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Definition of the Eurofleets+ Access Programme



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1. Introduction

The Eurofleets+ work package (WP) 4 is devoted to the practical management of the calls for proposals requesting the use of Research Vessels (RVs) and Marine Equipment (ME) within Eurofleets+. The management includes the preparation of the Eurofleets+ Access programmes, call dissemination, launching of the calls, the proposal evaluation handling, the selection procedures and post-cruise project evaluation.

This document will be the first deliverable of WP4, aiming at defining the Eurofleets+ Access Programmes: 1) the Ship-time and Marine Equipment Application (SEA Programme), 2) the Co-PI Programme and 3) the Remote Transnational Access (RTA) Programme

Eurofleets+ will provide open, **transnational access** to a unique fleet of **27** state-of-the-art, modern **research vessels (RVs) (13 Global/Ocean and 14 Regional)** so that these infrastructures are optimally used for excellent science, leading to high level scientific publications and exploitation by European and international researchers. Ship time will be offered to academic and industrial researchers to perform ship-based research across the entire **North Atlantic, Mediterranean, Black Sea, North Sea, Baltic Sea, Pacific Southern Ocean and Ross Sea** with additional **global locations** based on specific vessel schedules. In addition, researchers will be able to apply for the use of cutting edge embarked marine equipment (ME), which includes **7 Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs)** and **5 Autonomous Underwater Vehicles (AUVs)**, as well as access to the unique **portable telepresence system**. The telepresence unit (to be provided by the Global Foundation for Ocean Exploration, USA) will enable remote access by researchers and diverse end users including the public; a unique piece of marine infrastructure not available in Europe.

European and international researchers from academia and industry will be able to apply for three different types of Access Programmes, through a single user-friendly proposal submission portal (PT-Outline). Proposals will be evaluated following the Eurofleets Evaluation System, established in Eurofleets(1), which follows the best practices from different European ship-time application and evaluation procedures.

2. Eurofleets+ Access Programmes

Three different Access Programmes will be launched in Eurofleets+, extending the infrastructure to new users and a higher number of users overall.

2.1. Ship time and marine Equipment Application (SEA) Programme

2.1.1. Call description

The SEA Programme will provide access to the RVs and ME through a full ship-time application. There will be a minimum of two calls, the first with mainly larger, “ocean going” vessels and the second with more “regional” vessels, as the “ocean going” vessels request a longer planning phase of their cruise schedules. RVs and ME not requested in the first call (“Ocean”) or with spare capacities will be offered in the “Regional” call again.

The SEA Programme aims to be highly flexible. Applications will be allowed for single cruises, multi-year and/ or multi-vessel surveys, with or without ME. The SEA Programme will also allow applications for ME to be used or operated in already funded cruises (by other means than Eurofleets+ funding).

2.1.2. Timing of the call releases

- The first call (“Ocean”) from the SEA Programme will open in summer 2019 for a period of three months.
- The second, “Regional” call, will open in fall 2019, again remaining open for three months.

2.1.3. Eligibility criteria

Access will be provided to selected ‘user groups’, i.e. teams of one or more researchers (users) led by a ‘user group leader’/principal investigator (PI). Proposals for access to any of the offered infrastructures will be accepted if they meet the following criteria:

- i. Applicants from all nationalities are eligible to apply. However, access for user groups with a majority of users not working in a EU or associated country is limited to 20% of the total amount of units of access provided in Eurofleets+. I.e., 20% of the granted days on RVs and use of ME offered in Eurofleets+ can be dedicated to non-EU (or associated countries) applicants.

