



Framework Partnership Agreement Concerning the European Topic Centre on Climate Change Adaptation and LULUCF 2022-2026

Reference: Open call for proposals OCP/EEA/CAS/21/002-ETC CA

Closing date: 29.4.2021

Terms of reference's purposes:

1. Specify what actions the EEA is to finance under the framework partnership agreement resulting from this call for proposals (technical specifications)
2. Announce the criteria which the EEA will apply to determine the successful consortium among the applications received (evaluation of applications)
3. Provide information on how to apply, and the expected timeline

These terms of reference will form Annex I to the framework partnership agreement resulting from this call for proposals and will be binding during the agreement.

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1 Technical Specifications

1.1 Background information

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

The European Environment Agency (EEA ⁽¹⁾) is a main source of information of the European Union and its Member States (MS) in developing, implementing, and evaluating European environment policies. The EEA aims to support sustainable development and to help achieve significant and measurable improvement in Europe's environment through the provision of timely, targeted, relevant, and reliable information to policy-making agents and the public.

Institutionally, the EEA is one of the Agencies of the European Union and is the hub of the European Environment Information and Observation Network (Eionet ⁽²⁾), a network of around 350 organisations across Europe through which environmental-related data and information are collected and disseminated. The functioning of the EEA and Eionet are described in the EEA regulation ⁽³⁾. The Agency has 32 member countries. These are the 27 EU Member States (MS), Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey.

The EEA Regulation identifies three elements of Eionet: main component elements of national networks, National Focal Points (NFPs), and European Topic Centres (ETCs). The Regulation ⁽⁴⁾ sets out that ETCs are formed with institutions (within the Network) who conclude agreements with the Agency. They are designated by the Management Board and entrusted to cooperate with the Agency on specific tasks, set out in the multiannual work programme. These partnerships, implemented through multi-annual framework partnership agreements, are also foreseen to be an important element of the modernisation of Eionet that will be a key on-going process for the coming years.

European Topic Centres (ETCs) are consortia of organisations in EEA member countries with expertise in specific environmental areas, contracted by the EEA through framework agreements to carry out specific tasks to support the implementation of EEA and Copernicus work programmes. Each ETC consists of a coordinator organisation and specialist partner organisations from the environmental research and information community, which combine their resources in their areas of expertise.

This call for proposals aims to identify a new ETC that will take up the work in the following topic area from 1 January 2022: Climate change adaptation and LULUCF.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eea.europa.eu>

⁽²⁾ <http://www.eionet.europa.eu>

⁽³⁾ (EC) Regulation No. 401/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on the EEA and Eionet (codified version, OJ L126 of 21 May 2009, p13, see: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32009R0401:EN:NOT>

⁽⁴⁾ (i.e. articles 4 and 5).

1.1.2 The EEA-Eionet Strategy 2030 ⁽⁵⁾

The EEA-Eionet common vision for 2030 is to “...together constitute the leading network for policy-relevant environment and climate knowledge at European Union and country levels...” The Strategy – Delivering data and knowledge to achieve Europe's environment and climate ambitions clarifies how the network intends to achieve this vision and sets out the strategic directions for the network during the next decade, articulated in five Strategic Objectives (SO):

- SO1 Produce evidence-based knowledge to support policy implementation and development of new initiatives to accelerate and scale up the transition to sustainability;
- SO2 Deliver targeted inputs to inform policy and public discussions, by organising and communicating knowledge on responses, including innovative solutions to societal challenges;
- SO3 Strengthen our network through more active engagement at the country level and work with other leading organisations in order to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and expertise;
- SO4 Embrace digitalisation, including new technologies, big data, artificial intelligence and earth observation that will complement and potentially replace established information sources to better support decision making; and
- SO5 Develop structures, expertise and capacity across our network to meet evolving knowledge needs, securing and diversifying the resources needed to achieve our joint vision.

The EEA-Eionet Strategy 2030 outlines five areas of work that strongly relate to European policy priorities and form the overall structure for the broad division of ETC support roles. The five areas of work identified in the strategy are:

1. Biodiversity and ecosystems;
2. Climate change mitigation and adaptation;
3. Human health and the environment;
4. Circular economy and resource use; and
5. Sustainability trends, prospects and responses.

Europe's production sectors (including agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and industry) as well as consumption and production systems (energy, mobility, food, and buildings) will be addressed through the five interlinked work areas.

The EEA-Eionet Strategy underlines the role of data and understanding for the pivotal decade to come. It sets out how EEA and Eionet will work together with other knowledge providers at European level and with Eionet countries in support of Europe's environment and climate ambitions.

⁽⁵⁾ [EEA-Eionet Strategy 2021-2030: delivering data and knowledge to achieve Europe's climate and environment ambitions — European Environment Agency \(europa.eu\)](https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/press/news/2021/09/01/eea-eionet-strategy-2021-2030-delivering-data-and-knowledge-to-achieve-europe-s-climate-and-environment-ambitions)

1.1.3 Role of European Topic Centres

Under the overall leadership of EEA, ETCs provide expertise and capacity to support the EEA and its member countries with implementing the EEA-Eionet Strategy. ETCs, working together with Eionet countries, facilitate the provision of data and information from the countries and deliver assessments, reports and other services to the EEA and Eionet. ETCs are extensively involved in acquiring, processing and quality assuring data for EEA. However, the nature of the data, the sources and challenges vary significantly between topics of work.

ETC work on indicator analysis and assessments involves both the development of new indicators in response to policy requirements as well as the regular processing and updating of indicators which requires networking with experts in member countries.

The role of ETCs in supporting implementation of EU legislation and policies is also a key element of EEA activities towards Member States and the European Commission. ETCs gather expertise to cover the knowledge needs for EU policies, to handle and analyse data, to assess the European state and trends of the environment occurring in EEA member countries.

In addition to expertise on specific topics, ETCs have, to differing extents, competency in digitalisation, social sciences, systemic analysis, modelling literacy; knowledge of prospective tools, co-creation methods and capacity-building in order to fulfil their roles.

Despite the different areas of expertise, ETCs need to cooperate extensively with each other and it is expected that cross-cutting cooperation will be reinforced and an important element of all ETC work for the coming years. ETCs cooperate to both respond to cross cutting policy requirements and in relation to dependencies in their work to other ETCs.

In the past the Monitoring, Data, Information, Assessments, Knowledge (MDIAK) chain was the core EEA business model. The new EEA-Eionet Strategy sees MDIAK as a value adding chain within a wider set of business models. This change reflects an appreciation by EEA and its stakeholders that EEA can frequently add value in individual components, for example, only managing data or, instead by only providing expert assessment on data or information provided directly to EEA. This change in emphasis means that ETCs in different topic areas may work in more focused ways, or even exclusively on certain parts of the chain.

Integration across traditional topic domains to respond to specific environmental challenges is a becoming a key feature of the European environmental policy support landscape. Integration and associated cross-cutting cooperation are intrinsic features in EEA work such as on SOER, indicators, LULUCF, Copernicus, Urban/city sustainability, etc. In order to achieve the necessary level of integration, good practice, including on data, within and across topics is needed.

