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Selection Report 2 - SEA Programme Call; Co-PI Programme and RTA Programme



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1 Introduction

EUROFLEETS+ work package 4 is indispensable for the implementation of Transnational Access (TNA) to the research vessels (RVs) and marine equipment (ME) offered in EUROFLEETS+. It is devoted to the practical management of all the calls for proposals.

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 deliverable is dedicated to (1) the evaluation of the Ship-time and Marine Equipment Application (SEA) Programme call “REGIONAL”, and (2) the evaluation and selection of proposals submitted to the Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI) and Remote Transnational Access (RTA) programmes offered by EUROFLEETS+. The two latter TNA programmes are **running calls**, which allow the continuous submission of proposals until call closure in 2022.

SEA Programme Call REGIONAL

The REGIONAL call opened at 25th of November 2019 and closed at 28th of February 2020. It provided access to 16 research vessels and 6 pieces of marine equipment in the North Atlantic Ocean, North-West/West Atlantic, Baltic Sea, North Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Atlantic Ocean, Black Sea, Arctic Ocean, Southern and Pacific Ocean, either together with an EUROFLEETS+ cruise or on board a non-EUROFLEETS+ cruise.

Research vessels offered in the SEA Programme Call “REGIONAL”

North Atlantic Ocean

RV Belgica (RBINS, Belgium)
RV Magnus Heinason (HAVST, Faroe Islands)
RV Sarmiento de Gamboa (CSIC, Spain)

North-West/West Atlantic

RV Atlantic Explorer (BIOS, Bermuda)
RV Coriolis II (UQAR, Canada)

Baltic Sea, North Sea

RV Alkor (Geomar, Germany)
RV Aranda (SYKE, Finland)
RV Simon Stevin (VLIZ, Belgium)
RV Skagerak (UGOT, Sweden)

Mediterranean Sea, Atlantic Ocean

RV Angeles Alvarino (IEO, Spain)
RV L’Europe (IFREMER, France)
RV SOCIB (SOCIB, Spain)

Mediterranean and Black Sea

RV Aegeo (HCMR, Greece)
RV Mare Nigrum (GEOCOMAR, Romania)
RV Tubitak Marmara (TUBITAK, Turkey)

Arctic, Southern and Pacific Ocean, Mediterranean Sea

RV Laura Bassi (OGS, Italy)

Marine Equipment offered in the SEA Programme Call “REGIONAL”

AUV ASTERx or IDEFx (Ifremer, France)

AUV CNR Glider 'Teresa' (CNR ISMAR, Italy)

AUV Hugin (UGOT, Sweden)

AUV VLIZ (VLIZ, Belgium)

ROV Ocean Modules V8 offshore (UGOT, Sweden)

VSAT Satellite System (Telepresence Unit) (GFOE, United States of America)

Running Calls: Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI) and Remote Transnational Access (RTA) programme

The Co-PI and RTA programmes opened on the 21st of November 2019. The Co-PI programme is open for the submission of proposals until 31st of January 2022, the RTA programme until 30th of September 2022. The RTA programme only grants up to one day of access, and the application and evaluation of the RTA projects are less onerous than the Co-PI programme. Since access through RTA is granted remotely, there is also no need for a long planning and implementation phase as for the other EUROFLEETS+ programmes. Therefore, applications for the RTA programme can be submitted for a longer period than for the Co-PI programme, in order to still allow for a short-term implementation of an RTA project, if applicable.

The **Co-Principal Investigator (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. Applicants to the Co-PI programme could apply for all 27 state-of-the-art research vessels (RVs) (13 Global/Ocean and 14 Regional) offered within Eurofleets+. If applicable, ME may be utilised if scheduled for a main cruise on an Eurofleets+ vessel. The programme provides the successful applicant with one to three days (maximum) of access to a RV and ME.

The **Remote Transnational Access (RTA) programme** provides researchers with remote access to samples or data from any of the 27 state-of-the-art research vessels (RVs) (13 Global/Ocean and 14 Regional) offered within EUROFLEETS+. This remote access allows sample or data needs to be addressed remotely, when this can be accomplished with one day of ship-time. Applicants are able to apply for remote access to all vessels offered within EUROFLEETS+, independent or attached to the scheduled cruises of the SEA Programme.

2 The EUROFLEETS+ evaluation procedure

2.1 General description of the evaluation procedure

The foundation for the evaluation and review procedure for the SEA programme calls was already established by the EUROFLEETS 1 and 2 projects. The evaluation procedure for the two running calls (Co-PI and RTA) was adjusted according to the needs of these calls.

