

Selection procedure

(section 4.1.2, Specification of procedure I_2 ‘Selection of Projects and award of grants in the context of the Call for Proposals’ of the Procedures Specification Document of the EEA FM 2014-2021 Programme Operator entitled: ‘Water Management’)

The Selection of Projects and the award of grants in the context of the Call for Proposals are based on the Regulation, the JMD on the Management and Control System for the EEA FM 2014-2020, the EEA FM 2014-2021 Procedures Manual and the specific content of:

- Decision no. 24663/3-3-2020 by the Deputy Minister of Development and Investment on the ‘Co-financing of the Programme entitled Programme D – Water Management, with the Special Service “Executive Authority of the Partnership Agreement, Environmental Sector” of the Ministry of Environment and Energy as Programme Operator, on the resources of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism (EEA FM) for the period 2014-2021 and National Resources from the Public Investment Programme (PIP) (Government Gazette, 975/B/21.03.2020), as modified by the Government Gazette 1556/B’/2020 “Correction of Errors” and
- the Programme Agreement attached to the aforementioned decision for the funding of the “Water Management” Programme - GR-Environment, signed between the Donor Countries, on the one hand, and the Hellenic Republic on the other, as duly represented by the Ministry of Development and Investment

The proposals are submitted through the EEA MIS at the electronic address: logon.ops.gr, by the Project Promoter's legal representative (legal representative's personal user account) in the Greek language until the deadline defined in the call. The Technical Bulletin (form E.I.1_2 of the EEA FM 2014-2021 Procedures Manual) is assigned a registration number by the Programme Operator.

In cases of documents/files, for which an electronic attachment/submission is not technically feasible (e.g. maps, drawings etc.), the Project Promoter shall be bound to send them to the Programme Operator within 10 working days from the proposal's electronic submission date. It is underscored that the relevant documents/files should be handed over to the Programme Operator and be assigned a registration number within the days specified, on the sender's exclusive responsibility.

After the deadline defined in the call, the proposals are evaluated in two stages, as mentioned in the EEA FM 2014-2021 Procedures Manual and is specified below:

Stage A': Check for completeness and eligibility of proposals submitted (administrative and eligibility criteria)

The completeness and eligibility check for each proposal is carried out by two (2) evaluators/experts, based on the criteria attached to the call for proposals, regarding STAGE A': COMPLETENESS AND ELIGIBILITY CHECK; at least one of the two evaluators/experts does not belong to the Programme Operator's personnel. The evaluators not belonging to the Programme Operator's personnel are selected out of the Evaluators' Registry of the General Secretariat of Research and Technology of the Ministry of Development and Investment. For this purpose, the relevant list is drawn up encompassing scientists from the Registry whose cognitive object falls broadly within the fields of interest of each call.

Assigning the proposals to evaluators, not belonging to the Programme Operator's personnel, is carried out by draw, picking from the above list; Unit A' of the Programme Operator is responsible for this process as it is in charge of the proposals upon their submission, further to the respective call for proposals. Note that in this procedure, another parameter considered each time is the availability of the evaluators included in the list. After assigning the proposals to the available participants in the list, it is possible to assign more than one proposal to every participant in alphabetical order.

The Programme Operator may request from the applicant additional information/documents to justify compliance with the criteria of this stage, in case, one or both evaluators, during the evaluation, ascertain omissions in the submitted proposal pertaining exclusively to:

- The 'formal completeness of the submitted proposal' and in particular to information/documents being specified in the call for proposals (such as studies, administrative acts etc) or/and
- Decisions by competent or collective bodies of the project promoter or other competent bodies, if it is stipulated by the law in effect.

The evaluator(s) shall inform Unit A' of the Programme Operator and the proposal is returned to the corresponding project promoter via the MIS, with reference to the omissions that need to be covered so that the project promoter complies with what is asked from the Programme Operator, within the time constraints specified by the Programme Promoter and this period shall not exceed four (4) working days from the day following the notification. Alternatively, this procedure may be arranged via correspondence between the Programme Operator and the candidate project promoter.

If the additional information/documents are not submitted in due time, the proposal is rejected.

Any omissions regarding the signatures required by the call for proposal or the suggested project grant beyond the funding limits, fixed by the call, cannot be corrected in the context of additional information/documents.

For every proposal to be evaluated, each evaluator fills in the required fields of the checklist regarding the STAGE A' proposal completeness, in accordance with the project's evaluation criteria attached to the call.

The evaluation shall take the form of a YES/NO answer when each criterion is implemented. For a proposal to be considered as being positively evaluated in Stage A', it should score YES in all implemented criteria by both evaluators.

Should there be a difference in the evaluation of a criterion, between the two (2) evaluators but if at least one criterion has been scored NO by both (2) evaluators, the proposal is rejected.

