



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

European Topic Centre on Land use and spatial information 2007-2010¹

Open call for proposals (Grant agreements): 2006/EEA/ADS/06/001
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1. Background information

The European Environment Agency (EEA) and the European Environment Information and Observation Network (Eionet)

The European Environment Agency (EEA) is the main source of information used by the European Union and its Member States in developing environment policies. 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. Established by the EU in 1990 and operational in Copenhagen since 1994, the EEA is the hub of the European Environment Information and Observation Network (Eionet), a network of around 300 institutes across Europe through which it collects and disseminates environment-related data and information. This information is made available through various report series, briefings and the EEA website².

The European Commission, the European Parliament, national and regional authorities in the member countries, and a wide range of non-governmental organisations are among the regular users of the databases and information products.

Institutionally, the European Environment Agency is one of the Agencies of the European Union. The functioning of the EEA and Eionet are described in the EEA founding regulation³.

The Agency, which is open to all nations that share its objectives, currently, has 31 member countries. These are the 25 EU Member States; Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein, which are members of the European Economic Area; and the 3 EU candidate countries, namely Bulgaria, Romania and

¹ The successful consortia will be proposed a Framework Partnership Agreement covering initially the period from 2007 to 2008 (current EEA Strategy 2004-2008) which may be renewed for an additional period of 2 years under the new EEA Strategy 2009-2013.

² <http://www.eea.eu.int/>

³ EEC 1210/90 of 7 May 1990, amended by EC 933/1999 of 29 April 1999 and EC 1641/2003 of 22 July 2003, see <http://org.eea.eu.int/documents>

Turkey. An agreement has been reached with Switzerland on EEA membership. This agreement is awaiting notification by Switzerland.

Five European Topic Centres (ETCs) are currently part of Eionet. They cover the topics 'Air and climate change', 'Water', 'Terrestrial environment', 'Waste' and 'Biodiversity'. The first three are now opened up for proposals for new consortia to carry out the tasks.

Role of the European Topic Centres

The European Topic Centres (ETCs) are, according to the EEA founding regulation⁴ and in practice, an important instrument supporting the EEA through the execution of sizeable, continuous, well-defined tasks with the involvement of member countries. European Topic Centres are involved in the work of EEA as a data centre for the issues air, climate change, water, biodiversity and land use. Tasks focus on the harmonisation of monitoring of the environment in the member countries, in the compilation of the resulting data in international databases, in the processing of the information including the use of models to describe and analyse the present and future state of the environment, and in the production of indicators to communicate the findings to various users.

European Topic Centres are part of the Eionet and a support to the Eionet. Their activities have an important component of networking with experts in the member countries on the harmonisation, the quality and exchange of data, in building capacities in the member countries through country visits and meetings with all country experts in the Eionet. Topic Centres are a sparring partner for countries in discussing options for improving national information systems. Networking with the countries also occurs when involving the member countries in the analyses of indicators and in assessments. The ETCs are expected to work together with the other European Topic Centres on crosscutting projects.

To perform these tasks European Topic Centres include the best expertise in Europe to handle data in their topic area, and to analyse the environmental data with regards to developments in society and economy and with regards to environmental and sectoral policies. European Topic Centres are also expected to have the expertise to cover the full geographical area of EEA member countries.

European Topic Centres are thus important resources for the EEA, and through the EEA for its member countries and the Community institutions. The yearly work programmes of the topic centres are decided upon by the EEA taking into account the requirements of all parts of the Eionet and other stakeholders. For the execution of the work programmes, ETCs receive several (mostly yearly) grants from the Agency and are co-financed by

⁴ The EEA founding regulation, see footnote 3, describes in article 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6 Topic Centres and their tasks as part of Eionet.

national and other contributions. Only tasks with a component of networking with the member countries can be supported under grant agreements.

It is the experience of the past years that the variety of tasks to be done by an ETC, and the variety of expertise needed are usually found in a multinational consortium of institutes and/or companies.

2. Future EEA work in the land use and spatial information area based on the EEA strategy 2004-2008

“The Agency is committed to support the spatial requirements of European and global development initiatives, including key thematic strategies on marine systems and soils, with particular attention to land-use changes in ecologically sensitive areas and protection of soils.” (EEA Strategy 2004-8).

