



Pilot Projects and Preparatory Actions (PPPA)

Call for proposals

Pilot Project on a demonstrator fishing vessel
to promote energy transition in the fisheries
sector

PPPA-2024-FISHVESSELEDEMO

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EUROPEAN CLIMATE, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT EXECUTIVE AGENCY (CINEA)

CINEA.D – Natural Resources, Climate, Sustainable Blue Economy and Clean Energy
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CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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0. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU **action grants** in the field of Natural Resources and Environment.

The regulatory framework for this EU Funding Programme is set out in:

- Regulation 2018/1046 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))

The call is launched in accordance with the Financing Decision¹ and will be managed by the **European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA)** ('Agency').

 Please note that this call is subject to the final adoption of the budget by the EU budgetary authority. In case there are substantial changes, we may have to modify the call (or even cancel it).

The call covers the following **topic**:

PPPA-2024-FISHVESSELDEMO – Pilot Project: Fostering energy transition in the fisheries sector (Demonstrator of a fishing vessel)

We invite you to read the **call documentation** carefully, and in particular this Call Document, the Model Grant Agreement, the [EU Funding & Tenders Portal Online Manual](#) and the [EU Grants AGA – Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

These documents provide clarifications and answers to questions you may have when preparing your application:

- the [Call Document](#) outlines the:
 - background, objectives, scope, activities that can be funded and the expected results (sections 1 and 2)
 - timetable and available budget (sections 3 and 4)
 - admissibility and eligibility conditions (including mandatory documents; sections 5 and 6)
 - criteria for financial and operational capacity and exclusion (section 7)
 - evaluation and award procedure (section 8)
 - award criteria (section 9)
 - legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements (section 10)
 - how to submit an application (section 11)
- the [Online Manual](#) outlines the:
 - procedures to register and submit proposals online via the EU Funding & Tenders Portal ('Portal')

¹ COMMISSION DECISION on the financing of the pilot project "Fostering energy transition in the fisheries sector" (Demonstrator of a fishing vessel) and the adoption of the work programme for 2024 C(2024)875 of 15/02/2024.

- recommendations for the preparation of the application
- the AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement contains:
 - detailed annotations on all the provisions in the Grant Agreement you will have to sign in order to obtain the grant (*including cost eligibility, payment schedule, accessory obligations, etc.*).

1. Background

Overview

To overcome the challenges of climate change and environmental degradation, the European Commission set out the European Green Deal (EGD) in 2019, aiming to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. The implementation of the European Green Deal encompasses measures covering all sectors of the economy, including fisheries.

Currently, the European fishing fleet is responsible for annual emissions of 4.3 million tons of CO₂ equivalent². The sector is fuel intensive and relies heavily on fossil fuels for its operations. This dependency on fossil fuels not only reduces the environmental sustainability of fisheries, but also makes it vulnerable to increases in energy prices, such as those experienced recently due to the Russian military aggression against Ukraine. This has created uncertainty for the sector and affected its profitability.

State of play

In February 2023, the European Commission published the Communication on the Energy Transition of the EU Fisheries and Aquaculture sector³, setting a framework for diversification from fossil fuels and improving energy performance. The Communication identifies two main changes that are necessary for the energy transition in this sector:

1. An increase in energy efficiency, including a decrease in fuel-use intensity and in overall fuel consumption in the sector in the short to medium term; and
2. A switch from fossil fuels to renewable and zero or low-carbon energy sources and fuels. Examples of these energy sources are green electricity, hydrogen, certain biofuels, ammonia, as well as batteries and wind power.

The Communication includes 27 actions to support four main objectives:

- (i) to improve the governance framework and coordination/cooperation between stakeholders;
- (ii) to close the gaps in both available technology and knowledge through research and innovation (R&I);
- (iii) to develop skills and a workforce that is prepared and ready for the energy transition; and
- (iv) to improve the business environment, including in financing opportunities and awareness.

² [Energy transition of fishing fleets: Opportunities and challenges for developing countries | UNCTAD](#)

³ [COM-2023-100_en.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

To achieve these actions, there is a need to further test and demonstrate innovations on fishing vessels, including alternative propulsion technologies and other solutions to improve the energy performance of fishing vessels.

In this context, the European Commission launched a call for proposals under the Horizon Europe programme for Lighthouse projects in the Baltic and the North Sea basins on green and energy-efficient small-scale fishing fleets (HORIZON-MISS-2023-OCEAN-01-05). This call focused on testing, validating, and demonstrating solutions to reduce the emissions and fuel consumption of small-scale fishing vessels⁴.

The present call for proposals targets the financing of a pilot project on a demonstrator marine fishing vessel of 12 metres or more in length. It aims to further support the objectives of the Commission Communication on the Energy Transition of the EU Fisheries and Aquaculture sector. The demonstrator, which will be developed by retrofitting an existing fishing vessel, should test different hull design and/or alternative propulsion technologies and/or alternative power sources for onboard systems and equipment that reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). These should broaden the possibilities offered to fishers to save energy and galvanise the energy transition of fishing vessels.

