



Sustainable Blue  
Economy Partnership

**“PILOTING ACCESS TO SHARED  
RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES AT PAN-  
EUROPEAN SCALE TO REINFORCE  
CAPACITIES AND SUPPORT THE  
TRANSFORMATION OF THE BLUE  
ECONOMY”**

**1<sup>st</sup> Access call to Research Infrastructures**

Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership

2025



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**Title: Piloting access to shared Research Infrastructures at pan-European scale to reinforce capacities and support the transition of the blue economy**

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DISCLAIMER: This Transnational Access (TA) Call to Research Infrastructures (RIs) is intended as a groundbreaking action in the framework of a European Partnership programme to demonstrate the added value of the transnational shared access to RIs for the transformation towards a sustainable blue economy. This pilot activity starts to fill gaps of the uneven distribution of access to infrastructures and introduces an impact-oriented approach to research and innovation (R&I), support knowledge and data sharing and dissemination across Europe. The Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership will offer the opportunity to use a RI, but no other expenses will be reimbursed. Therefore, the organisation submitting an application will have to demonstrate the feasibility of the projects by declaring availability of own resources.

*This Call text, prepared under the relevant tasks of the Partnership and including input by the European Commission, has been validated by the RI providers and approved by the General Assembly of the Partnership.*

*The experience gained in the development of this TA Call will be useful to inform future ones, duly adapting contents and procedures.*

## 2025 TRANSNATIONAL ACCESS CALL TO RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES, IN BRIEF

### WHAT

The **European Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership (hereafter the Partnership)** is **launching an open call for access to Research Infrastructures (RIs)**, inviting private and public organisations to submit impact-oriented R&I proposals to use the portfolio of RIs made available by providers that are partners of the Partnership, by contributing to the objectives of the Partnership. The call is inspired by the Transnational Access schemes with specific constraints, i.e. while access to the RIs is offered, the implementation of the project is self-funded.

RIs providers, being partner of the Partnership, will make available a portfolio of RIs of the following typologies:

- *Research Vessels*
- *Fixed platforms, auxiliary devices and experimental stations*
- *Mobile platforms (AUVs, gliders, aircraft)*
- *Portable equipment*
- *Analytical labs and Test benches (pressure chambers, pools. calibration/inter-calibration bench, including sample analysis)*
- *High Performance Computing Centres*

The **RIs** of the portfolio are **offered to public and private selected groups of users** of the blue economy pan-European community, i.e. researchers, engineers and technical staff of research organisations, private companies, non-profit organisations etc. **submitting a successful proposal to the 2025 TA Call to RIs.**

## **WHO**

PROVIDER: An organisation offering access to its own RI in the TA Call. The Provider designates a keyperson for contacts referred to as ‘RI provider contact point’ (see **Annex B**).

USER: A user is the entity / group of subjects that accesses a RI. For this Call and the technical parts of the submission form, the term USER is associated with the Team members of the organisations requesting access to the RI, and whose proposal is selected for implementing the access.

APPLICANT: General term used for indicating either persons or organisations presenting a proposal.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (PI): Leader of each organisation applying to the TA Call, either as Project Leader (i.e. Partner 1 of the Project) or as Project Partner.

TEAM MEMBER OR USER TEAM: Staff of the Project Leaders / Project Partners involved in the proposal.

PROJECT LEADER: Organisation coordinating the proposal. It must be from one Country of the Partnership.

PROJECT PARTNER: Organisation participating in the proposal. It can be from all over the world.

SUSTAINABLE BLUE ECONOMY PARTNERSHIP (or PARTNERSHIP): Pan-European R&I initiative, joined by Member States, Associated and Third Countries together with the EU Commission to support the transition towards a sustainable blue economy by 2030, launching the 2025 TA Call for RIs.

