionet.europa.eu

[2] http://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/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32009R0401:EN:NOT

One key role is to manage five thematic Environmental Data Centres (Climate change, Air, Water, Land use and Biodiversity).

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', 'Spatial information and analysis', 'Biological Diversity', and 'Sustainable consumption and production'.

Having regard to the expiry of the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) concerning the ETC Inland, coastal and marine waters on 28 August 2013, the EEA launches this call with a view to identifying the consortium which will continue the work in the topic area from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2018[4] .

The total annual budget for Specific Agreements (SAs) to be concluded on the basis of the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) will be subject to available funds from the General Budget of the EU and priorities set in the EEA Strategy 2014-18, which will be approved by the EEA Management Board later in 2013. Present spending in the topic area is of the order of:

Inland, coastal and marine waters (total): EUR 1,600,000

1.2 Role of European Topic Centres (ETCs)

ETCs are, according to the EEA regulation[5] 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 support the EEA Environmental Data Centres in the topics Air, Climate change, Water, Biodiversity and Land use referred to above, and may provide help to EEA in supporting other data centres coordinated by Eurostat and JRC. Tasks focus inter alia on the processing of data and information from Eionet and international databases for use in indicators and models to describe and analyse the present and future state of the environment, for the production of indicators to communicate the findings to various users and for analyses of the effectiveness of policy implementation including distance to targets.

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 and/or information, capacity-building in 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 in indicator analysis and assessment. Under the overall leadership of EEA, leading, steering and supervising the work of the ETCs, ETCs are also expected to cooperate amongst themselves on crosscutting projects.

[4] This call is subject to the EEA Financial Regulation and its Implementing Rules as determined by the EU's Financial Regulation (EU) No 966/2012 of 25.10.2012 (OJEU L 298/1 of 26.10.2012) and its Rules of application laid down in Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 of 29.10.2012 (OJEU L 362/1 of 31.12.2012), in particular their respective Titles VI on Grants (Articles 121-137 FR and 173-210 RAP). It is also subject to the EEA regulation which stipulates in Article 4(5) that 'topic centres shall be designated by the Management Board …for a period not exceeding the duration of each multiannual work programme…Each designation may, however, be renewed'.

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

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.

1.3 Agreements

All activities of ETCs are based on Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs) and Specific Agreements (SAs) concluded to implement the former. Annual work programmes, which serve as the basis for the award of any grants, are decided upon by the EEA and ETCs 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 demands on EEA work in the area of Inland, coastal and marine waters 2014-2018

2.1 Policy context

ETC support to EEA is needed in particular in areas where EEA contributions to the policy process entails a complex 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, specific ETC tasks in section 3. The proposal submitted is expected to demonstrate the capability of the consortium to work with all their specific tasks targeted in the described policy context.

The 7th Environmental Action Programme (EAP) has set out the key elements of the future environment policy linked to the Europe 2020 Strategy, such as the EU Sustainable Development Strategy, and is expected to further shape the policy context of the EEA work. The main specific policy context for the work of ETC/ICM is set by the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). However, both are developing within the Europe 2020 strategy with the Biodiversity strategy and the resource efficiency roadmap setting the path for their further development. The water and marine directives interpret the call 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.

As the policy frameworks are largely developed now, the challenge for EU and Member States is an effective implementation with the right information management at all levels in terms of monitoring, reporting and assessment to ensure easy and streamlined achievement of the objectives.

Inland waters

The main specific policy development in the inland water area is the further implementation of the WFD along with the other water[6] and the flood directives. The 1st round of River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) will have been implemented for six years in 2015, good status should be achieved, and the 2nd round of RBMPs should improve the

[6] Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (UWWTD), Nitrate, Drinking and Bathing Water Directive

areas where good status could not be achieved. 2018 will therefore see the first real review of the WFD by the Commission. Furthermore, in 2015, the 1st round of Flood Risk Management Plans will be due which are supposed to be fully coordinated with the RBMP.

As a more cross-cutting element within the water area and moving the WFD into the area of water resource management, the Commission published in November 2012 the 'Blueprint to safeguard Europe's water resources'[7]. This will bring developments for the better implementation of the WFD as well as the integration between WFD, WS&D policy, and the water-related parts of the Climate change adaptation and vulnerability policy. In this respect, the issue of resource efficiency will continuously play an important role and the work started under the Blueprint as water milestone of the *resource efficiency roadmap* will gain more speed in form of a focus on environmental accounts for water.

The 7th EAP is expected to focus on crosscutting elements like implementation and to include ecosystem assessments and green economy as an answer to the dual challenge of resource efficiency within the boundaries of ecosystem sustainability. For the water area at EU level at large (inland water and marine) this means a strong focus on the implementation of the ecosystem-based approach in connection also with the integration with the Biodiversity Strategy and a focus on economic aspects.

The priority area of implementation will need a strong focus on streamlining of reporting. Here, the policy-relevant part led by the Commission needs to lead on the streamlining of requirements under the different water policy elements in the inland water and marine area (WFD, MSFD and other directives); this will include reporting cycles, purpose of monitoring or introducing reporting only in cases of significant changes in the reported status.

Coastal and marine environment

The topics covered by transitional, coastal and marine environment are guided by a broad portfolio of EU policies: the MSFD, WFD, HD, BD, the 2020 Biodiversity Strategy, ICZM, IMP, MSP, CFP, climate change, and resource efficiency[8]. Furthermore, the EEA is committed to support the development and implementation of the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) and INSPIRE. The EEA Strategy also sets its own objectives on topics where coastal or marine perspectives will be requested, e.g. environment and human health. Transitional, coastal and marine environment covers the aquatic environment (including biodiversity – which as a central theme of MSFD, will become a core activity of the future ETC/ICM), and human activities on land that directly impact the aquatic environment. It does not cover the environment of the terrestrial part of the coast.