2. Objectives – Themes and priorities – Activities that can be funded – Expected impact

– PPPA-2024-FISHVESSELDEMO – Pilot Project: Fostering energy transition in the fisheries sector (Demonstrator of a fishing vessel)

Objectives

The overarching objective of the call for proposals is to support the energy transition in the marine fishing sector by tackling technology and knowledge gaps and promoting low carbon and energy efficient solutions.

The specific aim is to demonstrate the feasibility of using alternative propulsion technology(ies) and / or other solutions, including digital, to improve the energy performance of a marine fishing vessel, and to fill gaps in information and knowledge on the potential for, and compatibility of, technologies for the fishing sector. Where possible, the action should also support the reduction of underwater noise that affects species, such as marine mammals.

This call for proposals aims to finance a demonstrator fishing vessel of 12 metres or more in length, which will be used to carry out testing of different alternative propulsion, energy performance and emissions reduction technologies, including digital. The existing vessel will be retrofitted with the most promising of these technologies.

Themes and priorities (scope)

This topic focuses on:

- Exploring the compatibility of innovative and mature technologies and solutions to reduce energy consumption and emissions from fishing vessels, in their range of activities.
- Demonstrating the viability of low carbon and energy efficient technologies and

⁴ Under the call HORIZON-MISS-2023-OCEAN-01-05 "Small-scale fisheries" is defined as "fishing carried out by fishing vessels of an overall length of less than 12 m and not using towed fishing gear".

their impact on the operation and environmental performance (including noise pollution) of fishing vessels.

- Filling knowledge gaps on the technological, digital, social, legal, regulatory and policy barriers to the energy transition of fisheries, as well as on the safety aspects, and increasing fishers' awareness and interest.

Activities that can be funded (scope)

The project should perform an assessment of the feasibility and scope of the test, which should identify the characteristics of the fishing vessel (hull design, propulsion technologies and energy used on board), and the different type of tests needed with the retrofitted vessel.

Based on the feasibility assessment, the project should carry out tests to determine the vessel's energy savings, safety, and environmental performance (including, if possible, noise reduction) with different fishing gears and in different weather conditions.

The project should test the compatibility of one or more alternative means of propulsion and onboard systems/technologies, including digital tools. It is up to the applicants to propose the most appropriate combinations.

Proposals may draw on existing innovations in other sectors (e.g., waterborne transport), as well as relevant results from previous EU initiatives, in particular those under Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe that deal with waterborne transport.

The project should include as many as possible of the activities listed below (NB: this list is non-exhaustive):

- Determination of the baseline performance and fishing capacity of the original fishing vessel, to compare results after retrofit.
- Assessment of the feasibility, scope and best cost-benefit ratio of the technology options for the retrofit of the chosen vessel with solutions to improve its energy performance, reduce its GHG emissions and reducing underwater noise.
- Development of the concept and design for the retrofit, which may include replacement/modernisation of engines, and/or integration of other technologies to increase energy performance and reduce emissions (such as hydrodynamic optimisation, gear efficiency, digital tools, alternative fuels and bridge systems for engine control).
- Retrofit of an existing fishing vessel, in line with the concept and design.
- Definition of monitoring indicators and tests to be carried out with the retrofitted fishing vessel to determine the energy savings, safety, emissions and environmental performance (including underwater noise reduction) in real operational conditions.
- Conducting sea trials of the retrofitted fishing vessel in real operational fishing conditions, different weather conditions and with different gears.
- Using analyses of the results from retrofitting of the demonstration vessel, to issue technical feedback and propose recommendations to support the energy transition of the fishing fleet.
- Developing a communication strategy to be carried out during the project, including a strong visual identity and branding, to promote the pilot project and the energy transition in fisheries to a wider EU audience, including fishers,

coastal communities, and investors. Communication activities should include some that are targeted to youth engagement.

- Establishment of a clear rationale and legacy strategy for the vessel's use as a demonstrator after the pilot project concludes, that can benefit the fisheries sector and the fisher community (for example using the vessel as a travelling showcase of the results of the pilot project across European fishing ports, or as a training vessel for young fishers across EU).
- Activities to promote cooperation and exchange of knowledge with other relevant EU funded projects or initiatives – e.g., Horizon projects (HORIZON-MISS-2023-OCEAN-01-05), Zero Emission Waterborne Transport partnership.

The following activities cannot be funded:

- Landing of professional fishing products and commercial fishing operations
- Construction of new vessels

Technical requirements for the vessel

- The vessel selected for the demonstration project must be one of the following:
 - a. An active fishing vessel, of 12 metres or more in length, ready to become a demonstrator.
 - b. A non-active fishing vessel, of 12 metres or more in length, ready to become a demonstrator.
 - c. An existing demonstrator fishing vessel, of 12 metres or more in length, with diesel engine.
- Under option a) above, applicants must ensure that the vessel is de-registered from the national register of fishing vessels prior to its retrofitting.
- For all the above options, applicants should identify the selected vessel for the retrofitting and demonstration activities in their proposal. The vessel must operate as a demonstrator and applicants must describe in their proposal the relevant legal and administrative procedures that they will need to complete in order to use the vessel as a demonstrator for the project activities listed above. The change of activity of the vessel (e.g., de-registration from the fishing fleet) must be recorded in the relevant national register and reported in the EU fleet register.
- The project activities and retrofitting of the vessel should not result in any increase in fishing capacity of the vessel. Applicants must ensure that the retrofitted vessel will not re-enter the fishing fleet after the end of the project or explain in their proposal other solutions to avoid any increase in fishing capacity.

