

Terms of reference for the European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity (2019-2021)

Reference: Open call for proposals No OCP/EEA/NSS/18/001-ETC/BD

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

⁽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>.

⁽⁴⁾ These are the 28 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.

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 on Biological Diversity on 9 September 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 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

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

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 4,000,000.00 and EUR 4,500,000.00 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 powers 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 biological diversity 2019-2021

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, 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 described policy context.

The 7th Environment Action Programme (7th 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 shapes the policy context of EEA work up to 2020. The 7th EAP refers to 9 priority objectives, the first of which is to protect, conserve and enhance the EU's natural capital, while another refers to the need to improve the evidence base for environment policy. Three basic streams of the Action Programme refer to: better implementation of existing environmental legislation; the transition to a green economy; and new initiatives for issues not addressed sufficiently by current legislation, namely biodiversity, climate adaptation, sustainable cities, and chemicals.

The next ETC cycle sees the expiry of this strategic timeframe and as such needs to be understood as an interim period finalizing and reviewing the end of one strategy period and leading to the contents and strategies of a post-2020 period with respect to the European and global processes related to biodiversity.

These processes are: at EU-level, the EU Biodiversity Strategy (Communication from the Commission: Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 (COM(2011) 244 final), in the following BD2020) ⁽⁸⁾ that follows on from the 2006 Biodiversity Action Plan ⁽⁹⁾; and, at global level, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

⁽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>

⁽⁹⁾ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52006SC0621>

Strategic Plan 2011-2020, including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets ⁽¹⁰⁾ made in Nagoya in October 2010.

The Aichi targets are organized under five strategic goals comprising both: (i) aspirations for achievement at the global level; and (ii) a flexible framework for the establishment of national or regional targets. Parties, including the EU, are invited to set their own targets within this flexible framework, taking into account national needs and priorities, while also bearing in mind national contributions to the achievement of the global targets. The EU Biodiversity Strategy contributes to these global strategic goals. The most relevant directives supporting the biodiversity strategy are the nature directives (Birds ⁽¹¹⁾ and Habitats ⁽¹²⁾ directives), whose fitness for purpose was confirmed in the recent fitness check (target 1). As a follow up of the nature fitness check, the Action Plan for Nature, People and the Economy ⁽¹³⁾ sets out the priority actions to work towards the achievement of target 1 of the BD2020. The respective environmental acquis in the water and marine area, the new regulation on invasive alien species as well as agricultural and forest policies are equally essential to help reaching targets 2-6 of the strategy.

The main focus of the work in 2019 and 2020 will be scoped by the review of the BD2020, the European contribution to the 6th reporting under the CBD in 2019, and the state-of-nature report based on nature directives reporting.

The BD2020 contains six main targets and respective actions. The six targets cover:

- Implementation of EU nature legislation including Natura 2000;
- Protection and restoration of ecosystems and ecosystem services;
- Integration of Biodiversity in agriculture and forestry policies;
- Integration of Biodiversity in the maritime and fisheries policies;
- Addressing the problem of invasive alien species;
- EU contribution to averting global biodiversity loss.

Regarding the ecosystemic approach and integration with ecosystem services, as related to target 2 of the strategy, a specific action, Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and Services (MAES), with the European Commission in the lead, was launched in Europe. Its aim is to provide a knowledge base on ecosystems and their services in Europe. It underpins the achievement of all 6 targets of the strategy and is also relevant to a number of other EU sectoral policies such as agriculture, maritime affairs and fisheries, and cohesion. An international agreement was reached at the same time on the establishment of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES, to which the EU has an enhanced observer status), recognizing the potential contribution it could make to enhance the effectiveness of the CBD and the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

⁽¹⁰⁾ <http://www.cbd.int/doc/strategic-plan/2011-2020/Aichi-Targets-en.pdf>

⁽¹¹⁾ [Birds Directive: Directive 2009/147/EC](#)

⁽¹²⁾ Habitats Directive: [Council Directive 92/43/EEC](#)

⁽¹³⁾ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/fitness_check/action_plan/index_en.htm

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 biodiversity work, with the contributions and support of the ETCs, are to deliver streamlined data and information, and prepare policy and thematic relevant assessments of biological diversity in terrestrial 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. From 2011 onwards, these included the EU Biodiversity Strategy and its interrelated 6 targets, including the support to the EU involvement in the CBD Strategic Plan and its targets.