TA MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP (OF THE PARTNERSHIP): Technical secretariat in charge of: (i) collecting and dispatching the proposals to the evaluators; (ii) checking and adapting the work plans (feasibility and timeline) of the selected proposals together with the RIs' owners; (iii) organising and facilitating the meetings of the International Evaluation Panel (IEP); (iv) communicating to the applicants the result of the evaluation; (v) supporting the selected projects and the RI providers in resolving any possible dispute that may arise; and (vi) supporting the smooth implementation and follow-up of projects, at first by facilitating the signature of the user-provider agreement.

INTERNATIONAL EVALUATION PANEL OF THE TA CALL TO RIs: group of independent international scientific and technical experts from the relevant research areas covered in this call, including experts in ethics and in RIs' management, in charge of the evaluation of the proposals.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PARTNERSHIP: Decision-making body of the Partnership. It is joined by all members of the Partnership. Only full beneficiaries have voting rights with a maximum of two voting members per country.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE PARTNERSHIP: Operational body for the execution of the Partnership composed by all Work Packages' leaders and co-leaders, assisting the other Consortium for the implementation of the activities.

## **HOW**

> Consult the catalogue (<https://www.bluepartnership.eu/transnational-access-call-research-infrastructures>) and the relevant RI provider

- > Draft your proposal and submit it on the on-line platform (<https://proposals.etag.ee/sbep-ri/>)
- > Receive the feedback from the evaluation
- > If successful, sign the provider-user agreement
- > Implement your project through physical or remote access to the chosen RIs.

## WHEN

The Partnership's **TA Call to RIs opens on 28 February 2025 and closes on 29 April 2025.**

The **results of the evaluation** are expected in **September 2025**, while the **projects are expected to start between November 2025 and May 2026.**

Projects must be completed by **December 2027.**

# 1. CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

The European Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership (the Partnership) is a research and innovation (R&I) partnership initiated in 2022 under the Horizon Europe Programme. Its vision is to design, steer, and support a just and inclusive transition to a regenerative, resilient, and sustainable blue economy. The Partnership aims to drive the transformation needed towards a climate-neutral, sustainable, productive, and competitive blue economy by 2030, while creating conditions for a healthy ocean for people by 2050. The Partnership seeks to enhance the science-policy interface in marine and maritime domains within the EU and internationally by aligning national, regional, and EU R&I priorities, and bringing together science, industry, policy, and civil society. In addition, it contributes to the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030<sup>1</sup>, the Farm to Fork

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<sup>1</sup> [https://environment.ec.europa.eu/strategy/biodiversity-strategy-2030\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/strategy/biodiversity-strategy-2030_en)

Strategy<sup>2</sup>, the EU Mission “Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030”<sup>3</sup>, the Circular Economy Action Plan<sup>4</sup>, and the Zero Pollution ambition and the transformation of Europe’s blue economy towards climate-neutral status by 2050, as also reflected in the communication on a new approach for a sustainable blue economy in the EU “Transforming the EU's Blue Economy for a Sustainable Future”<sup>5</sup>.

Europe has a historic relationship with the sea, as nearly half of the EU population lives near the coast. In 2019, the EU blue economy employed 4.5 million people and generated over €671 billion in turnover. However, the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine severely impacted this sector, leading to significant drops in turnover and employment. The UN Global Compact ‘Blue Resilience Brief’<sup>6</sup> highlights how these challenges can advance science-industry collaboration to drive a resilient recovery. A study by the World Ocean Initiative suggests that with better management and innovation, the ocean could sustainably provide six times more food, while protecting marine ecosystems could boost job creation and transform maritime sectors<sup>7</sup>.

The potential of a climate-neutral and sustainable blue economy to deliver innovation, value creation and employment is high, and its role in addressing challenges as articulated in the European Green Deal and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, such as energy security, healthy productive and biodiverse ecosystems, human and animal health and well-being, climate change and sustainable food provision is considerable<sup>8</sup>.

