

CIRCLE-2 ERA-NET JOINT CALL FRAMEWORK and RULES

CIRCLE-MED2-2013

**Adaptation to Climate Change from a natural
and social science perspective:
Water in coastal Mediterranean areas**

Date: 4th March 2013

The aim of this CIRCLE-2 joint call is to encourage scientific cooperation between social and natural scientists in order to find novel solutions for transnational water-related climate change adaptation problems in support to public policies in coastal areas of the Mediterranean region.

1. Background

CIRCLE-2 ERA-Net (Climate Impact Research & Response Coordination for a Larger Europe) is a European FP7 Network¹. One of its objectives is to programme and fund transnational joint calls for policy-relevant research proposals using common management tools and mechanisms. These calls should reflect CIRCLE-2's Common Strategic Research Agenda (CARA)² and fund the production of climate adaptation knowledge along identified gaps and needs.

The common strategic research agenda on CCIVA forms the research strategic background that can ensure the scientific and policy relevance of its knowledge outcomes sets priorities for CIRCLE-2 funding activities by analysing the status, timings and needs of the participating organisations and countries.

Previously, CIRCLE-2 and its' predecessor CIRCLE CA have funded three joint calls on adaptation research with focus on Mediterranean, Nordic and Mountain areas themes.

The theme of the current call has been identified as a combination of current top research needs in the common strategic research agenda priority of CIRCLE-2.

2. Funders

The funding countries of this call are France, Greece, and Portugal represented by the following research funding organisations from the CIRCLE-MED Group: Ministry for Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy (MEDDE), France, Mariolopoulos-Kanaginis Foundation for the Environmental Sciences (MKF), Greece, and Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), Portugal further on called FUNDERS.

The FUNDERS have made funding pledges of up to € 610 000, consisting of the following national contributions:

Country	Funding organisation	Total funding available (k€)
France	MEDDE	350
Greece	MKF	60
Portugal	FCT	200

¹ <http://www.circle-era.eu/np4/home.html>

² <http://www.circle-era.eu/np4/CARA>

3. MANAGEMENT OF THE CALL

3.1. Call Steering Committee (CSC)

The Call Steering Committee (CSC) will manage the Call, using the principles in this paper as its operating framework. The CSC is constituted by representatives of each of the FUNDERS national organisation participating in the ERA-NET CIRCLE-MED2 call.

The key role of the CSC will be to manage the purpose, scope, and duration of the call and specifically to:

- Manage the proposal evaluation process;
- Appoint the Evaluation Committee;
- Approve and decide funding of each project (within the framework of the available budget and partners' possibilities to fund research projects);
- Send to all applicants' information on the evaluation results via the Call Virtual Secretariat within one month after its decision.

3.2. National Contact Person

Each contributing country will appoint one contact person to act as a national contact person for the call. These national contact persons will have relevant roles, principally to:

- Provide support for all applicants (Lead Partner and project partners);
- Undertake the administrative tasks associated with national operations of the call.

National contact persons are indicated in the following table:

Country	Funding organisation	Contact person
France	Ministry for Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy (MEDDE)	Maurice Imbard maurice.imbard@developpement-durable.gouv.fr Phone : (+33) (0)1 40 81 33 32
Greece	Mariolopoulos-Kanaginis Foundation for the Environmental Sciences (MKF)	Vasilis Tritakis vas@mariolopoulosfoundation.gr Phone: (+30) 210 362 38 61
Portugal	Foundation for Science and Technology, Portugal (FCT)	Dina Carrilho Dina.Carrilho@fct.pt Phone : (+351) 21 392 43 81

3.3. Call Virtual Secretary

The group of the national contact persons will form the Call Virtual Secretary (contact mail: circle2call2013@fc.ul.pt) which will be responsible for the first step of the evaluation (eligibility check). Positively evaluated projects will be sent by mail to the Evaluation Committee (EC).

The call secretary will be the primary point of contact for the applicants and evaluators, providing a central service additional to the national contact persons.

It will collect the applications, make the formal eligibility check and distribution to the national contact persons, coordinate and organise transparent scientific evaluation and approval process of applications, inform the project coordinators about the funding decision and monitoring of the funded projects (e. g. reporting).

The call virtual secretary will be coordinated by MEDDE (France).

The task of the call virtual secretary coordinator is: a) to keep on track the timetable; b) chairing/facilitating the meetings; and c) communication issues.

3.4. Evaluation committee (EC)

Applications will be evaluated by scientific experts (3 per application) by peer-review process coordinated by the call virtual secretary. The experts will be nominated and jointly agreed upon by the CSC. The EC will scientifically judge, make a consensus agreement and rank the received applications and give its recommendations for funding to the CSC.

A centralized international peer-review evaluation procedure will be performed on a remote basis. It will be confidential and based on the criteria and their weighting score given to ensure high overall and in particular scientific quality of the proposed projects. The evaluators will agree on confidentiality and declare conflicts of interest.