In the context of the "Better Implementation Agenda" as an essential part of the 7th EAP, EEA is committed to facilitate improving the delivery of benefits from EU environment measures and ensuring a full implementation of environmental policies and legislation at EU level, as well as to further develop and implement the objectives and initiatives set out in the Communication such as (selected quote):

- Further developing and better structuring, dissemination and accessibility of environmental knowledge, and strengthening the science policy-interface;
- Enabling implementation and enforcement to be more easily tracked;
- Improving inspections and surveillance regimes where necessary, *inter alia* through guidance for MS, on the basis of experience with existing provisions; and
- Fostering partnerships with MS, possibly in the form of implementation agreements.

Two fitness checks with relevance for the nature area were applied in recent years. These were first and foremost the fitness check of the nature directives itself and secondly the monitoring and reporting review (MRR). For the latter, the resulting action plan of the fitness check of environmental reporting requirements confirmed the role EEA takes in the support of the implementation of the nature directives. In follow up of the nature fitness check, the Action Plan for Nature, People and the Environment (AP NPE) confirmed the EEA role in particular regarding the following, concrete reporting processes:

- Dataflow and assessments of the conservation status of habitats and species under the nature directives (reporting under the Birds (Art. 12) and Habitats (Art. 17) directives), including the consolidation of the EUNIS habitats classification;
- Manage Natura 2000 data in close coordination with countries and the Commission, develop, support and track automated procedures, QA/QC procedures, providing yearly databases, supporting periodical Natura 2000 meetings and a reference portal.

The two fitness checks, of the nature directives and the MRR, respectively, look *inter alia* at the efficiency, effectiveness, coherence, relevance and EU added value of the reporting under the nature legislation. This puts EEA efforts to support and improve the knowledge base on nature-related information in direct relationship with the broader context to track progress towards the BD2020. EEA's role in a coherent framework for monitoring, assessing

and reporting on progress towards reaching the EU targets and streamlining these with the obligations under the CBD (Aichi targets) is essential, also as part of the AP NPE. EEA helps and is involved in the technical work to link existing biodiversity data, information and knowledge and use it to monitor the implementation of and streamlining the BD2020 reporting to avoid administrative burden. To fulfil these objectives, different actions need to be addressed:

- Use the SEBI (Streamlined European Biodiversity Indicators) in updating its indicators set to SEBI 2020 in support of the six targets and the end review of the BD2020;
- Interlink biodiversity, water and marine issues focusing on an integrated, cross-cutting approach using legal status information as well as wider information on pressures derived from e.g. Copernicus, following the MAES approach of pilots per ecosystem types. These would need to be taken into account in future ETC/BD work linking to specific activities of ETC/ICM and ETC/ULS;
- Further develop the Biodiversity Information System for Europe (BISE) in support of the BD2020. Revising the concept and linking it to a clear governance structure and implementation plan to help the targeted dissemination of the underpinning information for the review of the BD2020.

A further policy-relevant aspect of the work is addressing agriculture and forest multifunctionalities and their many ecosystem services as a key challenge to achieving several of the biodiversity targets. Farmland and forest land occupy around 90% of EU territory, with forests and wooded land covering more than 42% of the EU's surface; 30% of Natura 2000 sites are forest habitat. EEA has specifically analysed agricultural and forest ecosystems through the generation of indicators and assessments.

