

Integrated Marine and Coastal Management

Project Selection Procedures

EEA Financial Mechanisms 2009 – 2014

Programme number: PT02

EEAGrants: 19247250

Programme Area: Integrated marine and inland water management

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Introduction

In accordance with Articles 6.3, 6.4, 6.5 and 6.6 of the Regulation on the implementation of the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 a detailed description of the selection procedures is presented and identified in the Management and Control System of the PT02 – Integrated Marine and Coastal Management”.

1. Disclosure and Information

Prior to the projects selection and approval phase, the Programme Operator shall have the following concerns:

- Disclosure to all interested project promoters of possible funding opportunities and outcomes to be achieved in order to promote transparency in the use of funds placed under management of this Programme. This disclosure shall be made on the Programme website, through the national, regional and local (publicizing in daily newspapers) media, as well as through other dissemination forms provided in the Communication Plan, namely the production of promotional materials (brochures, posters) and the Newsletter. Thus, Calls for Proposals will be advertised this way.
- Informing applicants of the conditions of access to grants under the Programme and establishing a set of rules and procedures to be followed by the applicants from submission of the applications until the closure of the project, which will guide articulation between applicants and the Programme Operator. The aim is to provide the applicants with information at technical level in order to ensure that they will be able to effectively and regularly implement the projects for which they are responsible, fully aware of all rules and of the regulatory framework. For this effect, Project Promoter's Procedures Manual will be prepared.

2. Calls

In order to initiate the projects selection process, the Programme Operator shall advertise the Call for Proposals, which shall contain the following relevant information for potential applicants:

- Objectives and expected outcomes of the Programme;
- Types of projects and expected outputs;
- Eligible activities
- Total amount available under the Open Call;
- Minimum and Maximum funding amount to be granted to each approved project;
- Grant Rates;
- co-financing requirements;
- Deadline for the submission of proposals (day and hour);
- Eligible applicants
- Eligible partners
- Last date of eligibility of expenses;
- Eligible expenditure (Direct and indirect cost);
- Selection and decision-making process;
- Selection criteria to be applied;
- Scoring chart
- Planned date to communicate the decision to the Applicants Project Promoter;
- Provisions on the payment model;
- Applications submission form;
- Documents to be submitted with the application;
- Method(s) of submission
- Addresses for submission and queries
- Contacts.
- Links to further information incl. the EEA Grants

The deadline for the submission of proposals shall be two months counted as of the date of publication.

Calls for Proposals shall clearly define the form of presentation and selection of applications, which will be by open competition, which is characterized by the possibility of the applications being submitted within a pre-defined time range (2 months), for a previously established amount of the Fund's envelope/appropriation. Applications are ranked in descending order, according to the scores from the merit assessment, for selection purposes within the financial allocation to be granted within the scope of the tender.

The call shall also define the minimum score required for the final classification, which ensures the selection and funding of projects, thus meeting a level of quality that should be required in order to ensure the achievement of the Programme's objectives.

Any project scoring less than the minimum required shall not be selected.

3. Description of selection and approval procedures

The Programme Operator shall ensure that projects are selected for funding in accordance with the EEA Grants 2009-2014 Regulation, the Programme Agreement and the national and European Union law. This process is described as follows through the procedures relating to the stages of project acceptance, technical analysis and selection.

3.1. Selection committee

The Programme Operator shall establish a Selection Committee that shall recommend the projects to be funded within the programme. The Selection Committee shall consist of at least three persons possessing the relevant expertise. At least one of them shall be external to the Programme Operator.

3.2. Receipt of Applications

Applications must be submitted by the applicant to the Programme Operator in accordance with description in the Call.

Applications must be submitted in Portuguese or English, in digital format, by email, to the following address: eeagrants@dgpm.mam.gov.pt using the standard application form, with all documents constituting the application folder (i.e. list of documents to be submitted by the applicant and demandable on application) attached thereto.

The applicant must send all original documents, in paper format, to the address identified in the Call for Proposal, with the application form duly signed and stamped.