The MSFD aims to put measures in place by 2016 in order to achieve good environmental status of the marine environment through a set of marine strategies, which balance human activities within the boundaries for the sustainable use of Europe's seas. These strategies, developed by EU Member States, encompass a six-year cycle of activities including characterisation of the marine ecosystem and its current state. Targets are set to

[7] COM(2012)673
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52012DC0673:EN:NOT

[8] Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), Water Framework Directive (WFD), Habitats Directive (HD), Birds Directive (BD) Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP), Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP), Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).

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.

This integrated approach covers different aspects of the marine environment, ranging from characterization of, in principle, all habitats and species, as well as ecosystem functioning and an assessment of cumulative and synergetic effects of the human pressures acting on it, to a socio-economic analysis to establish the uses of the sea and associated cost of degradation of the marine environment. The strong link to pressures implies that human activities are critical to the marine environment domain, and consequently the MSFD is also seen as the environmental pillar of IMP, which, together with the CFP, governs a whole range of human activities in the sea. Therefore, the MSFD should be understood as setting the boundaries for sustainable use of Europe's Seas.

The MSFD establishes important links to other policy domains, in particular the WFD, HD, BD, ICZM, and the IMP as well as the CFP, in a way where those Directives and policies are seen as support to the MSFD. The Commission is currently preparing a joint initiative on ICZM and MSP aiming to support sustainable planning at sea and sustainable management of coastal areas. Climate change is not explicitly covered by the MSFD, but the oceans have a strong role in controlling Earth's climate, and climate change is likely to influence environmental targets set under the MSFD through *inter alia* ocean temperature change and acidification. This is one of the reasons the Directive provides for the six-year 'adaptive management' cycles. Having failed to halt biodiversity loss by 2010, the EU has recently adopted a 2020 Biodiversity Strategy[9], where the need to improve the knowledge on the state of marine ecosystems and the services provided by them as well as their values is included in one of its targets (cf. Target 2, Action 5). This is to be achieved by 2014 for their mapping and assessment and by 2020 for their valuation in terms of ecosystem capital accounting. For this reason, the Strategy establishes clear links to MSFD implementation as it will need to draw from the reporting and assessments under the Directive.

It will also be fundamental to support stakeholder processes on the above-mentioned policy areas by providing scientific expertise and institutional and operational knowledge at the regional level, e.g. through strong linkage to Regional Sea Conventions. This includes providing strong, demonstrated expertise and networking capacities on the overarching objective of ecosystem-based management to human activities in the marine environment.

2.2 EEA role in support of policy

General

The EEA role in support of the policy elements outlined above focuses on the knowledge base to facilitate the most effective monitoring, reporting and assessment to bring policies to work. EEA is the body to bring the MDIAK chain (Monitoring, Data, Indicators, Assessment, Knowledge) to work in the context of policy effectiveness following the relation between Drivers, Pressures, Status, Impacts and Responses (DPSIR framework). The Water Information System for Europe (WISE) with its inland water and upcoming

[9] http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/pdf/2020/1_EN_ACT_part1_v7%5b1%5d.pdf

marine part, with the respective information management and assessments are therefore in the centre of the focus. The ETC needs to be highly aware of EEA's role in the policy process to fulfil the specific tasks described in section 3 in a targeted and policy relevant way.

Work in the inland water and the coastal and marine areas have some similarities which imply that there are synergies to be gained from continuous collaboration within the ETC. However, the specific topics and activities are also different which warrants organising the work in two separate but connected sub-areas. The synergies can be mainly summarized as follows:

- There are similarities in the legislative processes of the main policy areas Water Framework Directive (WFD) and Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). Both directives build on an ecosystem based approach where regional organisation (River basin Principle, Regional seas) is essential. Both also relate to an objective to achieve good status (good environmental status for MSFD, good ecological status for freshwater). However, the status and logic of the implementation strategies are rather different and result in very different workflows and needs for EEA to support and participate e.g. in working groups and implementation steps.
- Both directives require a reporting process in which EEA plays a continuous and important role to bring together Eionet priority data flows with the Member State (MS) reporting on status and pressures. However, the timelines and deadlines for reporting for the implementation of the directives differ with the WFD being in its first review with the first full management cycle completed in 2010, whereas for the MSFD, the first reporting cycle is due in 2012, and its first full management cycle is only due by 2018. There are considerable synergies to be gained from the WISE-implementation in the marine area, and the first reporting round is largely building on the experience of the WFD.
- For both, inland water and marine policies the issue of climate change impacts are highly relevant. Between others the issue of flooding is covered by the flood directive, which has relations to both policy areas.
- The WFD assessments of ecological and chemical status in coastal and transitional waters are likely to become an essential 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.
- In the recent initiative of discussing better implementation and streamlining between the directives, a certain convergence can be seen again and also close relationships with the topic area of biodiversity, which would require continuously close contact between not only the freshwater and marine partners of the ETC/ICM, but also the ETC/BD.
- At the European level, with the implementation of SEIS and INSPIRE, data management is becoming increasingly sophisticated, with implications for the development of WISE. The ETC will benefit from having a strong data team that can service both areas using most up-to-date technologies combined with a sound understanding of those policies.

Inland waters

The EEA role in the further implementation of the WFD will be similar to 2012, to fulfil again in 2018 the obligation under Art. 18 WFD and support the review of the implementation. In terms of assessments for the further support of the WFD and Blueprint development, EEA contributions will need to continue as from the 2012 assessments. The EEA role would be to support the implementation as well as the future adds-on reporting work to bring through the data and information relevant for all water directives following the MDIAK chain.