Land is a key natural asset which value results from its surface as well as from the presence of the other natural elements (soil, water, climate, fauna and flora) and their combination with man made assets (activities, infrastructures and settlements). They determine the functions of land, its capacity to support the reproduction of natural ecosystems as well as to sustain the many uses by man. Functions of land resulting from geographical conditions and present and past use, they are unevenly distributed over the territory, as well as the environmental problems that they may generate. Therefore, the assessment of the potentials of land assets or of conflicts in the use of land requires combining statistical and geographical approaches, whereby land use functions can be linked to economic accounts, directly or via satellite accounts.

In this understanding, there is since several years a clear political recognition that sectoral policies of the EU modify the spatial structure and potential of the economy and society thereby altering land use patterns, soil functions and landscapes, and hence environmental protection and quality. Considerations on the spatial dimension of EU policies thus represent a key component for a balanced and sustainable development and a support to territorial cohesion as well. In this context, EEA has been faced and is increasingly faced with demands for spatial and territorial analyses from its clients to support policy development in the area of soil degradation, nature conservation (e.g. connectivity of ecosystems/sites, coherence of Natura 2000 network), water management (e.g. river basins characterization), coastal areas etc. EEA itself needs to improve integration of spatial datasets from different sources and coordinate spatial analysis within ETCs in order to ensure consistency for integrated assessment and reporting.

Furthermore, recent strategic discussions amongst the member countries, European Parliament and the main EU institutions responsible for environmental policy, reporting and assessment (DG ENV, EEA, ESTAT and JRC) have underlined an increasing need for factual and quantitative information on land use related issues and for this to be based on timely, quality assured data. The EEA plays a key role in fulfilling these requirements together with Eionet and in close cooperation with Commission services: completion of two land cover inventories (Corine land cover 1990 and 2000). This knowledge now needs to be further consolidated and streamlined with other inventories to provide more regular, up to date, robust assessments of the state of the environment for land related phenomena and progress towards policy targets. To ensure that this goal is achieved, it is proposed that, among the partners involved, the EEA will now take the lead in thematic area ‘Land use’.

Taking the lead will require the EEA to provide an articulated support for a variety of activities including:

- the services of a data centre where needed, which should include:
 - development and streamlining of geospatial data flows; build and implement the integrated spatial information system, including data from monitoring and models on land use, water, biodiversity. Full use will be made of the reporting and data flows foreseen under GMES (and globally GEOSS), INSPIRE and EU legislation such as water framework and Natura 2000 directives, and updates of the Corine Land Cover.
 - establishment (where required) and running of quality assurance and control procedures; the main developments will be in the area of assuring the standards adopted by member countries and integrating non-geospatial information into the assessments.
 - development and support of indicators based on innovative assimilation of data and models, in particular agreed methodologies and standards for spatial resource accounting with ESTAT;
- production of policy-relevant information and communications with a wide variety of audiences by undertaking regular regional assessments on specific issues (e.g. environmental aspects of rural areas, urban spread).

These activities will be part of a joint work process with European Commission services and European Space Agency in particular towards the development and implementation of the shared European information system, of which INSPIRE and GMES service products are key structuring elements - the EEA will also play a crucial role in supporting those two programmes; EEA responsibilities have been identified in close cooperation with the lead Commission services –in particular, the EEA will assist the Commission on coordinating the European spatial data infrastructure under implementation of Inspire and will be the geo-node for environmental information in this context.

As indicated, the political interest in land use issues is high at the moment in Europe - see Table below -and the Agency approach to the many related policies should be pragmatic.

Main policy support activities

Policy and legal framework	<i>Theme</i>	<i>EEA assessments</i>	<i>Data management/ Dissemination</i>	<i>Products/services</i>

