

## **Framework document for the CIRCLE-MOUNTAIN call**

FOR THE FIRST PILOT CIRCLE-MOUNTAIN

COORDINATED CALL

**Climate change impacts (natural and anthropogenic factors) and response options in mountainous areas**

## Contents

1	Background .....	3
2	Management of the Coordinated Call .....	4
2.1	Call Steering Committee (CSC) .....	4
2.2	National Contact Person .....	4
2.3	Joint Call Secretariat .....	4
2.4	Evaluation Committee .....	5
3	The principles of CIRCLE-MOUNTAIN .....	6
3.1	Call Funding .....	6
3.1.1	Funding Rates and Eligibility .....	6
3.1.2	Deadline .....	6
3.1.3	Project Duration .....	6
3.2	Project Proposal .....	6
3.2.1	Eligible Project Structure and Project Management .....	6
3.2.2	Requirements for Grants .....	7
3.2.3	How to present your Proposal? .....	7
3.2.4	Submission of the proposals .....	8
3.3	Evaluation Process .....	8
3.3.1	Eligibility Check .....	8
3.3.2	Scientific Evaluation .....	8
3.3.3	Final Ranking .....	9
3.4	Contractual relationships .....	9
3.4.1	Funding Contracts .....	9
3.4.2	Research Consortium Agreements .....	9
3.4.3	Project Commencement .....	10
3.5	Project Monitoring and Reporting .....	10
3.5.1	Reporting to the CSC .....	11
3.5.2	Conferences .....	11
4	National contact persons .....	11

**This announcement represents the first pilot call by the Mountain community within CIRCLE: CIRCLE-MOUNTAIN. This call is meant to establish transnational collaborative research projects in the field of Climate change impacts (natural and anthropogenic factors) and response options in mountainous areas.**

## 1 Background

CIRCLE is an ERA-Net funded by the European Commission. Its main aim is to coordinate European **research on the impact of, and adaptation to climate change**. It should help decision-makers design effective strategies, since adaptation is needed regardless of developments on greenhouse gases. **This clear focus excludes research on mitigation, which is being developed elsewhere.**

The Mountain group - CIRCLE-MOUNTAIN - agreed to launch a common call within CIRCLE. Scientific results will facilitate a better definition of more ambitious future calls within the same area.

The funding countries of this call are Austria, France, Greece, Hungary, Spain, Sweden and Turkey represented by the following partner institutions from the CIRCLE-MOUNTAIN Group: Federal Ministry of Science and Research, BMWF, managed by the Environment Agency Austria (Umweltbundesamt, UBA-A), Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development and Sea (Ministère de l'Ecologie, de l'Energie, du Développement durable et de la Mer, MEEDDM), Mariolopoulos-Kanaginis Foundation for the Environmental Sciences (M-KF), Ministry of Environment and Water (Környezetvédelmi és Vízügyi Minisztérium, MEW), Ministry of Science and Innovation (Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación, MICINN), The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (Türkiye Bilimsel ve Teknik Araştırma Kurumu, TÜBİTAK) and The Swedish Research Council for Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning (Forskningsrådet för miljö, areella näringar och samhällsbyggnad, FORMAS); further on called FUNDERS.

CIRCLE funders have made funding pledges of **up to €2.12 Million**, consisting of the following national contributions:

<b>Funders</b>	<b>Funding pledges (up to...) in EURO</b>
France	€1.000.000
Turkey	€300.000
Austria	€250.000
Sweden	€200.000
Spain	€200.000
Greece	€150.000
Hungary	€20.000
<b>Total</b>	<b>€2.120.000</b>

The funds will be distributed via the geographical return principle. Each funder only funds national applicants, based on national rules.

## **2 Management of the Coordinated Call**

### **2.1 Call Steering Committee (CSC)**

The Call Steering Committee (CSC) will act on behalf of the Contributing Countries (the CIRCLE funders) to manage the Coordinated Call, using the principles in this paper as its operating framework. The CSC is constituted by representatives of each national organisation participating in the ERA-NET CIRCLE-MOUNTAIN and involved in this funding initiative.

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 Joint Call Secretariat within one month after its decision.

