Framework Partnership Agreement concerning the European Topic Centre on Climate Change Mitigation 2022-2026

Reference: Open call for proposals OCP/EEA/CAS/21/003-ETC CM

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.

Contents

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 mitigation.

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[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]

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.

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[5] EEA-Eionet Strategy 2021-2030: delivering data and knowledge to achieve Europe's climate and environment ambitions — European Environment Agency (europa.eu).

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.

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 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 on 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 Specific Agreements (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/Eionet-Strategy 2021-30. During the period 2022 – 2026, the indicative total budget allocated to ETC CM is 7,5M Euros[7] excluding contributions from assigned revenues and other contracts.

1.2 Future demands on EEA work in the area of climate change mitigation 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.

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[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 adjustments for inflation.

The European Green Deal (EGD) [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.

The EGD 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 EGD 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 to introduce 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 EGD, the implementation of the proposed 8th Environment Action Programme, as well as Europe's global commitments.

1.2.2 Topic-specific policy context

The Paris Agreement is the first-ever universal, legally binding global climate change agreement, adopted at the Paris climate conference (COP21) in December 2015. The agreement sets out a global framework to avoid dangerous climate change by limiting global warming to well below 2°C and pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5°C.

According to the Special Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, net-zero CO_2 emissions at global level needs to be achieved around 2050 and neutrality for all other greenhouse gases somewhat later in the century in order to be on a pathway to limit temperature increase to 1.5 °C.

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

In the European Union, the objective to be climate-neutral by 2050 is at the heart of the EGD and in line with the EU's commitment to global climate action under the Paris Agreement. In 2020, the Commission proposed the first European Climate Law to enshrine the 2050 climate-neutrality target into law.

To achieve its long-term decarbonisation objectives, the EU has adopted a climate and energy policy framework for 2030, based particularly on key targets on greenhouse gas emissions, renewable energy and energy efficiency. It is mainly implemented through three pieces of climate legislation: the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS), the Effort Sharing Regulation with Member States' emissions reduction targets and the Land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) Regulation.

This framework is also supported by legislation aiming to achieve the Energy Union's objective: EU directives, such as on renewable energy, on energy efficiency, or on building's energy performance, aim to drive progress towards a climate-neutral economy and build an energy system that ensures affordable energy for all consumers, increases the security of the EU's energy supplies, reduces EU's dependence on energy imports, creates new opportunities for sustainable growth and green jobs, and brings environmental and health benefits – e.g. through reduced air pollution.

As transport represents almost a quarter of Europe's greenhouse gas emissions and is the main cause of air pollution in cities, the EU is also pursuing several objectives to increase the efficiency of the transport system, speeding up the deployment of low-emission alternative energy for transport, and moving towards zero-emission vehicles.

In 2019, EU greenhouse gas emissions had decreased by about 24 % compared to 1990, due to the combined result of policies and measures and economic factors. The carbon and energy intensity of the EU economy has drastically decreased because of improvements in energy efficiency and the use of less carbon-intensive fuels, especially renewable energy sources. Transport remains one of the biggest challenges ahead to decarbonising the economy.

While the EU is on track to achieve its 2020 targets on greenhouse gas emissions and renewable energy, progress on the energy efficiency target remains insufficient. Rising energy consumption trends and recent greenhouse gas projections from Member States indicate that the EU is not yet on track towards its 2030 climate and energy targets. Achieving the EU's long-term climate neutrality objective will require further efforts across all the key sectors, as set out in the 2018 Commission's vision for a climate-neutral EU.

Significant efforts will also be required at the national level. Under the Regulation on the Governance of the Energy Union Climate Action (the 'Governance Regulation'), EU Member States developed integrated National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs) for the period 2021-2030, as well as national long-term strategies, consistent with their NECPs, on how they plan to achieve the greenhouse gas emissions reductions needed to meet their commitments under the Paris Agreement and EU objectives.

In September 2020, the Commission proposed to raise the 2030 greenhouse gas emission reduction target, including emissions and removals, to at least 55% compared to 1990. Discussions on detailed legislative proposals are expected to begin in June 2021 to implement and achieve the increased ambition.