2.2.1 Evaluation procedure SEA-programme

In EUROFLEETS+ we followed the evaluation procedure established in EUROFLEETS 1 and 2 which proved to be successful. The evaluation procedure for the SEA programme was already described systematically in [Deliverable 4.8](#).

2.2.2 Evaluation procedure Co-PI and RTA programme

In contrast to the SEA programme, the Co-PI and RTA programmes were established the first time in in Eurofleets+. A Co-PI project is intended to form part of longer, scheduled (EUROFLEETS+) cruise, funding from one to a maximum of three days of ship-time and up to three participants maximum. The remote access through the RTA programme allows sample or data needs to be addressed remotely, when this can be accomplished with one day of ship-time.

The application procedure for the Co-PI programme, i.e. the scientific and financial description of the project, is shortened to accommodate the requirements of a shorter cruise and research programme, as well as the early career stage of the applicants in the Co-PI programme. The same applies to the RTA programme, which includes a very shortened cruise program.

Proposals must be submitted using the **online proposal submission portal** (shared platform and single entry point for the EUROFLEETS+ Co-PI programme and RTA programme. Platform “PT-Outline”, maintained by DLR Projektträger, Berlin, Germany). The proposals submitted to the running calls are **evaluated at least every six months**.

In parallel to the application procedure, the evaluation procedures for the Co-PI and RTA programme were simplified compared to the SEA programme evaluation. This was aimed at shortening the time for the proposal evaluation, since Co-PI and RTA projects are shorter as such, request fewer funding as the SEA projects and are to be integrated into already scheduled cruises.

The evaluation of proposals is managed by the EUROFLEETS+ Evaluation Office. The process aims to be fair and transparent and provides constructive feedback to applicants.

The scientific evaluation and the decision to reject a proposal or to propose it for funding is taken by the EUROFLEETS+ Scientific Liaison Panel (SLP). The SLP is established by the EUROFLEETS+ Consortium and consists of international experts covering all fields of marine science (see [D4.8](#)). All

reasonable measures will be taken to ensure **Objectivity, Transparency, Equality of Treatment, Impartiality, Quality and Confidentiality**.

The membership of the EUROFLEETS+ Scientific Liaison Panel is personal and public. For more details concerning the Panel's members please consult <https://www.eurofleets.eu/access/scientific-liaison-panel-slp/>.

2.2.3 Steps involved in the evaluation of the proposals submitted to the running calls

1 Eligibility Check

In the first place, it is verified if proposals meet the eligibility criteria put forward in the "EUROFLEETS+ Guidelines for Applicants" for the Co-PI/RTA programme, which is carried out by the EUROFLEETS+ Call Management & Evaluation Office (EO). If proposals fail to meet the eligibility criteria, they are excluded from further evaluation process and are returned to the applicant with a note explaining why they were considered to be not eligible (see **Figure 1**).

2 Scientific Evaluation

Following the eligibility check, a so-called "watchdog", i.e. a member of the SLP, is allocated to each proposal in mutual agreement by the chairs of the SLP and the EO. The watchdogs are assigned to the proposals that best correspond to their scientific expertise. This watchdog then examines the proposal(s) assigned to him/her and scores and comments on each proposal under each of the **Evaluation Criteria** (see below) using an individual **Proposal Assessment Form (PT Outline Expert)**. The watchdog also prepares a consensus evaluation report, which is provided to each applicant, whether successful or not. The consensus evaluation report does not contain any scores and use a common consensus evaluation form provided by the EO.

The chairs of the SLP view the submitted proposals as well and agree with the respective watchdogs on an overall score and if the proposals should be recommended for scheduling or not.

3 Logistic evaluation and negotiation of successful proposals

After a mutual agreement of the watchdogs and the SLP chairs, excellent proposals are examined by the EUROFLEETS+ Operational Liaison Panel to determine the logistical feasibility regarding potential research vessels, equipment, area of operation and timing of cruises.

Successful applicants may be asked to make changes to their proposals during the funding negotiation phase to accommodate the comments of the EUROFLEETS+ Scientific and Operational Liaison Panel on cruise planning and the integration with other projects/cruises.