The Blueprint focus on water resource management in connection with climate change adaptation and resource efficiency will be reflected in further work on water resource management in close link to climate change adaptation, water scarcity and droughts and floods. Here further EEA assessments are needed and EEA should play a stronger role regarding information on measures and pressures. Measures are to be considered in their close link to the key sectors for driving forces (energy, agriculture and utilities in the water energy food nexus). Resource management also in the context of stronger economic focus will need to be reflected in the continuous work on ecosystem capital accounts for water, building up on the efforts on water balances and water accounts in the period up to 2013, and support the development of guidance for Member States.

The further policy development with the Blueprint and the Biodiversity Strategy requires EEA inland water work to take a role in information on and assessments of water economics. Here economic expertise will be needed for gathering information on the cost of measures, water pricing and the possibilities and consequences of water pricing. For the most important sister directives of the WFD (UWWT, Nitrate, Bathing and Drinking water directive) further coordination, integration and harmonisation are needed. Water elements in the ecosystem assessment like interlinkages between nature directives and WFD results, and ecosystem functionalities (for good and services) are another area to develop the knowledge base. The water knowledge base needs further improvement in the area of hydromorphology (extensive WFD information available now) and chemicals (also in relation to health issues on the impact side)

Regarding better implementation and the 'streamlining of reporting process' for EEA, this will be most relevant in the data and information work, as the main tool for better implementation and reporting will be the improvement of the reporting streams requiring major development in the structure of the knowledge base and WISE. Eye on Earth can play a highly relevant role here and help organise and structure the transparency of wider reporting streams. EEA will most likely reflect this in its Strategy, having its role in streamlining the information systems and the further involvement in e.g. distributed systems to enable the changes in the reporting requirements. The challenge will be to make a significant shift and update of the information systems to reflect the higher needs of integration between the different policy streams, in particular the MFSD, WFD, Floods and Natura directives. Here not only close cooperation and interconnection with WISE, floods information and marine, but also the Biodiversity Information System, BISE, is highly relevant.

Coastal and marine waters

The EEA specifically supports policies through providing an information base on the topics covered by these policies, in order to satisfy all steps in the MDIAK cycle. Much of this information relates to the MSFD given its focus on achieving an ecosystem-based

approach to management of human activities for the marine environment. The information base includes developing policy relevant datasets, indicators and assessments in close collaboration with the EEA. Furthermore, EEA is exploring various assessment methods such as spatially-explicit assessments, accounting for ecosystems structures and services as well as their valuation.

Specific activities include supporting the development of the role of the EEA as receiver of data resulting from assessments and monitoring programmes, and new obligations to define this in the context of WISE-Marine, INSPIRE and SEIS are expected to follow.

The MSFD and WFD both operate with environmental indicators or quality elements, and developing these indicator sets in collaboration with the rest of the marine community (Eionet, Regional Sea Conventions, ICES etc.) is an integral part of the policy support.

EEA publishes integrated thematic marine assessments which, together with the SoER2015, are considered key policy support products. Producing integrated assessments requires focus on the relationship between state and pressures and impacts from maritime sectors and socio-economics, as well as their links to the blue growth and sustainability agenda. EEA is also developing a marine contribution to the 2020 Biodiversity Strategy in relation to its targets 1) halting the deterioration of marine habitats and species; 4) achieving Maximum Sustainable Yield; and 2) in terms of mapping and assessing marine ecosystems and their services (by 2014) as well as valuing such services in terms of ecosystem capital accounting (by 2020). Doing this will require developing both a methodology and drawing from the reporting and assessments under the MSFD in order to make it operational.

A central concept for the work is supporting 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. 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 introducing a systemic dimension in its marine assessments so these can evaluate ecosystem changes as well as, eventually, express such changes in terms of human welfare/wellbeing. This would allow the identification of possible trade-offs between long-term maintenance and short-term overexploitation of the seas' natural capital and related services, e.g. by maritime industrial uses. In this way, EEA marine assessments will not only be more relevant to EU policy (e.g. MSFD), but also to society at large.

Finally, EEA works to improve collaboration across EU-level coastal/marine/maritime initiatives and to bring them into the mainstream of the political processes. Current initiatives include: Marine Knowledge 2020 and the European Monitoring and Data network (EMODnet), the marine Copernicus Service, and multiple FP7 projects.

3. Specific tasks of the European Topic Centre on inland, coastal and marine waters

3.1 Inland Waters

Work package I1 – Monitoring, data and information systems

The ETC needs to work with EEA and its member countries and key international organisations[10] to arrive at efficient structures for the European Water Data Centre to deliver policy relevant data and information on chemical and biological water quality, on emissions to water, and on water quantity (including resources management).

In particular, the ETC will help the EEA in delivering a range of technical support needed to build up the knowledge base under the EU Water Directives, notably under the Water Framework Directive, UWWTD, Floods, Nitrates, Pesticides, Bathing and Drinking Water directives.

EEA with the Commission (DG ENV, Eurostat and JRC) is developing from 2013 onwards the 2nd generation of WISE which will encompass a wider range of data on all relevant directives (see above) and enabling better cross reference and assessments between the different reporting streams and information pools. Following the SEIS principle 'report once use many', better common use and streamlining will need to be established. Here the technical expertise and support of the ETC is needed on support the setting up, fine tuning and maintenance of the information structure, search and assessment tools. The ETC will need to play an active role in designing and establishing information systems to hold, process, and exchange, visualise and disseminate that information. In this context further development of WISE towards a distributed system and a system that will support implementation assessment will have to be reinforced.

The adoption of the Commission's Blueprint communication also highlights the need for sound water balances and water accounts. Therefore increased effort is needed on data and information on water resources (availability, abstraction, use and consumption) and on the methodologies to calculate, model or derive these data and the final accounts.