The Intervention Areas of the Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership are the link between the high-level Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda ([SRIA](#)) and the practical implementation

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<sup>2</sup> [https://food.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2020-05/f2f\\_action-plan\\_2020\\_strategy-info\\_en.pdf](https://food.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2020-05/f2f_action-plan_2020_strategy-info_en.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/eu-missions-horizon-europe/restore-our-ocean-and-waters\\_en](https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/eu-missions-horizon-europe/restore-our-ocean-and-waters_en)

<sup>4</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1583933814386&uri=COM:2020:98:FIN>

<sup>5</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2021%3A240%3AFIN>

<sup>6</sup> <https://unglobalcompact.org/library/5787>

<sup>7</sup> Costello, C., L. Cao, S. Gelcich et al. 2019 The Future of Food from the Sea. Washington, DC: World Resources Institute

<sup>8</sup> Stuchtey, M., A. Vincent, A. Merkl, M. Bucher et al. 2020. “Ocean Solutions That Benefit People, Nature and the Economy.” Washington, DC: World Resources Institute. [www.oceanpanel.org/ocean-solutions](http://www.oceanpanel.org/ocean-solutions).

through R&I calls and other activities. They provide actionable routes to approach the range of challenges, tensions, and opportunities that the Blue Economy is facing. Four Intervention Areas were defined as basis for Partnership activities for 2024: Digital Twins of the Ocean, Blue Economy Sectors, Managing Sea Uses, and Blue Bioresources<sup>9</sup>. These areas highlight the need for R&I activities and investments that, each in their own way, support the necessary transition towards a green and digital ocean economy.

Beside issuing yearly Joint Calls for R&I proposals (<https://bluepartnership.eu/funding-opportunities>) pooling national and regional financial resources through the participation of Funding Organisations (PFOs), the Partnership develops a set of additional structuring activities mobilising investment over different assets, including Research Infrastructures (RIs) through the participation of RIs' providers. Building on years of European cooperation on RIs projects, the interest by Member States to deploy RIs in the framework of the Partnership was fully acknowledged upon a call for expression of interests to which many organisations owning or running RIs positively replied.

Over the last decades, investments have been made by Member States at the European level, where the EU Strategy Forum for Research Infrastructures ([ESFRI](#)) supports a coherent and strategic approach to policymaking on RIs and facilitates multilateral initiatives leading to improve the use and development of RIs, including in the marine domain. Furthermore, relevant R&I projects support access to integrated marine RIs within the EC Framework Programmes under the relevant Work Programme.

Recognising the value of observations in enabling society through the provision of operational services and the strategic relevance of RIs as physical, digital, and human assets supporting marine research and education, the G7 Future of the Seas and Oceans Initiative Working Group under the Italian Presidency in 2024 has endorsed the marine RIs and their integration and harmonisation as an emerging topic and dedicated intersessional activities to define possible strategies and actions for integration and harmonisation of national activities.

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<sup>9</sup> «The Partnership Intervention Areas for activities in 2024». [www.bluepartnership.eu/news/partnership-intervention-areas-activities-2024](http://www.bluepartnership.eu/news/partnership-intervention-areas-activities-2024).

As acknowledged in the Conclusions of the EU Council of 29 November 2024 ‘Building bridges: Strengthening Europe’s Research and Technology Infrastructures’<sup>10</sup>, RIs are strategic assets to enable advancements in R&I, to boost scientific discoveries, deep-tech developments and education by providing the capacity, data and knowledge, and training highly skilled researchers and professionals as well as by supporting public good services, through the increasing provision of ocean data and forecasts for different applications as contribution to the European Ocean Observing System (EOOS)<sup>11</sup>. Within this framework, the capacity of Research and Technology Infrastructures to play a strong role in increasing the R&I potential of research performing organisations (RPOs), start-ups and small and medium enterprises (SMEs), as well as industry in local and regional ecosystems, thereby enhancing competitiveness and overcoming fragmentation, is also fully recognised.