1) Community Structural Policies 2007-13 (European Spatial Development Perspective – Territorial Cohesion)	Natural assets, land use conflicts, physical planning	*	* (CLC) ⁵	Support to and cooperation with ESPON / DG REGIO Spatial indicators
2) Common Agriculture Policy (Agri-environmental Regulation; New guidelines for Rural Development)	Landscape diversity and management, agriculture habitats	*	* (CLC) (LUCAS) ⁶	agri-environment indicators Land & ecosystems accounts
3) Follow up European Strategy for ICZM	Land use and land cover change coastal zones	*	* (CLC) (LACOAST) ⁷	Spatial indicators Land & ecosystems accounts
4) Urban policy and sustainable land use (6EAP Thematic strategies)	Urban sprawl, rural-urban relationships	*	* (CLC) (MOLAND) ⁸	Spatial indicators Land & ecosystems accounts
5) European strategy on soil	Soil protection	*		Spatial analysis of soil issues
6) Community Biodiversity Strategy – Habitats and Birds directives (Natura 2000)	Designated areas and habitats/ ecosystems	*	*	Spatial indicators Land & ecosystems accounts
7) Common Transport Policy	SEA of TEN	*		Comparative impact analysis
8) Water Framework directive	River Basin Management Plans Prevention of groundwater pollution from diffuse and local soil contamination	*	* (watersheds) (CLC) (LUCAS)	Geonode for spatial data infrastructure WISE ⁹ Spatial indicators Water accounts
9) Nitrate Directive	Ground water protection		*	Indicators on diffuse soil contamination
10) Landfill Directive	contaminated sites	*		
11) Sewage Sludge Directive	organic matter in soils,	*		Indicators on soil

⁵ CLC: CORINE Land Cover

⁶ LUCAS: Land Use/Cover Area frame Statistical Survey

⁷ LACOAST: Land Cover changes in Coastal zones 1970s-1990s

⁸ MOLAND: Monitoring Land Cover Dynamics

⁹ WISE: Water Information System for Europe

	soil contamination			contamination
12) Inspire European Spatial Data Infrastructure	Land cover and land use geospatial data		*	User requirements, data specifications
13) GMES Global Monitoring of Environment and Security	land cover and land use monitoring		*	User federation, shared information system
14) Research 6/7 th Framework programme (Environment and Sustainable development)	Carbon sinks, remote sensing, prevention of groundwater pollution from point sources and diffuse contamination	*	(CLC) (LUCAS)	
International conventions and programmes support				
1) UN Climate Change Convention	Greenhouse gas sinks (vegetation and soils)		(CLC)	
2) UNEP Regional Seas Conventions	GIS Working Group Marine Interregional Forum			Spatial indicators
3) UN Convention on Desertification UNCCD	Soil degradation in the Mediterranean	*	(CLC)	
4) UN Convention on Biodiversity	Biodiversity in soils	*	(Designated areas)	Spatial indicators Ecosystems accounts
5) Convention on Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP)	Air pollution, modelling and mapping critical loads, land use specific deposition rates, location and description of ecosystems	*	(CLC)	
6) Ramsar Convention on Wetlands	Changes on wetlands and water resources	*	* (Designated areas)	Spatial indicators Land & ecosystems accounts
7) GEO/GEOSS (Group on earth observations)	Comprehensive, coordinated and sustained earth observation system(s)	*	(CLC) - GlobCover	Shared information system

3. Specific tasks of the European Topic Centre on land use and spatial information

The new ETC should provide support for the work of other ETCs and the EEA itself in the field of spatial analysis, along the overall objectives presented above. In particular, the new ETC will be entrusted with:

- Support to the development and management of the EEA components of the European spatial information system, including links to developments in Inspire and GMES in Europe and globally, GEOSS;
- Quality control and assurance of geospatial data integrated in the information system (as part of data management at large);
- Maintenance and development of Corine Land Cover should be a core task of the ETC;
- Support to the development of specific indicators in the area of land use (issue and trend-based), and the related policy-relevant assessments;
- Consolidation and testing of innovative spatial analysis and modelling methods and tools, as well as information retrieving (e.g. land accounts, functional mapping and interactive atlases).

Work area 1 Data and Monitoring

The ETC will be a key support function to the EEA in its role as the data centre for land use for the EU and in the development of the in-house spatial data infrastructure as a contribution to the data centre concept as well as the EEA's role as the environmental geonode for Inspire. To this end, the ETC will support EEA on the coordination of the activities of the Eionet Spatial Data Interest Community which will collect environmental thematic user requirements for the implementing rules of the proposed Inspire directive.

The ETC will contribute to the maintenance and development of common reference datasets at European scale and to related datasets at global level. The ETC will as well support the EEA data centre related to land use and land cover information by providing web services including data handling of large volume databases (i.e. land cover, satellite imagery). The ETC will also support the EEA map production and quality control for products and services.

The ETC will continue to lead on the quality assurance and quality control of the planned more regular and higher resolution updates of the Corine land cover database (in the context of GMES services). In addition, the ETC will support EEA to consolidate and further develop links and data sharing with European experimental and operational land monitoring projects like Moland (land cover mapping at local scale), Vegetation, GlobWetland (monitoring of wetlands), LUCAS (in situ area sampling survey on land use and cover), EuroSION (coastal erosion monitoring), IRENA (agri-environment monitoring) and other international and national projects. In particular, support will be

expected in coordinating the European component of the ESA Globcover 2005 project for land cover mapping and participate in the product definition and validation.