Other requirements

- No commercial fishing activity can be carried out during the implementation of the project. If applicants propose to catch fish as part of the activities to test and demonstrate the retrofitted vessel in real operating conditions, applicants should describe in their proposal how they will fulfil relevant legal and administrative requirements to operate (e.g., authorisation to fish for scientific

purposes)⁵ and how the resulting catch will be used (e.g., charitable, educational or research purposes).

- Applicants should describe in their application how the demonstrator vessel will be used after the end of the project. Project deliverables shall include a legacy strategy for the future use of the demonstrator vessel. Applicants should preferably continue to use the demonstrator to further support the energy transition in the fisheries sector and to showcase and disseminate the project results, providing inspiration for stakeholders and investors (e.g., as a showcase, visitor centre, training vessel, to test alternative propulsion technologies/fuels, etc.).
- In selecting the technologies to integrate on the fishing vessel, applicants should consider key issues including the Technology Readiness Level of the technology, and certification.
- In their proposals, applicants should describe safety and risk management measures that consider the level of maturity of the technologies used. Applicants must ensure high levels of proper maintenance of the vessel, regular inspections of fuel systems, noise reduction measures, mitigation of pollution risks and compliance with all relevant environmental and safety regulations.

Expected impact

The expected impacts include:

- To develop and demonstrate viable solutions for fishing vessels which improve the energy performance, including GHG emissions and a potential reduction of energy-related operating costs.
- To increase knowledge on the challenges, benefits, and impacts (including economic, environmental and in terms of the health and safety of fishers) of different technologies to improve the energy, emissions, and environmental performance of fishing vessels (including underwater noise reduction).
- To raise awareness of, and broaden the possibilities for, alternative technologies and energy sources for a more energy efficient and climate neutral sector by 2050, to galvanise the energy transition of fishing vessels.

Indicators

Applicants should include a list of relevant indicators, including baselines, estimated targets, and how to measure them. An indicative and non-exhaustive list is provided below.

- Vessel retrofitted
- Number of different technologies/innovations used
- Number and type of studies/tests carried out
- Well-to-wake: Tons of CO₂ equivalent avoided⁶

⁵ Reg. (EC) No 1224/2009 of 20 November 2009.

⁶ E.g.: [swd_2023_54_en.pdf \(europa.eu\)](https://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Environment/Pages/Improving%20the%20energy%20efficiency%20of%20ships.aspx)
<https://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Environment/Pages/Improving%20the%20energy%20efficiency%20of%20ships.aspx>

- % of reduction of underwater noise⁷
- Number of communication campaigns

3. Available budget

The estimated available call budget is **EUR 2 200 000**.

We expect to fund one project.

We reserve the right not to award all available funds, depending on the proposals received and the results of the evaluation.

4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
Call opening:	20 February 2024
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>11 June 2024 – 17:00:00 CET</u> (Brussels)
Evaluation:	June-July 2024
Information on evaluation results:	July-August 2024
GA signature:	September 2024

5. Admissibility and documents

Proposals must be submitted before the **call deadline** (see *timetable section 4*).

Proposals must be submitted **electronically** via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (accessible via the Topic page in the [Search Funding & Tenders](#) section). Paper submissions are NOT possible.

Proposals (including annexes and supporting documents) must be submitted using the forms provided *inside* the Submission System (⚠ NOT the documents available on the Topic page — they are only for information).

Proposals must be **complete** and contain all the requested information and all required annexes and supporting documents:

- Application Form Part A — contains administrative information about the participants (future coordinator, beneficiaries and affiliated entities) and the summarised budget for the project (*to be filled in directly online*)

⁷ Descriptor 11: Energy, including underwater noise of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive – see: https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/marine-environment/descriptors-under-marine-strategy-framework-directive_en#descriptor-11-energy-including-underwater-noise

- Application Form Part B — contains the technical description of the project (*to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed and then assembled and re-uploaded*)
- **mandatory annexes and supporting documents** (*templates available to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded*):
 - detailed budget table/calculator
 - CVs of core project team: not applicable
 - activity reports of last year: not applicable
 - list of previous projects: not applicable
 - Extract from the national (EU) fleet register showing the registration status (including the registered activity) of the vessel to be used for the project activities, at the time of application.

Please note that the amounts entered into the summarised budget table (filled in directly online) must correspond to the amounts calculated in the detailed budget table. In case of discrepancies, the amounts in the online summarised budget table will prevail.