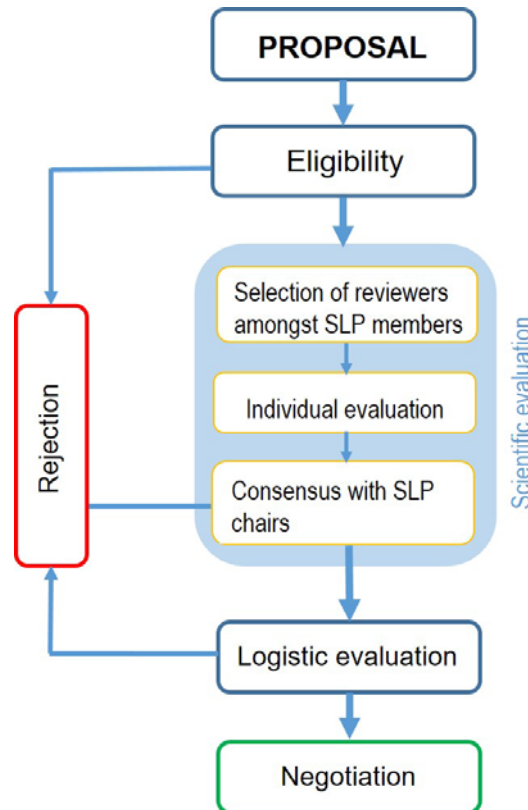


Figure 1: Evaluation scheme of the Eurofleets+ running calls.

3 SEA Programme call “REGIONAL”

3.1 Submitted applications to the REGIONAL call

Twenty-two proposals were submitted to the SEA Programme call “REGIONAL”, all of them met the eligibility criteria.

The proposals requested the following regions: North Atlantic Ocean (3), North-West Atlantic Ocean (1), Baltic & North Sea (1), Mediterranean Sea/Atlantic Ocean (1), Mediterranean Sea (2), Mediterranean & Black Sea (8), Southern Ocean, Arctic and Mediterranean (4).

From the 16 RVs offered within the call “REGIONAL”, 8 were requested as a first option: RV Aegeo (6), RV Angeles Alvarino (1), RV Aranda (1), RV Laura Bassi (4), RV Mare Nigrum (2), RV Sarmiento de Gamboa (3) and RV SOCIB (2) (see **Figure 2**). The RVs Magnus Heinason, RV Simon Stevin and RV Skagerak were not requested at a first or second option.

Regarding the marine embarked equipment, 5 pieces of equipment were offered. All pieces apart from the Telepresence Unit were requested in the REGIONAL call: AUV ASTERx or IDEFx (4), AUV HUGIN (UGOT) (1), AUV VLIZ (3) and ROV Ocean Modules V8 offshore (UGOT) (3).

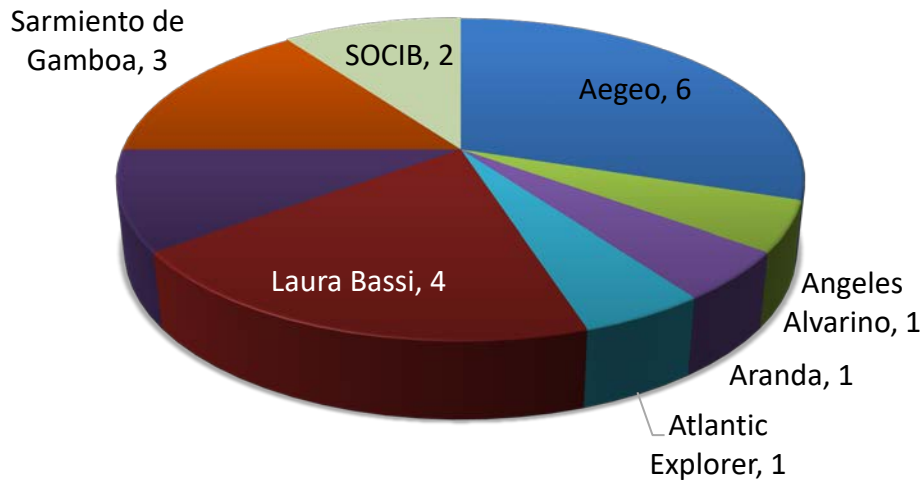


Figure 2: Pie chart showing the research vessels requested on the EUROFLEETS+ “REGIONAL” call

The 185 applicants of the 22 submitted proposals (proposal PIs and project partners) were based in 34 different countries (Figure 3). Most of the applicants came from Portugal (15%), followed by Spain (14%) and Germany (12%). These three countries were followed by Italy (10%), France (8%), United Kingdom (7%), The Netherlands (4%) and Malta (4%).