4. The principles of CIRCLE-MED2

This CIRCLE-MED2 call will offer grant funding by applying the 'National Contributions Model', which allows countries to pay for their own researchers. Clarifications on the possibilities to fund other countries researchers need to be obtained on a case by case basis from each national contact person listed in 3.2.

4.1. Call Funding

4.1.1. Funding Rates and Eligibility

Each funding organisation will rely upon its usual rules to determine the funding rate, eligibility of different types of cost, and eligibility of different types of organisation. The implication of this approach is that different researchers in a transnational consortium will be funded under different rules, and there will be different requirements in terms of eligibility of costs, funding rates, and requirement to bring third party funding to the project. However, each researcher will be operating within a rule-set, which is 'normal' for their country. Clarifications on national rules can be obtained from the National Contact Persons listed in 3.2.

There is no strict upper limit for a project, but in the view of available budget, we recommend that projects should not exceed € 300.000.

4.1.2. Deadline

The call will be published on the same date (Monday, 4th March 2013) in all contributing countries (in English) and on the CIRCLE website at:

<http://www.circle-era.eu/np4/Call2013.html>.

The deadline for submission of proposals is Monday, 6th of May 2013, at 18.00 CET.

4.1.3. Project Duration

The duration of projects is limited to a period of up to two to three years (24-36 months). It is intended that all projects start at the same time.

4.2. Project Proposal

4.2.1. Eligible Project Structure and Project Management

Within the framework of this call, funding will be provided for transnational, interdisciplinary joint projects based on a division of labour. Each project will consist of several work packages.

Each project must include three independent institutions from the three different FUNDERS countries of this call. The Project leader must be from one of the FUNDERS country of the call. Others may also participate as partners of the consortia, but must be independently financed.

However, applicants should take into account that the building and management of large consortia with more than five partners might be too time-consuming under the given framework conditions.

All participants accept the rules and agreements made within the framework of this call. The co-applicants designate a Project Leader among them. He/she must represent the project to the Call Steering Committee (CSC) and to the Call Virtual Secretariat.

4.2.2. Requirements for Grants

The Project Leader, who manages the project, must be from a funding country. Funding countries will fund their national institutions, and abide to national regulations in this respect.

Participants from other countries may participate, but must bring their own funding.

4.2.3. How to Present your Proposal?

The Lead Partner of the proposed project has to submit a Common Application Form on behalf of the Consortium.

This form can be downloaded at <http://www.circle-era.eu/np4/Call2013.html>.

The Common Application Form has to be completed in English and requires information on:

- Summary of the proposal;
- Administration of the project;
- Detailed research work description;
- Costs per partner and requested funding (including own contribution and costs justification);
- Time schedule;
- Consortium Agreement;

Attachments:

- Curriculum vitae for all key personnel;
- In case of non-FUNDER countries, a statement of own funding signed by the researcher and the head of institution, is required.

4.2.4. Submission of proposals

The Common Application Form should be sent in PDF format to the following e-mail address: circle2call2013@fc.ul.pt

We recommend that submitted e-mails are identified with the following subject:

Submission CIRCLE-MED2-[Acronym of the project]

IMPORTANT NOTE:

A physical copy of the Common Application Form has to be sent by mail to the Call Secretariat by no later than Monday, 6th of May 2013, at 18.00 CET (proof by post stamp).

The Call Secretariat post address is the following:

Maurice IMBARD
Ministère de l'Écologie, du Développement Durable et de l'Énergie
CGDD/DRI/SR - Pièce 4-45
Tour Voltaire
92055 LA DEFENSE Cedex
FRANCE

4.3. Evaluation Process

The evaluation of proposals is carried out at two different levels:

1. First Stage: "Eligibility Check";
2. Second Stage: "Scientific Evaluation".

4.3.1. Eligibility Check

The first stage of the assessment procedure will be carried out by the Call Virtual Secretariat based on the following general criteria (exclusion criteria):

1. Relevance to the call;
2. The submitted project outline includes research institutions or companies from the three funding countries, fulfils formal requirements of this call;
3. The given deadline for application is met. The form of the project outline and further formal criteria are in line with the regulations in this call (the applicants should take into account the funding pledge of the different funders);
4. The research team must involve both natural and social scientists;
5. The application has to be written in English.

The Project Leaders will be informed via E-mail of the results of this assessment within one month after the closing of the call.

4.3.2. Scientific Evaluation

Only proposals, which are fully compliant with the procedures outlined in 4.3.1 shall be eligible for consideration for this stage. The second stage of the assessment procedure is based on the following specific criteria.

