**Extract from**

**COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION**

**of 27.9.2017**

**amending Decision C(2016)8422 of 15 December 2016 concerning the adoption of the**

**work programme for 2017 and the financing decision for the implementation of the**

**European Maritime and Fisheries Fund**

**1.2.1.12.Sustainable blue economy calls**

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| **Type** | **Action grant (with strands) following a call for proposals**  |
| **Budget** | **€ 14.460.000** |
| **Priorities of the year, objectives pursued and expected results** | **With a view to enhance the development and implementation of the Integrated Maritime Policy, this action will award grants to projects within the following four specific strands:*** **Strand 1 - Demonstration and innovation linked to new technological opportunities in the blue economy, with a focus on bringing ideas to market;**
* **Strand 2 - Demonstrating efficient strategies and/or technologies to quantify, reduce and/or remove marine litter (especially from sea-based sources linked to the blue economy) in waters in/around the European Union, supporting EU marine litter policies and, where available, Regional Action Plans under RSCs;**
* **Strand 3 - Networking and exchange between 'blue players' in the Mediterranean, to improve maritime skills, business clustering, and diversification of fishing communities, including improved environmental performance;**
* **Strand 4 - Joint actions to enhance the sustainability of blue economy sectors in the Mediterranean.**

**Within each strand, projects will be selected by order of merit within the indicative budget allocated to the strand concerned, according to their overall score based on the evaluation of the award criteria.****Strand 1: Demonstration projects making blue technologies market- and investor-ready (indicative budget allocation € 7.960.000).** **Demonstration projects based on innovative technologies will be supported testing new industry and service applications and solutions for the blue economy. Such support is important to allow economic players, in particular SMEs, to apply new ideas and research results into marketable goods and services. It will also facilitate scaling up business models and service concepts.** **The strand may include support for coordination amongst participants and regions.** **The demonstration projects will, going beyond research/applied research, help innovative technologies and/or maritime services improve their market-readiness and advance towards market entry. This will be reflected in a requirement for a high "TRL" (Technology Readiness Level) between 6 ('testing in relevant environment') and 9 ('actual application/operational environment') as defined in Commission Decision C(2014)4995.****The strand should give the necessary credibility to the high-potential demonstration projects so that they are able to access other financing for the further development of their business.** **The strand should give priority to projects carrying out their work within the context of relevant sea basin strategies, i.e. the Atlantic Strategy and Action Plan, the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Action Plan and equivalent sea basin strategies.** **Strand 2: Efficient strategies and technologies against marine litter (indicative budget allocation € 2.000.000).****Fighting marine litter is one of the actions laid down in the Ocean Governance Joint Communication**[[1]](#footnote-1)[1]**.** **This strand will support projects that:*** **demonstrate strategies and technologies to reduce amount and harmfulness of marine litter from sea-based sources (such as fisheries, aquaculture, off-shore activities, maritime transport and maritime tourism);**
* **demonstrate strategies and technologies to monitor and quantify the contribution of sea-based sources of marine litter;**
* **demonstrate strategies and technologies to remove and recycle, in an environmentally sound and resource-efficient way, marine litter, whatever its provenance, found in seas and oceans in or around the European Union.**