In this respect, the integration of work across thematic areas, and hence across ETCs, e.g. work on agri-environment indicators as well as the development of the concept of high nature value farmland (HNVF) has been a staple of integration of biodiversity considerations into this sector policy. Both have been also shaping the development of forest-related activities. Tasks to be developed with support of the ETC/BD will address the impact of agriculture and forests in halting the loss of biodiversity and their possible role in protecting nature in an agro-ecological and spatial planning perspective. A similar approach is in place for marine biodiversity, e.g. work on marine protected areas (MPAs). All these points demonstrate, on the one hand, the high degree of involvement of EEA in biodiversity implementation issues and, on the other, their relevance for areas much beyond biodiversity, reaching out to ecosystems, agriculture, forests, marine, water, climate change vulnerability and adaptation, territorial aspects, and new data sources like Copernicus.

Furthermore, the sustainable development agenda set to 2030 with the 2015 UN-SDG summit as well as the forthcoming Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD-COP) 14 and 15 require further reading on how to shape the EEA work up to 2030. At the same time, the forthcoming EEA Strategy, expected from 2020 onwards, will require to be considered as well. Requirements arising from the EU clearly set the priorities in terms of future work. EEA work towards the state and outlook of the environment report (SOER) 2020, the transition agenda, and the contribution to an upcoming 8th EAP are also essential in guiding the way to this future programming period.

3. Specific tasks of the European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity

3.1 Organisation of the work

The European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity (ETC/BD) shall support the work of the EEA in this area 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 the EEA and European Commission services in support of implementation of the EU and related global strategies. These include:

- Support EEA work on monitoring, reporting and analysis of data and on information systems. This relates specifically to the implementation of the EU nature-related legislation (Birds and Habitats directives), the regulation on invasive alien species (IAS) (depending on provision of resources to the EEA), encompassing articulation with other key EU legislation in the marine and water area, streamlining as possible data and reporting activities and sharing expertise and knowledge;
- Support to the assessments and indicator developments that are needed in the reporting on the EU and Global Biodiversity Strategies, while supporting implementation of data and information aspects, namely mapping and assessing ecosystems health and their services in Europe;
- Provide wider policy support and specifically bring the work under the environmental acquis into the context of specific sector policies related to the BD2020 (e.g. agriculture, forestry, fisheries, spatial planning) and responsible for the main pressures on Biodiversity. This entails intense cooperation across EEA programmes and other ETCs, as well as cooperation with JRC, DG AGRI and other EU, pan-European and global partners.

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 nature and biodiversity 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 Nature and Biological Diversity policies, including the MAES initiative.

Work package 1 – Monitoring, data management and information systems

- Help preparing the reporting under the nature directives in 2019 (reporting period 2013-2018 for Article 12 of the Birds Directive and Article 17 of the Habitats Directive). This includes support to develop IT tools and prepare Reportnet for Member State deliveries, quality assure the data delivered (both tabular and spatial), prepare QA/QC reports and national summaries, compile EU tabular and spatial data sets and related metadata and documentation according to the EEA requirements for the Data Service;
- Make the EU-level biogeographical assessments for all the species and habitats covered by Article 17 of the Habitats Directive (about 2 700 species assessments and over 800 habitat assessments) ⁽¹⁴⁾;
- Produce analyses on the state and trends of individual species and habitats, their population/conservation status, main activities, pressures and threats impacting them, and conservation measures implemented by Member States, in support of the EU State

⁽¹⁴⁾ https://bd.eionet.europa.eu/activities/Reporting/Article_17/Reports_2007/index_html

of Nature report for 2020 and of the evaluation of the BD2020, including the distance to targets;