1.1.4 Agreements

ETC activities are based on framework partnership agreements (FPAs) and specific agreements (SAs) concluded with the EEA to implement the former. Specific (usually annual) action plans (APs) agreed between the EEA and the consortium will form the basis for the SAs.

The organisation and commissioning of work will be based on an annual budget allocation cycle (grants). All grants are subject to co-financing by the consortium concerned (minimum 10% of the

total eligible costs ⁽⁶⁾). Action plans will be jointly agreed based proposals from the ETC in response to EEA requirements.

The FPA will be concluded for a maximum period of up to 60 months starting from the date of signature and not exceeding 31 December 2026. The FPA will be signed between the EEA and the appointed coordinator of the consortium to whom the other consortium partners confer powers of attorney (see annex 7) for the purposes of submission of the proposal and signature of the FPA and SAs in case the proposal is selected. For further details, reference is made to the draft FPA and draft SA attached as annex 5.

1.1.5 Estimated value (Budget)

The total annual budget for SAs to be concluded based on the FPA will be subject to available funds from the General Budget of the EU and priorities set in the EEA Single Programming Document (SPD). During the period 2022 – 2026, the indicative total budget allocated to ETC CA is 4M ⁽⁷⁾ Euros excluding contributions from assigned revenues and other contracts.

1.2 Future demands on EEA work in the area of climate change adaptation and LULUCF 2022-2026

1.2.1 General policy context

In December 2019, shortly before the corona virus crisis struck Europe, the EEA presented its report *The European Environment – State and Outlook 2020*, (SOER) which detailed the unprecedented scale and urgency of Europe’s current environmental, climate and sustainability challenges.

Many persistent challenges rooted back in the past are coupled and amplified by emerging and systemic issues, associated with uncertainty, ambiguity and conflicts of interests. Issues range from exceeding planetary boundaries and tipping points, through global drivers of change, the functioning of complex systems of production and consumption and establishing fair, society-wide transformational outcomes.

The European Green Deal ⁽⁸⁾, proposed by the new European Commission in December 2019, endorsed in Council and European Parliament conclusions, is the European response to these systemic challenges. It provides a framework for ambitious actions and measures to position Europe firmly onto a path towards sustainability. It places the EU as a world leader in the implementation of the UN Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals, demonstrating that sustainability and prosperity could be achieved together.

⁽⁶⁾ The 10%-rule of minimum co-financing is applied towards the ETC as a whole. To what extent partners contribute to this co-financing is an internal ETC matter.

⁽⁷⁾ This figure may vary depending on actual budgets allocated to EEA and inflation.

⁽⁸⁾ The European Green Deal COM(2019) 640 final.

The European Green Deal proposal acknowledges the work of the EEA in highlighting the extent and urgency of the challenges and sets out a roadmap of around 50 key policies and measures needed to address the challenges. It sets out several long-term strategic objectives transforming the EU's economy for a sustainable future:

- Increasing the EU's Climate ambition for 2030 and 2050;
- Supplying clean, affordable and secure energy;
- Mobilizing industry for a clean and circular economy;
- Building and renovating in an energy and resource efficient way;
- A zero-pollution ambition for a toxic-free environment;
- Preserving and restoring ecosystems and biodiversity;
- From Farm to Fork: a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system;
- Accelerating the shift to sustainable and smart mobility.

Amongst the measures proposed, the European Green Deal also proposed the adoption of an 8th Environment Action Programme in 2020. This is to help ensure implementation, enforcement and effective delivery of environmental and climate policies and legislation and also introduces a new monitoring framework.

As set out in the EEA-Eionet Strategy, EEA and the Eionet will play a key role in supporting actions under the European Green Deal, the implementation of the proposed 8th Environment Action Programme, as well as Europe's global commitments.

1.2.2 Topic-specific policy context

Climate change is happening now and will get more serious in the future, even if global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions prove effective. The impacts will be much less severe if efforts to reduce emissions are successful in keeping the global temperature increase well below 2°C. Any higher emissions scenario would lead to considerably greater climate change.

Climate change, impacts, vulnerability and adaptation (CCIVA) work is crosscutting and thus linked with other EEA work areas (notably climate change mitigation, biodiversity and ecosystems, health and environment, resource use and sustainability).

At **global level** the 2015 UNFCCC Paris agreement ⁽⁹⁾ determines policy developments on mitigation and adaptation. It was informed by the IPCC fifth assessment report ⁽¹⁰⁾, published in 2013/2014. Regarding adaptation the global agreements focus on strengthening societies' ability to deal with the impacts of climate change; to engage in national adaptation planning processes and to provide continued and enhanced international support for adaptation to developing countries. In 2018 and 2019 the IPCC published several special reports addressing climate change impacts and adaptation at global level, notably:

⁽⁹⁾ http://unfccc.int/paris_agreement/items/9485.php

⁽¹⁰⁾ <http://www.ipcc.ch/activities/activities.shtml>

- Global Warming of 1.5°C ⁽¹¹⁾
- Climate Change and Land ⁽¹²⁾
- The Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate ⁽¹³⁾

The IPCC is now producing the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) which is planned for 2021/2022. The AR6 includes the Working Group II contribution addressing impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability.

The 2015 UN Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 ⁽¹⁴⁾ is also very relevant. It is a voluntary, nonbinding agreement aimed to improve understanding of disaster risk; strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk; enhance investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience and enhance disaster preparedness. The UN Agenda 2030 and the 17 Sustainable development goals (SDGs)⁽¹⁵⁾ and monitoring by Eurostat of progress in the EU through indicators ⁽¹⁶⁾, is of relevance primarily related to SDG 13 on climate action but with links to most of the other SDGs as well. The UN Convention on Biological Diversity ⁽¹⁷⁾, UNECE and OECD activities on climate change ⁽¹⁸⁾ and the activities of the OECD Task Force on Climate Change Adaptation ⁽¹⁹⁾ are also relevant promoting the nature-based solutions for adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

At the EU level, in 2013 the European Commission published a communication on adaptation (the 'EU strategy on adaptation to climate change' ⁽²⁰⁾). It aims at making Europe more climate-resilient and includes three objectives: **Promoting action by Member States, Better informed decision-making** and **Climate-proofing action at EU level**.

More ambitious EU strategy on adaptation to climate change as part of the European Green Deal is now being prepared and will be published in Q1/2021. This revised EU strategy was acknowledged as an essential element of efforts to increase the EU's climate ambition and resilience for 2030 and 2050, as climate change will continue to create significant problems in Europe and beyond despite mitigation efforts. As part of the preparation of the new Strategy, the European Commission has published in mid- 2020 a blueprint for a new, more ambitious EU strategy ⁽²¹⁾. The European Commission's proposal for an **EU Climate Law** provides a framework for progress in pursuit of the global adaptation goal established in Article 7 of the Paris Agreement; the adaptation strategy will be designed to support the achievement of the objectives of the proposal.

Mainstreaming adaptation into EU environmental and sectoral policies has progressed and is expected to continue and cover all key EU policies. A key EU policy is the Energy Union, which requires Member States to develop Integrated **National Energy and Climate Plans**, that allow reaching the various EU climate and energy objectives for 2030 and beyond.