### **2.2 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.

Details for national contact persons are given at the end of this announcement.

### **2.3 Joint Call Secretariat**

The Joint Call Secretariat will be established at the Spanish funder Ministry of Science and Innovation (Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación, MICINN).

The tasks of the Joint Call Secretariat comprise:

- primary point of contact for CSC and applicants,
- providing a central service additional to the national contact persons,
- collecting of all applications, formal eligibility test and distribution to the national contact persons,
- coordinate and make transparent scientific evaluation and approval processes of applications,
- primary point of contact for scientific evaluators,
- organise the Evaluation Committee Meeting,
- distribution of the 'Peer Review Ranking List' to the CSC,
- organize the funding decision meeting,

- informing the project coordinators about the funding decision,
- monitoring of the funded projects (e. g., support for joint projects' reporting (mid-term and final reports),
- organisation, support and documentation of three meetings for the projects of the funded projects (kick-off meeting, mid-term meeting and final meeting; note: participation is obligatory for at least all Project Leaders and the researchers/research teams should plan their budget accordingly).

The **contact details** of the **Joint Call Secretariat** are:

Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación - Universidad de Valencia  
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Phone: +34-91-603-77-23  
Webpage: [Webpage](#)

## 2.4 Evaluation Committee

The Evaluation Committee will consist of scientific experts with a broad scope in the field of climate change and adaptation, with a special focus on mountainous areas. It will be nominated and jointly agreed upon by the Call Steering Committee (CSC). It will scientifically judge and rank (via the final scientific Score) the received applications and give its recommendations for funding to the CSC.

The whole peer review process will be coordinated by the Joint Call Secretariat.

Peer review will be performed on a remote basis. It will be confidential and based on the criteria and their weighting Score given and also provided in the 'Evaluation Form', to ensure high overall and in particular scientific quality of the proposed projects.

### **3 The principles of CIRCLE-MOUNTAIN**

This CIRCLE MOUNTAIN call will offer grant funding by applying the 'National Contributions Model', which allows countries to pay for their own researchers and, on occasion, to pay for other countries' researchers, for instance by means of subcontracts of national laboratories. Research funds for Austria, Greece, Hungary, Spain and Turkey are restricted to national applicants.

#### **3.1 Call Funding**

##### **3.1.1 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. The French Funder has the possibility to fund researchers from other countries than France, in the case, the consortium is led by a French institution (Clarifications can be obtained from the French National Contact Person).

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 at the end of this announcement.

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.

##### **3.1.2 Deadline**

The call will be published on the same date (Tuesday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009) in all contributing countries in English, on the CIRCLE website <http://www.circle-era.net/research-calls/circle-mountain-call/> and the Joint Call Secretariat [Webpage](#).

The deadline for submission of proposals is Friday, January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2010, 17:00 CET.

##### **3.1.3 Project Duration**

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

#### **3.2 Project Proposal**

##### **3.2.1 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 partners from a minimum of three different countries. At least two partners (including the Lead Partner) must be from the funding countries of this 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).

### **3.2.2 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.

### **3.2.3 How to present your Proposal?**

A proposal has two parts:

SECTION 1: A Common Application Form for the proposed project, submitted by the Lead Partner of the Consortium (basis for peer-review);

SECTION 2: National Application Form, submitted by each partner of the consortium, including the Lead Partner, to the Joint Call Secretariat. Clarifications on national rules can be obtained from the National Contact Persons listed at the end of this announcement.

#### **SECTION 1: Common Application Form**

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.net/research-calls/circle-mountain-call/> and the Joint Call Secretariat [Webpage](#).

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

- administrative details;
- a summary of the proposal;
- a list of work packages;
- calculated costs per partner and requested funding (including own contribution);
- time schedule;
- detailed project description;
- Annex:
  - References (previous projects related to the proposed project);
  - List of Publication of the principal project participants in call related fields;
  - Curriculum vitae for all participating partners;
  - Statement of Commitment signed by each researcher of each partner, including the lead partner. These need to be provided in as many copies as partners involved in the consortium with original signatures, not copies.