At proposal submission, you will have to confirm that you have the **mandate to act** for all applicants. Moreover, you will have to confirm that the information in the application is correct and complete and that the participants comply with the conditions for receiving EU funding (especially eligibility, financial and operational capacity, exclusion, etc). Before signing the grant, each beneficiary and affiliated entity will have to confirm this again by signing a declaration of honour (DoH). Proposals without full support will be rejected.

Your application must be **readable, accessible and printable**.

Proposals are limited to maximum **70 pages** (Part B). Evaluators will not consider any additional pages. Shorter proposals are welcome.

You may be asked at a later stage for further documents (*for legal entity validation, financial capacity check, bank account validation, etc*).



For more information about the submission process (including IT aspects), consult the [Online Manual](#).

6. Eligibility

Applications will only be considered eligible if their content corresponds wholly (or at least in part) to the topic description for which they are submitted.

Eligible participants (eligible countries)

In order to be eligible, the applicants (beneficiaries and affiliated entities) must:

- be legal entities (public or private bodies)
- be established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
 - EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs))
- Beneficiaries and affiliated entities must register in the [Participant Register](#) — before submitting the proposal — and will have to be validated by the Central Validation Service (REA Validation). For the validation, they will be requested to upload documents showing legal status and origin.

Other entities may participate in other consortium roles, such as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions, etc (see section 13).


Specific cases

Exceptional funding — Entities from other countries (not listed above) are exceptionally eligible if the granting authority considers their participation essential for the implementation of the action.

International organisations — International organisations are eligible. The rules on eligible countries do not apply to them.

Entities without legal personality — Entities which do not have legal personality under their national law may exceptionally participate, provided that their representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf and offer guarantees for the protection of the EU financial interests equivalent to that offered by legal persons⁸.

EU bodies — EU bodies (with the exception of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre) can NOT be part of the consortium.

Associations and interest groupings — Entities composed of members may participate as 'sole beneficiaries' or 'beneficiaries without legal personality'⁹.  Please note that if the action will be implemented by the members, they should also participate (either as beneficiaries or as affiliated entities, otherwise their costs will NOT be eligible).

EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for certain entities (e.g. entities subject to [EU restrictive measures](#) under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)¹⁰). Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).

 For more information, see [Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment](#).

Consortium composition

Proposals must be submitted by a consortium of at least two applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities) from at least two Member States, which complies with the following conditions:

- At least one partner from the fishery sector (e.g., commercial fisher, fishery association, producers' organisation)

The participation of other relevant entities is encouraged, e.g., Port Authorities, NGOs, Community-Led Local Development (CLLD), vessel component manufacturers, research centres, SMEs, technology and other value chain providers and developers, etc.

Eligible activities

Eligible activities are the ones set out in section 2 above.

⁸ See Article 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

⁹ For the definitions, see Articles 187(2) and 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

¹⁰ Please note that the EU Official Journal contains the official list and, in case of conflict, its content prevails over that of the [EU Sanctions Map](#).

Projects must comply with EU policy interests and priorities (*such as environment, social, security, industrial and trade policy, etc*).

Financial support to third parties is not allowed.

Geographic location (target countries)

Proposals must relate to activities taking place in the eligible countries (*see above*).

Duration

Projects should normally range between 24 and 36 months.

Projects of longer duration may be accepted in duly justified cases. Extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment.

Project budget

Project budgets (maximum grant amount) are expected to be maximum EUR 2 200 000 euro per project.

The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

Ethics

Projects must comply with:

- highest ethical standards and
- applicable EU, international and national law.

7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion

Financial capacity

Applicants must have **stable and sufficient resources** to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share. Organisations participating in several projects must have sufficient capacity to implement all these projects.

The financial capacity check will be carried out on the basis of the documents you will be requested to upload in the [Participant Register](#) during grant preparation (*e.g. profit and loss account and balance sheet, business plan, audit report produced by an approved external auditor, certifying the accounts for the last closed financial year, etc*). The analysis will be based on neutral financial indicators, but will also take into account other aspects, such as dependency on EU funding and deficit and revenue in previous years.

The check will normally be done for all beneficiaries, except:

- public bodies (entities established as public body under national law, including local, regional or national authorities) or international organisations;
- if the individual requested grant amount is not more than EUR 60 000.

If needed, it may also be done for affiliated entities.

If we consider that your financial capacity is not satisfactory, we may require:

- further information
- an enhanced financial responsibility regime, i.e., joint and several responsibility for all beneficiaries or joint and several liability of affiliated

entities (*see below, section 10*)

- prefinancing paid in instalments
- (one or more) prefinancing guarantees (*see below, section 10*)

or

- propose no prefinancing
- request that you are replaced or, if needed, reject the entire proposal.



For more information, see [Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment](#).

Operational capacity

Applicants must have the **know-how, qualifications** and **resources** to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share (including sufficient experience in projects of comparable size and nature).

This capacity will be assessed together with the 'Quality' award criterion, on the basis of the competence and experience of the applicants and their project teams, including operational resources (human, technical and other) or, exceptionally, the measures proposed to obtain it by the time the task implementation starts.