⁽¹¹⁾ <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>

⁽¹²⁾ <https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl/>

⁽¹³⁾ <https://www.ipcc.ch/srocc/>

⁽¹⁴⁾ <http://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/sendai-framework>

⁽¹⁵⁾ <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

⁽¹⁶⁾ <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/sdi>

⁽¹⁷⁾ <http://www.cbd.int/>

⁽¹⁸⁾ <https://www.unece.org/stats/climate.html>

⁽¹⁹⁾ <https://www.oecd.org/environment/cc/climate-adaptation/>

⁽²⁰⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/adaptation/what_en

⁽²¹⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/consultations/docs/0037/blueprint_en.pdf

The reporting on adaptation by EU Member States is since 2015 part of the Monitoring Mechanism Regulation (reporting every 4 years, in 2015 and 2019) and will in future be part of the reporting under Regulation on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action (the governance regulation), where reporting will take place every two years (starting 2021) ⁽²²⁾.

Moreover, the recent EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 highlights the importance of ecosystems and their services and establishing green infrastructure and nature restoration and links to ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation. The Technical Expert Group (TEG) has been working on developing the EU taxonomy ⁽²³⁾ for climate change mitigation and climate change adaptation. Adaptation in cities is receiving increased attention, e.g. through the Covenant of Mayors initiative that shows a rapidly increasing number of cities that have committed themselves to adaptation and also through other city networks addressing adaptation ⁽²⁴⁾.

Furthermore, in 2019 the European Commission proposed the 5 European research and innovating missions with the aim to solutions to some of the greatest challenges facing our world ⁽²⁵⁾. Among the 5 missions the mission area 1 addresses adaptation to climate change including societal transformation. The mission aims to accelerate the transition to a climate prepared, more resilient, and fair Europe. Working with citizens, communities and regions the mission focuses on transformative adaptation, resilience forging, and green innovation.

In 2015, a **Copernicus climate change service** ⁽²⁶⁾ started, coordinated by the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF). In 2019/2020, the C3S became operational by providing climate data and information on impacts on a range of topics and sectoral areas through their Climate Data Store (CDS) ⁽²⁷⁾. EEA uses the information for various EEA indicators, and EEA includes links to relevant results in Climate-ADAPT. The service also provides regular annual 'State of the Climate' reports.

Other relevant EU knowledge initiatives include a 'European research and innovation roadmap for climate services' ⁽²⁸⁾, Nature-based solutions for resilience ⁽²⁹⁾, and Climate Knowledge and Innovation Community ⁽³⁰⁾.

As of October 2020, almost all EEA member countries have adopted their national adaptation strategy and/or national adaptation plan ⁽³¹⁾. In addition, several countries adopted sectoral and/or regional adaptation plans. In the future the focus adaptation policies at national level will be on implementation and its evaluation. At local level, as of April 2020, over 2 600 local authorities across

⁽²²⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/topics/energy-strategy-and-energy-union/governance-energy-union>

⁽²³⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/sustainable-finance-technical-expert-group_en

⁽²⁴⁾ For example <http://resilientcities2017.iclei.org/open-european-day/>

⁽²⁵⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/info/horizon-europe-next-research-and-innovation-framework-programme/mission-area-adaptation-climate-change-including-societal-transformation_en

⁽²⁶⁾ <https://climate.copernicus.eu/>

⁽²⁷⁾ <https://cds.climate.copernicus.eu#!/home>

⁽²⁸⁾ http://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/index.cfm?pg=climate_services

⁽²⁹⁾ <http://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/index.cfm?pg=nbs>

⁽³⁰⁾ <http://www.ipi-climate.eu/home>

⁽³¹⁾ <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/national-adaptation-policies>

the EEA's 38 member and collaborating countries, covering nearly 123 million people, are signatories to the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy on adaptation.

2021 will be the first year formally covered by legislation adopted or revised over the past few years under the 2030 climate and energy policy framework. In addition, the following ongoing initiatives under the European Green Deal will significantly shape EEA support on climate change policies:

- The European Climate Law proposal, including a legally binding target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and an objective to enhance Europe's adaptive capacity, strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability.
- Plan to increase the EU 2030 climate target and proposals for revisions of relevant existing legislative measures to deliver on the increased climate ambition

The European Green Deal and the 8th EAP calls for the transition to a climate neutral circular economy, that has zero pollution, is toxic free and that has halted biodiversity loss and has restored ecosystems. Land management is a key element of reaching these policy targets because the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) sector is the only sector that at present and in the next decades can compensate for GHG emissions in the form of terrestrial carbon sequestration. At the same agriculture, forestry and other land use are essential in providing materials to support a circular economy next to providing other ecosystem services such as biodiversity.

In summary, the main EEA objective in this work area is to support EU policy developments on climate change impacts, vulnerability, adaptation and LULUCF by providing relevant information, improving the existing knowledge base and to assist member countries in these areas.

1.2.3 EEA role in support of policy ⁽³²⁾

EEA provides support in implementing, evaluating, and improving the EU Climate Change Adaptation Strategy. EEA will also be involved in various work areas related to climate change impacts, vulnerability, and adaptation (CC IVA) and land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) in the coming years, including monitoring, data, indicators and assessments. The role of information platforms such the European Climate Adaptation Platform (Climate-ADAPT) as will increase in the coming years. Climate-ADAPT is the key information portal supporting the development and implementation of adaptation policies in Europe. It aims to support Europe in adapting to climate change by helping users to access and share data and information on climate change in Europe; current and future vulnerability of regions and sectors; EU, national and transnational adaptation strategies and actions; adaptation case studies and potential adaptation options; tools that support adaptation planning.

Regarding climate change data and monitoring, the EEA will undertake analyses of data availability and gaps with the aim of helping to improve the availability of, and access to, these data at EU level, including from the C3S. A related key EEA work area is maintaining, updating and developing indicators. This task builds on work done on indicators on climate change and its impacts in Europe, partly in cooperation with other organisations including World Health Organisation (WHO) Europe

⁽³²⁾ Within the scope of this FPA.

⁽³³⁾, European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) ⁽³⁴⁾, and EC Joint Research Centre (JRC) ⁽³⁵⁾. There will be a need for updating and improving CCIVA indicators to improve their quality, spatial detail and the consistency of observed data and model projections. Moreover, EEA will together with partners develop new indicators that support current and future policy needs. A particular focus in the coming years will be on climate change and human health.

An analysis of the coherence, effectiveness and costs of current and planned adaptation actions, including approaches to monitoring, reporting and evaluation of adaptation actions, has started and will be continued. Therefore, EEA will further analyze the progress in national adaptation policies, e.g. based on official reporting under the Energy Union Governance Regulation and incorporated in Climate-ADAPT. A specific focus will be on preparing adaptation indicators (both process-based and quantitative outcome-based) that are required at international level and increasingly being developed and used at national level. EEA has started the development of a database of nationally applied adaptation indicators, and this activity will continue in future.

EEA will furthermore continue to work on subnational/local and transnational adaptation (following publication of reports in this area in 2018 and 2020), with a focus on social aspects of urban adaptation and links to social vulnerability in context of just transition. EEA has published a first report on Unequal exposure and unequal impacts in 2019 ⁽³⁶⁾.

