

OPEN CALL FOR PROPOSALS

for the award of a Framework Partnership Agreement concerning the

European Topic Centre on

Spatial information and analysis 2011-2013 EEA/NSV/10/003¹

1. Background information

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

The European Environment Agency (EEA) is the main source of information of the European Union and its Member States in developing 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), 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 website². The European Commission, the European Parliament, national and regional authorities in the member countries, and a wide range of non-governmental organisations are among the regular users of the databases and information products.

Institutionally, the EEA is one of the Agencies of the European Union. The functioning of the EEA and Eionet are described in the EEA regulation³. The Agency, which is open to all nations sharing its objectives, has currently 32 member countries. These are the 27 EU Member States; Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway; Switzerland and Turkey.

Part of Eionet are currently five European Topic Centres (ETCs) covering the following topics: 'Air and Climate Change', 'Biodiversity', 'Land Use and Spatial Information', 'Sustainable consumption and production' and 'Water'.

¹ The successful *consortium* will be proposed a Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) covering the period from 2011 to 2013 (the remaining period of the current EEA Strategy 2009-2013) with a possible renewal for one year under the next EEA Strategy subject to management board approval.

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://org.eea.europa.eu/documents>.

Having regard to the expiry of the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) concerning the ETC Land use and spatial information on 31 December 2010, the EEA launches this call with a view to identifying the *consortium* which will continue the work in the respective area from 1 January 2011 to 31 December 2013.⁴

The change of name from ETC Land use and spatial information (ETC/LUSI) to ETC Spatial information and analysis (ETC/SIA) mirrors relevant policy developments, their related fast-growing requirements for consistent geospatial data and the corresponding capacities for coordinated spatial analysis methods and tools.

In February 2008, the European Commission adopted a Communication proposing to improve, modernise and streamline current environmental information systems by establishing a European Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS). SEIS is a distributed, integrated, web-enabled information system based on a network of public information providers sharing environmental data and information. It is built on existing e-infrastructure, systems and services in the Member States and EU institutions, especially those of the EEA and Eionet.

The system aims to tie in better all existing data flows and information related to EU environmental policies and legislation including the implementation of the infrastructure for spatial information in Europe Inspire, and other data and real time observations related to emerging environmental priorities, and services coming from programmes such as Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES). It will provide easily accessible information to both policy-makers and citizens. A major challenge will be to develop SEIS as a platform that also can be used for two-way communication on the environment, namely enabling users to upload and share their information with others from local to global level.

The EEA will achieve its contributions therein by, inter alia: working together with Eionet, the European Commission (primarily through ten thematic European Environmental Data Centres) and the EEA's European Topic Centres on the implementation of this distributed system for sharing information from local to global level based on interoperability and, focusing on EEA European data management, including streamlining priority dataflows with Eionet, coordination of the in-situ component of GMES and the management of 5 of those thematic Environmental Data Centres (Climate change, Air, Water, Land use and Biodiversity) to offer a wealth of European environmental datasets in suitable formats for various users.

The implementation of SEIS principles via appropriate technological development and networking activities with stakeholders plus an increased focus on the inclusion

⁴ With a possible renewal for one year under the next EEA Strategy subject to management board approval. This call is subject to the EEA Financial Regulation and its Implementing Rules as determined by the EU's Financial Regulation (EC) No. 1605/2002 as last amended by (EC) No. 652/2008 and its Implementing Rules (EC) No. 2342/2002 as last amended by (EC) No. 478/2007, in particular their respective Titles VI on Grants (Articles 108-120 FR and 160-184a IR). 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'.

of near-real time measurements and improved use of modelling techniques means that EEA will move away from the traditional methodology of processing national data as applied over the last 10 -15 years while continuing to support countries in their efforts to produce relevant and high quality data.

EEA's website will evolve from one that stores documents into an interactive site and portal that supports two-way communications and can be effective in helping to improve the quality and spread of environmental information.

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

Spatial information and analysis (total): 1,450,000 Euro

1.2 Role of European Topic Centres (ETCs)

ETCs are, according to the EEA regulation⁵ 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 supports EEA data centres for the issues air, climate change, water, biodiversity and land use and may provide help to EEA in supporting other data centres coordinated by Eurostat and JRC. Tasks focus on the harmonisation of monitoring of the environment in the member countries, the compilation of the resulting data in international databases, the processing of the information including the use of models to describe and analyse the present and future state of the environment, and the production of indicators to communicate the findings to various users.

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

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.

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

1.3 Agreements

All activities of ETCs are based on Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs) and Specific Agreements (SAs) concluded to implement the former. Work programmes (mostly annual implementation plans), which form part of the SAs, 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 EEA work and demands in the area of Spatial information and analysis 2011-2013

2.1. General objective

Over the 15 year period of EEA existence, there was an evolution of the character and role of ETCs, in terms of provision of “*timely, targeted, relevant and reliable data*”

Following these developments and the increasing political prominence of several environmental issues such as climate change mitigation/ adaptation, and biodiversity loss/ ecosystem services tackled by the EEA and hence ETCs, expectations and requirements for data, information and assessment have increased considerably in specifications, quality and interrelationships. This development has meant an increasing interconnection between themes and policy needs, thus more coordination by EEA and more cross-cutting work in ETCs. This interconnection has the immediate consequence of sharing common data which are ineluctably processed and provided by certain ETC to the other ETCs and to the EEA. This is especially the case for spatial information that has the highest share of common use amongst all EEA activities.

The commitment of the EEA is spatial information is inscribed in a long term perspective that takes stock of the past and present 5 years strategies which are summarized by the two successive extracts reported below:

“*The Agency is committed to support the spatial requirements of European and global development initiatives, including key thematic strategies on marine systems and soils, with particular attention to land-use changes in ecologically sensitive areas and protection of soils.*“ (EEA Strategy 2004-8).