In case there is a discrepancy in the evaluation of some criterion(a) between the two (2) evaluators, but there is no such criterion having marked NO by both evaluators, the proposal is forwarded to a third evaluator to evaluate only this /these specific criterion/criteria (with the diverging evaluation); this third evaluator shall determine the final evaluation of the proposal (i.e. if the third evaluator marks YES for all criteria to be examined, the proposal is evaluated positively while in the opposite case the proposal is rejected).

Based on Stage A' evaluation outcomes, the Programme Operator draws up the provisional table of Stage A' proposals, which is duly approved by the Minister of Environment and Energy. For proposals rejected at this stage, the Programme Operator provides substantiated information to the candidate project promoters and gives them the possibility to submit an objection/appeal. Objections/appeals are submitted one-off, for this evaluation stage, within the exclusive deadline of seven (7) working days as of the day following the notification of evaluation outcomes.

An objection/appeal should be substantiated and signed by the Project Promoter and, wherever needed, to be signed by the project owner, if it is different from the Project Promoter.

All objections submitted through the registry are examined by a three-member Objections Committee, which is set up by a decision of the Programme Operator. The Objections Committee may be assisted (with relevant opinion delivery) by an evaluator(s), other than the two (2) evaluators who evaluated and scored the specific proposal. Executives of the Programme Operator who participated in the evaluation procedure of the specific proposal shall not be entitled to participate in the Objections Committee. Moreover, it shall be ensured that the Objections Committee members and evaluators examining the objections are duly independent, by submitting a declaration of non-conflict of interest.

The objections are examined with regard to the lawfulness of the act they are opposing and with regard to the merits of the case; objections are either rejected or accepted. A submitted objection cannot be partially accepted.

Upon completion of Stage A' and the evaluation of objections, the final table of Stage A' proposals is drawn up by the Programme Operator and is duly approved by the Minister of Environment and Energy; the candidate project promoters having submitted their objections are accordingly informed about the acceptance or not of their objection.

Stage B': Evaluation of proposals conducted in accordance with the evaluation criteria.

The Evaluation Stage B' begins upon completion of Evaluation Stage A' and covers only the accepted proposals included in the final table of Stage A' (i.e. not rejected).

During Stage B', the evaluation of every proposal is carried out by the two (2) evaluators/experts who evaluated each proposal in the Evaluation Stage A', based on the relevant criteria attached in the call for proposals.

During the Evaluation Stage B', the Programme Operator may ask additional information/clarifications from the candidate project promoter via a similar procedure like the one mentioned during the evaluation stage A'. Note that these data may only refer to information that were not included in the submitted proposal due to error and if the additional data are submitted overdue, the proposal is rejected (for the possibility to submit additional information, the relevant information in the EEA FM 2014-2021 Procedures Manual apply).

For every proposal to be evaluated, each evaluator fills in the required fields in the stage B' Evaluation Sheet and the scored criteria are scored according to the criteria defined in the call. The final evaluation and the evaluation of proposals are based on the EEA FM 2014-2021 Procedures Manual and the proposals are ranked in score-based descending order.

The Programme Operator provides the list of proposals to the Selection Committee (Selection Committee based on the EEA FM 2014-2021 Procedures Manual), as ranked according to the above-mentioned procedure, in order to come up with the provisional classification table of Stage B' proposals

Once the above procedure is completed, the Selection Committee draws up the provisional classification table of evaluated proposals, which is duly approved by the Minister of Environment and Energy; this table is communicated to all candidate project promoters whose proposals participated in the stage B' evaluation and are given the possibility to submit an objection, following a similar procedure like the one mentioned in the evaluation stage A'.

After the examination of objections, following a similar procedure like the one mentioned in the evaluation stage A', the final classification table of evaluated proposals is created by the Programme Operator and is duly approved by the Minister of Environment and Energy. If the table resulting from the examination of objections differs in terms of the proposals' classification from the respective provisional Stage B' table, it is sent again to the Selection Committee for acceptance or substantiated modification; the final classification table of evaluated proposals is then drawn up and is duly approved by the Minister of Environment and Energy.

Upon approval of the classification table of evaluated proposals, the Programme Operator notifies the candidate project promoters having submitted their objections (about acceptance or not of their objection).

The final classification table of evaluated proposals is sent to the Special State Aid Agency of the Ministry of Development and Investment to be checked based on the state aid rules; all candidate project promoters whose proposals participated in Stage B' evaluation are notified of the outcomes of this check.

The proposals to be funded are the ones with the highest scores in the final classification table; grants are awarded until all the public expenditure in the call is exhausted; public expenditure may be readjusted up to 120%.

Should for any reason whatsoever a grant is not awarded to a proposal from the list of selected for funding proposals, the next in order proposals are awarded a grant until the free budget is exhausted.

All the evaluated proposals not funded due to exhausted budget are considered as reserve list.

Moreover, upon finalization of the reserve allocation in the context of the EEA FM 2014-2021, pursuant to article 1.11 of the JMD on the Management and Control System for the EEA FM 2014-2021, should there be an increase of the available amount, based on the approved programme, for the actions referred to in the call for proposals, there may be a grant award for more proposals, based on their classification in the Final classification table of evaluated proposals.