The ETC is expected to provide support to EEA in further developing the Data Centre for Water by means of WISE in a WISE family comprising WISE freshwater and WISE marine. This has to facilitate the data assimilation for EEA needs, and to provide expert support to EEA in coordination activities for European water monitoring. The ETC is also expected to establish links with other data centres (Biodiversity, Land use, Climate change and Air) and cooperate on analysis and visualisation tool developments across the topics.

Specific tasks:

- Maintenance and further development of the data flows under WISE SOE and water directives, as well as the widening to other data source (water utilities and industry). The work should be done with close cooperation with relevant actors and stakeholders. These data flows entail water quality in rivers and lakes and ground water, emissions to water, water quantity (see below) the UWWTD, Bathing water, and upcoming more on the drinking water and nitrate directive. It includes also all the respective geographical reference layers and spatial information.

[10] EU Commission (incl. JRC and EUROSTAT) as well as OECD (in support of Eurostat) and UN water institutions to which WISE should be the main entry point for European water data.

- In close cooperation with EEA member countries, ensure high quality of data and information stored in the Water Data Centre including *quality assurance and quality control of data* (QA/QC), documentation of data collections and databases. QA/QC on the substantive interpretation of data and the evaluation of methodologies used (e.g. models) by the EEA have to build on this and should be supported by additional water expertise from the ETC.
- Work on data and information flows needs to focus on the further integration of *measures* under the WFD, and when needed and necessary widen the scope to other water directives, specifically urban water and relevant sectoral activities and policies (e.g. utilities, agriculture, energy). Support in the reporting under the water directives in terms of reporting schemas, reporting tools and streamlining.
- In light of climate change, *water quantity data flows* as well as floods information need particular consideration, without ignoring the other parameters (especially ecological and chemical status). The ETC will work with the water accounting methodology, developed at EEA based on the SEEAW. Respective skills and flexibility to take up the developments are expected. As a strong tool with high data demands this will be the main methodology for water resource aspects both for water efficiency and water scarcity and drought assessments. The implementation for water quality accounts should be envisaged in wider context of further EEA work on ecosystem assessments. This work will strongly link to Commission developments of new guidelines (on water (quantity) accounts) and the so-called Knowledge-Policy platform and will need to link to Eurostat work on water accounts. Water quantity information for water accounts needs to draw on information sources beyond the established Eionet data flows.
- The above mentioned development of data flows and maintenance of information (tabular and spatial) by the ETC will need to be done in close cooperation with EEA and with the view to improve all data and information structures in the *2nd generation of WISE*. This includes ETC support to the EEA IT experts regarding efficient information structures, improvement of search and assessment functions, and development of the distributed system. Most up-to-date knowledge in object oriented development of information structures, newest data and information standards and GIS skills to integrate with the geographic reference data sets are paramount in this work package.

Work package I2 – Indicators

The EEA develops indicators to support regular environmental assessments indicating its state and trends and to support policy processes in the water area. These indicators are developed in the DPSIR assessment framework. The work on indicators is interlinked with data and (integrated) analysis and assessments. The ETC has to give support especially where the link to the member countries is crucial to ensure sound quality controlled and assured data. The ETC will need to maintain and develop indicator fact sheets, especially for the core set of indicators, which include an analysis of the trends.

For the next review of the WFD (Art. 18.2b), due in 2018, the ETC needs to continue intense work to keep the core set indicators related to the WFD and other water directives up to date and quality assured. The analysis and assessment of the information need to integrate recent information and previous trend information (EEA-SoE), as well as related information from e.g. nature directives.

To support the implementation of the Blueprint, the indicators for water quantity and especially for water scarcity and drought need to be further developed including the results of the water accounting process and environmental capital accounts. There is a need for the ETC to further develop the links between water and climate change indicators on floods and water scarcity and droughts.

Resource efficiency indicators illustrate whether economic growth is achieved on account of a growing resource use and associated impact or together with a reduced resource use and impact, with respect to both economics and the environment. Resource efficiency is linked with sustainable development and can be measured by physical efficiency (resource use productivity), environmental efficiency (resource impact), or as an eco-efficiency (composite) indicator. The ETC further develops the resource efficiency indicators in the theme of water for agriculture, industry and households.

Water indicators that are not part of the core set of indicators have to be maintained and further developed in close relation with the assessments where these indicators are used as a basic piece of information. It needs to be carefully evaluated where a fully-fledged development of indicator fact sheets for these indicators is needed and where, in the sense of a wider assessment, the DPSIR is utilised also without full development of a monitoring- data-indicator-assessment-knowledge chain. In more complex areas, like integrated water resource management, the indicator development should focus more on integrative aspects throughout the DPSIR and e.g. distance-to-target analysis than single state, trend, impact or pressure analysis.

Work package I3 – Policy support

The ETC needs to support EEA in fulfilling its role regarding the cooperation with the European Commission towards the further implementation of the Water Framework Directive, related directives and the Blueprint. Traditionally, for the data and reporting work as well as for its assessment, EEA and Commission work towards creating necessary synergies between the respective contracts and grants. The ETC work should continuously fit into this setting while pronouncing the clear benefit and role on the side of the EEA. The support in detail would be mostly related to practical work requirements and processes in the working groups under the WFD CIS and other directives in which EEA participates and supports the implementation with data information collection and management in WISE, specifically:

- The reporting under the WFD and other water directives to ensure better streamlining in all reporting processes (like UWWTD, drinking water, bathing water, nitrates directives, floods directive, E-PRTR) and with other policies (e.g. agriculture, biodiversity, climate change adaptation). Reporting processes and needs of the Commission and Member States have to be followed and the future integration under WISE (see WP I1) has to be supported with the relevant networking.
- The policy support regarding the implementation of the Blueprint will (depending on the implementation strategy for the Blueprint) likely focus on supporting the development of guidance documents in the WFD Common Implementation Strategy (CIS) process, the common body for EU and member states to develop implementation tools. The Blueprint so far called for guidance documents needed for water accounts. Here work on water balances and on the water accounting methodology is needed (see WP I1). Furthermore water accounts, as part of

established national accounts processes, have to be evaluated as a tool to support and monitor progress towards European water resources management.