Applicants affiliations

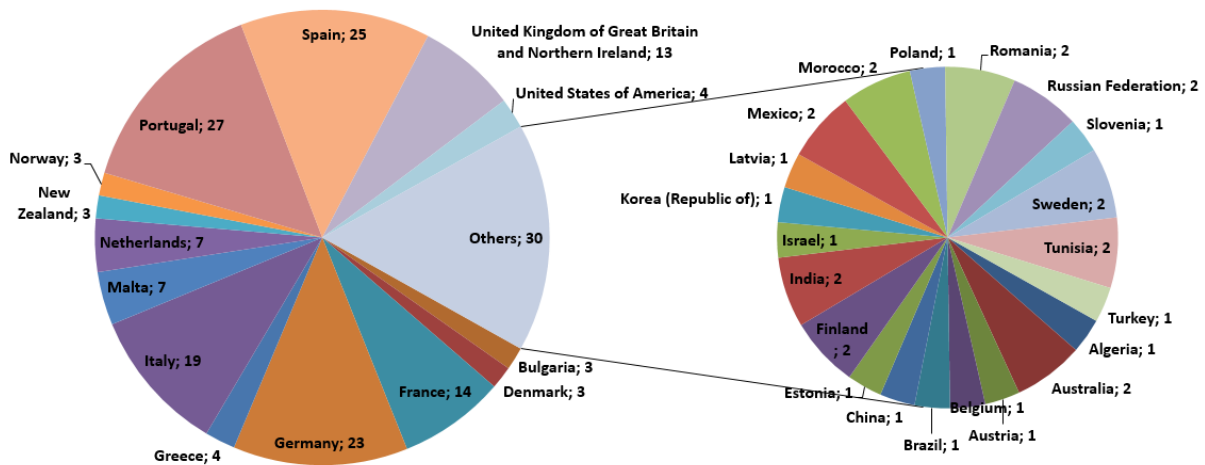


Figure 3: Pie chart showing the nationality of applicants to the call “REGIONAL”, as an indicator for international collaboration (34 countries for 22 proposals).

Status of applicants

41% of the proposals were submitted by early career PIs, 67% of them being female. Overall, 32% of the applications came from female PIs, and the project partners had 39% women.

3.2 Scientific evaluation

For the evaluation of the proposals submitted to the SEA Programme Call “REGIONAL”, each proposal was assigned a watchdog within the SLP. Afterwards, each proposal was sent to external evaluators with the aim of collecting at least three evaluations per proposal.

A total of 430 external evaluators were contacted for the evaluation process, with a success range of 2-7 external evaluations per proposal.

On 9th and 10th of June 2020, the SLP members held a consensus evaluation meeting, to discuss the scientific evaluation of each submitted proposal in detail. The meeting took place via videoconference, due to the COVID-19 pandemic starting in 2020.

The EUROFLEETS+ Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) cooperated closely with the SLP members and monitored the entire process. A member of the SAC attended the evaluation meeting to ensure that the evaluation, selection process and ship-time allocation were transparent and fair.

At the SLP meeting, each of the proposals was assigned to the following categories defined previously in the “Guidelines for Applicants”:

- A - Recommended for scheduling
- B - Additional proposals
- C - Not recommended for scheduling

Based on the discussion and agreement of the SLP, all proposals recommended for scheduling (“A”) were ranked as 1st choice (A1), 2nd choice (A2), ...etc. for each of the infrastructures offered in the “REGIONAL” call.

3.2.1 Outcome of the REGIONAL call scientific evaluation

The SLP recommended the following during the consensus evaluation meeting in June 2020: 11 proposals were proposed for scheduling with highest (A1) priority, 4 were ranked in category B, and 1 was not recommended for funding (C) (**Table 1**). The proposals in categories B and C were not considered for the logistic evaluation.

3.2.2 Outcome of the REGIONAL call logistic evaluation

The recommendations by the SLP were forwarded to the EUROFLEETS+ Operational Review Panel (OLP) in order to examine the logistic feasibility of the proposed cruises. The OLP meeting took place via e-mail communication. Following contact with each of the vessel operators to determine availability of the vessels and suitability for use of equipment, the cruises in **Table 2** have been confirmed for scheduling.