The project's selection and approval process is carried out in two sequencing phases, as follows:

1st phase – Administrative Checks

- **Correct preparation of the application process** - verification whether the application, in particular the Application Form, has been correctly completed and whether all required and mandatory annexes have been attached thereto.
- **Administrative and eligibility compliance** – verification of compliance with administrative and eligibility criteria.

2nd phase - Selection - The final score will be assigned to the project by applying the selection criteria approved by the Programme Operator and published in the Call for Proposal.

All sequencing phases are qualifiers.

1st Phase – Administrative Checks

Correct preparation of the application process

The verification of compliance of the submitted application will be supported by a check list, which will allow validating the following aspects:

- Verifying that the application process is submitted to the Programme Operator by the deadline set out in the Call;
- Verifying the completion of the Application Form (including the correct completion, signing and dating);
- Verifying all required documents to be included in the application.

Validation of the information is carried out by the **Financial, Legal, and Administrative Support**.

Administrative and eligibility compliance

The verification of compliance with the requirements of administrative and eligibility criteria is supported by general law and the Regulation on Implementation of the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism 2009-2014. Furthermore, the following requirements shall have to be complied with:

- The applicants and its partners comply and meet the general conditions for eligibility;
- That the proposed projects comply with the eligible activities as described in the Call;
- All The relevant local, national and European Union legislation (including but not limited thereto, environmental public procurement and state aid law) are complied with;
- The project or actions within projects do not, or will not, benefit from financial aid under other EU financial instruments;
- The financing rate requested is within the limits established in the Call;
- Eligibility of expenditure regarding:
 - Temporal Eligibility - the expenditure scheduling must fall within the period established in the Call;
 - Material Eligibility – the type of expenditure must be deemed eligible expenditure under the Regulation on Implementation of the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism 2009-2014, as provided in the call;
 - Formal Eligibility - clearance of eligible expenditure considering the verification of completed or ongoing procurement procedures.

The eligibility analysis, as described above, shall establish, by confirming or by rectifying, the correcting – the project's Total Costs, Total Non-eligible Expenses and Total Eligible Expenses.

The administrative and eligibility compliance shall be supported by the completion of a Check List and the Annex: "Questionnaire on compliance of public procurement procedures" to be completed by the applicant, for each awarding procedure already completed or in progress, as a document that the applicant shall have to submit with the Application Folder.

This validation will be based on all documents in the Application Folder.

Validation of the information is carried out by the **Financial, Legal, and Administrative Support** and by the **Technical Area Support**.

2nd Phase - Selection

Only proposals complying with the requirements of formal eligibility will be eligible for further evaluation. During the Selection Phase the Programme Operator shall evaluate the overall relevance and quality of the proposal.

The selection criteria allow assessing the applicant's ability to complete the proposed action, namely the:

- **Operational capacity** of the applicant and partners: professional and/or institutional competences, qualifications and requirements required to implement the project;
- **Financial capacity**, ensuring this way stable and sufficient financial flows to maintain its activity throughout the period during which the proposal is being carried out and to participate in its funding.
- **Technical Capacity**, the project quality and its contribution to the objectives, as well as to the programme outcomes and respective outputs.

Applicants must demonstrate a sound understanding of the objectives of the Call.

In order to obtain the final classification, the Selection Criteria Grid Analysis shall be completed. The methodology to be adopted, the scale of maximum scores to be awarded and the minimum required for the final classification, ensuring thereby the selection and funding of projects, shall be set in each Call. Thus, a level of quality that should be required in order to ensure the achievement of the Programme's objectives will be reached.

Two independent and impartial experts shall (separately) score the project in accordance with the selection criteria. For the purposes of ranking the projects, the average scores awarded by the experts shall be used.

In case the difference between scores awarded by the two experts is higher than 30% of the highest score, a third expert shall be commissioned by the Programme Operator to score the

project independently. In such cases the average score of the two closest scores shall be used to rank the projects.

The Programme Operator provides the **Selection Committee** with the list of ranked projects.

The **Selection Committee** shall review the ranked list of projects and, and may modify the ranking in justified cases. The justification for the modifications shall be detailed in the minutes of the meeting of the Selection Committee. In case a project is rejected as a result of such amendment, the affected applicant shall be informed in writing regarding the justification for the amendment. The Selection Committee shall submit the list of recommended projects to the Programme Operator.