- A further future focus develops from collecting and assessing the information on measures, (including their costs, other economic information and aspects of public participation) and network with Commission and Member States on these aspects.

Work package I4 – Assessments

In the period after 2012 up to 2018, EEA will continue to provide water assessments with increasing focus on the ecosystem-based approach and analyse the role of water management in a green economy. Ecosystem assessment and water resource efficiency are the key elements for future sustainable water management.

For the EEA water assessments to be produced, ETC work will provide the knowledge base on water topics including overview of and trends in status and pressures and evaluation of effects of policies as described in the section on the policy context above. EEA will request the ETC to draft background documents and sections to be used for producing water chapters in the EEA *SOER 2015* and thematic water reports. The assessment work needs to be based on a good understanding of the WFD process and the policy processes foreseen in the Blueprint, 2020 Biodiversity Strategy, and EU 2020 Strategy.

The further implementation of the WFD, the industry directives and the Blueprint development will require different assessments to support policy developments. These assessments will partly be based on and improvements of the 2012 water assessments. In the period 2016 to 2018, EEA is supposed to fulfil again its obligation under Art.18 in producing assessments on the status and pressures.

Spatial analysis and modelling of future status and pressures are more and more important aspects of any assessment work. The ETC is expected to provide capacities in particular in relation to data and visualisation to support EEA spatial analysis and modelling activities and to liaise where possible with the JRC, which has an important role in the EU level spatial assessment.

Policy effectiveness and socio-economic assessments will continue to be an important part of the overall work of EEA. The ETC should give support to this work especially with its data capacities.

The ETC will also be expected to support work on ecosystem assessments of freshwaters and wetlands. The assessment work needs to be based on a good understanding of the aquatic habitats and species and results from the Natura 2000 network.

EEA assessment work has to be supported further by providing information activities, for example through briefing notes, seminars, etc.

3.2 Coastal and marine waters

Work package M1 - Monitoring, data and information systems

EEA has a strategic role in providing sound and independent information on the European marine environment. Eionet will remain a central data source (for the WISE SoE dataflow) and the Water Data Centre a fundamental system to store high quality of data and information. Therefore the maintenance and further development of the WISE SOE dataflow on transitional, coastal and marine waters (namely on quality assurance and control of data, documentation of data collections and databases), as well as the widening

to other potential relevant data sources (e.g. Regional Sea Conventions) will be a main task.

However, EEA is also becoming established as the European host of marine data and information reported through the MSFD obligations which means that EEA will also be working more closely with Member States (through the MSFD WG on Data, Information and Knowledge Exchange – WG-DIKE) to support the MSFD underlying data and information flows related to the initial assessments and the monitoring programmes. In particular, EEA supported by ETC/ICM is tasked to provide support to the technical implementation of obligations through chairing of a WG-DIKE technical group, where INSPIRE, SEIS, and distributed data systems are central concepts. Through this activity, EEA will also support the process to make Member States' MSFD underlying data available with the aim of developing comparable and harmonized European marine and maritime reference datasets. This will be an on-going activity towards the next MSFD reporting cycle in 2018, which will be achieved through a collaborative process with MS under WG-DIKE and its technical group but also other relevant stakeholders (namely the Regional Sea Conventions, the EMODnet, the marine Copernicus, and FP7 research project communities and other Marine Knowledge 2020 activities). This activity will also contribute to expanding the quality and scope of EEA's marine and maritime indicators and assessments. These activities will feed into WISE-Marine with a strong emphasis on developing and making operational the marine component of it, as the main mechanism for organising the workflows and infrastructure needed to report on the obligations of the MSFD, and for making this information and data available. The ETC will therefore need to play an active role in supporting the design and establishment of WISE-Marine.

Work package M2 – Indicators

EEA maintains and develops policy relevant marine indicators (both core set indicators and the thematic MAR set). These indicators will be linked to relevant policy processes, ensuring that, in this way, they maintain their methodological soundness and policy relevance. Of particular importance for this work area will be use of the MSFD criteria and methodological standards on GES (Commission Decision 2010/477/EU) and its potential revision. Links to and cooperation with the Regional Sea Conventions and to the work developed therein will also be needed.

These processes will allow EEA to progressively cover such diverse issues as biodiversity, invasive non-indigenous species, food-web health, sea floor integrity, marine litter, noise, or other forms of energy introduction in the sea, in addition to eutrophication, chemical pollution and fisheries which have been historically assessed at the EEA (see also Table 1).

Furthermore, they will also allow widening the environmental and socio-economic dimensions of the EEA marine indicators within the DPSIR assessment framework. This will be done by exploring further development of pressure and impact indicators (and thus beyond the current predominance of state indicators) and hence allowing better policy implementation assessments.

Cross-policy coherence will be likewise essential for the future of EEA marine and maritime indicators. Therefore, they will continuously need to be adjusted to specific requirements of other related policies, in particular the WFD, the Habitats and Birds Directives, and the EU2020 Biodiversity Strategy to maintain their relevance.