The evaluation criteria are as follows:

A - Scientific quality

1. Scientific quality of the project (e.g. objectives, methodology);
2. Added value for the proposed research area;
3. Inter- and trans-disciplinarity;

B- Management

4. Quality of applicants and suitability of the consortium;
5. Quality of the consortium management;
6. Prospects for success with regard to the work and financial plan including time schedule;

C - Impact

7. Innovation (science/methodology, technology transfer and dissemination);
8. Trans-national linkage and benefit of cooperation;
9. Expected exploitability of results and potential for practical use;
10. Stakeholder involvement.

The following recommendations will also form part of the evaluation criteria:

- Thematic relevance with regard to the focus and criteria of this call, (eligibility criteria);
- Scientific cooperation between social and natural scientists (eligibility criteria);
- Involvement of research teams of other countries (with their own funding);
- Synergies with and links to relevant on-going adaptation research projects;
- Support to open access to scientific data and tools (see national rules);
- Feasibility of the budget;
- Promotion of researcher mobility;
- Strong knowledge user involvement including knowledge dissemination and knowledge transfer, in order to make research results available and supportive of public policies.

In this second step, the project proposals will be assessed according to the above mentioned criteria and rated by the Evaluation Committee appointed by the Call Steering Committee.

Proposals will be scored for all criteria according to the following scale:

5 - Excellent

4 - Very good

3 - Good

2 - Fair

1 - Poor

0 - The proposal fails to address the issue under examination or cannot be judged against the criteria due to missing or incomplete information

4.3.3. Final Ranking

As judged by the scientific evaluation, only excellent or very good project proposals will be examined at this stage.

The Call Steering Committee will then decide upon funding within the framework of the available budgets and the recommendations from EC. The Lead Partner involved will receive information on the results within one month after the Call Steering Committee's decision via the Joint Call Secretariat.

4.4. Contractual Relationships

4.4.1. Funding Contracts

Each project includes several consortium members, called Project Partners and one Project Leader. Each Project Partner (including the Project Leader will have a separate funding contract or likewise, (dependent on the national regulations) with one of the national funders. The contracts will be let in a coordinated way such that the projects will be delivered transnational.

For each funding contract for an approved project it is intended to have an identical starting time. The duration of projects is limited to a period between two and three years (24-36 months).

If a Project Partner leaves a Project Consortium, the problem has to be solved by the Project Consortium in line with its consortium agreement. The national funders must be kept informed of any such events.

The Lead Partner of an approved project has to inform the Call Virtual Secretariat and the National Contact Points about any changes in the work plan, which might affect the implementation of the project. Those shall only be minor and will need to be authorised by the funders.

4.4.2. Research Consortium Agreements

The CIRCLE-2 funders requires all successful research consortia to enter into consortium agreements between themselves, in order to manage the delivery of the project activities, finances, Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) and to avoid disputes, which might be detrimental to the completion of the project. After the funding decision for a project, the consortium agreement needs to be signed by the Project Partners and confirmation of this has to be sent to all the respective FUNDERS.

It will be the responsibility of the Lead Partner to draw up a consortium agreement suitable to the Project Partners. The consortium agreement will normally be under the law and legal system of the country of the Lead Partner.

The purpose of this document is to:

- Underpin the researchers collaboration, and provide the researchers with mutual assurance on project management structures and procedures, and their rights and obligations towards one another; and
- Assure the research funders that the Project Consortia have a satisfactory decision making capability and are able to work together in a synergistic manner.

The following subjects (as a minimum) should be addressed by the Consortium Agreement:

- Purpose and definitions;
- Organisation and management of the project;
- Lead Partner: nomination of the Lead Partner for the consortium and description of the role of the Lead Partner;
- Partners: persons in charge, roles and key tasks, conditions for their change, obligations and responsibilities of the research partners;
- Deliverables (transnational reports and if relevant requirements for national reports where co-ordination is required);
- Resources and funding;
- Confidentiality and publishing;
- Intellectual property rights (how this will be handled between the partners);
- Decision making within the consortium;
- Handling of internal disputes;
- Liabilities of the partners towards one another (including the handling of default of contract).

4.4.3. Project Starting Date

Funded projects should start on December 1st 2013.

Until that date, all partners involved have to agree on a consortium agreement, time schedule for the project and funding modalities.

Once the contracts come into effect, eligible costs may be claimed according to the national rules. In the interim period, researchers may commence work on the project at their own risk and costs.

4.5. Project Monitoring and Reporting

All funded projects will be monitored and assessed over the course of their duration. The monitoring of projects will comprise of a review of the reports and deliverables that the projects have to generate.

The funded project consortium is expected to establish a presentation on the CIRCLE2 website giving a description of their research project.

The projects will provide a mid-term report which will describe the progress made during the first half of the research project. A final report has to be submitted at the end of the project to the CSC for assessment of the report and control of the fulfilment of formal criteria (at the latest 2 months after the end of the project).

4.6. National Rules

Additional information on FUNDERS national rules should be requested from the National Contact Person (indicated in 3.2).