## SECTION 2: National Application Form

Additionally, applicants (Lead Partner and partners) have to submit a National Application Form for the proposed project, according to the national funding rules of each country (for details please contact the National Contact Person).

### 3.2.4 Submission of the proposals

Within the deadline indicated in the call text (Friday, January 29<sup>th</sup> 2010, 17:00 CET) the Project Leader has to submit the Common Application Form ([SECTION 1: Common Application Form](#)) online in pdf format at the Joint Call Secretariat [Webpage](#).

The National Application Forms (SECTION 2: National Application Form) have to be sent by e-mail and mail to the Joint Call Secretariat and the national contact person (post stamp not later than Friday, January 29<sup>th</sup> 2010).

We recommend that submission mails should be identified with the following subject:

**Submission circle-mountain-Name of your project**

## 3.3 Evaluation Process

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

- 1) First Stage: "Eligibility Check"
- 2) Second Stage: "Scientific Evaluation"

### 3.3.1 Eligibility Check

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

- The submitted project outline includes research institutions or companies from at least two of the funding countries and one other country that brings own funding, fulfils formal requirements of this call and is written in English.
- 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),
- The Project Leaders will be informed via E-mail of the results of this assessment within one month after the closing of the call.

### 3.3.2 Scientific Evaluation

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

Evaluation criteria of the call:

1. Thematic relevance with regard to the focus and criteria of this call,
2. Scientific excellence of the project (e.g. objectives, methodology),
3. Scientific excellence and qualification of the consortium (lead and partners),

4. Policy/stakeholder relevance & stakeholder involvement,
5. Quality of the consortium management,
6. Added value for the proposed research area,
7. Innovation (science/methodology, technology transfer and dissemination),
8. Inter- and trans-disciplinarity,
9. Prospects for success with regard to the work and financial plan including time schedule,
10. Expected exploitability of results and potential for practical use,
11. Trans-national linkage and benefit of cooperation (e.g. diverse mountain ranges).

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.

### **3.3.3 Final Ranking**

In a final step, the project proposals will be ranked by the Call Steering Committee according to their relevance for public policies. Only excellent or very good project proposals, as judged by the scientific evaluation, will be examined at this stage.

The Call Steering Committee will then decide upon funding within the framework of the available budgets. 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.

## **3.4 Contractual relationships**

### **3.4.1 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 French Funder has the possibility to fund researchers from other countries than France, in the case, the consortium is led by a French institution (Clarifications can be obtained from the French National Contact Person). 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 of up to two years (24 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 Joint Call 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.

### **3.4.2 Research Consortium Agreements**

The CIRCLE funders requires all successful research consortia to enter into consortium agreements between themselves, in order to manage the delivery of the project activities,  
22/09/2009

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 funding organisations by the Lead Partner.

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 will be 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, role & key tasks, and 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;
- the liabilities of the partners towards one another (including the handling of default of contract).

### **3.4.3 Project Commencement**

Funded project should start on August 1<sup>st</sup> 2010. 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.

### **3.5 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 institutions involved in the projects submit a kick-off, a mid-term and final report in accordance with the funding regulations to their corresponding funding organisations. The scientific part of the reports is to be written in English (but an extensive summary and/or

formal part of the reports may be required by funders in their national language – see national rules).

### 3.5.1 Reporting to the CSC

The funded project consortium is expected to establish a presentation on the CIRCLE website giving a description of their research project, at the latest 3 months after the start of the project.

It is the responsibility of the Lead Partner, to submit three reports to the CSC. A kick-off report will describe the start and first steps of the research project (latest three months after the project started), a mid-term report will describe the progress made during the first half of the research project (August 2011). 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).

### 3.5.2 Conferences

Conferences provide a great added value, after activities have started. A kick-off meeting, a mid-term meeting and a final meeting for all funded projects will be organized by the Joint Call Secretariat. The participation is obligatory for at least all Lead Partners. The researchers/research teams should plan their budget accordingly. After the projects have been concluded, the research results will be presented by the Lead Partners on the occasion of one of the regular ERA-NET CIRCLE meetings.

## 4 National contact persons

### Austria

Environment Agency Austria  
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### France

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Common E-mail address of all National Contact Persons:

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