The ETC will support EEA in the related discussions and developments, GMES Service Element Land Monitoring in particular and help maintain the inventory of in situ monitoring and prepare reports to be submitted to the GMES Advisory Council. The ETC will contribute to consolidating the federation of user needs for GMES services. These activities are to secure the long term sustainability of these land monitoring services with the view to improve or ensure continuity of some of the existing in situ monitoring components as well as the required adequate space component for remote sensing of the earth land surface.

The ETC Land use and spatial information will also provide a service function to other ETCs to facilitate the identification, comparability, harmonization and access to geospatial data needed for thematic processing and assessments.

Work area 2: Land accounting and Indicators

Work on data, indicators, regular thematic and integrated assessments is interlinked. ETC-Land use and spatial information will be expected to give support especially where the link to the member countries is crucial to ensuring sound and quality- assured data flows. The work will be designed to cover the following objectives:

- The ETC will be expected to maintain and develop land-related indicator fact sheets especially for the Core Set of Indicators¹⁰, which include an analysis of land cover / use changes based on the accounting methodology.
- Regular assessment of the potentials of land assets or of conflicts in the use of land, which requires combining statistical and geographical approaches, whereby land use functions can be linked to economic accounts, directly or via satellite accounts.
- More indicator development work will be also needed in the areas of land use; the ETC is expected to contribute to the identification, testing and implementation of new candidate indicators for regular spatial assessments of environmental issues.

Work area 3: Support the development and implementation of EU policy

It is important for the EEA to address each of the land use-related policies individually in their thematic context (e.g. nature protection networks, availability of water, etc.) –see Table presented in Point 2 above. However, the analytical work on land use should also be to depict the inter-linkages which may explain the processes behind the changes observed in the

¹⁰ See e.g. <http://themes.eea.eu.int/indicators/>

conflicting demands and uses of land and their effects on ecosystems at large. Land use per se is not subject to an elaborated and articulated policy stream, as are other media such as water or air. This aspect of sectoral ('vertical') and integrated ('horizontal') policy relevance will be considered by the Agency in terms of work priorities (for instance, environmental characterisation of rural areas and dynamics of agri-environment ecosystems are considered as post 2006 projects).

To this end, it is vital that the new ETC is able to provide the relevant expertise in a flexible manner across a range of topics, from coastal zone management to urban environment or strategic impact assessment – in the context of evaluating the effects of land planning and management in particular. Cooperation with other ETCs will be key to secure the in-depth knowledge of the connected thematic/sectoral policies.

Work area 4: EEA assessment reports

The topics of the spatial analyses and assessments depend on needs arising from policy processes, as reflected in the EEA annual management plans for the period.

In general the ETC will need to keep consolidating the vision developed so far with regard to land use and regional assessments (e.g. coastal zones, urban dynamics). This vision should focus on the specific tasks of the ETC in reporting on the influence and impact of human activities on land, and on the possible policy measures. It should also take into account policy developments especially in DG Agri, DG TREN, Regio and other fora such as ESPON.

The ETC thus should not spend resources in a very regular update of a full set of indicators on all regional issues, or to maintain the appropriate networks for this and to be heavily involved in all steps of the policy process (e.g.; integrated coastal zone management). Instead the ETC should analyse and report on (if appropriate on the basis of indicators) spatial trends in these issues every three to five years. To this end, the ability to characterise portions of the EU territory (reporting units that can be biogeographic regions, administrative units, river basins district, regional zones such as coastal or mountain areas, etc.) according a coherent description of spatial features and changes thereof for Europe as a whole is the key objective. The experience gained by the current ETC-TE in the assessment of coastal areas is viewed by the EEA as an example of good practice, which includes an effective cooperation with Commission services and an adequate connection with key stakeholders.

In this approach, the use of spatial modelling techniques and tools, including prospective analysis (scenarios), will be an important activity of the new ETC. Unless decided otherwise with EEA, the ETC will not develop new methods but instead compare, select and apply robust tools that will be properly documented -return of experience, know-how dissemination.