Completed by

“*...To inform policy makers, practitioners and the public on how the growing intensity of space and land-based resource use is leading to conflicts and potential irreversible changes via an analytical platform for spatial analysis, targeted land use modelling, integration of socio-economic statistics and high resolution land information and planning services to examine the processes of urbanisation and land use.*” (EEA Strategy 2009-13).

2.2 Background to current and new EEA activities

Over the past decade the Agency has analysed conflicts over the use of space and land-based resources in Europe and observed that they will be exacerbated by urbanization, transport growth, shifts in agricultural priorities, new forms of tourism, evolving societal aspirations around mobility and housing, demography and the continuous changes to the territorial landscape from climate change putting at risk ecological and social resilience.

Possible climate change events might, through changes in temperature and water regimes, deeply impact the vegetation cover and consequently the soil structure and hence land cover patterns.

Land is a key natural asset which value results from its surface as well as from the presence and interaction of other natural components (soil, water, climate, fauna and flora) and their combination with man made assets (activities, infrastructures and settlements). They determine the functions of land, its capacity to support the reproduction of natural ecosystems as well as to sustain the many uses by mankind. Functions of land resulting from geographical conditions and present and past use, they are unevenly distributed over the territory, as well as the environmental problems that they may generate or be impaired by. Therefore, the assessment of the potentials of land assets or of conflicts in the use of land requires combining statistical and geographical approaches, whereby land use functions can be linked to economic accounts, directly or via satellite accounts.

Land is not only a resource to be assessed. It has to be considered as a system in which a single piece of area is important element for the understanding of biodiversity, water resource or agricultural uses. The approach of land is therefore two fold:

- As the spatial system where any environmental and economic issue has to be attached and in which they can be connected thus allowing effective integrated assessment and providing the substrate to forecast analysis for example,
- As a topic to be analysed and understood as such.

In this twin understanding, there is since several years a clear political recognition that sectoral policies of the EU modify the spatial structure and potential of the economy and society thereby altering land use patterns, soil functions and landscapes, and hence environmental protection and quality. Considerations on the spatial dimension of EU policies thus represent a key component for a balanced and sustainable development and a support to territorial cohesion as well. In this context, EEA has been faced and is increasingly faced with demands for spatial and territorial analyses from its clients to support policy development in the area of soil degradation, nature conservation (e.g. connectivity of ecosystems/sites, coherence of Natura 2000 network), water management (e.g. river basins characterization), etc.

EEA itself needs to improve integration of spatial datasets from different sources and coordinate spatial analysis within ETCs in order to ensure consistency for integrated assessment and reporting.

The strong recognition of the need to address vulnerabilities and its corollary, adaptation, stated in the 2009-13 strategy⁶ demands a comprehensive spatial documentation of potential targets and drivers of vulnerabilities, reinforcing the role of spatial integration of data sets, - with special regards on the time dimension - and their possible relationships. A new ETC devoted to “Climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation” being created, its links with ETC on “Spatial information and analysis”, the new scope of the former ETC “Land use and spatial information” are foreseen to be formally implemented and are specified in a next section.

Furthermore, past and current strategic discussions amongst the member countries, European Parliament and the main EU institutions responsible for environmental policy, reporting and assessment (DG ENV, EEA, ESTAT and JRC) have underlined an increasing need for factual and quantitative information on land use related issues and for this to be based on timely, quality assured data. The EEA plays a key role in fulfilling these requirements together with Eionet and in close cooperation with Commission services: completion of the third land cover inventories (*Corine land cover* 1990, 2000 and 2006). This knowledge now needs to be further consolidated and streamlined with other inventories to provide more regular, up to date and robust assessments of the state of the environment for land related phenomena and progress towards policy targets. To ensure that this goal is achieved the partners involved requested the EEA to take the lead in thematic area ‘Land use’.

Finally, the now recognized importance of maritime space, both in economic and ecological potential terms, puts a direct emphasis on the need for spatial information and analysis for the marine environment. This approach takes into account the high environmental potential of European seas and coastal systems in the delivery of vital ecological services in the face of increasing pressures from climate change and the intensification of diverse and competing economic activities (inter alia shipping, fishing, energy, resource exploitation) throughout the European maritime area. New analytical methods are now needed for integrated assessments, in support to, inter alia, the design and implementation of marine spatial planning as policy tool. The new ETC will have to cooperate with ETC Inland, Coastal and Marine Waters to this end.

Taking the lead in the ‘land use thematic area has required the EEA to provide an articulated support for a variety of activities including:

- The services of a **data centre**, which current achievement stepwise includes:
 - design, development and streamlining of geospatial data flows; building and implementing the integrated spatial information system, including data from monitoring and models on land use, water, biodiversity and their inserting into reference systems (e.g. ECRINS for hydrosystems).