In addition, two sectoral assessments on adaptation have been published in 2019, addressing adaptation in the energy system and in the agriculture sectors, respectively. EEA will continue preparing sectoral climate change assessments in the future, including planned assessments on human health and on the marine environment. In 2017 EEA published a report addressing climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, and in 2021 EEA plans to publish a new assessment report assessing nature-based solutions for adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

Climate change will also be increasingly incorporated in other EEA assessments, focusing on terrestrial biodiversity and ecosystems, freshwater and ecosystems, ecosystem services and green infrastructure, in support of various key EU policies in these areas.

EEA publishes every 5 years an assessment 'State and Outlook Report for Europe's Environment' (SOER). The recent SOER was published in late 2019 and the next one will be published in 2024/2025. The report includes various thematic and sectoral assessments, including one on climate change adaptation.

In early 2021, Climate-ADAPT will include two new components which will be further regularly updated in years to come:

- 1) European Climate Data Explorer: an interactive graphical user interface that allows presenting selected data and information from the C3S Climate Data Store in Climate-ADAPT;

⁽³³⁾ <http://www.euro.who.int/en/home>

⁽³⁴⁾ <https://ecdc.europa.eu/en>

⁽³⁵⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/peseta-iv>

⁽³⁶⁾ <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/unequal-exposure-and-unequal-impacts>

- 2) The European Climate and Health observatory: a portal developed by many partners (including EEA, Commission, Lancet Countdown, World Health Organization (WHO), European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)) focusing on climate change and health.

These new developments in Climate-ADAPT are aimed at improving support to the development and the implementation of adaptation policies and actions in Europe.

Work on climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation needs to be increasingly coordinated with work in other EEA work areas (and related ETCs), in particular air pollution, climate change mitigation and energy, freshwater, marine, biodiversity, urban systems, and human health and circular economy. Close cooperation with Joint Research Centre (JRC), WHO, ECDC and possibly other EU agencies has to be reinforced as well.

EEA supports the Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) of greenhouse gas emissions in the Agriculture, Forestry And Land Use (AFOLU) sector under Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action in particular through setting up and as of 2023 implementing the MRV system in relation to Regulation (EU) 2018/841 on the inclusion of greenhouse gas emissions and removals from land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) in the 2030 climate and energy framework.

The ETC will need to support these EU and national policy processes to various extents and where appropriate, which is described in more detail below.

1.3 Specific tasks of the European Topic Centre on Climate Change Adaptation and LULUCF (ETC CA)

The European Topic Centre on Climate Change Adaptation and LULUCF (ETC CA) shall support the work of the EEA in the period 2022-2026. The EEA Single Programming Document and the EEA strategy 2021-2030 will serve as the basis for the identification of priorities and work packages set out in the annual ETC action plans.

Three key features of EEA and ETC work in 2022 – 2026 will be:

1. The EEA State of Environment report 2025 which will already be in preparation in 2022 and 2023.
2. Much greater focus on systemic challenges. The European Green Deal (EGD) is the European approach to addressing sustainability challenges from a systemic perspective. As such, the demand for knowledge on sustainability will grow, both for designing solutions and for monitoring progress.
3. Designing and providing support for monitoring requirements for the implementation of the forthcoming 8th Environmental Action Plan (EAP) and EGD in particular the EU adaptation strategy.

For the assessments to be produced by the EEA, the ETC CA will provide the knowledge-base on climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation (including disaster risk reduction) and LULUCF in close collaboration with EEA staff and agreed in the specific annual action plans. In order to ensure the best allocation of available resources, the expected work is divided into five work packages.

1.3.1 Work package 1 – Climate change impacts and vulnerability

EEA has been regularly updating a set of EEA indicators climate change impacts and vulnerability. EEA has over the past years produced a range of products on climate change impacts and will

continue to do in future, however using new type of digital products, such as story maps on impact, European climate data explorer or/and European climate impact atlas. Key assessment will be the 2025 state of the environment and outlook report (SOER2025) and its underpinning assessments. While developing its work on assessment reports, EEA will take into account relevant activities by other organisations, including the IPCC and its upcoming 6th assessment report as well as various recent IPCC special reports.

ETC - CA will support EEA and work together with other ETCs on the following tasks:

- Drafting European wide assessments and overviews of national and transnational assessments on climate change impacts and vulnerability.
- Updating and developing European indicators and wide assessments on impacts of and vulnerability to climate change of environment, economy and human health.
- Developing new indicators and assessments of social vulnerability to climate change in context of just transition.
- Developing integrated indicators and assessments on climate change impacts and vulnerability in urban areas and transnational regions.
- Assessing the effects of climate change outside Europe on the European economy and society and other emerging new topics.
- Developing new indicators using data from the relevant Copernicus services and other emerging data providers.
- Developing new digital visualization tools to present data and information climate change impacts and vulnerability (e.g. climate story maps, European climate data explorer managed jointly with the C3S, European climate impacts atlas, ...).
- Working with other ETCs on supporting EEA developing thematic assessments including on climate change impacts on socio-economic sectors such as agriculture, energy, transport and on terrestrial biodiversity and ecosystems, freshwater and marine ecosystems, ecosystem services and green infrastructure, etc.

1.3.2 Work package 2 – Climate change adaptation including supporting developments of Climate-ADAPT

EEA has over the past years produced a range of assessment reports on climate change adaptation including on disaster risk reduction and will continue to do in future. Key assessments will be supporting key objectives and actions of the EU adaptation strategy, supporting EEA member countries and transnational adaptation activities, and contribute to the EEA 2025 state of the environment and outlook report.

The Climate-ADAPT platform is and will be the key tool for EEA to help provide policy support on climate change adaptation at EU, transnational and national level. More specifically, the objectives of Climate-ADAPT include: (1) to facilitate the collection, sharing and use of CCIVA information and build a consistent and updated knowledge base; (2) to assist the effective uptake of the relevant knowledge by decision-makers; and (3) to contribute to a greater level of coordination among sectors and institutional levels.

EEA is working with the Member States and the European Commission to implement the reporting requirements under the governance regulation. The reported information will be included on the country pages in Climate-ADAPT.

ETC CA will support EEA and work together with other ETCs on the following tasks:

1) Indicators and assessments on adaptation

- Preparing and updating adaptation indicators (both process-based and quantitative outcome based) and assessing comparability between these indicators.
- Preparing assessments of national adaptation strategies and action plans in EEA countries.
- Preparing assessments of actions on social aspects of adaptation in context of just transition, including adaptation in urban and transnational regions in Europe.
- Preparing new assessments on ecosystem-based solutions for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction.
- Preparing sectoral adaptation assessments and (including in the agriculture, transport and in energy sector and the related broader 'systems') and assessments on climate change and human health (i.e. together with the ETC on human health and the environment).
- Preparing assessments on climate change adaptation and associated cost and benefits of adaptation in Europe.
- Evaluating adaptation policies from various perspectives, including sectoral (e.g. energy, agriculture, health), cross-cutting (e.g. disaster risk reduction, ecosystem-based adaptation) and governance level (with key focus on transnational, national, and local levels) (i.e. together with the ETC on biodiversity and ecosystems and the ETC on human health and the environment).
- Contributing to EEA's thematic assessments including assessments on terrestrial biodiversity and ecosystems, freshwater and marine ecosystems, ecosystem services and green infrastructure.