If the evaluation of the award criterion is positive, the applicants are considered to have sufficient operational capacity.

Applicants will have to show their capacity via the following information:

- general profiles (qualifications and experiences) of the staff responsible for managing and implementing the project
- description of the consortium participants

Additional supporting documents may be requested, if needed to confirm the operational capacity of any applicant.

Public bodies, Member State organisations and international organisations are exempted from the operational capacity check.

Exclusion

Applicants which are subject to an **EU exclusion decision** or in one of the following **exclusion situations** that bar them from receiving EU funding can NOT participate¹¹:

- bankruptcy, winding up, affairs administered by the courts, arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or other similar procedures (including procedures for persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- in breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- guilty of grave professional misconduct¹² (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)

¹¹ See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

¹² Professional misconduct includes: violation of ethical standards of the profession, wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility, false declarations/misrepresentation of information, participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition, violation of IPR, attempting to influence decision-making processes or obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain advantage.

- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of EU Regulation [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).

Applicants will also be rejected if it turns out that¹³:

- during the award procedure they misrepresented information required as a condition for participating or failed to supply that information
- they were previously involved in the preparation of the call and this entails a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise (conflict of interest).

8. Evaluation and award procedure

The proposals will have to follow the standard submission and evaluation procedure (one-stage submission + one-step evaluation).

An **evaluation committee** (possibly assisted by independent outside experts) will assess all applications. Proposals will first be checked for formal requirements (admissibility, and eligibility, *see sections 5 and 6*). Proposals found admissible and eligible will be evaluated against the operational capacity and award criteria (*see sections 7 and 9*) and then ranked according to their scores.

For proposals with the same score a **priority order** will be determined according to the following approach:

Successively for every group of *ex aequo* proposals, starting with the highest scored group, and continuing in descending order:

- 1) The *ex aequo* proposals will be prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for the award criterion 'Relevance'. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion 'Impact'.
- 2) If this does not allow to determine the priority, a further prioritisation can be done by considering the overall project portfolio and the creation of positive synergies between projects, or other factors related to the objectives of the call. These factors will be documented in the panel report.

¹³ See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

All proposals will be informed about the evaluation result (**evaluation result letter**). Successful proposals will be invited for grant preparation; the other ones will be put on the reserve list or rejected.

No commitment for funding — Invitation to grant preparation does NOT constitute a formal commitment for funding. We will still need to make various legal checks before grant award: *legal entity validation, financial capacity, exclusion check, etc.*

Grant preparation will involve a dialogue in order to fine-tune technical or financial aspects of the project and may require extra information from your side. It may also include adjustments to the proposal to address recommendations of the evaluation committee or other concerns. Compliance will be a pre-condition for signing the grant.

If you believe that the evaluation procedure was flawed, you can submit a **complaint** (following the deadlines and procedures set out in the evaluation result letter). Please note that notifications which have not been opened within 10 days after sending will be considered to have been accessed and that deadlines will be counted from opening/access (*see also [Funding & Tenders Portal Terms and Conditions](#)*). Please also be aware that for complaints submitted electronically, there may be character limitations.

9. Award criteria

The **award criteria** for this call are as follows:

1. Relevance (10 points):

- Clarity and consistency of the action, including the proposed fishing vessel and retrofitting technology(ies)
- Objectives and extent to which they match the themes and priorities and objectives of the call, including the proposed methodology to compare the results of retrofitting
- Contribution to the EU strategic and legislative context
- European/trans-national dimension
- Impact/interest for a number of countries (EU or eligible non-EU countries); possibility to use the results in other countries; potential to develop mutual trust/cross-border cooperation

2. Quality (10 points):

- Logical links between the identified problems, needs and solutions proposed (logical frame concept)
- Quality of the consortium and project teams
- Appropriate procedures and problem-solving mechanisms for cooperating within the project teams and consortium
- Methodology for implementing the project (concept and methodology, organisation of the work (procedures and allocation of resources), management, involvement of subcontractors, timetable, risks and risk management, monitoring and evaluation)
- Cost effectiveness (sufficient/appropriate budget for proper implementation; best value for money)

3. Impact (10 points):

- Ambition and expected long-term impact of results on target groups/general public
- Appropriate dissemination and legacy strategies
- Possibility to use the results in other countries
- Sustainability of results after EU funding ends

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score
Relevance	6	10
Quality	6	10
Impact	6	10
Overall (pass) scores	21	30

Maximum points: 30 points.

Individual thresholds per criterion: 6/10, 6/10 and 6/10 points.

Overall threshold: 21 points.

Proposals that pass the individual thresholds AND the overall threshold will be considered for funding – within the limits of the available budget (i.e., up to the budget ceiling). Other proposals will be rejected.

10. Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements

If you pass evaluation, your project will be invited for grant preparation, where you will be asked to prepare the Grant Agreement together with the EU Project Officer.

This Grant Agreement will set the framework for your grant and its terms and conditions, in particular concerning deliverables, reporting and payments.

