

BEST

Open call for proposals in the framework of the Preparatory Action 'BEST' (Voluntary scheme for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Territories of the EU Outermost Regions and Overseas Countries and Territories)

Background

In the framework of the Preparatory Action¹, 'BEST' (Voluntary scheme for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Territories of the EU Outermost Regions and Overseas Countries and Territories), the Commission invites public and private bodies in the EU Outermost Regions and Overseas Countries and Territories, site managers, research institutions, non governmental organisations and international organisations to submit proposals for projects.

Description

The EU Outermost Regions (ORs) and Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) are home to exceptional biodiversity. Situated in the three large oceans and at a range of latitudes, these entities are biodiversity rich and play host to more endemic species (species that are exclusive to a restricted geographical area) than are found on the whole of continental Europe. In July 2008 a conference on "The European Union and its Overseas Entities: Strategies to counter Climate Change and Biodiversity Loss" was held in La Réunion under the French Presidency of the European Union² resulting in the "Message from Reunion Island", which is recalled – *inter alia* - in the Environment Council Conclusions adopted on 25 June 2009. *BEST* is a follow-up on the "Message from Réunion Island". The BEST preparatory action gives the opportunity to launch projects to showcase the potential benefits of the scheme and to prepare for its long term support.

Objectives

The actions shall contribute to the protection of natural and semi-natural habitats which are characteristic for the EU Outermost Regions and Overseas Countries and Territories and promote the sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services through practical examples including examples for ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and mitigation and green infrastructure providing multiple benefits. In addition the actions shall reinforce existing and encourage new partnerships with a view to establishing a governance structure for a durable implementation of BEST beyond the lifetime of the preparatory action.

A more detailed description of the objectives is set out in the Guide for grant applicants.

¹ Preparatory Action within the meaning of Article 49(6) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p. 1), as last amended by Council Regulation (EC) No 1525/2007 of 17 December 2007 (OJ L 343, 27.12.2007, p.9)

² see <http://www.reunion2008.eu/>

Budget and Eligibility

The budget available for this call is EUR 2.000.000.

The Programme is a co-financing instrument. The maximum co-financing is 95% of the eligible costs.

Applicants and their partners must be public or private bodies, actors and institutions. Applicants must be registered in an EU Member State or in an EU Overseas Country and Territory or be an International organisation. Partners from Third Countries are also eligible.

Beneficiaries will be selected on the basis of the criteria set out in the Guide for grant applicants relating to this Call for Proposals and within the limits of the available budget.

The procedure for the appraisal of a proposal is as follows:

- receipt, recording and acknowledgement of receipt by the Commission,
- examination by the services of the Commission,
- formulation of the final decision and communication of the result to the applicant.

The decision of the Commission is final.

Information on the Application

The Guide for grant applicants relating to this Call for Proposals which sets out the admissibility, eligibility, exclusion, selection and award criteria and the application, assessment and approval procedure, can be downloaded from the Commission web site at the following address: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/funding/grants_en.htm

It may alternatively be obtained by applying in writing to the following address:

European Commission

DG ENV B2

BU-5 03/043

B-1049 Brussels

Fax (00) (32-2) 297 96 93

Email: ENV-BEST@ec.europa.eu

Deadline for submitting applications

Proposals must be submitted by 9 September 2011, 17:00 hrs at the latest.