⁶ “To support new EU and European Policy developments on vulnerability and adaptation and on disaster prevention and management by developing online access to relevant environmental information, observations for rapid spatial mapping and decision-support tools, via SEIS and GMES services to help Member States' meet their objectives for dealing with climate change impacts, adaptation, vulnerability mapping, disaster prevention and management” (EEA Strategy 2009-13)

- The current prototype of data centre aims at and partly allows, full use of the reporting and data flows foreseen under GMES (and globally GEOSS), updates of the *Corine Land Cover*, INSPIRE and EU legislation such as water framework and Natura 2000 directives considered from their spatial dimension and components of the landscape in the LUDC⁷,
- Establishing (where required) and running of quality assurance and control procedures; the main developments being in the area of assuring the standards adopted by member countries and integrating non-geospatial information into the assessments. This last part is the least developed but is of extreme importance to analyse functions of land and their trends.
- Development and support of derived data sets and indicators based on innovative assimilation of data and models, in particular agreed methodologies and standards for spatial resource accounting with ESTAT which is expected to provide the economic component of the Environmental accounts that represent a key domain for EEA in the years to come;
- Production of policy-relevant information and communications with a wide variety of audiences by undertaking regular regional assessments on specific issues (e.g. environmental aspects of rural areas, urban spread). In this context, EEA has been faced and is increasingly facing with demands for spatial and territorial analyses from its clients to support policy development in the area of soil degradation, nature conservation (e.g. connectivity of ecosystems/sites, coherence of Natura 2000 network), water management (e.g. river basins characterization for WFD), coastal zone management (support to EU ICZM recommendations, implementation of the Noise directive), etc.

2.3 Partnerships and policy linkages

The activities introduced above are part of a joint work process with European Commission services and European Space Agency in particular towards the development and implementation of the shared European information system (SEIS), of which INSPIRE and GMES service products are key structuring elements. The EEA will also play a crucial role in supporting those two programmes; EEA responsibilities have been identified in close cooperation with the lead Commission services –in particular, the EEA assists the Commission on coordinating the European spatial data infrastructure under implementation of Inspire and will be the geo-node for environmental information in this context.

⁷ Land Use Data Centre, one of the 5 environmental data centres hosted by the European Environment Agency (Climate Change, Biodiversity, Land use and Air Quality). Environmental data centres are institutionally supported facilities providing convenient access to, manipulation of, and/or distribution of data sets relating to a specific thematic area (including supporting information and expertise) to users. They are intended to have a long lifespan, as they are not tied to a specific project.

The political interest in land use and maritime issues is high at the moment in Europe - see Table below -and the Agency approach to the many related policies should be pragmatic.

Main policy support activities

Policy and legal framework	Theme	EEA assessments	Data management/ Dissemination	Products/services
Community Structural Policies 2007-13 (European Spatial Development Perspective – Territorial Cohesion)	Natural assets, land use conflicts, physical planning	*	*(CLC) ⁸	Support to and cooperation with ESPON / DG REGIO Spatial indicators
Common Agriculture Policy (Agri-environmental Regulation; New guidelines for Rural Development)	Landscape diversity and management, agriculture habitats	*	*(CLC) (LUCAS) ⁹	agri-environment indicators Land & ecosystems accounts
Follow up European Strategy for ICZM	Land use and land cover change coastal zones	*	*(CLC) (LACOAST) ¹⁰	Spatial indicators Land & ecosystems accounts
Urban policy and sustainable land use (6EAP Thematic strategies)	Urban sprawl, rural-urban relationships	*	*(CLC) (MOLAND) ¹¹	Spatial indicators Land & ecosystems accounts
European strategy on soil	Soil protection	*		Spatial analysis of soil issues Functional soil mapping
Community Biodiversity Strategy – Habitats and Birds directives (Natura 2000)	Designated areas and habitats/ ecosystems	*	*	Spatial indicators Land & ecosystems accounts SEBI indicators

⁸ CLC: CORINE Land Cover

⁹ LUCAS: Land Use/Cover Area frame Statistical Survey

¹⁰ LACOAST: Land Cover changes in Coastal zones 1970s-1990s

¹¹ MOLAND: Monitoring Land Cover Dynamics

Policy and legal framework	Theme	EEA assessments	Data management/ Dissemination	Products/services
Common Transport Policy	SEA of TEN	*		Comparative impact analysis
Water Framework directive	River Basin Management Plans Prevention of groundwater pollution from diffuse and local soil contamination	*	*(watersheds) (CLC) (LUCAS)	Geonode for spatial data infrastructure Rivers reference system (ECRINS) WISE ¹² Spatial indicators Water accounts
Nitrate Directive	Ground water protection		*	Indicators on diffuse soil contamination
Landfill Directive	contaminated sites	*		
Sewage Sludge Directive	organic matter in soils, soil contamination	*		Indicators on soil contamination
Inspire European Spatial Data Infrastructure	Land cover and land use geospatial data		*	User requirements, data specifications
GMES Global Monitoring of Environment and Security	land cover and land use monitoring		*	User federation, shared information system Support to GMES DEM / hydrosystems reference layers
Research 6/7 th Framework programme (Environment and Sustainable development)	Carbon sinks, remote sensing, prevention of groundwater pollution from point sources and diffuse contamination	*	(CLC) (LUCAS)	
International conventions and programmes support				
UN Climate Change Convention	Greenhouse gas sinks (vegetation and soils)		(CLC)	
UNEP Regional Seas Conventions	GIS Working Group Marine Interregional Forum			Spatial indicators
UN Convention on Desertification UNCCD	Soil degradation in the Mediterranean	*	(CLC)	
UN Convention on Biodiversity	Biodiversity in soils	*	(Designated areas)	Spatial indicators Ecosystems accounts
Convention on Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP)	Air pollution, modelling and mapping critical loads, land use specific deposition rates, location and description of ecosystems	*	(CLC)	

¹² WISE: Water Information System for Europe

Policy and legal framework	Theme	EEA assessments	Data management/ Dissemination	Products/services
Ramsar Convention on Wetlands	Changes on wetlands and water resources	*	*(Designated areas)	Spatial indicators Land & ecosystems accounts
GEO/GEOSS (Group on earth observations)	Comprehensive, coordinated and sustained earth observation system(s)	*	(CLC) - GlobCover	Shared information system
Noise directive	Data Flows relating to the Environmental Noise Directive 2002/49/EC		*	Noise production / exposure mapping
EU Integrated Maritime Policy and Marine Framework Strategy Directive	Changes in marine ecosystems,; Marine spatial planning; Integrated Coastal zone management ,	*		Geo-spatial data; Spatial indicators

3. Specific tasks of the European Topic Centre on Spatial information and analysis

This ETC is the continuation, with some detailed changes, of the former ETC on Land Use and Spatial Analysis.