The Model Grant Agreement that will be used (and all other relevant templates and guidance documents) is the "GENERAL MGA v1.0" which can be found in the [Portal Reference Documents](#), under the Programming period 2021-2027 and under the section for programme "European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF)".

Starting date and project duration

The project starting date and duration will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 1*). Normally the starting date will be after grant signature. A retroactive starting date can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons – but never earlier than the proposal submission date.

Project duration: *see section 6 above*.

Milestones and deliverables

The milestones and deliverables for each project will be managed through the Portal Grant Management System and will be reflected in Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement.

Form of grant, funding rate and maximum grant amount

The grant parameters (*maximum grant amount, funding rate, total eligible costs, etc*) will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 3 and art 5*).

Project budget (maximum grant amount): *see section 6 above*.

The grant will be a mix of budget-based and actual cost grant (actual costs, with unit cost and flat-rate elements). This means that it will reimburse ONLY certain types of costs (eligible costs) and costs that were *actually* incurred for your project (NOT the *budgeted* costs). For unit costs and flat-rates, you can charge the amounts calculated as explained in the Grant Agreement (*see art 6 and Annex 2 and 2a*).

The costs will be reimbursed at the funding rate fixed in the Grant agreement (**80%**).

Grants may NOT produce a profit (i.e., surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). For-profit organisations must declare their revenues and, if there is a profit, we will deduct it from the final grant amount (*see art 22.3*).

Moreover, please be aware that the final grant amount may be reduced in case of non-compliance with the Grant Agreement (*e.g., improper implementation, breach of obligations, etc*).

Budget categories and cost eligibility rules

The budget categories and cost eligibility rules are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 3, art 6 and Annex 2*).

Budget categories for this call:

- A. Personnel costs
 - A.1 Employees, A.2 Natural persons under direct contract, A.3 Seconded persons
 - A.4 SME owners and natural person beneficiaries
 - A.5 Volunteers
- B. Subcontracting costs
- C. Purchase costs
 - C.1 Travel and subsistence
 - C.2 Equipment
 - C.3 Other goods, works and services
- D. Other cost categories
 - D.1 Financial support to third parties
- E. Indirect costs

Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:

- personnel costs:

- SME owner/natural person unit cost¹⁴: Yes
- volunteers unit cost¹⁵: No
- travel and subsistence unit cost¹⁶:-Yes
- equipment costs: According to the options available in the General Model Grant Agreement (“GENERAL MGA v1.0” which can be found in the [Portal Reference Documents](#), under the Programming period 2021-2027 and under the section for programme “European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF)”)
- other cost categories:
 - costs for financial support to third parties: not allowed
- indirect cost flat-rate: 7% of the eligible direct costs (categories A-D, except volunteers costs and exempted specific cost categories, if any)
- VAT: non-deductible VAT is eligible (but please note that since 2013 VAT paid by beneficiaries that are public bodies acting as public authority is NOT eligible)
- other:
 - in-kind contributions for free are allowed, but cost-neutral, i.e., they cannot be declared as cost
 - kick-off meeting: costs for kick-off meeting organised by the granting authority are eligible (travel costs for maximum 2 persons, return ticket to Brussels and accommodation for one night) only if the meeting takes place after the project starting date set out in the Grant Agreement; the starting date can be changed through an amendment, if needed
 - project websites: communication costs for presenting the project on the participants’ websites or social media accounts are eligible; costs for *separate* project websites are not eligible
 - other ineligible costs: No

Reporting and payment arrangements

The reporting and payment arrangements are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4 and art 21 and 22*).

After grant signature, you will normally receive a **prefinancing** to start working on the project (float of normally **40%** of the maximum grant amount; exceptionally less or no prefinancing). The prefinancing will be paid 30 days from entry into force/financial guarantee (if required) — whichever is the latest.

There will be one or more **interim payments** (with detailed cost reporting).

In addition, you will be expected to submit one or more progress reports not linked to payments.


Payment of the balance: At the end of the project, we will calculate your final grant amount. If the total of earlier payments is higher than the final grant amount, we will ask you (your coordinator) to pay back the difference (recovery).

¹⁴ Commission [Decision](#) of 20 October 2020 authorising the use of unit costs for the personnel costs of the owners of small and medium-sized enterprises and beneficiaries that are natural persons not receiving a salary for the work carried out by themselves under an action or work programme (C(2020)7115).

¹⁵ Commission [Decision](#) of 10 April 2019 authorising the use of unit costs for declaring personnel costs for the work carried out by volunteers under an action or a work programme (C(2019)2646).

¹⁶ Commission [Decision](#) of 12 January 2021 authorising the use of unit costs for travel, accommodation and subsistence costs under an action or work programme under the 2021-2027 multi-annual financial framework (C(2021)35).

All payments will be made to the coordinator.

 Please be aware that payments will be automatically lowered if one of your consortium members has outstanding debts towards the EU (granting authority or other EU bodies). Such debts will be offset by us — in line with the conditions set out in the Grant Agreement (*see art 22*).

Please also note that you are responsible for keeping records on all the work done and the costs declared.