- In case EEA is resourced to take up the tasks on managing the IAS reporting information flow, help preparing the reporting under the IAS Regulation in 2019 and organize data and information to support indicators and assessments in the following years;
- Further development of the EEA Environmental Data Centre on Biodiversity including the EUNIS web application, providing quality-assured data in support of European reporting initiatives according to the EEA relevant actions put forward under the MRR and using SEIS and INSPIRE principles ⁽¹⁵⁾;
- Maintain and further develop the Biodiversity Information System for Europe (BISE) ⁽¹⁶⁾, including respective information platforms on ecosystems and green infrastructure (GI) within BISE, while keeping countries and other stakeholders involved in building a European knowledge node; to this effect link with other knowledge management initiatives, including WISE (Inland Waters and Marine), Climate-ADAPT, in liaison with the Soils and Forests Data Centres as well as with other relevant partners both at EU (e.g. JRC) and global (e.g. IUCN) levels;
- Help reinforcing the knowledge base for agriculture, forest and marine biodiversity by providing ecological expertise to EEA work incorporating recent land use information and Copernicus local component results;
- In the context of work package 4, support the effective implementation of the existing EU nature legislation (Birds and Habitats directives), support the regular update of the Natura 2000 sufficiency assessments and preparation of the Union lists, if necessary including support to bio-geographical seminars for the assessment of the network of Sites of Community importance (SCI), and preparation of the required databases. This means assessing coherence and sufficiency of sites under the Birds and Habitats directives, including preparing and streamlining technical procedures for relevant legislation, as well as other relevant expert support as needed in coordination with Commission services;
- Improve the EEA communication on species, habitats, protected sites and ecosystems via diverse products, like the EUNIS Web-application and media channels ⁽¹⁷⁾ ⁽¹⁸⁾;
- Further help developing the EUNIS habitat classification, taking into account new information (e.g. the IUCN red list) as well as relevant cross-walks as tools to support European policy on nature conservation, including elements of interest to the EEA like the Natura 2000 process, development of indicators and environmental reporting;
- Help the reporting of the nationally designated areas (CDDA) process and deliver the final dataset. The CDDA is an Eionet priority data flow;
- Under established cooperation with the Council of Europe, support data reporting by the Contracting Parties to the Bern Convention on Emerald sites.

Work package 2 – Indicators

⁽¹⁵⁾ <https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/biodiversity/about-data-centre>

⁽¹⁶⁾ <https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/biodiversity/bise-2013-the-biodiversity-information>

⁽¹⁷⁾ <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/10-messages-for-2010>

⁽¹⁸⁾ <https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/biodiversity>

- Help assess progress to halt the loss of biodiversity in the EU and report on progress towards biodiversity targets using indicators and appropriate baselines;
- Further develop and update EEA indicator frameworks, in particular continue to develop the SEBI 2020 indicators set ⁽¹⁹⁾ in alignment with the EEA core set of indicators (CSI) and agri-environment indicators. To this effect, help organising the respective processes with relevant partners (SEBI working groups);
- Assess, through the use of SEBI, EEA or other indicators, the driving forces behind the impacts on biodiversity in various ecosystems in support of integrated assessments, including State of the Environment Reports;
- Support interlinkages and communication with national, EU and international organisations and bodies to ensure wider streamlining of the SEBI process and indicator set;
- Assist in the production of online versions of indicator factsheets in the EEA Indicator Management System (IMS);
- Further support the development of high nature value type indicators following the experience of HNVF ⁽²⁰⁾, and further develop a similar indicator for forests ⁽²¹⁾.

Work package 3 – Assessments

On ecosystems and their services, a wider European understanding of the concept as a follow-up of the 2005 Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA-SGAs) has been established within the MAES process and related research activities and is serving as the basis for EEA assessments on biodiversity. For the ETC, this sets the path for all integrated assessments building on the data analyses in work packages 1 and 2. The ETC should:

- Prepare biodiversity assessments and support broader EEA integrated assessments addressing pressures and driving forces relevant for halting the loss of biodiversity, in support of both the EU and global biodiversity strategies. With that, support the EEA's regular state and outlook of the environment reports (SOER) and other major integrated assessments using EEA generated datasets, indicators and other sources of information, generated by various research projects and networks ⁽²²⁾;
- As one of the main information sources on biodiversity, support and accompany the preparation of the progress report for target 1 of the BD2020 based on the information reported under the nature directives (State of nature report), linking to and including IAS information as appropriate. This will be in the form of the update of the State of Nature report published in 2015;
- Under target 2 of the BD2020, gather and assess knowledge on methodologies required for ecosystems assessment for Europe, including environmental accounting, based on experiences at country and global level; this should also include assessments of critical issues in the interface of conservation and restoration, ecosystem resilience and effectiveness of management;