Their structuring role is reflected in the creation of networks, user communities and dynamic ecosystems that bring together many R&I stakeholders. Therefore, they are positioned to support the process to fulfil the objectives of the Partnership as well as to support the European Digital Twin of the Ocean (European DTO)<sup>12</sup>, also with reference to the widening and internationalisation strategy, ensuring open access to many countries, including those with less developed RIs capacities or affected by situations hampering the smooth implementation of activities requesting access to RIs, e.g. in the Black Sea area. In consequence, the first call for access to marine RIs of national and pan-European scale is launched in 2025. The call is open to blue economy stakeholders’ communities (research institutions, private companies, NGOs, etc...), inside and outside the Partnership Consortium from countries belonging or associated to the Partnership and beyond. In their R&I proposal for the request of RI access, applicants must address the Intervention Areas of the Partnership 2024 (see Section 2.2). Complementing the joint transnational call for R&I projects, the Pilot [2025 SBEP TA Call to RIs] aims to:

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<sup>10</sup> <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-16179-2024-INIT/en/pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.eoos-ocean.eu/our-purpose/>

<sup>12</sup> [https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/eu-missions-horizon-europe/restore-our-ocean-and-waters/european-digital-twin-ocean-european-dto\\_en](https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/eu-missions-horizon-europe/restore-our-ocean-and-waters/european-digital-twin-ocean-european-dto_en)

- Contribute to the implementation of the Partnership’s Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) through responding to the Intervention Areas.
- Support the widening and internationalisation strategy of the Partnership, valuing its regional dimension.
- Support the synergies with relevant EU initiatives, including the EU Mission ‘Restore our Ocean and Waters’ and the Horizon Europe Work Programme for relevant RIs.
- Contribute to the EOOS and promote Open Data and Open Science.
- Support the development innovative services, transfer solutions from SMEs, and improve skills.
- Leverage on the national plans for RIs and the roadmap of the ESFRI.
- Align and valorise national investments.
- Provide support to policies, including through piloting a more structured Partnership-RIs from a strategic to an operational perspective.
- Further aligning the Partnership strategy and relevant component of the ESFRI roadmap.
- Enhance operational efficiencies by optimising the proper use and sharing of RIs.

In this context, the Partnership will launch the first call for access to Research Infrastructures [2025 TA Call to RIs], enabling applicants from the pan-European blue economy community to submit a proposal for using the RIs made available by providers being partner of the Partnership, with the aim of sustaining the objectives of the Partnership, further enhancing its impact. It has to be noted that the outcomes of this Partnership action can be relevant for the development of other activities, including joint calls and additional activities of the Partnership.

## 2. DESCRIPTION OF THE CALL FOR ACCESS TO RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES

### 2.1 General requirements

Applications in this call must be impact-driven contributions to the transformation into a blue economy for a more resilient future and towards carbon neutrality targets, following an impact pathway approach. Each project should therefore describe its impacts accordingly. The possible users of the outcomes of the projects should be identified in the application.

Applications should briefly describe how they relate to the relevant strategies and initiatives described in the context and objectives of the Call (Section 1.0).

Proposals will be evaluated in terms of scientific excellence, impact and implementation (see **Annex B**), and considered eligible if contributing to at least one Intervention Area of the Partnership (see 2.2). At the same time, reflections on contributions to relevant initiatives will be appreciated as well as on stakeholders' engagement, including a broad range of actors, i.e. industry partners, citizens, and policy makers. These are indeed considered as means to enhance innovation and societal relevance and, ultimately, to promote a change and increase the impact of the projects. In the framework of dissemination, communication and outreach activities, capacity building actions, such education and training, will also be positively considered.

The projects must be developed at a pan-European level and located in European Sea basins: the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea, the Baltic Sea, the North Sea, the Atlantic Ocean, and other regional European areas such as Arctic Ocean, Barents Sea, Celtic Sea, Adriatic Sea, Aegean Seas, etc.

Applicants are expected to assess the projects' impact on the sea-basin(s) targeted in their proposal and address possible scalability in other basins. At the regional level, complementarities and synergies with the lighthouses of the EU Mission 'Restore our Oceans and Waters' will be requested especially for the potential joint valorisation of the outcomes of the projects. Applications should also emphasise the cooperation with key EU access scheme initiatives, including RIs projects (e.g. AQUARIUS, AQUASERV, POLARIN, etc...) as well as address complementarities where applicable, including in terms of exploited RIs.