1.2.3 EEA roles in support of policy

Climate change represents one of EEA and Eionet's five areas of work outlined in their strategy for the period 2021-2030, in order to deliver on their five strategic objectives. In this area of work, the EEA will monitor Europe's progress towards climate neutrality and climate resilience. It will also

support the development, implementation and evaluation of relevant policies and accompanying measures, by:

- Collecting, quality-checking, compiling and reporting relevant data and information on greenhouse gas emissions as well as climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation in Europe;
- Analysing and assessing these data against European and national mitigation and adaptation objectives and commitments;
- Monitoring the implementation and effects of national climate-relevant policies and accompanying measures targeting sectors such as energy, transport, buildings, agriculture, forestry and other land use;
- Identifying trade-offs and synergies of climate mitigation and adaption policies with other environmental issues, such as biodiversity, air pollution, freshwater and marine environment;
- Developing knowledge on solutions to address environmental and sustainability challenges in the energy and mobility systems.

During the period 2022-2025, supporting the implementation of the new 2021-2030 EU policy framework on climate change mitigation and clean energy will be a key EEA priority for climate change mitigation. In particular, the EEA will work with Member States, the Commission and its ETCs to implement new requirements on progress reporting under the Governance Regulation. This will be done in the context of a new e-reporting platform developed jointly with DG Climate Action (DG CLIMA) and DG Energy, building on EEA reporting infrastructure Reportnet 3.0. The EEA will also support the implementation of the new transparency framework under the Paris Agreement, to begin in 2023.

In addition, the EEA will continue its reporting activities covering several EU and international reporting obligations, several which will undergo revisions and changes. The EEA will support the collection and compilation of data and information on climate change mitigation, energy and transport officially reported under the EU Emissions Trading System, the Effort Sharing Regulation, the LULUCF Regulation, the regulations on fluorinated gases (F-gases) and on ozone depleting substances, including the implementation at EU level of the Kigali amendment to the Montreal Protocol, the Fuel Quality Directive 98/70/EC and the related reporting directive 2015/652, the regulations setting CO_2 emission performance standards for new passenger cars and for new light commercial vehicles, and for new heavy-duty vehicles, respectively, as well as the reporting of real-world CO2 emissions and fuel consumption data of cars and vans, expected to start in 2022. The EEA will also support the Commission and Member States to prepare the integrated national energy and climate progress reporting, from 2023 onwards, under the Governance Regulation.

In that context, the EEA will provide practical support and relevant capacity-building expertise to Member States in support of annual and biennial reporting activities under the Governance Regulation. It will also support relevant Committees and working groups under the Governance Regulation. It will control and assure the quality of the information officially reported and provide

feedback to reporters on data quality issues. The EEA will also seek to improve the dissemination of these data and information to key stakeholders.

In 2022, the EEA will coordinate the last review of national greenhouse gas inventories under the Effort Sharing Decision, which supports the determination of national compliance for the period 2013-2020. In the following years and until the 2027 review under the Effort Sharing Decisions, in the absence of formal annual reviews, the EEA will strengthen its internal checks of national inventories for the compilation of the EU greenhouse gas inventory.

The EEA will seek to further develop its quantitative analytical methods to better understand the trends and drivers of EU's historic and projected greenhouse gas emissions, and in particular to better link sectoral trends with the national policies and measures planned or adopted by Member States concerning these sectors.

The EEA will also support the implementation of the LULUCF Regulation. The 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. Agriculture, forestry and other land use are also essential in providing materials to support a circular economy next to providing other ecosystem services such as biodiversity. The EEA will seek to strengthen its own and Member States' capacity on LULUCF reporting and accounting, in particular through increased links with land use accounting and the Copernicus Land Use Services.