- ii. The user group leader/PI and the majority of users of a project must work in a country other than the country that owns and operates the infrastructure. They cannot apply for ship-time on a research vessel or access to ME from their own country.
 - Example 1: A PI based in Norway is entitled to apply for ship-time on all of the listed vessels, except RVs carrying the Norwegian flag (e.g. *RV G.O. Sars*), and/or any piece of marine equipment provided by Norway (e.g. *ROV Aegir 6000*).
 - Example 2: If an application is requesting access to e.g. *ROV Aegir 6000* (based in Norway) onboard *RV Celtic Explorer* (based in Ireland), the PI and the majority of users must work in a country other than Norway and Ireland.
- iii. The PI of a proposal and the designated cruise leader (Chief scientist of the embarked team) must be affiliated to the same institution.
- iv. The proposals within the SEA Programme must involve at least three partners from three different countries.
- v. In the case of proposals requesting only a piece of ME to be deployed from an already funded cruise (not Eurofleets+ funded), the proposals can involve partners from one single country, as long as they work in a country other than the country the requested infrastructure is based. However, international partners are encouraged even if only as remote participants for data treatment and exploitation.
- vi. The cruise length/days of access to RVs and ME, requested by the applicants, should not exceed the number of days offered. Additional days can be chartered independently of Eurofleets+ funding, if agreed with the RV or ME operator.
- vii. A data management plan (DMP) must be submitted together with the proposal. The DMP should follow the Eurofleets+ guidelines.
- viii. Proposals must include an advanced training or educational programme for scientists or technicians.
- ix. Only user groups that are entitled to and willing to disseminate the knowledge they will generate under the project are eligible to benefit from access free of charge to the infrastructures under the Eurofleets+ flag, unless they are working for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). User groups must agree to comply with the Eurofleets+ data policy.
- x. The PI or a designated cruise leader of a proposal must have the appropriate scientific/ technical expertise to conduct on-board research cruises.

2.2. Co-PI Programme

2.2.1. Call description

The Co-PI Programme is specifically aimed at early career researchers, or researchers with no experience in leading a research cruise, to implement their own research together with experienced scientists in Eurofleets+ scheduled cruises. This programme will provide the successful applicant with a maximum of three days of access to a RV and ME. In the Co-PI Programme, applicants will be able to apply for all vessels offered within Eurofleets+. If applicable, ME may be utilised if scheduled for a main cruise on an Eurofleets+ vessel.

2.2.2. Timing of the call release

- The calls for the Co-PI Programme will open in fall 2019
- The Co-PI Programme will be open to applications in a running call. This call will be open all the time after its release, for a maximum duration of three years. The running call will enable applicants to continuously submit proposals until the call closes.
- Evaluation of the Co-PI applications will be conducted approximately every six months, or when necessary.

2.2.3. Eligibility criteria

Proposals for access to any of the offered RVs will be accepted if they meet the following criteria:

- i. The programme is open to early career researchers or experienced researchers of any nationality, without previous participation as PI in a research cruise.
- ii. The applicant (PI) for a Co-PI project must work in a country other than the country the RV/ME is based. They cannot apply for ship-time on a research vessel or ME from their own country, e.g. a Norwegian PI is entitled to apply for ship-time on all of the listed vessels, except RVs carrying the Norwegian flag (e.g. *RV G.O. Sars*).
- iii. The proposals submitted to the Co-PI Programme do not require the involvement of international partners.

- iv. Only one Co-PI project will be funded and allowed to attend a scheduled cruise on an Eurofleets+ vessel. A Co-PI project may be granted up to three participants, depending on berth availability and main activities of already scheduled cruises.
- v. The cruise length/days of access to RVs or ME, requested by the applicants, should not exceed three days.
- vi. Only users that are entitled to and willing to disseminate the knowledge they will generate under the project are eligible to benefit from access free of charge to the infrastructures under the Eurofleets+ flag. Users must agree to comply with the Eurofleets+ data policy.

2.3. Remote Transnational Access (RTA) Programme

2.3.1. Call description

The RTA Programme will provide researchers with remote access to samples or data from a Eurofleets+ fleet vessel. RTA Programme applications will be submitted in a continuous running call (as in the Co-PI Programme). Remote access will allow sample or data needs to be addressed remotely, when this can be accomplished with one day of ship time. In this programme, applicants will be able to apply for remote access to all vessels offered within Eurofleets+, independent or attached to the scheduled cruises of the SEA Programme.