The **Programme Operator** shall establish whether the selection process has been conducted in accordance with the EEA Regulation and if the Selection Committee's recommendations comply with the rules and objectives of the programme. Following such verification the Programme Operator (Decision Body), based on the recommendation of the Selection Committee, shall make a decision regarding which projects shall be supported. In case the Decision Body modifies the decision of the Selection Committee, it shall inform the Selection Committee and provide it with a justification.

Applications that meet the required minimums are ranked in descending order according to the scores from the assessment of selection criteria to be provided in the call for proposals. The applications with the highest scores within the financial allocation for each call will be awarded grants.

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Applications that have sufficient quality, but are not awarded granting because of the limitations in funding set by each call, should be put on a ranked reserve list.

In case funds are uncommitted, a second call may be launched and shall make available any remaining funds for re-granting. The Programme Operator shall notify the applicants regarding the results of the selection process within 45 working days after the end of the deadline for submission of applications and will publicize the results.

Annex A presents the **flowchart of the selection process**.

4. Selection Criteria for Calls

In the selection of applications, selection criteria will be applied taking into account the assessment criteria and weightings, as the following table:

Selection Criteria	Weighting (W)	Indicative aspects	Criteria Classification (CC) (points)*	Global Score
1. Contribution to achieving the Programme's objectives and expected outcome(s) and outputs	30%	Demonstration of the contribution for the overall objectives, outcomes and outputs of the Programme: a) Achieving and sustaining the Good Environmental Status (GES) in the European marine and coastal waters? (25%) b) Strengthen bilateral relations? (25%) c) Demonstration of the contribution of the project to the Programme's expected outcomes and outputs? (50%)	25% * CC1a 25%*CC1b 50%*CC1c	
2. Technical coherence and understanding	30%	a) Identification and understanding of the specific needs the proposal is intended to solve? (20%) b) Demonstration of solid knowledge and experience relevant for the development of the project accordingly with the objectives which aims to achieve? (20%) c) Qualification of the team members in the subject matter of the present call for proposals and of the proposed project, as demonstrated by relevant academic qualifications and sufficient (for senior members this would mean several years) relevant professional experience? (20%) d) Identification of distinct, relevant and realistic deliverables? (20%) e) Feasibility, clarity, logic and coherence of the proposal? (20%)	20%*CC2a 20%*CC2b 20%*CC2c 20%*CC2d 20%*CC2e	
3. Approach and added value	20%	a) Measures proposed to involve stakeholders, ensuring visibility of the project? (35%) b) Complementarity with the projects identified in the National Ocean Strategy 2013-2020 Action Plan - Mar-Portugal Plan – Programmatic Area/Ocean - Action Programme “Marine Strategy Framework Directive”; Programmatic Area/Governance – Action Programmes	35%*CC3a 35%*CC3b	

		"Administration", "Education, science and technology" and "Identity and Culture"?(35%) c) Relevance of expected results and potential impact in terms of stimulation of best-practice, innovation and demonstration? (30%)	30%*CC3c	
4. Financial coherence and availability	20%	a) Feasibility of proposed project in terms of coherence of resources and timetables? (25%)	25%*CC4a	
		b) Demonstration that the project is implemented with the aim of achieving economic efficiency? (25%)	25%*CC4b	
		c) Budget: consistency of the expenditures with the foreseen activities? (25%)	25%*CC4c	
		d) Clearly state the co-financing requirements? (25%)	25%*CC4c	

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Score	Meaning
0	no contribution
1	very poor
2	poor
3	adequate
4	good
5	very good

4.1. Final Classification

The Final Classification (FC) of each application is based on the scale of 0 to 5 points for rating criteria aggregation, using the following formula:

$$FR = W_1 * (25% * CC_{1a} + 25% * CC_{1b} + 50% * CC_{1c}) + W_2 * (20% * CC_{2a} + 20% * CC_{2b} + 20% * CC_{2c} + 20% * CC_{2d} + 20% * CC_{2e}) + W_3 * (35% * CC_{3a} + 35% * CC_{3b} + 30% * CC_{3c}) + W_4 * (25% * CC_{4a} + 25% * CC_{4b} + 25% * CC_{4c} + 25% * CC_{4d})$$