⁽¹⁹⁾ <http://biodiversity.europa.eu/topics/sebi-indicators>

⁽²⁰⁾ <https://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/indicators/agriculture-area-under-management-practices/agriculture-area-under-management-practices-2>

⁽²¹⁾ <https://projects.eionet.europa.eu/hnv-forest-area/>

⁽²²⁾ <https://www.eea.europa.eu/soer-2015/europe/biodiversity>

- Assess pressures on ecosystems and ecosystem services from a wide range of socio-economic activities, in particular in relation to impacts of pressures including climate change, land use and landscape fragmentation, and support assessments on the restrictions such pressures pose on services delivery by specific ecosystems;
- In support of awareness raising on the value of ecosystems and use of natural resources, help more integrated assessment linking to sector information from land, agriculture, forest etc., focusing also on socio-economic aspects;
- In support of target 2 and the upcoming MAES report (2019), perform and support quantitative (ecosystem extent) and qualitative (ecosystem condition) analyses of Europe's ecosystems;
- Integrate the conceptual knowledge on ecosystems and their services into the assessment of progress of targets 1, 2 and 3 of the BD2020 (agriculture and forests);
- Support the work on GI and biophysical mapping of ecosystems and their services, including analysis and collection of evidence of the wide array of co-benefits GI produces for local economies, the social fabric and the wider environment;
- Help maximising the use of existing data and spatial modelling techniques to support analysis of the health of ecosystems in Europe (conditions), planetary boundaries (in terms of Europe's footprint globally) and emerging demands on ecosystems capability to deliver services.

Work package 4 – Networking and policy support

- Support the implementation of the Birds and the Habitats directives (and, if added to EEA core tasks, the IAS regulation) in particular by assisting EEA in the preparation of the upcoming reporting under the Directives in 2019, supporting EEA participation or lead in the respective working groups and development of relevant guidance to Member States with specific expertise;
- Actively support EEA in its participation in the MAES Working group and Steering group through support to information sharing on mapping and assessing ecosystems and their services, including networking with EEA countries (Eionet). In cooperation with the ETC/ULS, support EEA in its participation in the Working group on green infrastructure implementation and restoration (WG GIIR), giving expert advice on restoration;
- Join EEA participation or represent EEA in meetings of the Co-ordination Group for Biodiversity and Nature (CGBN), Nature Directors, Council of Europe (Bern convention/ Emerald network) or other panels as necessary and appropriate;
- At global level, support participation in CDB and IPBES meetings as necessary and appropriate;
- Support the preparation of Natura 2000 seminars with a view to improving the conservation status (in connection with the implementation of targets 1 and 2 of the BD 2020). Next to the finalisation of this 'old' biogeographical process (sufficiency seminars), this includes conceptual support to the 'new' biogeographical process (management seminars, 'low hanging fruits') with a view to obtaining harmonised information and management effectiveness, as also required under the CBD, and cooperate with MS to this effect;
- Support the final review and progress to target assessment of the BD2020 strategy, the EU Sixth National Report to the CBD, and respective follow-up processes;

- Support the biodiversity-related reporting and assessment frameworks being established under the CAP, streamlining indicator development and information and data sharing according to SEIS principles.

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, the ETC shall maintain close links with the Eionet (EEA countries and other ETCs), as well as with other relevant key partners, 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, indicator 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 the implementation of relevant directives (Nature with MSFD, WFD, as examples), biodiversity and biodiversity-related indicators, adaptation to climate change, mapping and spatial analysis;
- 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:

- conceptual differences between favourable conservation status, good ecological status (WFD), good environmental status (MSFD), and how each of these can be used in the assessment of ecosystem condition under MAES;

- land cover/use (including use of Copernicus information) and its impact on biodiversity (including link to land use accounts);
- biodiversity, connectivity (land and water) and green infrastructure (wider landscape as well as urban environment);
- biodiversity in marine protected areas, Natura 2000 and marine habitats, and inland water and marine aspects in supporting assessments of ecosystems and their services;
- atmospheric deposition of pollutants (critical loads);
- programme of measures under the WFD and MSFD and their effect on biodiversity;
- coordination of land, water, marine species and habitat information in EUNIS through cooperation on the classifications and through respective cross-walks;
- the need to fulfil the BD2020 has resulted in a recent Commission initiative discussing better implementation and streamlining between the nature directives, 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 organisation and structure of the European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity

The present and earlier ETCs are consortia of government, research and non-profit organisations, 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 ⁽²³⁾ 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 Biodiversity 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 SAs 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.