Work area 5: ETC management, networking and capacity building in EEA member countries

The organisational set up and *management* procedures of the ETC consortium must meet the special and general conditions to the agreement (Annex I). To ensure this, the management of the ETC requires e.g. clear decision and communication structures within the consortium, and well established links to the Agency and the EEA member countries, to the European Commission and to other relevant organisations. In response to the yearly work programme, which is the basis for the grant, the consortium shall produce an annual implementation plan.

The ETC management must also include procedures for quality assurance – inclusive language check - of all its deliverables.

The ETC shall maintain close links with Eionet and EEA member countries, through:

- strong communication effort with the countries, including networking and regular country visits;
- in dialogue with the countries identifying barriers to optimally perform their tasks (e.g. monitoring capacities, staff resources, knowledge gaps) and developing proposals to solve any issues;
- carrying out outreach and information dissemination campaigns to the land use community;
- maintaining and further consolidating the providing of training and capacity building in the countries for land cover inventories;
- organising regular Eionet workshops and seminars to discuss the outcomes of the work and plan future activities with the member countries;
- joint work with other ETCs.

Within the implementation of its work programme, the new ETC shall seek efficient cooperation and mutual benefit with the existing and planned *networks* relevant to its domain of work, from data sharing to specific assessment expertise or to research activities. Such cooperation can take the form of an explicit partnership, prior to EEA agreement; special attention should be given to new developments, e.g. in the context of GMES or the 7th Framework research programme. It is expected that the ETC will keep up with relevant established and new networks, as opportunities and need be.

Collaboration with international bodies is part of the ETC remit, upon identification with the EEA. To ensure proper links with main partners and clients and better respond to the cooperation and connected needs, participation, where appropriate, in relevant international working groups is essential. This includes working groups on assessments, information/data and guidebooks. These activities aim to help harmonising assessments at

international level, reporting of data and information for national and international obligations, and streamline international reporting.

Collaborations with the Statistical Office and the Joint research centre of the European Commission are among the most important ones, within the frame of a joint work programme between EEA and these institutions.

4. Guidelines for the expertise and organisation of the European Topic Centre on land use and spatial information

The present and earlier ETCs are consortia of government organisations, private non-profit organisations and a few commercial firms. Based upon the experiences of the Agency some guidelines can be given for a successful consortium applicable to the ETC land use and spatial information.

A. The structure of the ETC consortium

The ETC is expected to comprise of a consortium with one coordinating organisation and several partners. The following points have to be considered when establishing the consortium:

- It is the experience that it is difficult to manage many small partners (e.g. with contracts of less than 50 000 euro/yr) in a consortium and that fewer partners can improve management. However this has to be balanced against the need to cover the required fields of expertise and to ensure good geographical coverage.
- For the topic land use and spatial information, a relatively small core team to cover core tasks to be supplemented by additional expertise to meet specific needs for assessments seems to be an appropriate, flexible and responsive ETC structure.
- The work programme may be best addressed by a 'core group' located at the coordinating organisation, supported by partners with specific competences. The expertise needed in the core group is both topical and technical, including:
 - coordinator, having excellent management and networking capabilities;
 - administrative support, able to work in English and organise European meetings and consultations;
 - geospatial data management with experience in QA/QC;
 - expertise to design spatial information systems including the ability to handle relevant GIS components in cooperation with the European data infrastructure developed at EEA;
 - expertise in spatial analysis, across environmental and sectoral themes, including knowledge of physical planning policies;
 - the core team should have access to financial control services, to ensure proper financial management.
- The consortium as a whole should cover the main work areas with the expertise listed under Section B. but also have excellent links to the wider European expertise. This is particularly important where specific skills are

needed e.g. for certain methodologies, modelling or for a wider sector integration, etc.

- Therefore the ETC should be structured in a way to ensure the necessary flexibility to be able to adapt to changing needs and being able to subcontract experts for specific projects.

As an indication, the budget needed for the work will be ca 1 200 000 € per year the remainder coming from national contributions, amounting to at least 10 % of the total. Specific figures will be decided annually, based on the available budget and annual management plan of the EEA.