The EEA will continue monitoring progress and developments of emissions and allowances under the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS). It will closely follow new proposals, such as the possible inclusion of additional sectors. The EEA will also assess the information on the use of auctioning revenues, as reported by Member States to EEA under the Governance Regulation. As auctioning is now the default method of allocating allowances in the EU ETS, such revenues could become a significant source of financing of long-term energy and climate action across Europe.

Based on the information collected, the EEA will also continue supporting the EU's transition towards climate neutrality by tracking annually the progress made by the EU and its Member States in reducing their greenhouse gas emissions, including at the sectoral level. As foreseen in the proposal for a European Climate Law, the EEA will further assist the Commission in the preparation of the assessment, in 2023, of the collective progress made by all Member States towards the achievement of the EU's climate-neutrality objective, as well as of the consistency of national measures identified as relevant for achieving that objective.

The EEA will also continue providing technical support to international climate negotiations processes under the Paris Agreement and follow the implications of these developments on EU's own reporting transparency system.

The EEA will continue supporting the EU's efforts to phase out ozone depleting substances (ODS) and fluorinated greenhouse gases (F-gases), both under the Montreal Protocol (and its Kigali amendment) and the relevant Ozone and F-gas Regulations. The EEA will seek to enhance the use

that can be made of the information reported, either to support other reporting activities (e.g. greenhouse emissions reporting) or for various assessments related to the uses of potential F-gas emitting substances.

The EEA will keep monitoring the greenhouse gas intensity and the quality of road transport fuels sold in the EU, as reported under the Fuel Quality Directive, and will seek to improve the use and relevance of the information collected, in particular with regard to biofuels and their direct and indirect effects on greenhouse gas emissions depending on the feed crops used.

The EEA will assess progress of the EU and Member States in deploying renewable energy in the perspective of the transition to a low-carbon European energy system. It will analyse quantitative benefits on decarbonisation as well as other possible synergies and trade-offs of such transition.

The EEA will also develop assessments of the progress in reducing energy demand and improving energy efficiency, in particular in the building sector, in line with Commission's initiatives to promote and accelerate the renovation of the EU's built environment. Such work will represent key input to EEA's analysis of sustainability challenges at the urban level.

Through the production of preliminary estimates of national shares of renewable energy and energy consumption levels, the EEA will also keep tracking the progress of EU and Member States towards their respective targets relevant to clean energy.

The EEA will also conduct additional assessments looking at socioeconomic and environmental consequences arising from technological and societal shifts within the EU's energy system (i.e. on GHG emissions, air quality, health, noise, biodiversity, landscape fragmentation, etc.).

As regards the contribution of the transport sector to climate change mitigation, the EEA will continue to support the Commission, countries and vehicle manufacturers in the reporting of CO_2 from new passenger cars and vans, as well as from new heavy-duty vehicles. The EEA will also support the development of new data flows concerning real-world emissions of vehicles across Europe.

The EEA will seek to further improve the quality of greenhouse gas and air pollutant emissions data from aviation and shipping in national inventories, submitted under the National Emissions Ceilings Directive, and the Governance Regulation.

The EEA will ensure the continuing policy-relevance of the annual Transport and Environment report. For example, the EEA will keep conducting assessments of the foreseen changes, challenges and opportunities arising from technological and societal shifts within the EU's mobility system, such as the environmental impacts associated with the uptake of electric vehicles, modal shift, etc.

The EEA will also continue to monitor the environmental impacts caused by the transport sector (i.e. on GHG emissions, air quality, noise, biodiversity, landscape fragmentation) through its set of Transport and Environment Reporting Mechanism (TERM) indicators.

Finally, the EEA will seek to continue strengthening Member States capacity on policy evaluation in the area of climate change mitigation, energy and transport, as well as on the assessment of interactions and cross-benefits between policies.

Several air pollutants are also climate forcers. For that reason, there is an increasing recognition that policies and measures should be developed through an integrated approach for air quality and climate change. Thus, assessment work relating to mitigation of both climate change and air pollution will continue to be an important element in EEA's work over the coming years.