## 2.2 Intervention Areas

The first Transnational Access Call to Research Infrastructures (TA Call to RIs) within the Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership is entitled "Piloting access to shared Research Infrastructures at pan-European scale to reinforce capacities and support the transition of the blue economy".

All proposals must be developed within the following four Partnership Intervention Areas (IAs).

**A minimum of one IA must be addressed in the proposal to be eligible.**

The precise content of the different Intervention Areas and their respective outcomes and impacts could be found on the Partnership website according to the links provided below:

- **Digital Twins of the Oceans:** *This Intervention Area proposes a multidisciplinary, long-lasting research and innovation activity that focuses on the development of twin technology for spatially limited areas at sea-basin level. The activity aims to improve our understanding of the relations among essential systems at sea-basin level and ultimately support the development of AI based simulation and prediction capabilities for European oceans. More at <https://bluepartnership.eu/intervention-area-digital-twins-ocean>.*
- **Blue Economy Sectors:** *This Intervention Area covers all sectors of the blue economy, focusing on the prerequisites for a green and digital transition of these sectors and on the conditions for co-existence and multi-use of activities and infrastructures at sea. The main aim of the Intervention Area is to support the optimal use of resources in European oceans and seas in terms of space and material flows while ensuring the conditions for sustainability and reducing environmental pressures. More at <https://bluepartnership.eu/intervention-area-blue-economy-sectors>.*
- **Managing Sea-Uses:** *This Intervention Area addresses the need for innovative tools and approaches to the sustainable planning and management of sea-uses, interlinking maritime spatial planning (MSP), the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), and Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) with a focus on the regional dimension. More at <https://bluepartnership.eu/intervention-area-managing-sea-uses>.*
- **Blue Bioresources:** *This Intervention Area addresses research and innovation needs to support a just transition to the sustainable production and utilisation of blue bioresources, with emphasis on production and processes that minimise the environmental impacts while meeting the demand for healthy and affordable blue food, feed, and other biobased products. More at <https://bluepartnership.eu/intervention-area-blue-bioresources>.*

Please note that **for each IA, key thematic areas are indicated** to facilitate the focus of the proposal.

In addition, topics related to the monitoring of marine ecosystems and their socio-economic activities will be welcome to facilitate coordination of observations at the regional level.

Each proposal must specify: their specific demand (up to two RIs), the needs, the time of access and the geographical area where the requested RI support is expected. To this end, a detailed **catalogue of the offered RIs is available at this link:** <https://www.bluepartnership.eu/transnational-access-call-research-infrastructures>. Outcomes and impact of the RI support to the project need to be explained on the scientific level and as well on the socio-economical domain (for details see **Annex B**, eligibility criteria 5-6).

Applicants will have to comply with the provision of a user-provider agreement (see **Annex F** as a basic template) regulating the mutual relationship that the legal representative of the Project Leader and of the Provider of the RIs will sign. Applicants will be also requested to respond to some general requests from the Partnership, such as a notification of the signature of the user-provider agreement, any relevant changes to the project and the access report. They may also decide to subscribe a Consortium Agreement among the proposal's Partners.

## 2.3 Impact of the proposals

Under Horizon Europe, the EU Members-States and Associated Countries aim to create significant societal and environmental impacts. In this context, applicants need to describe the expected impact of their R&I project that applies for RI access and how it contributes to the overall impacts defined under this call:

- *The potential for impact beyond the academic world, such as in societal, technical, environmental, economic, policy-making, or behavioural realms;*
- *How relevant stakeholders, including industry, and blue economy communities can be involved in, and/or benefit from, the design and achievement of the R&I project;*
- *To what extent the project contributes to address the enhancement of human capacity building development;*
- *How approaches for achieving impact are integrated into the project design and conducted by the team;*
- *The potential for a long-term collaboration at international level.*

One way to make such a plan is to rely on a methodology of Theory of Change (ToC) with a related Impact Pathway (IP) to describe the research process, mentioning well-specified outputs and outcomes. It is recommended to rely on this methodology to describe the expected impact of the project.