Prefinancing guarantees

If a prefinancing guarantee is required, it will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4*). The amount will be set during grant preparation, and it will normally be equal or lower than the prefinancing for your grant.

The guarantee should be in euro and issued by an approved bank/financial institution established in an EU Member State. If you are established in a non-EU country and would like to provide a guarantee from a bank/financial institution in your country, please contact us (this may be exceptionally accepted, if it offers equivalent security).

Amounts blocked in bank accounts will NOT be accepted as financial guarantees.

Prefinancing guarantees are normally requested from the coordinator, for the consortium. They must be provided during grant preparation, in time to make the prefinancing (scanned copy via Portal AND original by post).

If agreed with us, the bank guarantee may be replaced by a guarantee from a third party.

The guarantee will be released at the end of the grant, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Grant Agreement (*art 23*).

Certificates

Depending on the type of action, size of grant amount and type of beneficiaries, you may be requested to submit different certificates. The types, schedules and thresholds for each certificate are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4 and art 24*).

Liability regime for recoveries

The liability regime for recoveries will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet point 4.4 and art 22*).

For beneficiaries, it is one of the following:

- limited joint and several liability with individual ceilings — *each beneficiary up to their maximum grant amount*
- unconditional joint and several liability — *each beneficiary up to the maximum grant amount for the action*

or

- individual financial responsibility — *each beneficiary only for their own debts.*

In addition, the granting authority may require joint and several liability of affiliated entities (with their beneficiary).

Provisions concerning the project implementation

IPR rules: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 16 and Annex 5)*:

- rights of use on results: Yes

Communication, dissemination, and visibility of funding: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 17 and Annex 5)*:

- additional communication and dissemination activities: Yes

Other specificities

n/a

Non-compliance and breach of contract

The Grant Agreement (chapter 5) provides for the measures we may take in case of breach of contract (and other non-compliance issues).



For more information, see [AGA – Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

11. How to submit an application

All proposals must be submitted directly online via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System. Paper applications are NOT accepted.

Submission is a **2-step process**:

a) create a user account and register your organisation

To use the Submission System (the only way to apply), all participants need to [create an EU Login user account](#).

Once you have an EU Login account, you can [register your organisation](#) in the Participant Register. When your registration is finalised, you will receive a 9-digit participant identification code (PIC).

b) submit the proposal

Access the Electronic Submission System via the Topic page in the [Search Funding & Tenders](#) section (or, for calls sent by invitation to submit a proposal, through the link provided in the invitation letter).

Submit your proposal in 3 parts, as follows:

- Part A includes administrative information about the applicant organisations (future coordinator, beneficiaries, affiliated entities, and associated partners) and the summarised budget for the proposal. Fill it in directly online
- Part B (description of the action) covers the technical content of the proposal. Download the mandatory word template from the Submission System, fill it in and upload it as a PDF file
- Annexes (*see section 5*). Upload them as PDF file (single or multiple depending on the slots). Excel upload is sometimes possible, depending on the file type.

The proposal must keep to the **page limits** (*see section 5*); excess pages will be disregarded.

Documents must be uploaded to the **right category** in the Submission System otherwise the proposal might be considered incomplete and thus inadmissible.

The proposal must be submitted **before the call deadline** (see *section 4*). After this deadline, the system is closed and proposals can no longer be submitted.

Once the proposal is submitted, you will receive a **confirmation e-mail** (with date and time of your application). If you do not receive this confirmation e-mail, it means your proposal has NOT been submitted. If you believe this is due to a fault in the Submission System, you should immediately file a complaint via the [IT Helpdesk webform](#), explaining the circumstances and attaching a copy of the proposal (and, if possible, screenshots to show what happened).

Details on processes and procedures are described in the [Online Manual](#). The Online Manual also contains the links to FAQs and detailed instructions regarding the Portal Electronic Exchange System.

12. Help

As far as possible, ***please try to find the answers you need yourself***, in this and the other documentation (we have limited resources for handling direct enquiries):

- [Online Manual](#)
- FAQs on the Topic page (for call-specific questions in open calls; not applicable for actions by invitation)
- [Portal FAQ](#) (for general questions).

Please also consult the Topic page regularly, since we will use it to publish call updates. (For invitations, we will contact you directly in case of a call update).

Contact

For individual questions on the Portal Submission System, please contact the [IT Helpdesk](#).

Non-IT related questions should be sent to the following email address: cinea-emfaf-calls@ec.europa.eu .

Please indicate clearly the reference of the call and topic to which your question relates (see *cover page*).

13. Important



IMPORTANT

- **Don't wait until the end** — Complete your application sufficiently in advance of the deadline to avoid any last minute **technical problems**. Problems due to last minute submissions (*e.g. congestion, etc*) will be entirely at your risk. Call deadlines can NOT be extended.
- **Consult** the Portal Topic page regularly. We will use it to publish updates and additional information on the call (call and topic updates).
- **Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Exchange System** — By submitting the application, all participants **accept** to use the electronic exchange system in accordance with the [Portal Terms & Conditions](#).
- **Registration** — Before submitting the application, all beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners must be registered in the [Participant Register](#). The participant identification code (PIC) (one per participant) is mandatory for the Application Form.
- **Consortium roles**— When setting up your consortium, you should think of organisations that help you reach objectives and solve problems.