2) Climate – ADAPT platform

- Regularly including new, relevant, up-to-date and quality assessed and checked information in Climate-ADAPT (including preparing and publishing database items for all categories and sectors of information).
- Analyzing the information contained in the platform, including preparation of overviews of e.g. sectoral information, to optimize accessibility and use by different groups of adaptation stakeholders.
- Collecting, compiling and analyzing the reported national information and maintaining a summary of national adaptation strategies, action plans and other national adaptation activities on Climate-ADAPT.
- Testing the new IT functionalities and aligning the Climate-ADAPT content with the new functionalities.
- Ensuring regular monitoring, reporting and evaluation procedures of the platform and supporting a future evaluation of Climate-ADAPT.

- Enhancing Climate-ADAPT with information reported by countries, collection of good practice examples (e.g. at local level) and information from other funding sources (e.g. LIFE, Horizon Europe and the Mission on Adaptation to climate change including societal transformation).
- Supporting developing of the new European Climate and Health observatory to be launched on Climate-ADAPT in 2021 (together with the ETC on human health and the environment).
- Disseminating the knowledge on Climate-ADAPT to ensure its uptake and the links to adaptation platforms at all levels in Europe.

1.3.3 Work package 3 – Monitoring and assessing climate change mitigation and adaptation in land management

The European Green Deal (EGD) and the proposed 8th EAP calls for the transition to a climate neutral circular economy, that has zero pollution, is toxic free and that has halted biodiversity loss and has restored ecosystems. Land management is a key element of reaching these policy targets because the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) sector is the only sector that at present and in the next decades can compensate for GHG emissions in the form of terrestrial carbon sequestration. At the same agriculture, forestry, and other land use (AFOLU) are essential in providing materials to support a circular economy next to providing other ecosystem services such as biodiversity.

To address the topic of land management and environmental impact in an integrated manner, EEA has established a cross-programme team on LULUCF to coordinate, exchange and optimise the in-house knowledge on land management with the aim to (i) monitor greenhouse gas emissions and removals from land use, land use change and forestry as required under the LULUCF regulation and (ii) develop assessments on the co-benefits and trade-offs of land management in sectors as agriculture and forestry, considering climate change mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity objectives.

The work of the cross-cutting team on LULUCF will be supported by the following four ETCs with EEA project managers coordinating the various activities within the LULUCF team but with planning and budgeting of activities within each ETC.

ETC Biodiversity and ecosystems: in support of the cross-cutting EEA work on LULUCF, focus on assessment of LULUCF and provision of various ecosystem services and assessment on co-benefits and trade-offs with other policy domains.

ETC Climate change mitigation: Supporting Data reporting, review, and support on the implementation of the LULUCF regulation including quality assessments (QA) and quality checks (QC) and analysis of agriculture and LULUCF emission inventory, projections and policy and measures information.

ETC Data integration and digitalization: Support the MRV process of the LULUCF regulation with the development and maximizing the use of Copernicus services and expertise on geospatial data integration.

The ETC work with other ETCs and will support assessments on land management and climate change mitigation and adaption as well as the impact of climate change policies on other environmental topics such as biodiversity. Moreover, ETC will support EEA in coordinating

of LULUCF related activities between the various ETCs in support of developing cross-cutting LULUCF publications and datasets.

ETC CA will support EEA and work together with other ETCs on the following tasks:

- Performing specific assessments relevant to the agriculture, forestry and other land use (AFOLU) sectors, including assessing climate impacts on the sector, progress achieved to climate mitigation and adaptation policy targets as well identification of important co-benefits and trade-offs in relation to other functions provided by land management.
- Supporting EEA with the development and maximizing the use of Copernicus services to perform assessment on climate change mitigation and adaptation in the LULUCF sector.
- Supporting EEA with the compiling and assessing of third-party policy scenarios and outlooks in the AFOLU sector to inform specific analyses.
- Collaborating with other ETCs to understand better potential co-benefits and trade-offs of climate related land use and land management choices.

1.3.4 Work package 4 – Data management and reporting

ETC CA will support the EEA and work in close cooperation with the ETC on data integration and digitalization on the following tasks:

- collection and quality assurance of reported data under the respective regular data reporting cycles. This includes the, representing the EEA in relevant working groups, communication of technical requirements, helpdesk function and Member State support.
- Publication of reported data in Climate-ADAPT using ReportNet 3.0, in particular the transition to the new systems, optimization of workflows, and the submission or harvesting of data.
- Uptake and integration of alternative data sources, in particularly Copernicus products in particular to facilitate the uptake and integration of Copernicus services products such as products from the Copernicus Land Monitoring Services (CLMS) and Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S).
- Development of novel methods for harvesting new data sources by using artificial intelligence, advanced data mining or automation and integration of these methods into the regular data flows, where possible.

1.3.5 Work package 5 – ETC management, networking and outreach

This work package includes the activities and tasks necessary for the management of the ETC, outreach and capacity building. The work package includes the following tasks:

ETC Management

- ETC consortium designates a manager who is the primary contact in the ETC for the EEA, NFPs from member countries and other relevant organizations.

The manager:

- Represents the interests of those planning and delivering ETC tasks across the consortium. They assume overall accountability for ETC deliverables and services provided, including adherence to EEA corporate standards.
- Sets up and maintains procedures for quality assurance undertaken with reference to EEA standards, including documentation and language-checking of all its deliverables.
- Ensures the ETC is in compliance with legal requirements, such as in relation to data protection.

- Reports to EEA on overall progress of ETC activities against the objectives of the annual action and communication plans as well as on risks.
- Ensures that structured work plans are prepared in sufficient time by project managers within the consortia.
- Maintains oversight on state of preparation of deliverables, including critical dependencies leading to potential delays, where needed escalating needs for preventative measures or corrective actions.
- Manages change request process in relation to deliverables agreed by ETC and EEA.
- Maintains financial records in accordance with requirements.
- May be supported by core management team that may include a deputy and administrative manager.

ETC Networking and Outreach

Under the supervision, guidance, and agreement of EEA, the ETC shall support the modernisation of Eionet and maintain close links with the Eionet (EEA member countries and other ETCs) as well as support dissemination of EEA and ETC products. Main tasks are to:

- Support EEA in organizing Eionet workshops and seminars to discuss the outcomes of work and plan future activities with the member countries; build upon the discussion results of relevant Eionet groups (i.e. National Reference Centres).
- Support EEA in dialogue with countries to identify barriers to optimally performing their tasks (e.g. monitoring and reporting capacities, flows of data, knowledge gaps, indicator development, responsiveness), developing proposals for improvements to solve any issues that emerge.
- Engage in communication efforts with the countries, including networking and country visits within defined processes.
- Contribute to Eionet modernisation initiatives.
- Provide training and capacity building in the countries in response to identified and agreed priorities and needs, including where relevant on solutions to support meeting EU policy targets.
- Engage actively in co-operation with other ETCs to strengthen the coherence of data and information, based on priorities of EEA work programme.
- Undertake publishing and outreach, including through social media, in alignment with EEA communication framework and based on agreed annual priorities.
- Maintain and regularly update the consortium website (including brief description of ETC consortia, list of members of the consortia, overview of work plans) as well as an inventory and access point to ETC knowledge products (indicating any relation between the ETC product and supported EEA products).
- Make use of ETC graphical design elements and guidance on products.
- Where possible, publish deliverables and results of ETC work, accepted by EEA, in open access repositories with a public copyright license, such as creative commons.