Please refer to **Annex A 'THEORY OF CHANGE'**, for more information on how to set up a Theory of Change, as well as to a workshop from the Dutch Research Council (NWO), which is freely accessible here: <https://impact.nwo.nl/en/working-with-an-impact-plan>.

The credibility of the pathways to achieve the expected outcomes and impacts specified in the call text will be considered in the evaluation of the proposals.

## 3. TECHNICAL INFORMATION ON RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES AVAILABLE FOR THE CALL

**Transnational Access (TA)** means the free of charge use of research infrastructures or installations for users selected on competitive basis. According to the TA approach, the majority of the team members (> 50%) must be employed in a country other than the country that owns and operates the infrastructure.

The Partnership offers a portfolio of 49 Research Infrastructure services through the integrated availability of the following typology of RIs:

- *Research Vessels*
- *Fixed platforms, auxiliary devices and experimental stations*
- *Mobile platforms (AUVs, gliders, aircraft)*
- *Portable equipment*
- *Analytical labs and Test benches (pressure chambers, pools. calibration/inter-calibration bench, including sample analysis)*
- *High Performance Computing Centres*

A detailed **catalogue** is available at this link: <https://www.bluepartnership.eu/transnational-access-call-research-infrastructures>.

The Partnership portfolio of RIs is made available through different access typology: physical and remote access.

- **Physical** (in person/hands-on): the presence of the user team is required/recommended during the whole operation period
- **Remote**: the requested facility is operated by the owner's staff and the presence of the user team is not required.

Please note that some providers may also enable partially remote access: the presence of the user team is required at some stage (e.g. installing and un-installing, sample collection and storage). Please contact the provider to further explore.

## 4. PROCEDURES, ELIGIBILITY, AND SELECTION CRITERIA

### 4.1 Call process

The TA Call to RIs will be advertised online from the following web pages:

- *Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership website and social media:*
  - o Website: <https://www.bluepartnership.eu/transnational-access-call-research-infrastructures>,
  - o LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/blue-economy-eu/>
  - o X: @BlueEconomyEU
- *Online Submission Tool: <https://proposals.etaq.ee/sbep-ris/>*
- *Relevant webpages of Partnership’s partners and the European Commission as well as of other relevant EU projects/infrastructure Consortia.*

The application process consists of one **single step**.

The Principal Investigator (PI) of the Project Leader must submit a proposal on behalf of the Partners, providing key data on the proposed project. The PI of the Project Leader must get in touch with the contact point of the potential RI in an early stage of the application process to clarify basic requirement and expectations.

The **deadline for the submission** of the proposal is **29 April 2025, 15.00 CEST**.

### 4.2 Call timetable

12 February 2025	Pre-announcement
<b>28 February 2025, 15:00 CEST</b> (local time in Brussels)	<b>Official launch – Call Publication and Information webinar</b>

<b>29 April 2025, 15.00 CEST</b>	<b>Deadline for submission</b>
<b>5 to 23 May 2024</b>	Eligibility checks by the TA Management Working Group
<b>Early June to end of August 2025</b>	Evaluation being done by the International Evaluation Panel (IEP)
<b>Mid-September 2025</b>	IEP meeting (in presence) and results of full proposals evaluation (ranked list of proposals), also validated by the RI Providers. The General Assembly of the Partnership is informed as well.
<b>Mid to End-September 2025</b>	Results of the proposal selection sent to the applicants
<b>October 2025</b>	Final fine-tune, including period of access(es), with RIs providers and contact between providers and users for signing the agreement regulating the access and all accomplishments towards the RI providers and the Partnership, including due communications, detailed implementation plan and reporting
<b>November 2025 to May 2026</b>	Start of projects and execution according to the availability of the requested RI
<b>May 2027 to November 2027</b>	End of projects (within 18 months from the start)

Table 1 2025 SBEP TA Call to RIs Timetable

### 4.3 Confidentiality and conflict of interests

The Partnership is committed to avoiding any Conflict of Interest and safeguarding good scientific practice.