Many of EEA's future activities across the area of climate change mitigation will therefore take place against a substantial and changing policy background at the EU, national and even local level (see for example mitigation and adaptation objectives of the Covenant of Mayors). Several developments will lead to changes in the environmental information reporting requirements and assessment needs for countries and the European Union as a whole. Both the EEA and its ETC will therefore need to adapt to these changing requirements in the years ahead.

1.3 Specific tasks of the European Topic Centre on Climate Change Mitigation (ETC CM)

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

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

- The EEA State of Environment report 2025 which will already be in preparation in 2022 and 2023.

- Much greater focus on systemic challenges. EGD is the European approach to addressing sustainability challenges from a systemic perspective. As such, the demand for knowledge on sustainability, both for monitoring progress and designing solutions will grow.

- Designing and providing support for monitoring requirements for the implementation of the 8th EAP and EGD.

These areas will be embedded in specific action plans. In order to ensure the best allocation of available resources, the expected work is divided into 5 work packages:

1.3.1 Work package 1 – Mitigation of climate change and ozone depletion

This work package will consist of the following tasks:

- Supporting the timely reporting of data and information reported under EU legislation by Eionet member and cooperating countries, including data on national greenhouse gas emissions, approximated (preliminary) greenhouse emissions, national greenhouse gas projections, national climate change mitigation policies and measures, use of ETS auctioning revenues, financial and

technological support to developing countries, implementation of the EU ETS Directive, ozone-depleting substances and fluorinated greenhouse gases;

- Supporting the continuous improvement of data quality by performing and documenting quality assurance and quality control (QA/QC) checks on the information reported by member countries and companies where relevant, ensuring that QA/QC procedures and documentation remains updated, and reporting on outcomes of data quality checks;

- Compiling the draft EU data submissions required under international legislation, including EU emission inventory datasets and inventory reports under the UNFCCC and the EU submission under the Montreal protocol on ozone depleting substances. These activities require close coordination with member countries and European Commission services;

- Participating in external (UNFCCC) emission inventory reviews, and assisting EEA with the implementation of the 2022 annual emission inventory review under the Governance Regulation and Effort Sharing Decision;

- Preparing and implementing methodologies to estimate data which are not directly based on the compilation of Member States submissions, such as for gap filling purposes (missing data not reported by Member States) or on an ad-hoc basis, to underpin specific assessments;

- Supporting data reporting, review, and support on the implementation of the LULUCF regulation including QA/QC checks and analysis of agriculture and LULUCF emission inventory, projections and policy and measures information;

- Supporting the use of Copernicus services both by EEA and by Eionet where relevant, including reviewing the potential for new applications and uses for Copernicus information;

- Supporting EEA member countries with their data deliveries by providing assistance with data exchange, expert and training workshops, and including potential country visits to provide on-site training and capacity building;

- Preparing assessments of greenhouse gas emission trends, including application of advanced statistical methods to determine explanatory factors for past changes in emissions;

- Contributing to specific assessments relevant to the energy, transport and AFOLU (agriculture, forestry and land use) sectors, including assessing progress with the integration of environmental considerations into these sectors and environmental progress achieved;

- Compiling and assessing third-party policy scenarios and outlooks in the field of climate mitigation and energy in order to inform specific analyses;

- Analysing relevant projections and the effectiveness of climate change mitigation policies and measures to achieve future targets, including detailed consideration of the non-ETS trading sectors and LULUCF sectors, and use of flexible mechanisms etc.;

- Performing in-depth and robust assessments of the progress of the EU, its Member States and other EEA member countries towards meeting relevant targets and objectives, including e.g. those of the EGD, climate mitigation targets set for 2030 and 2050 climate neutrality objectives;

- Analysing relevant projections and the effectiveness of climate-relevant policies and measures to achieve future targets, including detailed consideration of the non-ETS trading sectors and LULUCF sectors, and use of flexible mechanisms etc.;

1.3.2 Energy

This work package will consist of the following tasks:

- Supporting the timely reporting of data and information reported under EU legislation by Eionet member and cooperating countries, including data and information on renewable energy and energy efficiency, under the Governance Regulation (the scope of such data remaining to be further clarified), as well as on fuel quality under the Fuel Quality Directive;