1.4 General principles on the organisation of European Topic Centres

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

The ETC shall comprise one coordinating organisation and several partners. The organisation and functioning of this grouping shall be documented in a consortium agreement. The following points shall be considered when establishing the consortium:

- EEA member country coverage is 32 countries. The consortium should be constructed in a way that gives access to partners with experience in EU and regional level work, international networks etc. without necessarily representing all EEA member countries.
- It is important that some leadership roles within the consortium are from organisations which either have experience in participating in Eionet or in working closely with and supporting EU Institutions and that their organisations are actively engaged in the policy area.
- The number of partners shall be balanced against the need to cover the required field of expertise and to ensure good geographical coverage.
- The consortium needs the following administrative functions:
 - a coordinator (ETC manager), having appropriate management and networking capabilities;
 - administrative support, able to work in English and organise European meetings and consultations; and,
 - accounting support, in order to ensure proper financial management and reporting.
- Effective practice has been that at least the manager and some of a designated core team, work for the ETC 100%, with a group of key experts, working mainly for the ETC (i.e. >50%) supported by a broader group of experts available to provide specific expertise or work on specific tasks.

1.5 Mandatory requirements

In order to deliver high quality products and services, ETCs shall comply with the following mandatory requirements:

1.5.1 General requirements

- The ETC shall report to the EEA, the primary contact points being the ETC manager and the assigned EEA lead for the ETC.
- The ETC coordinator shall put in place and maintain an agreed internal ETC management structure that ensures delivery of outputs and services requested as well as efficient communication and coordination with all partners.

- The ETC shall be structured in a way which ensures proper linkages with other ETCs in order to respond to cross-sectoral and cross-thematic cooperation and integration needs and to avoid duplication or disintegration of tasks across partners.
- The ETC needs to be structured in a way to ensure flexibility to be able to adapt to changing needs and to be able to provide experts for specific projects.
- The ETC needs the capability to network and communicate with stakeholders in national or regional environmental administrations, European wide environmental networks, and international organisations, including regional cooperation bodies and conferences. The ETC needs to have proven links to wider European knowledge and expertise.
- The working language of the of the FPA and SAs is English. More particularly, the ETC is expected to deliver management documents and results ready for use or publication in English.
- ETC management must have in place procedures for quality assurance undertaken with reference to EEA standards, including documentation and language-checking of all its deliverables.
- The ETC coordinator shall report on progress and risks and ensure that mutually agreed work plans are prepared by project managers within the consortia. Subject to guidance from the EEA, the ETC coordinator shall ensure coherence and integration of ETC work with the work carried out by the EEA.
- ETCs shall, unless otherwise agreed with the EEA, publish the results of ETC work, accepted by EEA, in open access repositories with a public copyright license, such as creative commons.
- As a contribution to the overall EEA continuous improvement framework, ETC management shall, support EEA by identifying opportunities for innovation and improvements in specific working areas and in agreement with EEA, support their implementation.
- The EEA operates an environmental management system framed around minimizing its environmental footprint and is EMAS certified ⁽³⁷⁾. EEA offsets travel related greenhouse gas emissions, procures green energy and aims to reduce its electricity consumption as well as being active in waste minimisation. The environmental performance of contractors and partners is nested within EEA's environmental performance, which is part of the overall EEA continuous improvement framework. Thus, it is a requirement that the ETC has, or develops specific environmental policies and can document and report on steps taken to reduce environmental impact during the life of the FPA.

⁽³⁷⁾ <https://www.eea.europa.eu/about-us/emas>.

1.5.2 Technical and scientific expertise requirements

The consortium is expected to have demonstrated excellent technical and scientific knowledge, expertise and experience to be able to fulfil the tasks set out in the work packages mentioned in 1.3 above and to provide the necessary science-policy support as follows:

- Knowledge of relevant international, EU and national policy developments regarding climate change adaptation, including links to disaster risk reduction and to sectoral related policies at EU and to some extent at national level.
- Knowledge about co-benefits and trade-off between climate change adaptation, climate change mitigation, land management, biodiversity, marine, human health and other socio-economic sectors.
- Knowledge of related concepts and policy tools, such as adaptation support tools at EU, transnational, national and subnational levels.
- Analytical skills regarding climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation and disaster risk reduction and as well LULUCF in a broader AFOLU sense.
- Expertise in conducting integrated assessments linking climate change adaptation, LULUCF and socio-economic aspects along the Driver-Pressure-State-Impact-Response (DPSIR) cause-effect conceptual chain both within and across different policy areas including the use and analysis of projections and scenarios and policy effectiveness assessments performed using appropriate techniques and tools.
- Expertise in preparing technical and assessments reports on climate change adaptation and LULUCF.
- Experience in indicator development, maintenance and updating, as well as analysing trends in support of policy (including distance to target analysis).
- Experience in data handling and processing methods, ensuring quality of reported data, including analytical skills regarding statistical and geo-spatial analysis of environmental data. This includes a general requirement to ensure alignment with EEA corporate standards in particular use the EEA common workspace as central infrastructure for data management and data analytics and to manage technical documentation in a central collaborative environment in accordance with EEA data steward and data custodian roles.
- Knowledge and experience for spatial data handling and analysis as required by the INSPIRE Directive (2007/2/EC) and its implementing rules as well as sufficient expertise on Copernicus services and uptake of their products including the requirement to secure transparent use of approved EEA reference data sets from the EEA spatial data infrastructure and centralised data cubes applications.
- Experience in communication and visualization tools such as web maps, data visualization tools and web content management.
- Experience in preparing, facilitating and documenting workshops and meetings through using of advanced participatory processes.

2 Evaluation of the proposals

2.1 Participation in the award procedure

2.1.1 Eligibility

Consortia consisting of at least two partners (natural/legal persons, private or public), these partners being established in different EEA member countries³⁸, are eligible to submit proposals, subject to 2.1.2 and 2.2.1 below. Consortia must identify one of their partners as the coordinator who will interface with the EEA.

Entities which do not have legal personality under the applicable national law of one of the EEA member countries are also eligible under the same conditions, provided that their representatives have and can prove their capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf and assume financial liability.

Partners not established in one of the EEA member countries referred to above may exceptionally participate in a consortium, provided that the other eligibility requirement is respected, and they complied with exclusion and selection criteria listed under sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 below. A maximum of two partners from non-EEA member countries may be involved in a consortium submitting a proposal under this call for proposals.

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

2.1.2 *Ne bis in idem*

No partner may participate in **more than one** consortium aiming at the FPA **concerning this ETC**, i.e. the ETC on climate change adaptation and LULUCF. 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 on climate change adaptation and LULUCF. Disregard of these rules will lead to exclusion of all consortia concerned.

2.2 Criteria

2.2.1 Exclusion criteria

Apart from the situations under 2.1.2, consortia shall be excluded from participation in this procedure if any of its partners is in one of the situations referred to in Articles 136 and 141 of the Financial Rules applicable to the general budget of the European Union³⁹.