B. Technical and scientific expertise

The composition of the ETC land use and spatial information has to ensure a proper balance between the managerial and the representational skills together with a wide professional experience covering the whole range of issues related with land use issues. To cover work indicated under Point 3 above, the ETC consortium is expected to have technical and scientific expertise in the following areas:

- Very good knowledge of land use and land cover issues, excellent understanding of the interdisciplinary issues associated with land management and experience in the development of related policy relevant indicators;
- Very good expertise in geospatial environmental data management (in particular data handling, quality assurance of large volume and complex data sets);
- Very good GIS expertise doubled by a good understanding of the integrated spatial assessment and spatial indicator development;
- Very good experience in CORINE land cover mapping
- Very good expertise in remote sensing developments and space/air-born monitoring, as well as adequate experience in dealing with major actors involved;
- Very good knowledge and expertise in regional assessment, from coastal to urban environment to impacts of large-scale infrastructure (e.g. transport networks);
- Experience in sectoral analysis such as socio-economic geography and land planning;
- Very good experience in using or producing prospective analysis (outlooks) and models for land-based assessments;
- Experience in using geo-statistical methods (e.g. sampling, probabilistic approaches, environmental accounting) in the environment domain;

- Analytical, synthetic and writing skills;
- Good communication capacities.

Besides strong professional skills all core team members are expected to have previous experience in working in a multi-disciplinary and preferably international environment.

C. The procedures to execute the work programme

In order to deliver high quality products and services the following requirements for executing the programme have to be considered:

- The working language of EEA is English. The ETC is expected to deliver texts (background notes, draft fact sheets and reports, etc.) that do not need further language checking before publishing. The consortium shall establish a quality control procedure for this;
- ETCs report to the Agency. The primary link will be between the ETC coordinating organisation (ETC-manager) and the EEA liaison project manager at the Agency.
- The work of the ETC needs to be closely integrated into the overall work of the EEA. All relevant EEA project managers will keep close contact to all relevant partners on specific tasks. The overall coordination of the different tasks of the ETC, cooperation with other ETCs, and other external EEA cooperation is expected to be ensured by a stringent management of the ETC closely interacting with the management structure in the EEA.
- The ETC is also expected to provide input into the initial development of the annual EEA work programme and provide EEA with proposals for the continuous development of the working areas.
- The ETC should be structured in a way to ensure proper linkages with other ETCs as cross-sectoral and cross-thematic cooperation and integration needs further attention in the future. This integrated and more complex cooperation will need highly transparent ETC-management and intensive coordination with EEA avoid duplication or disintegration of tasks across partners.
- Maintaining and improving the links to the European Environment Information and Observation Network¹¹, i.e. the 'eionet-terrestrial'¹² and in particular with the Primary Contact Points and National Reference Centres appointed by the member countries is the basic foundation under the work of the ETC. This means e.g. ad hoc technical support to member countries to make them able to contribute to the reporting of

¹¹ <http://eionet.eu.int/>

¹² <http://terrestrial.eionet.eu.int/>

'priority data'. The ETCs also to a considerable extent assist the EEA in organising annual meetings with the Eionet partners; the support given to the member countries should reflect the specific needs of all countries.

- Participation in cross cutting collection of data and information as well as all integrated assessments and spatial analysis creates the need to cooperate with the other ETCs¹³ set up by the Agency.
- The EEA is committed with an internal Environmental Policy to ensure that the EEA operates in an environmentally sound manner -the EEA is EMAS certified since March 2005. The consortium will be requested to take in consideration reduction of environmental impact of activities of the ETC and to develop an Environmental Policy for the ETC.

¹³ see list in Section 1

5. Submission of the proposal

Natural or legal persons - which constitute the consortium - that do not fall under any of the exclusion cases (see Section 6 below) are invited to submit to the Agency proposals for the European Topic Centre on Land use and Spatial information 2007-2010.

The consortium may include organisations from all EEA Member countries (see Section 1). The quality of coverage of the EEA Member countries area and the balance in the geographical distribution of the partners will be taken into account in the evaluation.

In drawing up the proposal, the consortium should bear in mind the provisions of the standard framework partnership agreement and the specific agreement for grants attached to this invitation to tender (Annex I).

The proposal must include all the information and documents required for the appraisal of tender on the basis of the selection criteria and the award criteria set out below.