Where:

- $W_1... W_4$ = Weighting Criteria

- $CC_{1a}... CC_{4d}$ = Criteria Classification

(The classification will be established to 2 decimal places without rounding)

5. Communication with applicants and appeal processes

Communication with project promoters can be made by: letter, email or fax. During the project's appraisal, selection and approval phase, the procedures will be the following:

1st Phase – Administrative Checks

Correct preparation of the application

1A – In case the project promoter submits the Application Form and all documents to be included in the Application Folder

A notice will be given to the applicant informing it that the proposal meets the conditions regarding its correct preparation. Moreover, the application/project will be given a code number. The appraisal moves to the **Administrative and eligibility compliance**.

1B – In case the project promoter does not correctly prepare the application process

A notice will be given to the applicant informing it regarding the intention to not accept the application, through a process of prior hearing. Within this scope, the applicant will have 10 days to give an opinion on that proposal of intent pursuant to the Administrative Procedure.

In case the project promoter responds to the prior hearing by repeating the 1st Phase:

- a) If the result is **1A**, the appraisal moves to the **1C**.
- b) If the result is **1B**, the application shall not be accepted and the applicant will be given notice regarding the non-acceptance of the proposal.

In case the project promoter does not respond to the prior hearing, the application shall not be accepted and the applicant will be given notice regarding the non-acceptance of the proposal.

Administrative and eligibility compliance

1C – In case the application complies with the administrative and eligibility requirements

The appraisal moves to the **2nd Phase**.

1D – In case the application does not comply with the administrative and eligibility requirements

A notice will be given to the applicant requesting it to provide clarification/additional elements.

In case the project promoter responds to the said clarification/additional elements request:

- a) If the results is **1C**, appraisal moves to the **2nd Phase**.
- b) If the result is **1D**, the applicant will be given notice regarding the intention to not accept the application, by means of a prior hearing proceeding. Within this scope, pursuant to the Administrative Procedure Code, the applicant will have 10 days to give an opinion on that intention proposal.

- (1) In case the project promoter responds to the prior hearing:
The answer will be analysed in order to conclude whether the arguments are sufficient to review and potentially modify the decision of not accepting the application. If the arguments are sufficient, the appraisal goes to the **2nd Phase**. If they are not sufficient, the applicant will be given notice of the non-acceptance of the proposal.
- (2) In case the project promoter does not respond to the prior hearing:
The applicant will be given notice of the non-acceptance of the proposal.

In case the project promoter does not respond to the said clarification/additional elements request the application shall not be accepted and the applicant will be given notice regarding the non-acceptance of the proposal.

2nd Phase - Application of the selection criteria

Applicants shall be notified about the results of the selection processes within 45 working days after the end of the deadline for submission of applications.

2A – In case the project is selected

If after applying the methodology adopted for selection criteria, the project's final classification reaches the minimum points required in the Call, and the application qualifies for the selection and funding within the financial framework of each call, a Final Financing Decision will be prepared.

The Final Financing Decision may be favourable or subject to the satisfaction of certain conditions to be favourable.

The Financing Decision shall be communicated to the applicant within eight working days after the respective decision, pursuant to the Administrative Procedure Code.

In case the Financing Decision is favourable

The applicant will be given notice of the Favourable Financing Decision which will be formalized by means of a written contract to be entered between the Applicant and Programme Operator.

The Applicant shall have 20 days counted as of the date on which copy of the contract was forwarded to be signed and then returned. Failure to sign the contract within that period shall determine the expiry of the financing decision, whenever the applicant does not present a well founded justification within the same 20 days.

In case the Financing Decision is conditional

In case the proposed financing decision is favourable, but subject to the satisfaction of certain requirements, the Programme Operator shall notify the applicant regarding the reasons for the conditional assent, setting a deadline for the submission of the documents and/or clarifications that will lifting the said constraints. Regarding the conditions that must be complied with during the implementation phase of the project, the lifting will be monitored by the Programme Operator, and in case of default by the Project Promoter, payments relating to the project's funding will be cancelled.