When submitting their application, each partner of the consortium (including any subcontractor) must provide a declaration on their honour in accordance with the form attached as annex 2, duly

³⁸ The 27 EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey.

³⁹ Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18.7.2018, OJEU L 193/1 of 30.7.2018.

signed and dated, stating that they are not in any of the situations specified in the above-mentioned provisions.

The initial verification of non-exclusion of partners will be done based on the submitted declarations and consultation of the [European Union's Early Detection and Exclusion System](#). The partners of the consortium with whom the EEA will enter into a FPA will be required, prior to the signature of the agreement, to provide the evidence specified in the penultimate paragraph of the declaration of honour mentioned above (see paragraph VI of annex 2).

2.2.2 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.

2.2.2.1 Legal Capacity

○ **Requirement:**

Any consortium is required to prove that all its members are authorised to perform the FPA under national law.

○ **Evidence to be provided:**

Each consortium partner shall submit a legal entity form (see annex 3 for the link to the form and instructions) dully filled out and signed, accompanied by either a copy of inscription in a trad register and/or VAT register, or a sworn declaration, or a certificate, or membership of a specific organisation, or express authorisation, or any other statutory document allowing verification of the partner's legal status.

2.2.2.2 Economic and financial capacity

○ **Requirements:**

- The consortium must be in a stable financial position and have the economic and financial capacity to perform the FPA.
- In accordance with Article 190 of the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the European Union, implementation of the FPA shall involve co-financing from the consortium.

○ **Evidence to be provided:**

- The partner assuming the role of coordinator of the consortium shall provide a financial identification form (see annex 4 for link to the form and instructions) duly filled out and signed;
- Each consortium partner shall provide a duly completed and signed simplified Financial Statement in accordance with the template provided as annex 6;

- For private partners: profit and loss accounts, balance sheet for the last financial year for which the accounts were closed (and audit reports by an approved external auditor certifying the accounts for the last available financial year ⁽⁴⁰⁾).
- 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 jointly agreed annual action plans ⁽⁴¹⁾;

2.2.2.3 Technical and professional capacity

○ **Requirements:**

1. Relevant experience in terms of human resources;
2. Relevant experience in the provision of similar services;
3. Application of adequate quality standards;
4. Application of environmental management measures.

○ **Evidence to be provided:**

1. Human resources:

a) CVs detailing the educational and professional qualifications of the partner's managerial staff as well as those of the staff designated to perform the tasks listed under section 1.3, indicating language skills and the required professional experience as follows:

- Managerial staff: Minimum 2 CVs, each documenting a minimum of 15 years' relevant experience
- Experts responsible for performing the tasks:
 - Minimum 6 CVs of senior experts, each documenting at least 15 years' relevant experience.
 - Minimum 12 CVs of Junior experts, each documenting at least 6 years' relevant experience

b) Signed letters of intent of:

- the ETC Manager and core staff of the consortium's coordinator; as well as
- all the key experts ⁽⁴²⁾ of each consortium partner,

proving that the consortium as a whole has sufficient technical, scientific and management (including financial) experience to assume the role of an ETC;

2. Past experience:

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);

⁽⁴⁰⁾ Having regard to Article 196(1)(d) FR 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.

⁽⁴¹⁾ The 10%-rule of minimum co-financing is applied towards the ETC as a whole. To what extent partners contribute to this co-financing is an internal ETC matter.

⁽⁴²⁾ i.e. experts from the partners in the consortium who would be entrusted with the performance of activities in the main work areas should dedicate between 50 to 75% of their time for that purpose.

3. Quality standards:

For each consortium partner, proof and description of their quality assurance and quality control systems;

4. Environmental management measures:

For each consortium partner, proof and description of their environmental policy specifying the status of implementation.

2.2.3 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 based on the award criteria and allocation of points as outlined below, producing a maximum total score of 100 points:

No	Award criteria	Max. points
1	<p>General understanding Demonstrated knowledge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EEA’s role in supporting policy implementation and developing knowledge to support Europe’s sustainability objectives, • the stakeholders that the EEA and the Eionet are supporting and cooperating with within the topic area, • the tasks requested across all work packages, the respective roles of data, indicators and assessment/information products and systems in delivering these, and the technical methodologies and frameworks necessary for their development, • how the different dimensions of the topic area (climate change adaptation and LULUCF) are interconnected, and how they relate to thematic and cross-cutting issues outside the topic area of this ETC, • how different dimensions of the topic area differ or connect across global, EU, national and sub-national scales, • EU environment and climate policy initiatives and objectives in the topic area, as well as impacts and variability of their implementation in countries. 	20
2	<p>Data and information systems Demonstrated knowledge of relevant official and non-official data sources, such as statistics, expert surveys, research, earth observation (Copernicus) and citizen science, and the different processing requirements associated with these. Experience and expertise in data collection design, quality control, and content management of data and information systems to support assessment products. Demonstrated experience applying appropriate data analysis including geospatial analysis to support assessments, such as summarising complex data and information, data near-casting techniques etc to inform policy makers and other stakeholders.</p>	15
3	<p>Assessments Demonstrated experience and expertise in:</p>	25

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supporting the preparation, production, and management of assessment knowledge products (i.e. reports, policy briefings, indicators, web-based products...) in the specific topic areas to be addressed by the ETC, • preparing and contributing to cross-thematic and cross-sectoral assessments, including preparation of integrated assessments that capture dimensions of policy integration, socio-economic dependencies and links across relevant economic production systems and sectors, • developing thematic assessments that combine new/innovative data sources with traditional sources of data. 	
4	<p>Policy support</p> <p>Demonstrated experience and expertise in providing knowledge to inform the development and implementation of local, national, EU and relevant international policy processes.</p> <p>Experience in ex-ante and ex-post analysis of the effectiveness of strategies and policies in the topic area and understanding of the links with other policies in other relevant topic areas.</p>	15
5	<p>Cooperation and networking</p> <p>Sound and innovative approaches to cooperating, sharing knowledge and supporting Eionet member organisations in member countries.</p> <p>Proposals for approaches and opportunities for collaborating with other ETCs on joint activities and how these will add value to the work of this ETC.</p> <p>Experience and expertise in accessing and working together with relevant expert networks and institutes external to the Eionet, including relevant communities of practice and the scientific community.</p>	15
6	<p>Consortium management</p> <p>Sound arrangements for implementing transparent, effective, and quality-assured management of the ETC consortium, including financial management.</p> <p>Sound approach to managing different thematic and regional dimensions of the topic area individually and as a coherent whole.</p> <p>Adequate level of manpower, resources and output corresponding to the indicative budget.</p> <p>Arrangements to allow the consortium to respond to specific requests at short notice.</p>	10
Total		100

Proposal which do not obtain at least 50% of the maximum score for each award criterion and at least 70% of the overall score for all criteria, will be deemed of insufficient quality and therefore not considered for the award of the FPA.

Should proposals obtain the same final score and tie for first place, the winning proposal will be decided based on the highest score achieved for award criterion No 1 (general understanding of the

tasks), and if these scores are equal, on the highest score achieved for award criterion No 3 (assessment). If necessary, any further prioritisation will be based on the highest score achieved for award criterion No 6 (ETC management), then the remaining award criteria taken in numerical order.