- Supporting the preparation of preliminary estimates of primary and final energy consumption and of the share of renewable energy at EU and national level;

- Evaluating the implementation of energy policies and measures to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, including the assessment of:

  - progress at EU and national level towards targets,
  - policy efficiency, coherence and effectiveness,
  - side effects/external factors influences (within and outside the EU),

  and linking pressures to upstream drivers in the energy system;

- Analysing the potential impacts and identifying benefits and environmental pressures of different shares of renewable energies in different sectors (electricity, heat and transport), including sector coupling, interactions and trade-offs between sectors (transport, industrial pollution, energy, and agricultural land-use etc.), and the associated external costs, also at local/urban/city level;

- Analysing the potential socioeconomic relevance, impacts, benefits and environmental pressures of different energy efficiency options, in particular in the building sector;

- Assessing the environmental impacts and modelled interactions, trade-offs and synergies between climate change mitigation and air pollution policies including those addressing environmental pressures arising from the energy sector (including impacts on GHG emissions, air pollution, impact on biodiversity and marine environment, land-use, noise, socio-economic impacts etc.) at European, national and local scales.

1.3.3 Transport

This work package will consist of the following tasks:

- Supporting the timely reporting of data and information reported under EU legislation by Eionet member and cooperating countries, including data and information on CO_2 emissions from new cars, vans and heavy-duty vehicles;

- Supporting EEA activities on the implementation of new or revised EU legislation on transport emissions, especially concerning changes in monitoring and reporting requirements, including updates to reporting guidance, reporting tools and supporting material;

- Supporting the analysis of the EU's vehicle fleet and the development of electric mobility;

- Evaluating the implementation of transport policies and measures to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, including the assessment of progress and EU and national level towards specific

transport-related policy objectives, and linking pressures to upstream drivers in the mobility system;

- Contributing to specific assessments relevant to the transport sector (e.g. the annual Transport and Environment report) including assessing progress with the integration of environmental considerations into this sector and environmental progress achieved;

- Assessing the environmental impacts and modelled interactions, trade-offs and synergies between climate change mitigation and air pollution policies including those addressing environmental pressures arising from the transport sector (including impacts on GHG emissions, air pollution, impact on biodiversity and marine environment, land-use, noise, socio-economic impacts etc.) at European, national and local scales.

1.3.4 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 follows 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 enough 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 guidance 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 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 its deliverables.

- 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[9]. 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.

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:

- In-depth knowledge and understanding of relevant international, EU and national policy developments regarding climate change mitigation, energy and transport, and understanding of the associated reporting requirements and data flows;

- Data-handling and processing of large data sets, including database development and management, and the development and implementation of protocols for electronic data processing, QA/QC and data extraction and dissemination. This should include experience

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[9] https://www.eea.europa.eu/about-us/emas.

working with greenhouse gas emission inventories, and knowledge of the associated guidance documents. The future contractor should have experience working in cloud infrastructure.

- The analytical skills and expertise to assess trends and projections of greenhouse gas emissions at the sectoral level and of key energy variables, including methods to identify the relative effects of various drivers of these trends;

- Experience in indicator development, maintenance and updating, as well as analysing trends in support of policy (including distance to target analysis).

- Expertise and proven experience in conducting integrated assessments 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;

- Socio-economic analysis of climate and energy mitigation pathways, including experience in applying environmental externality frameworks, knowledge of market-based environmental instruments, etc.;

- Integrated assessments and system-level analysis, including modelling, 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;

- Technological developments in the energy sector, including energy modelling, data sources, abatement technologies, etc.

- Technological developments in the transport sector, including vehicles and their propulsion systems, fuels, digitalisation etc. across all main modes of passenger and freight transport.

- Experience conducting social science research to investigate the role of behaviour, demography and socio-economic status in influencing the environmental impact and consumer choices of population groups, as well as experience with working with citizens, communities and various other organisations.