In case the project promoter responds to the Conditional Financing Decision

- a) the information/clarifications supplied will lift the constraints – the Financing Decision becomes favourable and follows the previously defined procedures;
- b) the information/clarifications do not lift the constraints - the project will get an Unfavourable Financing Decision.

In case the project promoter does not respond to the Conditional Financing Decision within the deadline - the project will get an Unfavourable Financing Decision.

2B – In case the project is not selected

The Programme Operator shall inform the affected applicant and provide it with justification for the non-selection decision. The said decision will be subject to the applicant's prior hearing, which, pursuant to the Administrative Procedure Code, will have 10 working days to give its opinion on that proposal.

In case the project promoter responds to the prior hearing:

The answer will be analyzed in order to conclude whether the arguments are sufficient to review the non-selection decision. In case the arguments are accepted, the appraisal moves to 2A. In case they are not accepted, the

classification of non-selected project will hold and the applicant will be given notice of the Final Unfavourable Financing Decision.

In case the project promoter does not respond to the prior hearing:

The applicant will be notified regarding the Unfavourable Financing Decision.

6. Avoidance of conflict of interest

The situations of conflict of interest with persons involved in the selection, verification and monitoring processes will be avoided, namely through the following procedures:

- Each person involved in the selection process shall sign a statement undertaking that he/she has neither economic interests, political or national affinities, family or emotional ties, nor does he/she share any other interests of the applicant or his/her partner, or any other interests that might influence his/her impartial performance;
- The Programme Operator will take all the necessary measures to prevent that such a situation will affect the integrity of the selection process, namely by replacing the persons involved in the selection process in case such potential conflict of interest is detected.

7. Small Grant Scheme

The selection process and selection criteria for the general calls for proposals as described above also applies to the Small Grant Schemes.

8. Bilateral Fund

The selection process to the Fund for Bilateral Relations will be more simplified than the described above. There will be an internal assessment for selecting projects/intentions under the Calls for FBR.

The application of selection criteria and the project selection will be made by an internal Selection Committee formed up for the purpose.

Applications can be submitted continuously without specific deadlines, no longer than until the 1st quarter 2015 for measure (a) and 1st quarter 2016 for measure (b).

A detailed description of the selection process is provided in the "Strengthen Bilateral Relations – Work Plan".

8.1. Selection Criteria for Bilateral Fund

Selection Criteria	Weighting (W)	Indicative aspects	Criteria Classification (CC) (points)*	Score
1. Contribution to achieving the Programme's objectives	20%	Demonstration of the contribution for the overall objectives of the Programme: a) Achieving and sustaining the Good Environmental Status (GES) in the European marine and coastal waters? (30%) b) Strengthen bilateral relations? (70%)	30%*CC1a 70%*CC1b	15
2. Reveals sustainability in terms of bilateral cooperation	30%	Demonstration of the contribution of the project to the sustainability in terms of bilateral cooperation: a) Maintenance of bilateral relations after the project completed? (60%) b) Reveals ability to generate new bilateral relations? (40%)	60%*CC2a 40%*CC2b	
3. Contribution to achieving the Programme's Bilateral Relations Fund expected outcome(s) and outputs	30%	a) Demonstration of the contribution of the project to the Programme's Bilateral Relations Fund expected outcomes and outputs?(100%)	100%*CC3a	
4. Approach and added value	20%	a) Measures proposed to involve stakeholders, ensuring visibility of the project? (50%) b) Complementarity with the projects identified in the National Ocean Strategy? (50%)	50%*CC4a 50%*CC4b	

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Score	Meaning
0	no contribution
1	very poor

2	poor
3	adequate
4	good
5	very good

8.2. Final Classification

The Final Classification (FC) of each application is based on the scale of 0 to 100 points for rating criteria aggregation, using the following formula:

$$FR = W_1 * (30% * CC_{1a} + 70% * CC_{1b}) + W_2 * (60% * CC_{2a} + 40% * CC_{2b}) + W_3 * 100% * CC_{3a} + W_4 * (50% * CC_{4a} + 50% * CC_{4b})$$