Finally going beyond environmental assessments, it will be fundamental to keep track of the development of the growing maritime sectors and their impacts on the wider marine

socio-ecological system. This means maritime indicators, based on socio-economic data, will need to be developed and maintained to allow more cross-cutting and integrated assessments of the marine and maritime domains, following the ecosystem approach. This workflow will also contribute to EEA's wider objective of assessing more recent policy demands such as resource efficiency, ecosystems resilience and human well-being. It will also support reaching the sustainable growth objectives of the IMP (of which the MSFD is the environmental pillar) and MSP and ICZM that both provide policy tools that address the wider socio-economic context in maritime/coastal areas.

Work package M3 – Policy Support

EEA and the ETC should be particularly active in developing the knowledge base for policy implementation. This means that the EEA frequently participates in workshops, working groups and expert groups related to the policy portfolio of marine and coastal environment through provision of working documents and presentations. A particularly close relation exists to the MSFD WG-DIKE, where the EEA and the ETC are tasked to provide support to the technical implementation of obligations through chairing of a WG-DIKE technical group, where INSPIRE, SEIS, and distributed data systems are central concepts. Similarly, the EEA supports WG-MAES of the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy Common Implementation Framework by developing a marine ecosystem services classification, a marine ecosystem typology for mapping purposes, and a specific assessment methodology at the European level that can also support Member States' own ecosystem and services assessments, which is to be made operational *inter alia* by drawing from the reporting and assessments under the MSFD.

Expertise and networking capacities are needed to support EEA in the development and maintenance of contacts relevant for EEA assessments to the network under the MSFD, including FP projects, and the ETC should be able to support stakeholder processes by providing organisational capacity, scientific expertise, and institutional and operational knowledge of relevant activities.

Work package M4 – Assessments

The objective of EEA coastal and marine environment assessments is to support the characterisation and evaluation of the implementation of the ecosystem-based approach to the management of human activities in the marine environment, which is embedded in the MSFD. This, as a first step, requires the assessment of the state of the coastal and marine environment, in order to draw up expert reports on the quality and sensitivity of the environment and the pressures acting upon it, following the DPSIR framework.

It is the responsibility of the ETC/ICM to provide the scientific and expert knowledge base for questions related to the quality, sensitivity and pressures influencing transitional, coastal and marine environment, which will allow drawing up expert reports on marine and maritime topics together with EEA staff. A main part of the EEA assessment will be in regard to the MSFD and strong expertise in the content elements of this Directive is required (see also Table 1).

ETC/ICM will support marine and maritime assessments within and across the marine regions and beyond with analyses, based on the knowledge base established through work packages M1 and M2, on the topics listed in Table 1 in the following areas:

- The state of the marine environment through use of indicators and the information made available through the MSFD reporting and other activities.

Furthermore analyses of the state of the coastal and marine environment through use of multi-metric and indicator-based assessment tools will be performed.

- Human activities, and their pressures and impacts upon the state of marine ecosystems (requires significant innovative capacity for spatial analysis).
- Relevant analysis of policy response measures put in place to achieve EU policy targets for the marine environment, including analyses of the MSFD programmes of measures and an assessment of the European network of marine protected areas.
- Economic and social drivers of uses of the marine waters, as needed to estimate the cost of degradation of those waters, including:
    - Development and implementations of an integrated assessment framework for socio-economic analysis of maritime activities methodologies;
    - Focus on the current trends including forecasting of the main maritime sectors such as fisheries, energy, transport, and leisure activities.
    - Overall marine ecosystem assessments, drawing from all of the above, with a focus on state and trends of ecosystem services and their (economic) valuation, also in terms of ecosystem capital accounting.

The main marine and maritime assessments in the period 2014-16 include, but are not limited to:

- A 2014 MSFD baseline report. This includes providing an overview of the data reported by Member States through the 2012 Initial Assessment.
- Marine and maritime assessments for the State of the Environment Report 2015. This includes an assessment of trends in and prospects for the European marine environment building upon indicators as well as relevant data reported by Member States under the MSFD.
- Individual marine and maritime assessments, in support on 2014 baseline assessment and 2015 EEA SoER, utilising the improved knowledge base made available by the MSFD. Besides supporting core EEA functions it will support discussions on criteria for Good Environmental Status as well as help prepare a comprehensive review of the status of the marine environment.
- Marine contributions to the 2020 EU Biodiversity Strategy 2014 Target 2 deadlines, including a marine ecosystem services classification, a marine ecosystem typology for mapping purposes, and a specific assessment methodology at the European level leading to assessments of several ecosystem services at that level. Also development of methodologies for coastal and marine ecosystem capital accounting, including preliminary accounts (towards the 2020 Target 2 deadlines).
- Preparation of assessment following 2018 reporting.

3.3 General activities

Work package 5 - ETC management and capacity-building

The organisational set-up and management procedures of the ETC consortium must meet the special and general conditions of the Framework Partnership Agreement. To ensure this, the management of the ETC requires, for example, clear decision and communication structures within the consortium, and well-established links to the EEA and its member countries, to the European Commission, and to other relevant organisations. In response

to the jointly agreed annual work programme, which is the basis for the grant, the consortium shall submit a proposal for action. The ETC management must also include procedures for quality assurance, including language-checks, 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 for EEA tasks at least 50% or their time.

EEA member country coverage will soon be 33. The consortium should be constructed in a way that the partnership enables the international networking among partners with experience in EU and regional level work, international networks and, e.g., EU-level think tanks, without representing all EEA member countries.

As the ETCs are an inherent part of the Eionet and distinguished from other contractual arrangements, the close link to other Eionet members (EEA member countries and other ETCs) is absolutely vital. This needs to be realised through:

- strong communication efforts with the countries, including networking and regular country visits;
- in dialogue with the countries, identifying barriers to perform their tasks optimally (e.g. monitoring capacities, staff resources, knowledge gaps) and 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 member countries;
- engaging actively in co-operation with other ETCs to strengthen the coherence of data and information, in particular regarding geographical reference data sets, and integration in an ecosystem approach. Cooperation should be integrated into the on-going content work and should provide synergies rather than additional work load. Work among ETCs has to be complimentary.