Its duties are to continue the data, indicator and assessment support provided by the present ETC on Land Use and Spatial Information. In the light of the new EEA strategy 2009-2013 the spatial dimension and the increase in data and information needs to support EU environment and land use-related policies thanks to adjustments to the tasks requested of the ETCs and the way they are organised and coordinated as well as shared with other ETCs.

These adjustments are for instance the development of synergies with GMES (Global Monitoring for Environment and Security) programme and the coherence of reference geospatial data for SEIS (Shared Environment Information System). The development of the spatial dimension of the existing EU policies (i.e. Inspire directive) on topics and sectors (inter alia energy, water, transport, maritime), along with the growing focus on environmental accounting and support to vulnerabilities assessment and adaptation, demands a more structured and integrated approach of the spatial component of information in relation with the environment and their interrelationships which are emphasised by the new designation of the ETC.

Especially the following developments will have to be taken into account in the rest of the EEA Strategy period:

- Maintain and continue developing the spatial information at the EEA and neighbouring level, to be Inspire-compliant. This includes land cover and land use data provision, based on CORINE *land cover* and GMES-land services, the integration of socio-economic and statistical information, e.g. collected by Eurostat (e.g. Urban Audit database, LUCAS) or ESPON 2013 (e.g. European Spatial Planning Observation Network) and

reference systems (e.g. ECRINS, elevation, particular regions such as mountain, coastal, etc.);

- Support to development by EEA of the “geonode” which provides various web services and connects the ETCs with the EEA and other European and national institutions engaged in SEIS and INSPIRE activities, in the context of the establishment of a common spatial data infrastructure (SDI) for EEA and ETCs and the other data centres, with special regards to “soil” and “forest” data centres, designed and operated by the JRC but which constitute major partners for the new ETC;.
- Support to the development and implementation of environmental accounts, following the recognition¹³ of urgency in developing fast-track implementation of ecosystem accounts, first focusing on water, carbon and land accounting. This requirement makes it necessary to share efforts on all the mentioned topics between ETCs.
- Maintain and develop methodologies and tools for analysis and assessments of land-based and maritime space dynamics in their interactions with environmental features, over space and time. The topic areas will continue to cover: Urban/Rural, Territorial cohesion, Regional assessments, Maritime (coastal management), Green infrastructure, ecosystem accounting (sensu lato). These activities includes continuity in the validation, dissemination and maintenance of methods, tools and services in the field of spatial analysis making best use of the geonode mentioned above.

The new ETC shall provide support for the work of other ETCs and the EEA itself in the field of spatial analysis, along the overall objectives presented above. In particular, the new ETC will be entrusted with the following groups of tasks:

- Support for the development and management of the EEA components of the European spatial information system, including links to developments in Inspire and GMES in Europe and globally, GEOSS and reference systems as well as information retrieving (e.g. land accounts, functional mapping and interactive atlases). As a rule, these components should become the privileged entry point to assessment, modelling as listed below;
- Maintenance of *Corine land cover* and developments in the view of regular production of Corine 20xx in better integration with land use (including quantified attributes) and landscape components (migrating towards OODM Corine production for example);
- Quality control and assurance of geospatial data integrated in the information system (as part of data management at large) with special regards to the soil component of the land and those landscape features and data in relation with vulnerabilities and adaptation;

¹³ Minutes of the EEA Management Board – DIMESA Seminar, held on Tuesday, 24 November 2009, 10:00-17:00 Luxembourg-Kirchberg, Jean Monnet building, Room M6

- Consolidation and testing of innovative spatial analysis and modelling methods and tools, in close liaison with the new ETC on Climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation which should effectively coordinate land use scenarios and related modelling capacities,
- Support for the development of specific assessments and indicators in the area of land use (issue and trend-based), and the related policy-relevant assessments

These tasks, and their correlative supporting facilities, are analysed into 6 “work areas” to better emphasise the necessary relationships with other actors and that demand from the future ETC the capacity of cooperative work with other institutions and EEA staff. The three first of these work areas are devoted to data *sensu lato*, two on assessments and the last on management and capacity building, and need to be considered as a common requirement across the whole ETC.

Work area 1: Land cover and land use data sets.

The new ETC will continue to lead on the quality assurance and quality control of the planned regular and higher resolution updates of the *Corine land cover* database (in the context of GMES services). In addition, the ETC will support EEA to consolidate and further develop links and data sharing with European experimental and operational land monitoring projects like Moland (land cover mapping at local scale), Vegetation, GlobWetland (monitoring of wetlands), LUCAS (in situ area sampling survey on land use and cover), IRENA (agri-environment monitoring) and other international and national projects. In particular, support will be needed in coordinating the European component of the ESA Globcover 2005 project for land cover mapping and participate in the product definition and validation.

A major gap in the current land related data set is between *Corine land cover* and the land use information on the one hand and the poor consideration of major linear structures (namely river systems, railways and roads) in the land cover data sets on the other hand. This later gap creates a bias in land accounting for example. Both gaps have considerable consequences on the usefulness of data and on the accuracy of the assessments. Finding methodological solutions and practical implementation to bridge these gaps and consequently improve and widen the scope of the LEAC facility is of paramount importance to meet the 2009-2013 strategy goals.