**Projects should include a robust method to evaluate their cost-effectiveness and their quantifiable contribution to reducing concentrations of marine litter in the respective compartments (at the sea surface, in the water column, on the sea floor or along coasts). They should also explain how the proposed method can be scaled up (e.g. by raising financing). All proposals should include assessments of the environmental impacts of the proposed technology/strategy.** **Priority may be given to projects demonstrating a capacity to promote dialogue and cooperation with relevant stakeholders and to projects demonstrating a high degree of innovation and sustainability in the proposed strategies and technologies.****Strand 3: 'Blue networks in the Mediterranean context' (indicative allocation 3.000.000)** **This strand aims to support job creation, innovation and entrepreneurship in the blue economy of the Mediterranean Sea, through cooperation between private and public maritime stakeholders from the countries concerned.** **One of its purposes is to implement specific actions from sea basin-based strategies/initiatives, or to seek other complementarities with relevant initiatives and policy priorities in the Mediterranean. The degree of regional outreach and involvement of southern Mediterranean partner countries is another key element that the projects shall consider.** **This strand addresses the following specific objectives:****a) pilot networking amongst maritime-, port- and logistics-related education and training institutes in the Mediterranean in order to carry out activities such as identifying common needs and joint actions regarding maritime skills and professions, promoting exchanges and mutual understanding, raising awareness of maritime professions and their appeal to young people;****b) promote networking between maritime clusters in the Mediterranean around concrete activities in areas such as marine resources and maritime technologies or providing support through appropriate services to business development;****c) pilot twinning of fisheries local communities in the western Mediterranean, in areas such as sustainable small-scale fisheries and recreational fishing, diversification of fishing activities, aquaculture development and skills development.****The supported projects must include an evaluation method which will measure their direct contribution to (depending on the topic of the project) creating or diversifying jobs, increasing student mobility and traineeships, improving ocean literacy, filling skills gaps, more effectively using existing infrastructure to increase innovation or research capacities or facilitating technology transfers.****Strand 4: Joint actions to enhance the sustainability of blue economy sectors in the Mediterranean (indicative budget allocation € 1.500.000)****Blue economy sectors such as tourism, aquaculture and fisheries are already of great importance for the Mediterranean Sea basin, whereas new sectors like blue biotechnology hold great promise. All of them could create more jobs and growth in the future, especially in the southern and eastern Mediterranean where there is still much underdeveloped potential. These blue economy sectors all rely on coastal and marine natural capital, which provide a wide range of services such as natural fish stock restoration, aesthetic and cultural services attracting visitors, sea water purification, coastal resilience, and all the key elements of actions 6.1 and 6.2 of the International Ocean Governance Joint Communication. In turn, this bolsters the sustainability of the blue economy sectors using the services, bringing economic benefits to society as a whole.** **In line with the International Ocean Governance Joint Communication (actions 6.1 and 6.2), this strand will support projects in the Mediterranean Sea or along its coast which are based on a partnership between EU and third country entities.** **Project work must:** * **restore damaged or degraded  coastal and marine natural capital, and/or create new areas of blue-green infrastructure;**
* **make use of state-of-the-art or innovative methods of marine ecosystem restoration and protection;**
* **develop a robust method for evaluating outcomes of the two areas of intervention outlined above.**
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| **Essential eligibility, selection and award criteria**  | **Eligibility criteria****Project applicants can be private or public legal entities (profit or non-profit).****Proposals must be submitted by a consortium of minimum two legal entities from two different countries. The coordinating entity (lead partner) must be established in an EU Member State.****In addition, specific eligibility criteria apply to each of the strands.****For strands 1 and 2:** **Project applicants must be established in an EU Member State. If a project activity to be carried out in the waters of the EU or an EU Outermost Region also extends into neighbouring waters outside the territory of the Union, applicants established in the non-EU countries in whose jurisdiction these waters fall, are eligible, providing that the involvement of those applicants is necessary in view of the nature of the action and in order to achieve its objectives.** **A proposal must include a transnational partnership with applicants from at least 2 different eligible countries, of which at least one must be an EU Member State.****For strand 1:****At least one business partner in the sense of a profit-making legal entity has to participate in the proposal.****For strand 2:****The four regional sea conventions (Barcelona, Bucharest, HELCOM, OSPAR) may be partners in a proposal. In any case proposed activities must be compatible with and supportive of the implementation of the existing regional plans against marine litter in the Mediterranean, Baltic and North east Atlantic.****For strand** **3:****All project applicants must be entities established in an EU Member State or in a Mediterranean partner country participating in the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM).** **For objective a) of this strand, proposals must include a transnational partnership of applicants from at least 3 different eligible countries as described above. Of these, at least two must be from different EU Member States and at least one must be from an eligible Mediterranean partner country.** **For objective b) of this strand, proposals must include a transnational partnership of applicants, which must be private or public legal entities, from at least 3 different eligible countries as described above. Of these, at least two must be maritime clusters, whether from an EU Member State or from an eligible third country.** **For objective c) of this strand, the coordinating entity (lead partner) must be a Fisheries Local Action Group established according to Article 32(2)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and art. 61 of Regulation (EU) No 508/2014. The proposals must include a transnational partnership of applicants from at least one EU Member State and one eligible Mediterranean partner country adhering to the WestMED Initiative (Algeria, France, Italy, Libya, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Portugal, Spain and Tunisia).****For strand 4:** **A proposal must consist of a transnational partnership with applicants from at least 2 different eligible countries, of which at least one must be based in an EU Member State and at least one in a non-EU country both of which shall be bordering the Mediterranean sea basin.****Selection criteria** **(valid for all strands)****Applicants must have the financial and operational capacity required to implement and complete the proposed project, including good knowledge of EU and regional policies relevant for the prject and demonstrated experience in the subject matter.****Award criteria****(valid for all strands)*** **Relevance and added value: Relevance of the proposal and its expected results to achieving the objectives of the action and of the strand in question. Added value of the proposal in terms of synergies/complementarity with other relevant initiatives (notably established sea basin-based initiatives and regional plans, international commitments), projects or EU policies, and in terms of geographical coverage.**
* **Project implementation: Effectiveness and coherence of the work plan. Feasibility in terms of activities and timetable. Appropriate and balanced allocation of tasks and human resources. Appropriate project management set-up. Complementarity of partners. Adequate risk management.**
* **Cost-effectiveness: Clearly presented and appropriate budget representing value for money in comparison to expected results, involving a cost-effective allocation of financial resources in relation to the planned activities and outputs.**
* **Impact: Expected outputs and impact. Dissemination, sustainability and transferability of the expected results, potential multiplier effect.**
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| **Implementation** | **This action will be implemented by EASME.** |
| **Cofinancing involved** | **For strand 1 maximum 65%.****For strands 2, 3 and 4 maximum 80%.**   |
| **Indicative timetable** | **Call for proposals to be launched in the 4th quarter of 2017.** |

1. [1]              JOIN(2016) 49 final [↑](#footnote-ref-1)