- Experience in preparing, facilitating and documenting workshops and meetings through using of advanced participatory processes.

- The skills and expertise to deliver capacity building activities with Eionet countries, potentially including in-country visits, and increased 'helpdesk' functions. Such support can be envisaged across the dimensions ETCs are active in, by supporting countries to increase their capacities on e.g. data reporting and processing technologies, development of national action plans and measures, assessment techniques to inform national studies (such as how to perform health impact assessments etc.).

- Proven capacities for networking and communicating with relevant national, EU and international policy and scientific working groups and conferences.

- Ability to identify and engage stakeholders of various horizon in the work to be carried out in partnership; ability to coordinate stakeholders in "co-creation" oriented activities.

- Experience with communicating on complex technical issues to different types of audiences (e.g.: policy makers, business world, citizens, etc.) and using different mean of communication and media.

2   Evaluation of the proposals

2.1   Participation on 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 countries[10], 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 Mitigation. 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 Mitigation. 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 Union.

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[10] The 27 EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey.

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 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 Framework Partnership Agreement will be required, prior to the signature of the agreement, to provide the evidence specified in the penultimate paragraph of the declaration of honour mentioned above (see 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 frame.

2.2.2.1 Legal capacity

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

o **Evidence to be provided:**

Each consortium partner shall submit a legal entity form (see annex 3 for 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

o **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.

o **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[11]);

- 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[12];

2.2.2.3 Technical and professional capacity

o **Requirements:**

- Relevant experience in terms of human resources;
- Relevant experience in the provision of similar services;
- Application of adequate quality standard;
- Application of environmental management measures.

o **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:

o Managerial staff: Minimum 2 CVs, each documenting a minimum of 10 years' relevant experience

o Experts responsible for performing the tasks:

o Minimum 15 CVs of senior experts, each documenting at least 8 years' relevant experience

o Minimum 20 CVs of Junior experts, each documenting at least 3 years' relevant experience

b) Signed letters of intent of:

o the ETC Manager and core staff of the consortium's coordinator; as well as

o all the key experts[13] of each consortium partner,

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[11] 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.

[12] 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.

[13] i.e. experts from the partners in the consortium who would be entrusted with the performance of activities in the main work areas should anticipate allocating between 50 to 75% of their time for that purpose.

proving that the consortium as a whole has enough 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);

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 requirements 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	**General understanding** Demonstrated knowledge of: • 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 (e.g. climate change mitigation, energy, transport and mobility) 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 regional and/or local 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	**Data and information systems** Demonstrated technical and thematic knowledge of European data and information reporting requirements relevant to the topic area and including INSPIRE requirements where relevant. Knowledge of other 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 supporting the design, quality control and evaluation, analytics, and content management of data and information systems, including proposals for internal quality control procedures to support data product development and assessment activities. Demonstrated experience working with expert communities that employ different data flow approaches. Provision of support to users through data helpdesk type functions. Demonstrated experience applying appropriate methods for data analysis including geospatial analysis and modelling to support assessments, summarising complex data and information, use of data near-casting techniques etc to inform policy makers and other stakeholders.	20
3	**Assessments** Demonstrated experience and expertise in: • 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.	20
4	**Policy support** Demonstrated experience and expertise in providing knowledge to inform the development and implementation of local, national, EU and relevant international policy processes. 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	15
5	**Cooperation and networking**	15

	• Sound and innovative approaches to cooperating, sharing knowledge and supporting Eionet member organisations in member countries. • 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. • 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.	
6	**Consortium management** • Sound arrangements for implementing transparent, effective, and quality-assured management of the ETC consortium, including financial management. • Sound approach to managing different thematic and regional dimensions of the topic area individually and as a coherent whole. • Adequate level of manpower, resources and output corresponding to the indicative budget. • Arrangements to allow the consortium to respond to specific requests at short notice.	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 wining 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 proposals 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 "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 1st specific grant agreement	15 November 2021	At the latest

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) 2018/1725[14] 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 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

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[14] OJEU L 295 of 21.11.2018, p. 39-98.

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