The EEA is deeply involved in “neighbourhood” policies and cooperation. The natural areas of interest are the Eastern countries of Europe and the South Mediterranean and Middle-east countries, under special support of the ENP “South”. The integration of the relevant data sets, at appropriate resolution and assessing commonalities and interoperabilities at different levels is a challenge for the coming years.

Work on data, indicators, regular thematic and integrated assessments is interlinked. ETC/SAI will need to give support especially where the link to the member countries is crucial to ensuring sound and quality- assured data flows.

Work area 2: Supporting the EEA Land Use Data Centre

The ETC will be a key support function to the EEA in its role as the data centre for land use for the EU and in the development of the in-house spatial data

infrastructure as a contribution to the data centre concept as well as the EEA's role as the environmental geonode for Inspire. To this end, the ETC will support EEA on the coordination of the activities of the Eionet Spatial Data Interest Community which will collect environmental thematic user requirements for the implementing rules of the proposed Inspire directive.

The ETC will as well support the EEA data centre related to land use and land cover information by providing web services including data handling of large volume databases (i.e. land cover, satellite imagery). The ETC will also support the EEA map production and quality control for products and services.

Work area 3: Designing and implementing the interlinked reference layers

The ETC will contribute to the maintenance and development of common reference datasets at European scale and to related datasets at global level. The first reference data set with full topology that prefigures the type of referential to be used in next years is ECRINS, which current version shall be upgraded post 2012 with the delivery of the ECRINS compatible GMES hydrographic and elevation reference layers (resolution improved from ~1:250 to ~1:100 and for the DEM from 90m to 30m).

A major challenge is now to stepwise integrate the different spatial elements to reference systems and documenting them with the adequate topological relationships so that to anticipate on potential questions. A possible question that cannot be responded to for the time being and that could be raised at any opportunity is for example "*What are the number and areas of nature protection sites that could be severely polluted by flooding, because of wash-out of toxic deposits / plants?*". This falsely naïve example demonstrates several links involving dependency between rivers, flood plains, relative placement of natural sites and human activities plus the probable water elevation for certain flood occurrences. This is an example that can be applied, *mutatis mutandis*, in many other situations. Preparing elements for such analyses is a task to be carried out under this WP.

The new ETC has to analyse, jointly with other ETCs and services the appropriate information on the spatial components, so that the interrelationships between components dealt with different ETCs or services is not jeopardizing the integrated assessment, as exemplified above. It will also provide a service function to other ETCs to facilitate the identification, comparability, harmonization and access to geospatial data needed for thematic processing and assessments.

The ETC will as well support EEA in the related discussions and developments, GMES Service Element Land Monitoring in particular and help maintain the inventory of in situ monitoring and prepare reports to be submitted to the GMES Advisory Council. The ETC will contribute to consolidating the federation of user needs for GMES services. These activities are to secure the long term sustainability of these land monitoring services with the view to improve or ensure continuity of some of the existing in situ monitoring components as well as the required adequate space component for remote sensing of the earth land surface.

Work area 4: Contributing to thematic and regional assessments

The topics of the spatial analyses and assessments depend on needs arising from policy processes, as reflected in the EEA annual management plans for the period.

In most cases they address a theme or a region. In the former, “spatial” acts mainly as support to thematic policies; in the case of regional assessments there can be some specific land related policies that become more and more important in the EU legislation / initiatives.

It is important for the EEA to address each of the land-use related policies individually in their thematic context (e.g. nature protection networks, availability of water, etc.) – see Table presented in Point 2 above. However, the analytical work on land use should also be able to depict the inter-linkages which may explain the processes behind the changes observed in the conflicting demands and uses of land and their effects on ecosystems at large.

Land use per se is not subject to an elaborated and articulated policy stream, as are other media such as water or air. This aspect of sectoral (‘vertical’) and integrated (‘horizontal’) policy relevance will be considered by the Agency in terms of work priorities (for instance, environmental characterisation of rural areas and dynamics of agri-environment ecosystems were considered as post 2006 projects).

To this end, it is vital that the new ETC is able to provide in a flexible way the relevant expertise in a flexible manner across a range of topics, from coastal zone management to urban environment or strategic impact assessment – in the context of evaluating the effects of land planning and management in particular and possible insights to other major environmental concerns. Cooperation with other ETCs will be key to secure the in-depth knowledge of the connected thematic/sectoral policies.

In general the ETC will need to keep consolidating the vision developed so far with regard to land use and regional assessments (e.g. coastal zones, urban dynamics). This vision shall focus on the specific tasks of the ETC in reporting on the influence and impact of human activities on land, and on the possible policy measures. It shall also take into account policy developments especially in DG Agri, DG TREN, Regio and other fora such as ESPON, with special attention to the development of detailed outputs on physical assets – economic / sociological assets.

The ETC thus shall not commit to spend resources in a very regular update of a full set of indicators on all regional issues, or to maintain the appropriate networks for this and to be heavily involved in all steps of the policy process (e.g. Integrated coastal zone management(ICZM)). Instead the ETC shall analyse and report on (if appropriate on the basis of indicators) spatial trends in these issues every three to five years.

To this end, the ability to characterise portions of the EU territory (reporting units that can be biogeographic regions, administrative units, river basins, regional zones such as coastal or mountain areas, etc.) according a coherent description of spatial features and changes thereof for Europe as a whole is the key objective. The experience gained by the current ETC/LUSI in the assessment of coastal areas is viewed by the EEA as an example of good practice, which includes an effective cooperation with Commission services and an adequate connection with key stakeholders and non EU partners. This requires of course appropriate integration of data produced under Work area 1, related under Work area 2 and computed under the data centre facilities under Work area 3.

