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Circular Letter No.4614  
14 September 2022

To: All IMO Member States and Associate Members

Subject: **Call for Expressions of Interest to become a Lead Pilot Country in the GEF-UNDP-IMO GloNoise Partnership project**

## Introduction

1 Following the request of MEPC 76 (MEPC 76/15, paragraph 12.3.5), IMO, UNDP and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) have joined hands to develop a new technical cooperation project to address the issue of underwater noise from shipping. The project will focus on building capacity in developing countries for implementing the *Guidelines for the reduction of underwater noise from commercial shipping to address adverse impacts on marine life* (MEPC.1/Circ.833 of 7 April 2014). The project will further entail assisting developing countries and regions in raising awareness and filling the information gaps to assist the policy dialogue on anthropogenic underwater noise mitigation from shipping.

2 In this regard, a medium-size project concept was developed and approved by the GEF in June 2022, with a total funding of US\$2.0 million, subject to IMO submitting a fully-fledged project document that identifies the Lead Pilot Countries (LPCs) who can take a championing role in their respective regions and commit to the goals of the project. The full name of the project will be "Global Partnership for Mitigation of Underwater Noise from Shipping" (GloNoise Partnership). This GEF-UNDP financed project will be executed by IMO, under the GEF International Waters focal area, over a period of two years.

3 The project is now going through a six-month preparation phase during which the IMO Secretariat is developing a fully-fledged project document that will be submitted to GEF-UNDP for final endorsement and approval. Implementation is expected to commence during the first half of 2023.

## Call for Expressions of Interest to become a Lead Pilot Country

4 The IMO Secretariat is launching an open process and calling for expressions of interest to select the LPCs for the GloNoise Partnership project. At this stage, a maximum of five LPCs can be selected to take part in the project. The beneficiary countries will be the developing Member States of IMO and, where possible, a balanced global geographical distribution will be prioritized.

5 Member States are encouraged to inform the Secretariat of their intention to participate in the new project by submitting the questionnaire included in the annex to this circular letter.

Expressions of interest, **by email**, should be addressed to:

Mr. Youngso Kim  
Head, Partnerships, Department of Partnerships and Projects, IMO  
[ykim@imo.org](mailto:ykim@imo.org)

with copy to:

Mr. Steven Reyersen  
Programme Assistant, Department of Partnerships and Projects, IMO  
[sreyerse@imo.org](mailto:sreyerse@imo.org)

6 The closing date for this Call for Expressions of Interest is **Wednesday, 16 October 2022**. Member States and Associate Members are invited to submit their documentation as soon as possible.

### **Evaluation and selection of Lead Pilot Countries**

7 The selection of LPCs for the GloNoise Partnership will be done in three stages:

**Stage 1:** All expressions of interest submitted by Member States will be reviewed and assessed based on the information provided in the questionnaire in the annex. In the first instance, all expressions of interest will be subject to the country's eligibility for receiving GEF and UNDP support. Other evaluating criteria will include, inter alia:

- level of exposure to, and risk from, underwater noise;
- existence of national institutions, of formal or informal nature, addressing underwater noise;
- geographical distribution of the LPCs; and
- level of commitment by the country to prioritize underwater noise issues and to implement the 2014 Underwater Noise Guidelines.

**Stage 2:** Shortlisted countries will be contacted with a view to further assess the requirements and discuss the activities, deliverables and in-kind co-financing to be achieved during the two-year project. Based on this information, the LPCs for the GloNoise Partnership will be preselected.

**Stage 3:** By 1 December 2022, all preselected countries will be requested to submit a Letter of Endorsement (LoE) confirming their agreed in-kind co-financing to the GloNoise Partnership project and naming a Lead Agency, a National Focal Point and a National Project Coordinator. Upon receipt of the letter, the LPCs will be confirmed and included in the project document.

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**ANNEX**

**GLONOISE PARTNERSHIP**

**COUNTRY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LEAD PILOT COUNTRIES**

<b>Name of country</b>
1. Brief description of shipping activities and major ports in the country:
2. Brief description of non-shipping activities in the country that are linked to underwater noise issues (for example offshore industrial activities such as coastal power plants; dredging; drilling; the construction and operation of wind farms; hydrocarbon activities and seismic surveys; cable laying, or sonar and technology developers, etc.):

**Brief description of the importance of underwater noise related issues to the country**

3. Brief description of the country's proven record on the policy agenda on marine environmental protection:
4. Is underwater noise a priority issue being discussed in the country? If yes, why? Please provide examples, if any, of national policies, strategies and regulations on noise mitigation efforts, or their promotion.
5. Has the country identified or encountered any concrete issues relating to underwater noise? This could be in an environmental, socio-economic or cultural context. If yes, please provide a brief description.

6. Have any underwater noise-related studies or assessments been carried out in the country? If yes, please provide a brief description.

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7. Are a national database, information system or major scientific studies on underwater noise issues available in the country?

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8. Have there been any training or awareness raising activities related to underwater noise in the country? If yes, please provide a brief description.

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### **Institutional arrangements**

9. Is there any agency dealing with underwater noise mitigation in the country, or has any national committee or task force been formed to look into this issue? If yes, please provide the name, contact details and mandate.

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10. Please list the lead national stakeholders and scientific organizations involved in underwater noise related issues and studies in your country.

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11. What is the status of your country in relation to the implementation of the 2014 Underwater Noise Guidelines?

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12. Is your country a member of any regional cooperation structures addressing issues related to the marine environment? If yes, please provide the name(s) of these regional structures.

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13. Please elaborate on the country's commitment to participate in the GloNoise Partnership project as a Lead Pilot Country and provide leadership at a regional level.

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**Other information**

14. Please list any other activities (national projects, programmes, R&D activities, etc.) or information of relevance.

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