Where:

- $W_1... W_4$ = Weighting Criteria

- $CC_{1a}... CC_{4b}$ = Criteria Classification

(The classification will be established to 2 decimal places without rounding)

9. Organisational Structure

Figure A

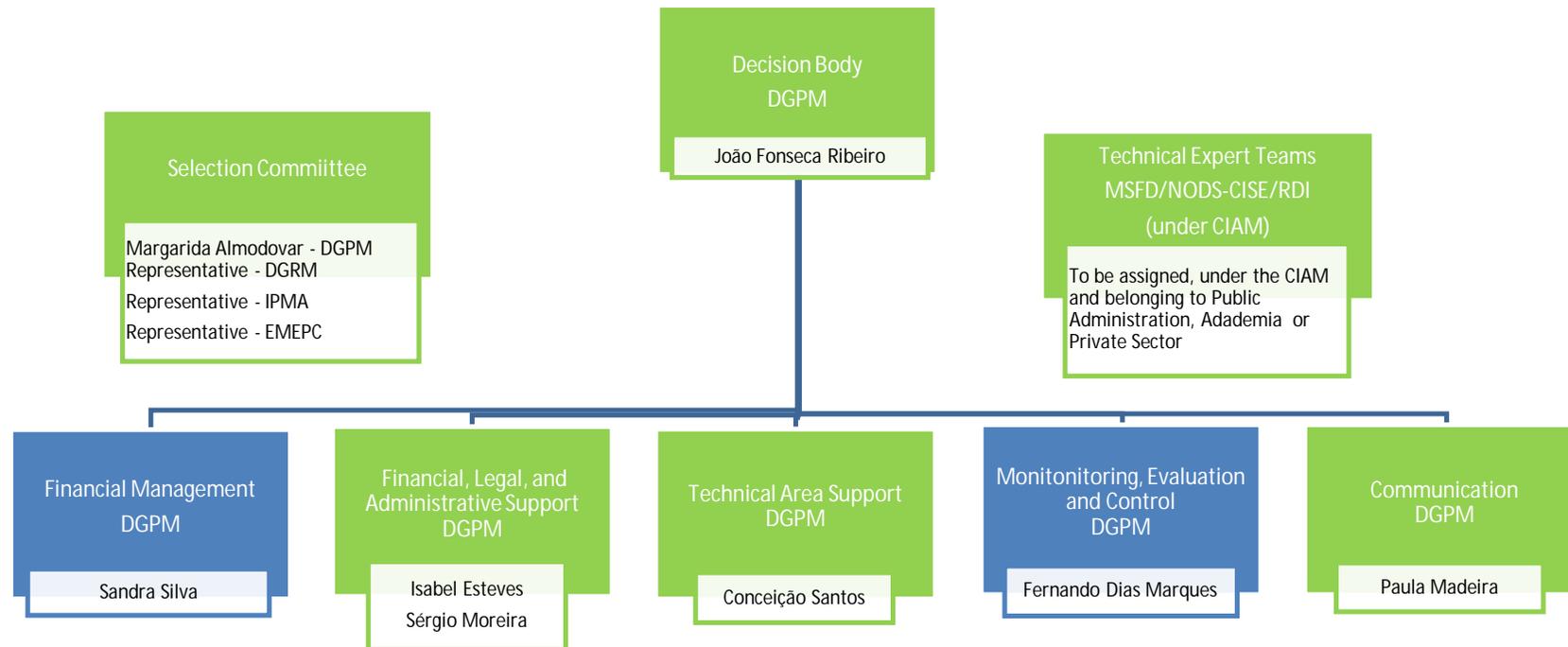


Figure A represents the **Organisational Structure** of the PT02's Programme Operator and identifies the organizational units involved in the selection process.