Table 1: Proposals recommended for scheduling by the SLP (A1-A3)

RV, ME/ Ranking	RV Aegeo, AUV VLIZ, ROV Max Rover	RV Aranda	RV Atlantic Explorer	RV Aegeo	RV Aegeo, ROV Ocean Modules V8	RV Mare Nigrum	RV Laura Bassi	RV Sarmiento de Gamboa	RV SOCIB	AUV ASTERx or IDEFx	AUV VLIZ	RV Belgica, AUV VLIZ
A1	EFP_SEA02-002	EFP_SEA 02-007	EFP_SEA 02-027	EFP_SEA 02-025		EFP_SEA 02-005	EFP_SEA 02-015	EFP_SEA02-004	EFP_SEA 02-014		EFP_SEA 02-026*	EFP_SEA02-024 ²
A2				EFP_SEA 02-006*		EFP_SEA 02-008 ¹	EFP_SEA 02-021	EFP_SEA02-019 ⁴				
A3				EFP_SEA 02-009			EFP_SEA 02-022					
A4					EFP_SEA02-023							
B				EFP_SEA 02-012			EFP_SEA 02-016	EFP_SEA02-013 ³	EFP_SEA 02-011			
C										EFP_SEA 02-018		

Notes:

¹ A1 for RV Tubitak Marmara; ² A2 for RV Aegeo; ³ Requesting ROV Ocean Modules V8, AUV ASTERx, ⁴ Scheduled on RV Ramon Margalef

* Unsuccessful Logistical Assessment

Table 2: Proposals with ship-time and marine equipment scheduled after the logistic evaluation.

Vessel and Marine Equipment	Cruise Name	Number of EF+ funded days	Scientific discipline	Location
RV Aegeo	MYRTOON	10	Climate dynamics Geology Sedimentology	Eastern Mediterranean, SW Aegean Sea, Myrtoon Basin
RV Ramon Margalef	Carbo-Acid	10	Biogeochemistry Marine Chemistry Physical Oceanography	Iberian margin
RV Atlantic Explorer	FIGURE	8	Biological Oceanography Biogeochemistry Microbiology Physical Oceanography	Gulf Stream (NW Atlantic)
RV Aranda	CABLE	2x4	Biological Oceanography Physical Oceanography	Gulf of Finland, Baltic Proper
RV Belgica, AUV Barabas	GRACE	11	Geology Geophysics Physical Oceanography Sedimentology	Ceuta Canyon and adjacent areas (West Moroccan Mediterranean margin)
RV Laura Bassi	ICON	5	Climate dynamics Deep Sea Research Geology Geophysics	Hillary Canyon, Ross Sea, Antarctica
RV Laura Bassi	ROSEBUD	5	Climate dynamics Deep Sea Research Geology Physical Oceanography Sea ice Sedimentology	Ross Sea (Antarctica)
RV Mare Nigrum	SLOGARO-II	7	Geology Geophysics Sedimentology Training	Danube Fan, 44°20' N, 30°39' E / 43°59' N, 31°20' E
RV Sarmiento de Gamboa	SINES	9	Biogeochemistry	Northeast Atlantic, Western Iberian Margin.
RV SOCIB	GRASSMAP	7	New technologies Marine Biology	Mallorca and Cabrera islands
RV Tubitak Marmara	PHYCOB	7	Biological Oceanography	Western Black Sea
RV Aegaeo, VLIZ AUV, ROV Max ROVER	ERODOTO	10	Deep Sea Research, Geology, Geophysics	Gulf of Squillace, Ionian Sea, Italy

As a result of the logistic evaluation, 12 highly ranked research projects, representing a success rate of the EUROFLEETS+ SEA Programme Call “REGIONAL” of 55%, will get access to 97 days at sea fully funded by the project.

Only one of the highly ranked proposal did not pass the logistics evaluation (table 1).

4 The EUROFLEETS+ running calls

4.1 Co-Principal Investigator programme

4.1.1 Submitted proposals to the Co-Principal Investigator programme

Since the opening of the Co-PI programme on 21st of November 2019 until call closure on 31st of January 2021, EUROFLEETS+ received 10 proposals for the Co-PI programme. Table 3 provides an overview of the submitted proposals per evaluation period:

Table 3: Submitted Co-PI proposals per evaluation period, from November 2019 to January 2022.