Work area 5: Developing and contributing to Cross-cutting assessments and emerging issues

There is no razor-cut distinction between the assessments under Work area 4 and this Work area. The difference is more on the innovative and systematic cross-cutting approach that requires a larger integration of the ETC team and partners with EEA staff and other participants.

Noise is typically a cross-cutting issue which sources, trajectories and exposition are directly related to land components and infrastructures that belong to radically different topic data flows and that does not explicitly require acoustic expert in the ETC. In this approach, as well as in the environmental accounts carried out by the EEA with the support of different ETCs and external experts (water (sensu lato, possibly including quantitative resource, quality, emissions), land cover / land use, ecosystem services, etc.) the use of spatial modelling techniques and tools, including prospective analysis (scenarios), will be an important activity of the new ETC to support these tasks, pro parte under the supervision of the new “client” which is the ETC/CCA¹⁴ in charge of coordinating the land development modelling in relation with vulnerabilities and impacts likely to be driven by climate change for example.

The new ETC/SIA is not expected to develop new methods but instead compare, select contribute to an possibly and apply robust tools that will be properly documented (return of experience, know-how dissemination, etc.) and which data components are integrated and properly related within the outcomes of the three first Work areas to capitalise their integration and make them suited to any other development.

For example, there is a necessary cooperation in different domains that aim at providing new and important information form better cross-use and confrontation of existing data sets, a quick flavour of the issues being:

- Soil is key factor of the erosion potential that has to be derived from erosion risk, land cover, land use, climatic events, etc. The potential should aim at quantifying the sediment budgets, recognised as key gap in the Euroision programme for example, to be analysed with river fragmentation tools that are not in the new ETC domain of expertise;
- Ecosystem accounts are highly integrated frameworks that all require spatial datasets. The kernel of all accounts is the reference system used at the analytical level and allowing the aggregation at the sound and politically appropriate level. The specific inputs from ETC/SIA to Water accounts are for example in the catchments and rivers reference system, which is a major land feature and (non limiting to) on soil water, which in turn is a key element of droughts, desertification, back feeding on erosion and important component of ecosystem accounts;

Each category of accounts requires a specific reference system that is spatially connected to the other ones. They are almost totally driven by land

¹⁴ ETC on Climate Change Impacts, Vulnerability and Adaptation

based features making it necessary to handle them all together and share their specification and uses with the other ETCs and users.

- Coastal development and land sealing is both a factor of risk (flash-floods) and a threat on coastal sediment balance, etc.

Beyond the cross-cutting and emerging issues support, the ETC/SIA will need to maintain and develop land-related indicator fact sheets especially for the Core Set of Indicators¹⁵, which include an analysis of land cover / use changes based on the accounting methodology and hence fuelled through the LEAC tools mentioned above.

These possible indicators are for example the regular assessment of the potentials of land assets or of conflicts in the use of land, which requires combining statistical and geographical approaches, whereby land use functions can be linked to economic accounts, directly or via satellite accounts. More indicator development work will be also needed in the areas of land use; the ETC will contribute to the identification, testing and implementation of new candidate indicators for regular spatial assessments of environmental issues.

Work area 6: ETC management, networking and capacity building in EEA member countries

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 e.g. clear decision and communication structures within the consortium, and well established links to the Agency and the EEA member countries, to the European Commission and to other relevant organisations. In response to the yearly work programme, which is the basis for the grant, the consortium shall produce an annual implementation plan closely mirroring the EEA Annual management plan so that the best possible synergies are set.

The ETC management must also include procedures for quality assurance – inclusive language check - of all its deliverables.

The ETC shall maintain close links with Eionet and EEA member countries, through:

- strong communication effort with the countries, including networking and regular country visits where appropriate¹⁶;
- in dialogue with the countries identifying barriers to optimally perform their tasks (e.g. monitoring capacities, staff resources, knowledge gaps) and developing proposals to solve any issues;

¹⁵ See e.g. <http://themes.eea.eu.int/indicators/>

¹⁶ The “where appropriate” aims at recalling the overarching EMAS requirements so that the EEA and its ETCs should minimize their carbon impact in relation with their activities. When physical travel is required, it should be best prepared by all means, with use of electronic conference / meeting.

- contributing by appropriate means, where appropriate and if facilitating the goals assigned to the ETC, to those external programmes in relation with their activity,
- carrying out outreach and information dissemination campaigns to the land use community;
- maintaining and further consolidating the provided training and capacity building in the countries for land cover inventories and other relevant tasks implemented in the annual SAs;
- organising regular Eionet workshops and seminars to discuss the outcomes of the work and plan future activities with the member countries;
- joint work with other ETCs.

Within the implementation of its work programme, the new ETC/SIA shall seek efficient cooperation and mutual benefit with the existing and planned networks relevant to its domain of work, from data sharing to specific assessment expertise or to research activities. Such cooperation can take the form of an explicit partnership, prior to EEA agreement; special attention shall be given to new developments, e.g. in the context of GMES or the 7th Framework research programme. It is expected that the ETC will keep up with relevant established and new networks, as opportunities and need be.

Collaboration with international bodies is part of the ETC remit, upon identification with the EEA. To ensure proper links with main partners and clients and better respond to the cooperation and connected needs, participation, where appropriate, in relevant international working groups is essential. This includes working groups on assessments, information/data and guidebooks. These activities aim to help harmonising assessments at international level, reporting of data and information for national and international obligations, and streamline international reporting. Collaborations with the Statistical Office and the Joint research centre of the European Commission are among the most important ones, within the frame of a joint work programme between EEA and these institutions.