The roles should be attributed according to the level of participation in the project. Main participants should participate as **beneficiaries** or **affiliated entities**; other entities can participate as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions. **Associated partners** and third parties giving in-kind contributions should bear their own costs (they will not become formal recipients of EU funding). **Subcontracting** should normally constitute a limited part and must be performed by third parties (not by one of the beneficiaries/affiliated entities). Subcontracting going beyond 30% of the total eligible costs must be justified in the application.

- **Coordinator** — In multi-beneficiary grants, the beneficiaries participate as consortium (group of beneficiaries). They will have to choose a coordinator, who will take care of the project management and coordination and will represent the consortium towards the granting authority. In mono-beneficiary grants, the single beneficiary will automatically be coordinator.
- **Affiliated entities** — Applicants may participate with affiliated entities (i.e. entities linked to a beneficiary which participate in the action with similar rights and obligations as the beneficiaries, but do not sign the grant and therefore do not become beneficiaries themselves). They will get a part of the grant money and must therefore comply with all the call conditions and be validated (just like beneficiaries); but they do not count towards the minimum eligibility criteria for consortium composition (if any).
- **Associated partners** — Applicants may participate with associated partners (i.e. partner organisations which participate in the action but without the right to get grant money). They participate without funding and therefore do not need to be validated.
- **Consortium agreement** — For practical and legal reasons it is recommended to set up internal arrangements that allow you to deal with exceptional or unforeseen circumstances (in all cases, even if not mandatory under the Grant Agreement). The consortium agreement also gives you the possibility to redistribute the grant money according to your own consortium-internal principles and parameters (for instance, one beneficiary can reattribute its grant money to another beneficiary). The consortium agreement thus allows you to customise the EU grant to the needs inside your consortium and can also help to protect you in case of disputes.

- **Balanced project budget** — Grant applications must ensure a balanced project budget and sufficient other resources to implement the project successfully (*e.g. own contributions, income generated by the action, financial contributions from third parties, etc*). You may be requested to lower your estimated costs, if they are ineligible (including excessive).
- **Completed/ongoing projects** — Proposals for projects that have already been completed will be rejected; proposals for projects that have already started will be assessed on a case-by-case basis (in this case, no costs can be reimbursed for activities that took place before the project starting date/proposal submission).
- **No-profit rule** — Grants may NOT give a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). This will be checked by us at the end of the project.
- **No cumulation of funding/no double funding** — It is strictly prohibited to cumulate funding from the EU budget (except under 'EU Synergies actions'). Outside such Synergies actions, any given action may receive only ONE grant from the EU budget and cost items may under NO circumstances be declared under two EU grants. If you would like to nonetheless benefit from different EU funding opportunities, projects must be designed as different actions, clearly delineated and separated for each grant (without overlaps).
- **Combination with EU operating grants** — Combination with EU operating grants is possible, if the project remains outside the operating grant work programme and you make sure that cost items are clearly separated in your accounting and NOT declared twice (see [AGA – Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6.2.E](#)).
- **Multiple proposals** — Applicants may submit more than one proposal for *different* projects under the same call (and be awarded funding for them).
Organisations may participate in several proposals.
BUT: if there are several proposals for *very similar* projects, only one application will be accepted and evaluated; the applicants will be asked to withdraw the others (or they will be rejected).
- **Resubmission** — Proposals may be changed and re-submitted until the deadline for submission.
- **Rejection** — By submitting the application, all applicants accept the call conditions set out in this this Call Document (and the documents it refers to). Proposals that do not comply with all the call conditions will be **rejected**. This applies also to applicants: All applicants need to fulfil the criteria; if any one of them doesn't, they must be replaced or the entire proposal will be rejected.
- **Cancellation** — There may be circumstances which may require the cancellation of the call. In this case, you will be informed via a call or topic update. Please note that cancellations are without entitlement to compensation.
- **Language** — You can submit your proposal in any official EU language (project abstract/summary should however always be in English). For reasons of efficiency, we strongly advise you to use English for the entire application. If you need the call documentation in another official EU language, please submit a request within 10 days after call publication (for the contact information, see *section 12*).

- **Transparency** — In accordance with Article 38 of the [EU Financial Regulation](#), information about EU grants awarded is published each year on the [Europa website](#).

This includes:

- beneficiary names
- beneficiary addresses
- the purpose for which the grant was awarded
- the maximum amount awarded.

The publication can exceptionally be waived (on reasoned and duly substantiated request), if there is a risk that the disclosure could jeopardise your rights and freedoms under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights or harm your commercial interests.

- **Data protection** — The submission of a proposal under this call involves the collection, use and processing of personal data. This data will be processed in accordance with the applicable legal framework. It will be processed solely for the purpose of evaluating your proposal, subsequent management of your grant and, if needed, programme monitoring, evaluation and communication. Details are explained in the [Funding & Tenders Portal Privacy Statement](#).