Priority areas for cross-ETC cooperation from a freshwater perspective would be:

- ecosystem assessment, biodiversity and development of an ecosystem-based approach throughout sectoral policy in implementation of a green economy;
- land use (including coastal areas) and its impacts on the inland water coastal and marine environment;
- climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation regarding floods, droughts, water scarcity and related hazards and their socioeconomic effects;
- the above three areas include all the respective tools and integration of spatial reference data sets, respective information structure and the further integration of WISE with the other information systems BISE, Climate adapt and the Land use Data Centre.

Priority areas for cross-ETC cooperation from a coastal and marine environment perspective would be:

- Biodiversity: Marine protected areas, Natura 2000 and marine habitats and species under the Habitats and Birds Directives and support of ecosystem assessments;
- 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
- Atmosphere: Atmospheric deposition of pollutants;

- Land use (including coastal areas) and its impacts on inland coastal and marine waters (including link to land use accounts);
- Some aspects, like the status of coastal and transitional waters, are covered by both WFD and MSFD, and in the recently developed State of Water report, the freshwater and marine teams have had a close collaboration which has been of great benefit to the development of the report. In 2015/2016, programmes of measures will be established and reported under both WFD and MSFD, and MS have requested that a common reporting approach is developed because some measures will be the same under the two Directives;
- The need to fulfil the 2020 Biodiversity Strategy has resulted in a recent Commission initiative discussing better implementation and streamlining between the HD, WFD and MSFD reporting. The EEA already supports developing overlapping reporting strategies. This could be further strengthened through cross-cutting teams at the EEA and the ETCs.

4. General guidance on the expertise and organisation of the European Topic Centre on Inland, coastal and marine water

The present and earlier ETCs are consortia of government organisations, private non-profit organisations and a few commercial firms. Based upon EEA experience some general guidance can be given for a successful consortium.

4.1 The structure of the ETC consortium

The ETC consortium shall comprise a core team consisting of an ETC-manager, a freshwater team lead, a marine environment team lead and a data team lead, and a number of associated partners, and details of the consortium working arrangements considering the points listed below are to be provided with the proposal:

- In the core team, it will be the responsibility of the freshwater, marine and data team leads to develop, organise and secure the content of EEA work programme objectives, in collaboration with the EEA, and the ETC coordinator, whereas it will be the responsibility of the ETC coordinator to ensure that all administrative requirements are met.
- The ETC coordinator and each team lead should have high level senior expertise, good knowledge of the policy setting, strong integration into the scientific community and interdisciplinary expertise within each of their topics. Furthermore, they should have 50-75% of their time available to work for ETC ICM, from organisations which participate in Eionet and that their organisations are actively engaged in the implementation in the main policy areas (Water Framework Directive and Marine Strategy Framework Directive). Furthermore the data team should work across inland, coastal and marine waters in support of both areas.
- The consortium should be organised around the following administrative functions:
    - coordinator (ETC manager), having appropriate management and networking capabilities;
    - administrative support, able to work in English and organise European meetings and consultations;
    - accounting support, in order to ensure proper financial management;

- to ensure specific expertise on an ad hoc basis on emerging issues or related to specific methodologies (e.g. accounting, ecological flows, public participation etc.) the possibilities of subcontracting need to be considered in the organisational setting including budgetary consequences.

- The consortium should consist of a number of partners able to cover the required field of expertise as well as a balanced European geographical coverage (for coastal and marine environment this means ability to support activities related to the four marine regions of Europe).
- The consortium as a whole needs to cover the two main work areas with the expertise listed under 4.2, but also to have links to the Eionet and its expertise across Europe. Access to expertise through participation in research projects is particularly important in projects where very specific skills are needed.
- The ETC needs to be structured in a way that ensures the necessary flexibility to enable adaptation 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 also with relevant Commission and/or other international policy and scientific working groups and conferences.
- The ETC core team and partners will collaborate with EEA staff. Most elements of the annual work plan are developed by the EEA. This collaboration can take place in the form of feedback from EEA staff, team meetings, project meetings, or extended stays at the EEA.

4.2 Technical and scientific expertise

The consortium is expected to work equally in the freshwater (groundwater, rivers, lakes) and in the coastal and marine environment domains. 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, distributed in a way so that it adequately covers both the freshwater and the coastal and marine environment domains. In broad terms, the following expertise is needed in both teams:

- data management skills and experience in major European concepts like SEIS and INSPIRE, including also expertise to 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;
- 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;
- 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 programme.

In the freshwater domain, the ETC is expected to have technical and scientific expertise in the following areas:

- Data work and indicator development. Good knowledge and expertise is needed for data analysis, with insight into 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.

- 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 programme on data issues as well as insight into scientific knowledge to exploit the needs and possibilities for integrated and cross-sectoral assessments.
- 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.
- 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 developed with the ETC Biodiversity
- 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) are needed together with some inside into the reasonable application of Payments for ecosystem services.
- Similarly, corresponding expertise is also expected on biodiversity matters and vulnerabilities and adaptation to climate change impacts, which is pertinent to cooperation with ETC Biodiversity and ETC Climate change Impacts, Vulnerability and Adaptation.
- 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).

In the coastal and marine environment domain the ETC is expected to have technical and scientific expertise in the areas outlined in Table 1 which broadly outlines the content priorities of the EEA work programme under marine and coastal environment. In addition to this, 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.