4. General guidance on the expertise and organisation of the European Topic Centre on Spatial information and analysis

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 applicable to the ETC Spatial information and analysis.

A. The structure of the ETC consortium

The ETC shall comprise of a consortium with one coordinating organisation and several partners. The following points have to be considered establishing the consortium:

It can be difficult to manage many small partners (e.g. with contracts of less than 50 000 euro/yr) in a consortium, it is acknowledged that fewer partners can improve management. However this has to be balanced against the need to cover the required field of expertise and to ensure good geographical coverage.

A relatively small core team to cover core tasks to be supplemented by additional expertise to meet specific needs for assessments seems to be an appropriate, flexible and responsive ETC structure.

The work programme may be best addressed by a 'core group' located at the coordinating organisation, supported by partners with specific competences. The expertise needed in the core group is both topical and technical, including:

- coordinator, having appropriate management and networking capabilities;
- administrative support, able to work in English and organise European meetings and consultations;
- geospatial data management with experience in QA/QC;
- expertise to design spatial information systems including the ability to handle relevant GIS components in cooperation with the European data infrastructure developed at EEA;
- expertise in spatial analysis, across environmental and sectoral themes, including knowledge of physical planning policies;
- the core team shall have access to financial control services, to ensure proper financial management.
- The consortium as a whole needs to cover the main work areas with the expertise listed under Section B. but also have appropriate links to the wider European expertise and experiences that are or that might be required during the lifetime of the ETC. This is particularly important where specific skills are needed e.g. for certain methodologies, modelling or for a wider sector integration, inter-sector dependencies, 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 being able to subcontract experts for specific projects and even just having access to the required support.

B. Technical and scientific expertise

The composition of the ETC Spatial information and analysis has to ensure a proper balance between the managerial and the representational skills together with a wide professional experience covering the whole range of topics related with land use issues. To cover work indicated under Point 3 above, the ETC consortium is expected to have technical and scientific expertise in the following areas:

- Very good knowledge of land use and land cover issues, deep understanding of the interdisciplinary issues associated with land management and experience in the development of related policy relevant indicators;

- Very good expertise in geospatial environmental data management (in particular data handling, quality assurance of large volume and complex data sets);
- Very good GIS expertise doubled by a wide understanding of the integrated spatial assessment and spatial indicator development;
- Very good experience in *Corine land cover* design, mapping, making and utilisation;
- Very good knowledge in the activities attached to remote sensing developments and space/air-born monitoring; ETC will have to work with EEA in dealing with major actors involved, in particular in the GMES community;
- Very good knowledge and expertise in regional assessment, from coastal to urban environment to impacts of large-scale infrastructure (e.g. transport networks);
- Experience in sectoral analysis such as socio-economic geography and physical / spatial planning;
- Very good experience in using and possibly producing prospective analysis (outlooks) and models for land-based assessments;
- Experience in using geo-statistical methods (e.g. sampling, probabilistic approaches, environmental accounting) in the environment domain. It is acknowledged that many of these techniques are extremely specialised. It is hence important the ETC identifies which should be immediately available and which should be accessible if the need would occur;
- Analytical, synthetic and writing skills;
- Good communication capacities.

Besides strong professional skills all core team members are expected to have previous experience in working in a multi-disciplinary and preferably international environment.

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 FPA and SAs. More particularly, the ETC is expected to deliver documents (background notes, draft fact sheets and reports, etc.) at a quality level 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 designated 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 Eionet¹⁷, in particular the Primary Contact Points (PCP) and National Reference Centres (NRC) appointed by the member countries, is the basic foundation for the work of the ETCs. This means, e.g., *ad hoc* technical support to member countries, reflecting the specific needs of all countries, to enable them to contribute to the reporting of 'priority data'. The 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.

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.

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/10/001, EEA/NSV/10/001 and EEA/NSV/10/002), **no partner may participate in more than one consortium aiming at the FPA concerning the ETC of this Open Call**, the ETC on Spatial

¹⁷ <http://www.eionet.europa.eu/>.

information and analysis. 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 the ETC/SIA. 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 93(1), 94 and 96(2)(a) of the FR, namely the following:

- (a) they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- (b) they have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of *res judicata*;
- (c) they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify;
- (d) they have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;
- (e) they have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of *res judicata* for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity detrimental to the Communities' financial interests;
- (f) they are currently subject to an administrative penalty referred to in Article 96(1) FR
- (g) they are faced with a conflict of interest
- (h) they are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the contracting authority as a condition of participation in the procedure or fail to supply this information
- (i) following another procurement or grant award procedure financed by the Community budget, they have been declared to be in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with their contractual obligations;
- (j) have been excluded (according to Article 96(2)(a) FR) as candidate, tenderer or contractor from the contracts and grants financed by the budget, for a maximum period of ten years.

The cases referred to in point (e) shall be the following:

- (a) cases of fraud as referred to in Article 1 of the Convention on the protection of the European Communities' financial interests drawn up by the Council Act of 26 July 1995;

(b) cases of corruption as referred to in Article 3 of the Convention on the fight against corruption involving officials of the European Communities or officials of Member States of the European Union, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 May 1997;

(c) cases of involvement in a criminal organisation, as defined in Article 2(1) of Joint Action 98/733/JHA of the Council;

(d) cases of money laundering as defined in Article 1 of Council Directive 91/308/EEC

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

The *consortium* with whom the Agency will enter into a Framework Partnership Agreement must provide evidence confirming the declaration referred to in the previous point.

The contracting authority shall accept as satisfactory the following evidence:

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

ii) For point (d) a recent certificate issued by the competent authority of the State concerned.