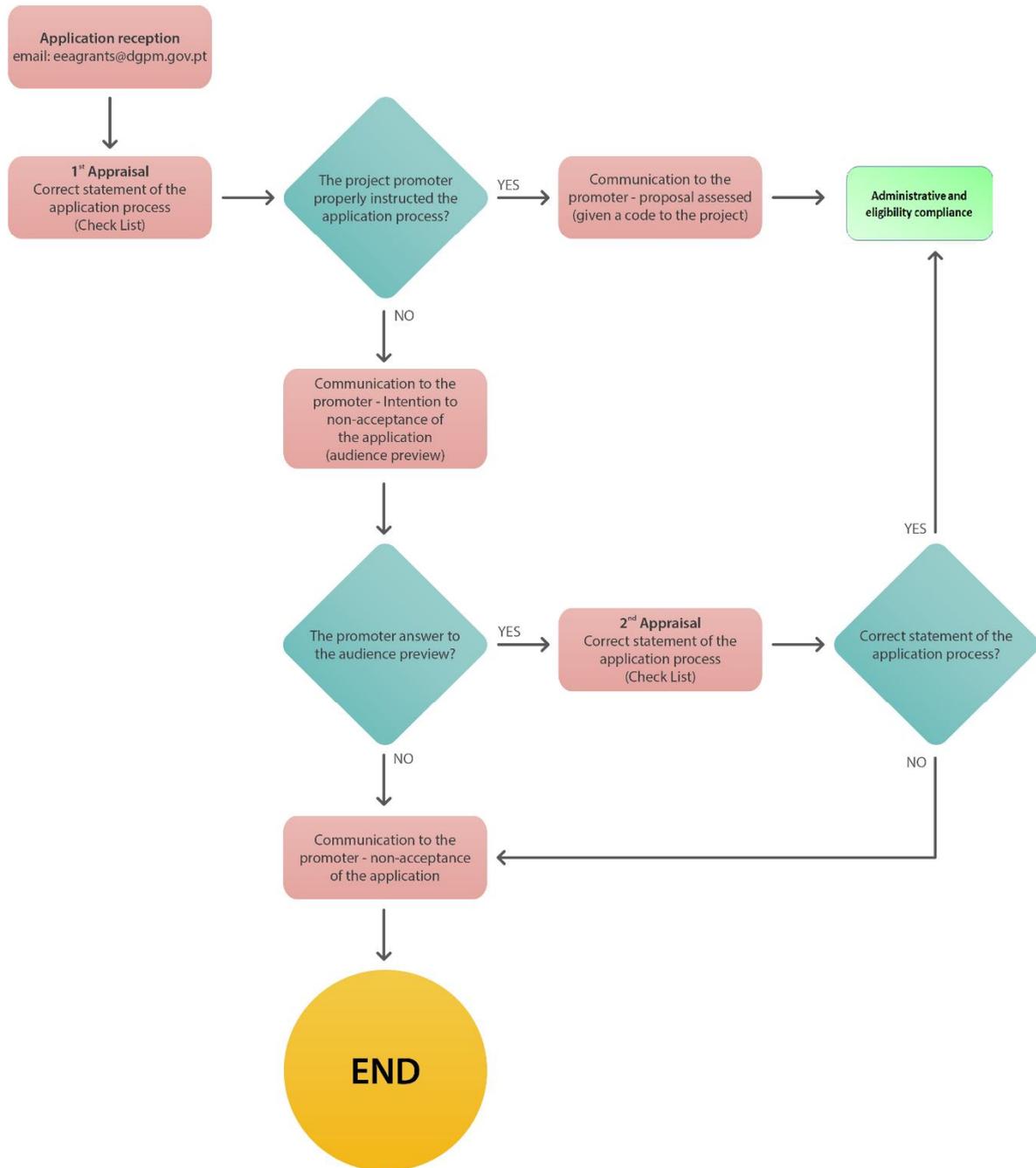
This organisational structure shall ensure independence and functional separation regarding the principle of segregation of duties, in the selection process of the projects and in the financial monitoring of approved projects, and it shall also be ensured that those functions are going to be performed by different technicians.

It is intended that the organisational structure ensures segregation of duties with regard to the analysis and selection of projects, verification of claims and on-the-spot verifications.

Annex A - Flowchart of the selection process.