²³ <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 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, 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 the 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 allow it to undertake the tasks and provide the deliverables listed under section 3 above. 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):

- International, EU and national policy developments regarding nature and biodiversity and ecosystems assessments, including forests and agriculture;
- Legal provisions entailed by the EU nature directives and IAS regulation, with special emphasis on managing the respective data flows;
- Reporting under the nature directives as well as under related EU environment legislation (MSFD, WFD), the CBD and other regional or global Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA) (Bern Convention, Ramsar Convention, Barcelona Convention, as mere examples);
- Proven experience in assessing the conservation status of species and habitats including the different stages of the process;
- Proven knowledge and expertise on biogeographic processes, both at EU and pan-European scales;
- Relevant ecological expertise (e.g. ornithology, taxonomy, marine biodiversity) across the requirements imposed by Work packages 1 to 4;
- Understanding of the EEA conceptual MDIAK (Monitoring-Data-Information-Assessment- Knowledge) chain for biodiversity;
- Demonstrable understanding of the EU and global Biodiversity targets and knowledge of relevant processes supporting their assessment and reporting (indicators, information and knowledge systems);
- Expertise and proven experience in conducting integrated assessments including the use and analysis of GIS data and indicators;
- Broad knowledge of the five key biodiversity pressures: overexploitation and unsustainable use; habitat loss and degradation; pollution; invasive alien species;

climate change; and including pressures from agriculture and forests on its associated Biodiversity, including soil aspects;

- Knowledge of ecosystems, their services, respective mapping and assessment, conceptual and process frameworks in place (e.g. EEA ecosystems accounting method) or to be implemented in the near future (MAES, IPBES);
- Indicator streamlining activities, including biodiversity, agriculture and forests indicator frameworks;
- QA/QC of data flows, indicators and assessments on ecosystems, biodiversity and nature;
- SEIS, Copernicus and their associated services, including spatial analysis and INSPIRE;
- Networking and communicating with countries, including Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) and the European Neighbourhood Initiative (ENI) countries, with relevant Commission and/or other international organisations and scientific bodies and working groups, including relevant MEA.

The scientific expertise required to fulfil the tasks above include the following disciplines, particularly in their applied form: botany, zoology (including ornithology), ecology, statistics, GIS – application and spatial analysis, systems theory, modelling, information technology (IT).

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 ⁽²⁴⁾. 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.

⁽²⁴⁾ 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.

A consortium may also include partners from other countries than those mentioned above, 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 ⁽²⁵⁾, **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 Biological Diversity (ETC/BD). 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 Biological Diversity (ETC/BD). 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 ⁽²⁶⁾.

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

⁽²⁵⁾ 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/18/002-ETC/ICM and OCP/EEA/NSS/18/003-ETC/ULS, <https://www.eea.europa.eu/about-us/tenders/calls-for-proposals/open>.

⁽²⁶⁾ 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.

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 sheets, or extracts therefrom, for at least the last two financial years 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 ⁽²⁷⁾ of **all** consortium partners,

⁽²⁷⁾ 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).

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 ⁽²⁸⁾;
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, 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 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:

⁽²⁸⁾ 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.

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. nature protection and ecosystem-based management) 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 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 habitats and species inventories, ecological modelling 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 on biological diversity and ecosystem condition and dynamics 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 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 of the effectiveness of strategies and policies, in the topic area.</p>	15
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 framework partnership agreement and specific grant agreement 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 subcontracts 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 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/18/001-ETC/BD
- The call for proposals title ***“Framework partnership agreement concerning the European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity 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 of the 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 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.

Proposals 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 regard 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) ⁽²⁹⁾.

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

⁽²⁹⁾ This regulation is currently under revision.