Evaluation period	Proposal ID	Requested RV	Requested Working Area	PI affiliation
11/2019 – 05/2020	EFP_RC-010	RV SOCIB	From the coast of Mallorca (Palma) to Valencia (Denia) and Ibiza (Northern and Southern sections)	Portugal
	EFP_RC-007	RV Sanna	West Greenland coast	Norway
05/2020 – 11/2020	EFP_RC-014	RV Belgica AUV ASTERx	Alboran Sea (western Mediterranean Sea)	Spain
11/2020 – 05/2021	EFP_RC-018	RV Thalassa, ROV Ariane	Cabliers Cold Water Coral Province (Eastern Alboran Sea)	Italy
	EFP_RC-019	RV Sarmiento de Gamboa	West Iberian Margin	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
	EFP_RC-020	RV Laura Bassi	Hillary Canyon, Ross Sea, Antarctica	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
	EFP_RC-021	RV Aranda	Gotland Deep Baltic Sea	Poland

05/2021 – 11/2021	EFP_RC-023	RV Belgica	Western Mediterranean	Germany
	EFP_RC-024	RV Belgica	Northern Sicily Continental Margin (Tyrrhenian Sea)	Italy
	EFP_RC-026	RV Atlantic Explorer	North-west Atlantic Ocean, between Cape Hatteras (North Carolina, USA) and Bermuda Island (UK)	France

4.1.2 Scientific and logistic evaluation of the Co-PI proposals

For each of the 6-monthly evaluation periods of the Co-PI programme, each submitted proposal was assigned to a watchdog from the SLP by the SLP chairs. This watchdog evaluated the respective proposal within four weeks. Each evaluation was approved by both SLP chairs, and videoconference meetings or email discussions took place to finally decide on which proposals to put forward to the logistics evaluation.

In line with the guidelines for applicants of the SEA programme, proposals were categorised as:

- A - Recommended for scheduling
- B - Additional proposals
- C - Not recommended for scheduling

Based on the discussions and agreement of the watchdogs and SLP chairs, the proposals recommended for scheduling (A) were ranked as 1st choice (A1), 2nd choice (A2), ...etc. for each of the evaluation periods.

Table 4: Co-PI proposals scientific ranking and outcome of logistics evaluation and ship-time information

Proposal ID	Requested RV	SLP Ranking	OLP decision	Attached to SEA cruise & timing	Days at sea
EFP_RC-010	RV SOCIB	A	Unsuccessful Logistical Assessment		
EFP_RC-007	RV Sanna	A	Unsuccessful Logistical Assessment		
EFP_RC-014	RV Belgica, AUV ASTERx	A	Scheduled	GRACE May 2022	3

EFP_RC-018	RV Thalassa, ROV Ariane	A	Scheduled	OASIS Dates TBC 2023	1
EFP_RC-019	RV Sarmiento de Gamboa	C (not recommended)			
EFP_RC-020	RV Laura Bassi	A	Scheduled	ICON Spring 2023	3
EFP_RC-021	RV Aranda	A	Scheduled	CABLE March/October 2022	1
EFP_RC-023	RV Belgica	A	Pending	TAIPro2022 May 2022	1,25
EFP_RC-024	RV Belgica	A	Pending		3
EFP_RC-026	RV Atlantic Explorer	A	Pending	FIGURE 21-28 July 2022	3

As a result of the scientific and logistic evaluation, at least two Co-PI cruises will be scheduled for 2022. As of January 2022, Eurofleets+ will facilitate eight days of fully-funded ship-time for the Co-PI programme.

4.2 Remote Transnational Access programme – scientific and logistic evaluation

Since the RTA programme opened on 21st of November 2019, two proposals were submitted to the RTA programme. An overview of the submitted proposals per evaluation period is give in table 5:

Table 5: Submitted proposals to the Remote Transnational Access programme:

Evaluation period	Proposal ID	Requested RV	Requested Working Area	PI affiliation
11/2020 – 05/2021	EFP_RC-016	Not specified	Western Ionian Basin	Malta
05/2021 – 11/2021	EFP_RC-013	RV Thalassa	Western, central and eastern Mediterranean Sea	Italy

The scientific evaluation of the submitted RTA proposals followed the procedure for the Co-PI programme.

Based on the discussions and agreement of the watchdogs and SLP chairs, the proposals were either recommended for scheduling (A), recommended for improvement and kept on hold (B) or not recommended for scheduling (C).

Table 6: Remote Transnational Access proposals - scientific ranking and outcome of logistics evaluation.

Proposal ID	Requested RV	SLP Ranking	OLP decision	Attached to SEA cruise & timing
EFP_RC-016	Not specified	A	Pending	Pending
EFP_RC-013	RV Thalassa	A	Pending	Pending

4.3 Status of running call applicants

All PIs who submitted proposals to the running calls had an early career status. 60% of the Co-PI proposals and 100% of the RTA proposals were submitted by female PIs. Most of the applicants came from Italy (3), followed by Spain and the UK (2 each), and one each from France, Germany, Malta, Poland and Portugal.