2.3.2. Timing of the call release

- The calls for the RTA Programme will open fall 2019 in a continuous running call for three years.
- Evaluation of the RTA-proposals will take place every six month after call opening, or when necessary. Scientifically excellent proposals will be offered to the Eurofleets+ vessel operators for implementation, in connection or not to Eurofleets+ cruises, if those are logistically feasible for them.

2.3.3. Eligibility criteria

Proposals for RTA to any of the offered Eurofleets+ RVs will be accepted if they meet the following criteria:

- i. The applicant (any nationality) of a RTA project must work in a country other than the country the RV is based. Data or samples cannot be requested from a RV based at their own country, e.g. a Norwegian applicant is entitled to apply for data or samples from all of the listed vessels, except RVs carrying the Norwegian flag (e.g. *RV G.O. Sars*).
- ii. The proposals within the RTA Programme do not require the involvement of international partners.
- iii. The work proposed for the RTA, requested by the applicants, must be achievable within one day of ship time.
- iv. Only users that are entitled to and willing to disseminate the knowledge they will generate under the project are eligible to benefit from access free of charge to the infrastructures under the Eurofleets+ flag. Users must agree to comply with the Eurofleets+ data policy.

3. Infrastructure offered in the three Eurofleets+ Access Programmes

A new infrastructure portal will be available on the Eurofleets+ website (www.eurofleets.eu). This will provide instant access to detail on vessel and equipment capabilities and a graphical easily understandable depiction of sea areas served by the vessels and equipment, with clear information on timing of vessel and equipment availability, for applying to one of the three Access Programmes.

The **unit of access** for the vessels will be a DAY. An access day is a 24-hour period with access to all equipment, services and support. The ROVs and AUVs will also be available on a unit of access of a day. The portable telepresence unit will be offered on a day unit of access basis. The tables below show the access days and areas of operation for each of the infrastructures on offer. For the RVs, the maximum number of applicants allowed to embark a SEA-cruise is given as well.

Table 1: Research vessels scheduled for SEA-call 1 “Oceans”, Co-PI and RTA

Research Vessel	Nationality	Access days	Scheduled areas of operation	Number of berths
NE Atlantic/tbc				
RV Celtic Explorer	Ireland	7-12	NE Atlantic	21
RV Magnus Heinason	Faroe Islands	7-10	NE Atlantic	5-7
RV Mar Portugal	Portugal	6-15	NE Atlantic	30
RV Ramon Margalef	Spain	5-14	NE Atlantic/Iberian Margin	9
RV Thalassa	France	7-14	NE Atlantic	25
OGS Explora	Italy	8	tbc	22
RV Pelagia	Netherlands	10-17	Atlantic/Other tbc	12
NRV Alliance	Italy	5-9	tbc	25
RV Arni Freidrickson	Iceland	5-9	North Atlantic	17
NE Atlantic/Arctic				
RV Sanna	Greenland	5-8	Arctic Ocean/Greenland	7-8
RV DANA	Denmark	5-8	NE Atlantic/Arctic Ocean	27
RV G.O. SARS	Norway	7-10	NE Atlantic/Arctic Ocean	30
NW/ W Atlantic				
RV Coriolis II	Canada	7-9	NW Atlantic	14
RV Atlantic Explorer	Bermuda	5	Western Atlantic	22
Pacific				
RV Tangaroa	New Zealand	12	Pacific/Southern	25

Tbc: to be confirmed

Table 2: Marine Equipment: Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs) scheduled for SEA-call 1 “Oceans”, and Co-PI.

Marine Equipment: ROVs	Nationality	Access days	Scheduled areas of operation
NE Atlantic			
ROV Ægir 6000	Norway	10	NE Atlantic/Arctic Ocean
ROV LUSO	Portugal	8	NE Atlantic

ROV Holland1	Ireland	7 -14	NE Atlantic
Atlantic/Pacific			
ROV Genesis	Belgium	10	Atlantic/Pacific/Southern S
ROV Ocean Modules V8 offshore	Sweden	7-14	Atlantic/Pacific/Southern S
ROV Marum Squid	Germany	10	Atlantic Pacific/Southern S

Table 3: Marine Equipment: Autonomous Underwater Vehicle (AUVs) and others scheduled for SEA-call 1 “Oceans”, and Co-PI.