The main text part of the proposals should include **in the following order**:

1. An executive summary of the proposal, **not exceeding 5 pages**:
 - ETC name as indicated in the title of these specifications
 - Title, address, telephone number, fax number and e-mail address of the (proposed) lead organisation
 - Name and short (one paragraph) CV of proposed ETC manager
 - Titles and addresses of other organisation(s) included in consortium proposal
 - Names and short (one paragraph) CVs of main experts proposed for ETC consortium and who would contribute at least 100 days/year to ETC
 - A summary of how it is proposed to organise and deliver the core work, in particular which partner(s) will be responsible for the main tasks and activities, how these will be coordinated by the core team and how the budget could be allocated across the tasks;
2. An appreciation of the vision and priorities for the ETC over the next four years (2007-2010); how the results will contribute to the development of policies in the area; how the priorities will be developed and how the expertise offered will provide a balanced team covering the range of expertise required and that will be able to contribute to the individual tasks and activities as specified. This appreciation should include an overview of which partner(s) will be responsible for, and/or contribute to, which tasks and activities and how this will be coordinated across partners.

3. An appreciation of how the proposed consortium takes into account the need to reflect the different geographic circumstances of EEA member area.
4. An appreciation of the way the member countries will be involved in the work of the Topic Centre.
5. An appreciation of how the proposed consortium will offer some continuity to carry forward the experience, expertise and capacity developed to date in ETC Land Use and Spatial Information.
6. A statement on the proposed approach to quality assurance and quality control.
7. An overview of the experts in the consortium, including the description of a core team in the coordination organisation.
8. A proposal for the organisation of the Topic Centre, including a rationale for the chosen arrangement and the environmental policy of the consortium.
9. A proposal for technical/scientific review of progress and products through, for example, the EEA Scientific Committee, peer review, EIONET workshops, etc.
10. A breakdown of expected costs for personnel and an indication of likely non-staff costs (travel/subsistence, equipment, report production and other materials), within the likely annual budget
11. CVs of experts contributing significantly to the ETC, including a statement on availability and the number of days they will likely provide to the project every year
12. Brief summary of the capacities and portfolio of relevant projects carried out by each member of the consortium.

Annex V is a checklist of all (supporting) documentation needed.

Five bound copies and one unbound signed original of the proposal must be submitted. If any 'promotional material' on any of the partners is included with the proposal then only one copy of such material should be submitted.

6. Exclusion criteria

The conditions of participation of the proposers will be verified during the negotiation of the framework agreement. Before that however, proposers will have signed a declaration stating that they do not fall under any of the cases given by Article 93(1) of the Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (Annex IV). Before the conclusion of the agreement, they will also have given the Agency the information listed in Article 173 of the Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002, of 23 December 2002, laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities.

Proposers' attention is drawn on the provisions of Article 173(4) of the Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002. However, taking in account the financial collective responsibility of the consortium, the Agency will not require external audit reports over the last two years for consortia including public bodies.

Exclusion following Article 93(1) of the Financial Regulation occurs if candidates are in any of the following situations:

- are bankrupt or being wound up, have suspended business activities, are having their affairs administered by the court, have entered into an arrangement with creditors or are in any analogous situation, or are the subject of proceedings of this nature;
- have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgement which has the force of res judicata;
- have been guilty of grave professional misconduct;
- have not fulfilled their obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or taxes;
- have been subject of a judgement which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity detrimental to the Communities' financial interests;
- following another procurement procedure or grant award procedure financed by the Community budget, they have been declared to be in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with their contractual obligations;
- are subject to conflict of interest;
- have been guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the contracting authority.

In addition, the European Environment Agency demands candidates to ensure that they have not been convicted for an environmental offence in the exercise of the profession.

7. Selection criteria

The proposal must include evidence of the professional, technical and financial qualifications of each of the partner organisations by means of the following documentation:

- an identification sheet (name or business name, legal status, contact person, etc.) (Annex III);
- copy of the inscription on a trade or company register and of the inscription on the VAT-register; in case of universities, NGO's or similar organisations without a registration in such registers, the relevant part of an establishment agreement should be provided which allows verifying the legal status of the institute
- proof of stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain the activity throughout the 2007-2010 period
- detailed curriculum vitae of the personnel significantly involved in the proposed Topic Centre, including information on the candidate's working languages and those in which he/she is able to submit reports.
- notes confirming participation in the proposal by each of the partners
- letters stating the intention to provide co-financing to the project for at least a total of 10% of the agreed work programme per year¹⁴.
- For each partner a letter from the EEA management board member of the country in which the partner is based, identifying the institute as able to perform the function of a European Topic Centre within Eionet¹⁵

¹⁴ Before signing the agreement for each individual grant the final confirmation of co-financing for that grant will be needed. Co-financing may include making available staff to the project.