Table 1. Overview of the topics needed in the future EEA marine work

Topics covered by the MSFD and BD Strategy (future needs)	Priority in EEA work programme	Topics covered by the MSFD and BD Strategy (future needs)	Priority in EEA work programme
Biodiversity	**High**	Energy and underwater noise pollution	**Moderate**
Invasive aliens	**High**	Pressures from human activities (maritime sectors, blue growth and sustainability)	**High**
Fisheries	**High**	Socio economic assessments	**High**
Food web integrity	**Moderate**	Ecosystem and services assessment and valuation	**High**
Eutrophication	**High**	Ecosystem capital accounting	**High**
Sea floor integrity	**High**	Climate change	**High**
Hydrography	**Moderate**	Marine protected areas	**High**
Contaminants	**High**	Specific technical capacity on spatial and status assessment tools	**High**
Seafood quality	**High**	Hydromorphology and physical alterations of transitional and coastal waters	**High**
Marine litter	**High**	Marine and coastal management and measures	**High**

5. Mandatory requirements

In order to deliver high quality products and services the future beneficiaries 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 requiring minimal further language checking prior to publication. Future beneficiaries are required to have a quality control procedure to this effect.
- Without exception, the ETC 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 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.
- 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, 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, 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.

6. 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 27 EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey), are eligible, subject to 6.2 and 6.3, for submitting proposals. 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 total eligible costs.

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 (see the parallel Open Calls EEA/ACC/13/001-ETC/ACM, EEA/ACC/13/002-ETC/CCA and EEA/NSV/13/001-ETC/BD), **no partner** may participate **in more than one** consortium aiming at the FPA **concerning the ETC of this Open Call**, i.e. the ETC on Inland, coastal and marine waters. 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. 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 procedure if any of its partners is 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[11].

When submitting their application, each partner of the consortium 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 a Framework Partnership Agreement 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

Consortia are required to prove that all their partners are authorised to perform the framework partnership agreement 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, or entry in the VAT register or any other statutory document allowing verification of the partner's legal status.

To that effect, each partner of a consortium 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 register and, where applicable, a copy of inscription in VAT register.

(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 2014-2018;
- 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[12]).

[11] 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.

[12] Having regard to Article 196(3) RAP 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.

(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:

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 and team leads; 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;
3. A list and brief account of work considered relevant and carried out by the partners forming the consortium in the past five years, with the sums, dates and recipients (public or private);
4. 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[13];
5. 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;
6. For each partner, proof and description of their Quality Assurance and Quality Control systems;
7. For each partner, proof and description of their environmental policy.

6.5 Award criteria

The Framework Partnership Agreement 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 award criteria and allocation of points as outlined below, producing a maximum total score of 100 points:

No	Award criteria	Max. points
1	**General understanding of the task**. Knowledge and understanding of: • 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 inland ecological status	20

[13] 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.

	of inland water bodies and water resource efficiency) are related, and 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 member 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 and chemical status analysis, ecological economics and ecosystems accounting, that underpin the work; • the importance of collaboration within and outside Eionet.	
2	**Data and information systems** 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 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.	15
3	**Assessments** 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.	15
4	**Policy support** Experience and expertise in providing technical and scientific support to the development and implementation of international, EU, national or scale-relevant (e.g. Sea conventions, river basin districts, coastal areas) policy processes, including contributions to ex-ante and ex-post analysis of the effectiveness of strategies and policies, in the topic area.	20
5	**Collaboration and networking** Sound approach to collaborating with and providing capacity-building support to Eionet member organisations in member countries; experience and expertise in accessing and working together with relevant expert networks and institutes external to the Eionet, including the scientific world.	15
6	**ETC management** Sound arrangements for implementing transparent, effective and quality-assured management of the ETC consortium, including financial	15

	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 member countries. Sound environmental policy for the consortium. Adequate level of manpower, resources and output corresponding to the indicative annual budget.	
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 Framework Partnership Agreement, 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/about-us/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.

8. 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.

9. Timing

Information briefing: **22 February 2013, 10 am – 1 pm at the EEA premises in Copenhagen:** Kongens Nytorv 6, 1050 Copenhagen K

Deadline for submitting proposals: **30 April 2013**

Opening of proposals: **7 May 2013**

Evaluation of proposals: **From 8 May to 30 May 2013 (indicative dates)**

Following the decision of the EEA Management Board on the designation of the successful consortium (foreseen for 26 June 2013) and prior to signature of the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) all consortia will be notified of the outcome of this call.

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 EEA/NSV/13/002-ETC/ICM
- The call for proposals title "Framework partnership agreement concerning the European Topic Centre on Inland, coastal and marine waters"
- 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 affiliated with the partner coordinating the consortium;
- Presentation of the core team of the partner coordinating 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 100 days/year to the ETC.

(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 model in annex 3
- 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) (economic and financial capacity) and 6.4 (c) (technical and professional capacity)

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

The technical proposal providing all information requested under section 6.5 – Award criteria

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).

It is important that proposals are 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 proposals are packed in such a way to prevent any accidental opening during their 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).

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

ANNEXES

Annex 1 – Proposal submission form

Annex 2 – Declaration exclusion criteria

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 agreement

BRIEFING MEETING and further information

A briefing meeting to provide more background information on the expectations for the ETC and the procedure for submitting a proposal will be organised on 22 February 2013 in Copenhagen. If you are interested, please register by sending an e-mail to procurement@eea.europa.eu. We will send you the meeting details in response.

Any immediate questions regarding this call for proposals should be sent by e-mail to the European Environment Agency: olivier.cornu@eea.europa.eu (general questions) or ronan.uhel@eea.europa.eu (technical questions).

All applicants are encouraged to consult the section 'contract opportunities' on the EEA website regularly before the deadline (http://www.eea.europa.eu/about-us/tenders).