Marine Equipment: AUVs/ other	Nationality	Access days	Scheduled areas of operation
AUV Hugin (UGOT)	Sweden	10	Atlantic/Pacific/Southern S
HAVFO AUV	Norway	10	NE Atlantic/Arctic
VSAT Satellite System (Telepresence Unit)	USA	14	NE Atlantic

Table 4: Research vessels scheduled for SEA-call 2 “Regional”, Co-PI and RTA. The table shows the minimum access days and putative areas of operation for each of the infrastructure offered.

Research Vessel	Nationality	Access days	Scheduled areas of operation	Number of berths
Atlantic				
RV Belgica	Belgium	11	NE Atlantic	12-16
Baltic and North Sea				
RV Alkor	Germany	7	Baltic and North Sea	12
RV Skagerak	Sweden	7	Baltic and North Sea, NE Atlantic	16
RV Aranda	Finland	8	Baltic Sea, Kattegat, Skagerrak	27
RV Simon Stevin	Belgium	5	North Sea, English Channel	10

Mediterranean				
RV Aegeo	Greece	12	Mediterranean, Black and Red Seas	21
RV Sarmiento de Gamboa	Spain	10	N Atlantic, Mediterranean	25
RV Angeles Alvarino	Spain	10	E Atlantic, W Mediterranean	11
RV Socib	Spain	7	E Mediterranean	16
RV Tubitak Marmara	Turkey	6	Mediterranean, Black Sea	12
RV Mare Nigrum	Romania	7	Black Sea	25
RV L'Europe	France	7	Mediterranean	8

Table 5: Marine Equipment: Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs) and Autonomous Underwater Vehicle (AUVs) scheduled for SEA-call 2 “Regional”, and Co-PI.

Marine Equipment: AUVs	Nationality	Cruise duration (days)	Scheduled area
AUV VLIZ	Belgium	10	All Eurofleets+ regions
CNR Glider ,Teresa’	Italy	10	All Eurofleets+ regions
AUV AsterX	France	8	All Eurofleets+ regions

4. Funding within Eurofleets+

Transnational access to the RVs, ROVs and AUVs and specialised equipment will be provided free of charge to the successful applicants. Eurofleets+ funds will cover the use of the vessels, crew, fuel and other standard operating costs. Travel expenses for the embarked team and transport of equipment and samples will also be covered. This applies to the SEA and Co-PI Programme. In the RTA Programme, Eurofleets+ will fund one day of use of the vessel, crew, fuel and other standard operating costs, including the shipping of samples.

5. Evaluation

The selection of successful proposals will be completed in a transparent peer review evaluation process, handled by the Evaluation Office (based at the Alfred-Wegener-Institut Helmholtz-Zentrum für Polar- und Meeresforschung, Germany). Evaluations will be conducted by external experts, recommended and overseen by an independent Scientific Liaison Panel (SLP), according to defined criteria, with a strong focus on scientific excellence and innovation potential and aligned with H2020 evaluation processes (Excellence, Impact and Implementation). The logistic evaluation of proposals ranked as excellent and suggested for implementation will be conducted by an Operational Liaison Panel (OLP), consisting of the Eurofleets+ RV operators. The implementation of this evaluation system has already been previously accepted by the operators of 22 European RVs, as members of the Eurofleets 1 and 2 projects, and was tested in 9 calls for proposals (over 110 proposals evaluated) with 41 cruises successfully scheduled on board European RVs. In Eurofleets+, it was again agreed on to use this application portal for the 27 RVs and 13 ME offered in the Transnational Access Programmes.

Successful proposals will be integrated into each vessel's annual schedule and will follow the standard survey planning procedures used by the relevant organisation. An additional call will be issued mid-way through the project if there is remaining capacity following completion of the scheduled calls.

Eurofleets+ will prioritise support for research on sustainable, clean and healthy oceans, linking with existing ocean observation infrastructures, and it will support innovation through working closely with industry.