¹⁵ The EEA founding regulation art 4.4 requires that member countries identify the institutions that could be specifically entrusted to act as a topic centre of the network for specific tasks. As the new ETC agreements will be partnership agreements this requirement holds for all partners, not only (as in the past) for the coordinating organisation.

8. Awarding criteria

The framework partnership agreement will be awarded to the most advantageous proposal taking into account:

	Max. award points
1) <u>Approach to the work programme</u> - capability to provide information that addresses the needs of policy makers. The proposal should demonstrate the consortium's understanding of the objectives of the EEA strategy, and the policies to which ETC land use and spatial information should contribute. This should be reflected in the set up of the consortium, the design of the work programme and the products proposed	15
2) <u>Expertise on land use information</u> – in-depth knowledge of the relationship between pressures, state and impacts in the multiple uses of land and the effects of related policy/societal responses. Capacity to handle the relevant data and information (knowledge of relevant European data sets and monitoring programmes) in support to relevant analytical frameworks.	20
3) <u>Experience of land use policy processes</u> - the capacity of the consortium in supporting firstly EU and pan-European but also global and national policy instruments related to land use and land management, as evident from their previous projects and publications/reports; experience of participation in the development and implementation of this policy by providing expert advice in working groups etc.	15
4) <u>Capacity in developing indicators and supporting assessment</u> - the proposal and previous projects and publications/reports should show the capacity to provide the required deliverables.	10
5) <u>Technical expertise in geospatial data management</u> – the expertise of the consortium as evident from their previous projects and publications/reports/internet sites as regards data flow management, including validation processes, quality assurance and quality control, data base development and management including the handling of spatial data, GIS data processing for indicators and presentation. Continuity with CORINE land cover data management ensured.	15
6) <u>Use of existing capacities in Europe</u> - sound approach to access of expertise in the member countries and in institutes external to the consortium, links with relevant scientific and administrative organisations in Europe as evident from previous projects and reports.	10
7) <u>Project management and networking capacity</u> – A balanced spread of partners across Europe. Sound arrangements for the management of the	15

ETC consortium, and track record in implementing effective management procedures, enhancing cooperation between partners, and with countries and other stakeholders, transparent financial administration, environmental policy adopted and quality assurance. Adequate level of manpower, resources and output corresponding to the indicative annual budget.	
TOTAL	100

Each element will be scored according to the degree that the proposer fulfils the requirements, as demonstrated by CV's of key staff, portfolio of relevant projects by each consortium member, geographical coverage, and track record in delivery of similar products.

9. Deadlines and procedure for submitting the proposal

Proposals are to be submitted (according to the publication in the Official Journal) either by registered mail or by delivery (in person or by an authorised representative or private courier service) to Ronan Uhel, The European Environment Agency, Kongens Nytorv 6, 1050 Copenhagen K, Denmark, **to arrive not later than 11 May 2006, 16:00**. In the case of delivery (rather than use of registered mail) a receipt must be obtained as proof of submission, signed and dated by an EEA official..

Proposals must be submitted in **five copies** (four bound and one unbound) and placed inside **two** sealed envelopes. The inner envelope, addressed to the person indicated above, should be marked: **“Reply to call for proposals ETC Land use and spatial information. Not to be opened by the internal mail department”**. If self-adhesive envelopes are used, they must be sealed with tape and the sender must sign across the tape.

Submission of a proposal implies acceptance of the terms specified in the ‘Special and general conditions to the framework partnership agreement’ in all matters not governed by this invitation and waives proposers’ own terms of business.

Period of validity of the proposal: Six months from the closing date of this call for proposals.

The proposers will be informed whether or not their proposal has been successful.

Annexes

- I Standard Framework Partnership agreement and specific grant agreement, including special and general conditions
- II Procedure for evaluating the proposals
- III Identification sheet
- IV Autodeclaration form exclusion criteria
- IV Checklist for submitting the proposal

BRIEFING MEETING and further information

A briefing meeting to provide more background information on the expectations for the ETC and the procedure for submitting a proposal will be organised on 28 February 2006 in Copenhagen. If you are interested, please register by sending an e-mail to marc.clement@eea.eu.int. We will send you the meeting details in response.

Any immediate questions regarding this call for proposals should be sent by e-mail to the European Environment Agency: ronan.uhel@eea.eu.int.

All applicants are encouraged to consult the section 'contract opportunities' on the EEA website regularly before the deadline (11 May 2006, 16:00).