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

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 action/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, entry in the VAT register or any other statutory document allowing verification of the partner's legal status.

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

(b) Economic and financial capacity

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

- proof of stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain the *consortium's* activity throughout the period 2011-2013;
- for private partners: profit and loss accounts, balance sheet for the last financial year for which the accounts were closed (and audit reports by an approved external auditor certifying the accounts for the last available financial year¹⁸).

(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 (indicating, *inter alia*, the level of English/other language skills) + signed letters of intent of:
 - the ETC Manager and core staff of the *consortium* coordinator; as well as
 - the key experts of all *consortium* partners,proving that the *consortium* as a whole has sufficient technical, scientific and management (including financial) experience to assume the role of an ETC;
2. A list and brief account of 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;
3. Letters of intent of all *consortium* partners to participate and provide co-financing up to at least 10% of the total eligible cost of the annual work programme;¹⁹
4. For each partner established in an EEA member country, letters of confirmation from the respective Member of the EEA Management Board that the relevant partner is able to perform the function of an ETC partner within Eionet.
5. Proof and description of the consortium's/partners' Quality Assurance and Quality Control systems;
6. Proof and description of the *consortium's*/partners' environmental policy;

¹⁸ Having regard to Article 173(4) IR and the fact that all *consortium* partners will assume joint and several liability in accordance with the FPA, such audit reports are not required if consortia include any public bodies.

¹⁹ The 10%-rule of minimum co-financing is applied towards the *consortium* as a whole. To what extent partners contribute to this co-financing is an internal *consortium* matter. Before awarding any grant through Specific Agreements (SAs) based on the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA), the *consortium* must furnish proof of the amount of co-financing to be provided (Article I.6.2 FPA).

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 six award criteria and allocation of points as outlined below, producing a maximum total score of 100 points:

	Max. award points
1. <u>General approach to the work</u> - ability to provide information that addresses the needs of EEA and its stakeholders. The proposal needs to demonstrate the consortium's understanding of the objectives of the EEA strategy, and the policies to which ETC on Spatial information and analysis will contribute. This needs to be reflected in the set up of the consortium, the approach taken to the work and the products proposed.	15
2. <u>Expertise and experience on spatial information</u> – relates to land and maritime space for which an in-depth knowledge of the relationship between pressures, state and impacts in the multiple uses and functions of land and maritime space and the effects of related policy/societal responses as well as the relationships with the other environmental topics and issues (e.g. ecosystems, water, vulnerabilities, etc.). Capacity to handle and cross-manipulate the relevant data and information (knowledge of relevant European data sets and monitoring programmes) in support to relevant analytical frameworks.	20
3. <u>Expertise and experience of territorial policy processes</u> - the capacity of the consortium in supporting firstly EU and pan-European but also global and national policy instruments related to land and maritime space management and their respective uses, as demonstrated from achieved projects and publications/reports; experience of participation in the development and implementation of this policy by providing expert advice in working groups etc.	15
4. <u>Expertise and experience in developing indicators and supporting assessment</u> - the proposal and previous projects and publications/reports need to show the capacity to provide the required deliverables.	10
5. <u>Technical expertise in geospatial data management</u> – the expertise of the consortium as demonstrated from their previous projects and publications / reports / internet sites as regards data flow management, including validation processes, quality assurance and quality control, data base development and management including the handling and the cross-operating of spatial data, GIS data processing for indicators and presentation. Special attention is to be given to the interrelationships with reference systems on the one hand and with data sets operated by other ETCs / data centres on the other hand. Ability to secure the technical continuity of CORINE land cover data management.	15

6. Use of existing capacities in Europe and in the EEA area of concern - sound approach to access of expertise in the member countries and in institutes external to the consortium, links with relevant scientific and administrative organisations in Europe as evident from previous projects and reports.	10
7. Project management and networking capacity – Sound arrangements for the management of the ETC consortium, and track record in implementing effective management procedures, enhancing cooperation between partners, and with countries and other stakeholders, transparent financial administration, environmental policy adopted and quality assurance. Adequate level of manpower, resources and output corresponding to the indicative annual budget. Ability to work with countries across Europe (EEA member countries and potentially others). Capacity to carry-out annual management plans in close cooperation with the client (c.f. Work Area 6)	15
TOTAL	100

Proposals will be evaluated and awarded points according to the extent to which the above award criteria are fulfilled. Proposals scoring less than 65% of the maximum total score for the seven award criteria overall will be considered to be of insufficient quality and eliminated from the award procedure. Should proposals obtain the same total score of 65 points or more and tie for first place, the winning proposal will be decided on the basis of the highest score achieved in total across award criteria 2 to 5.

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 contract, in particular, those relating to business travel/electronic means of communication, paper and energy consumption. Further information on the EMAS system can be found on the EEA homepage: <http://www.eea.europa.eu/documents/emas>.

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

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: 3 February 2010 (Copenhagen)

Deadline for submitting proposals: 20 April 2010

Following the decision of the EEA Management Board on the designation of the successful *consortium* (foreseen for 16 June 2010) and prior to signature of the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) all *consortia* will be notified of the outcome of this call.

ANNEXES

Annex 1 – Proposal (model structure)

Annex 2 – Identification sheet

Annex 3 – Declaration exclusion criteria

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 3 February 2010 in Copenhagen. If you are interested, please register by sending an e-mail to olivier.cornu@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: ronan.uhel@eea.europa.eu (general questions) or Philippe.Crouzet@eea.europa.eu (technical questions).

All applicants are encouraged to consult the section ‘contract opportunities’ on the EEA website regularly before the deadline.