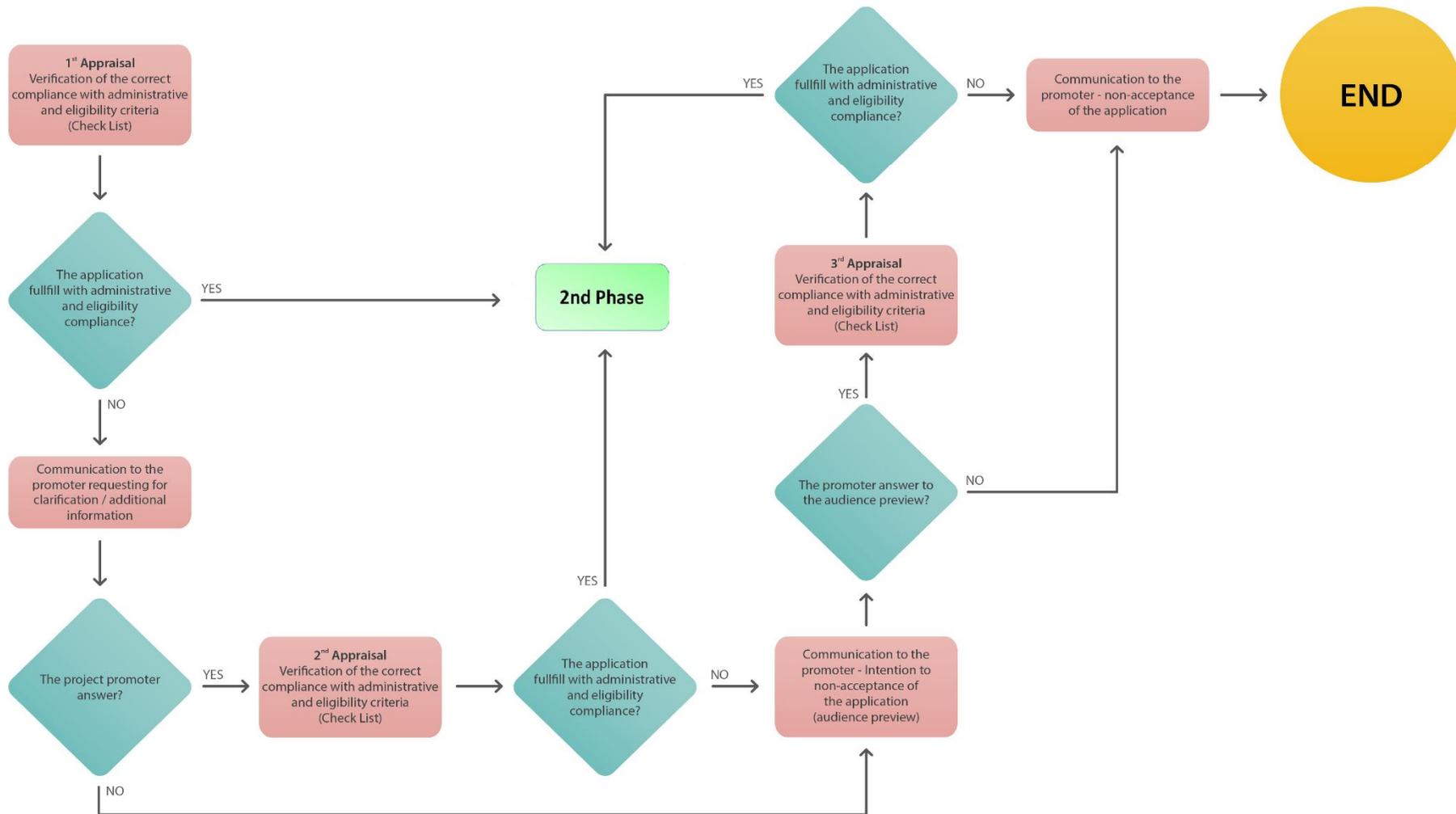
1st Phase - Administrative Checks

Correct statement of the application process



1st Phase - Administrative Checks

Administrative and eligibility compliance



2nd Phase - Selection