3 Submission of proposals and additional information

3.1 Submission of proposals

Proposals must be submitted through the electronic submission system ETHICS at [European Environment Agency](#) (the Contracting authority page), in one of the official languages of the European Union, preferably in English (supporting evidence does not need to be translated). Proposals submitted in any other way (e.g. e-mail or mail) will be disregarded.

Make sure you submit your proposal on time: the time limit for submission of proposal is **Thursday 29 April 2021 at 14:00** (UTC + 1). You are advised to start completing your proposal early. To avoid any complications with regard to late receipt/non-receipt of proposals within the deadline, please ensure that you submit your proposal several hours before the deadline. A proposal received after the deadline indicated in the call for proposal documents will be rejected.

For detailed instructions on how to submit a proposal, please consult [ETHICS for economic operators](#) (see section 7 for English).

The submission receipt provided by ETHICS with the official date and time of receipt of the submission (timestamp) constitutes proof of compliance with the time limit of proposals.

In case of technical problems, please contact the ETHICS Technical support (button available on the main page of the platform).

3.2 Legal effects of the call for proposals

This call for proposals is in no way binding on the EEA. The EEA's contractual obligation commences only when the FPA with the successful consortium is signed by both parties. Up to the signature of the FPA, the EEA may cancel the award procedure without applicants being entitled to claim any compensation. Any such decision must be substantiated, and applicants notified.

The period of validity of the proposal, during which the consortium partners may not modify the terms of their proposals in any respect, is 6 months from the deadline for the submission of proposals.

Submitting a proposal implies acceptance by the *consortium* of all terms and conditions of the standard Framework Partnership Agreement and its Annexes, attached as annex 5 to these terms of reference, in particular those on performance of the agreement, confidentiality, eligible costs, justification of costs, cost statements, payments, checks and audits, and processing of personal data. Any limitation, amendment, or denial of the terms of the agreement will lead to the automatic exclusion from the award procedure. The submitted proposal is binding on the consortium to whom the agreement is awarded for the duration of the FPA.

3.3 Contacts during the award procedure

Contacts between the EEA and interested applicants (consortia/partners) are prohibited throughout the award procedure save in exceptional circumstances and under the following conditions only:

3.3.1 Submission phase (before the time limit for submission of proposals)

Upon request, the EEA may provide additional information solely for the purpose of clarifying the call for proposals documents.

Any request for additional information must be made in writing only through the above-mentioned ETHICS website in the in the “Communication tab” by clicking “send question”. The EEA is not bound to reply to requests for additional information received less than 6 working days before the time limit for submission of proposals.

The EEA may, on its own initiative, inform interested parties of any error, inaccuracy, omission or any other type of clerical error in the context of the call for proposals documents. Any additional information will be published on the above-mentioned ETHICS website. The website will be updated regularly, and it is the applicants’ responsibility to check for updates and notifications during the submission period.

3.3.2 Opening of proposals

Proposals will be opened in public, remotely, at the time and place indicated in paragraph 3.4 below. A maximum of one representative per applicant may attend the remote opening session. For organisational reasons, applicants are requested to inform the EEA in advance (at least 2 working days before the date of the opening session) by e-mail to procurement@eea.europa.eu.

The public part of the opening session will be strictly limited to the following aspects:

- Verification that each proposal has been submitted in accordance with the submission requirements of this call for proposals;
- Announcement of the proposals received: the names of the consortium partners will be announced.

Applicants not present at the opening session may be informed of the outcome of the process by visiting the EEA website (<https://www.eea.europa.eu/about-us/tenders>).

3.3.3 Evaluation phase (after opening of the proposals)

Except in duly justified cases, applicants who have failed to submit evidence or to make statements as required in the call for proposals documents, shall be contacted by the EEA to provide the missing information or clarify supporting documents.

The EEA may correct obvious clerical errors in the proposal after confirmation of the correction by the applicant.

Such information, clarification or correction shall not substantially alter the proposal.

3.3.4 Award phase

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of the award procedure by e-mail. The notification will be sent to the e-mail address of the consortium's coordinator provided in the proposal submission form. The same e-mail address will be used by the EEA for all other communications with the applicant. It is the applicant's responsibility to provide a valid e-mail address and check it regularly.

3.4 Timetable

	Date	Comments
Call for proposals launch date	1 February 2021	On the EEA website
Last date for submission of clarifications to which the EEA is bound to reply	23 April 2021	
Time limit for submission of proposals	29 April 2021	At 14:00 (UTC+1)
Opening session	3 May 2021	At 10:00 (UTC+1)
Evaluation of proposals	From 5 May to 28 May 2021	Estimated
Designation by the EEA Management Board of the successful consortium	17 June 2021	Estimated
Award decision and notification of evaluation results	24 June 2021	Estimated

Framework partnership agreement signature	30 September 2021	Estimated
Approval of the annual action plan for the 1 st specific grant agreement	15 November 2021	At the latest
Signature and implementation of the 1 st specific agreement	January 2022	

3.5 Protection of personal data

Processing replies to this call for proposals will involve the recording and processing of personal data (such as name, address and CV). Such data will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2018/1725⁴³ on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data. Unless indicated otherwise, applicants' replies to the questions and any personal data requested are required to evaluate their proposal in accordance with the specifications of the call for proposals and will be processed solely for that purposes by the EEA. Under Regulation (EU) 2018/1725, applicants are entitled to obtain access to their personal data on request and to rectify any such data that is inaccurate or incomplete. Further details concerning the processing of personal data can be found in the privacy statement available on the EEA website: <https://www.eea.europa.eu/about-us/tenders>.

Applicants have the right of recourse at any time to the European Data Protection Supervisor (<https://edps.europa.eu>; edps@edps.europa.eu) for matters relating to the processing of their personal data by the EEA.

Applicants' personal data may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES), if they are in one of the situations mentioned in Article 136 of the Financial Regulation. For more information, see the privacy statement at [privacy_statement_edes_en.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#).

3.6 Means of redress

Applicants may submit any observations concerning the award procedure to the EEA using the e-mail address procurement@eea.europa.eu. If applicants believe that there is maladministration, they may lodge a complaint to the European Ombudsman within two years of the date from which they become aware of the facts which form the basis for the complaint (see <https://www.ombudsman.europa.eu>; eo@ombudsman.europa.eu).

Within two months of notification of the outcome of the procedure (award decision), applicants may launch an action for its annulment. Any request applicants may have and any reply from the EEA, or any complaint for maladministration, will have neither the purpose nor the effect of suspending the time limit for launching an action for annulment nor open a new period for launching an action for annulment. The

⁴³ OJEU L 295 of 21.11.2018, p. 39-98.

body responsible for hearing annulment procedures is the General Court of the European Union (<https://curia.europa.eu>; generalcourt.registry@curia.europa.eu).

3.7 Annexes

Annex 1 – Proposal submission form

Annex 2 – Declaration on exclusion criteria

Annex 3 – Legal entity form

Annex 4 – Financial Identification Form

Annex 5 – Draft Framework Partnership Agreement (including annexes)

Annex 6 – Simplified financial statement

Annex 7 – Power of attorney template

Annex 8 – Corporate standards

Annex 9 – List of abbreviations and acronyms

Annex 10 – Proposal executive summary template