**A Code of Conduct related to Conflict of Interests, confidentiality and non-disclosure is defined and applies to the representatives of the General Assembly of the Partnership, the TA Management Working Group, the contact persons of the RI providers and the International Evaluation Panel (IEP, see below paragraph 4.8.1).** An important aspect of this code is the avoidance of any conflicts between personal and applicants interests.

**Representatives of the Partnership's General Assembly and relevant support bodies (TA Management Working Group and International Evaluation Panel)**

The representatives of the General Assembly of the Partnership, the TA Management Working Group and the IEP will perform their work impartially and take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the work is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest ('conflict of interests').

The following situations will automatically be considered as a conflict of interest:

1. Involvement in the application process

- *Being involved in any proposal and in the preparation of any proposal, either as PI and team member or being involved in the publication or exploitation of the results;*
- *Having submitted a proposal as a PI or a team member, under the call;*

2. Relationship towards the applicant

- *Being a director, trustee or partner or in any way involved in the management of an applicant;*
- *Being employed or contracted by one of the applicants;*
- *Having close professional proximity, e.g., being a member of the same scientific institution with a hierarchical or department relation or impending change of the IEP member to the institution of the applicant in a position with a hierarchical or department relation or vice-versa;*
- *Having close family ties (spouse, domestic or non-domestic partner, child, sibling, parent etc.) or other close personal relationships with the applicants (PIs and team members) or being involved in the publication or exploitation of the results of the proposal;*
- *Having implemented with an applicant (PIs and team members) joint projects or joint publications within the past three years (e.g., have co-authored and published an article with an applicant during the last three years);*
- *Having (or having had during the last three years) a close scientific collaboration with an applicant (PIs and team members) of the proposal;*
- *Having (or having had) a relationship of scientific rivalry or professional hostility with an applicant (PIs and team members) of the proposal;*

- *Having (or having had), a mentor/mentee relationship specifically with a Principal Investigator of the proposal;*
- *Having a current or prior (in the last three years) activity in advisory bodies of the applicant's institution, e.g., scientific advisory boards;*

### 3. Personal interest

- *Having direct or indirect benefit if any proposal submitted is accepted or rejected;*
- *Having personal economic interests in the funding decision.*

Other situations preventing the IEP members from participating in the evaluation impartially could be considered a conflict of interest and should be reported as such by the IEP members.

Applicants of a proposal submitted under this 2025 SBEP TA Call to RIs (including the PIs and team members) may not serve as IEP members.

### **Beneficiaries/affiliated entities of the Partnership being RI providers and participating in this TA Call to RIs**

Research teams of some beneficiaries/affiliated entities of the Partnership, or specific research teams of a partner where applicable, that are providers of RIs may participate in this 2025 SBEP TA Call to RIs. For those partners, firewall measures have been foreseen to mitigate the risk of, perception of, or de facto conflict of interest or unequal treatment of applicants, including clear segregation of duties.

To ensure complete transparency and inform the recipients of calls, the organisations that are RIs providers and partners of the Partnership's Consortium who may apply to the 2025 TA Call to RIs are explicitly listed in **Annex B 'CONTACT POINTS'**, emphasising their compliance with the firewall measures. Their involvement in the preparation, selection and follow-up/monitoring of the calls is regulated as follows:

- *Preparation of the TA Call: The RI Providers support the identification of the relevant framework rules embedded in this Call and the drafting of the standard template of the agreement regulating the relationship between the providers and the users. In this regard, they also validate the final text of the TA Call to RIs*
- *Selection of the Projects: Following the finalisation of the evaluation procedure by the IEP, the contact points of the RI provider organisations, listed in Annex B, will oversee the*

*validation of the ranking list with specific regard to the technical feasibility of the proposal and are thus impeded to apply to this [2025 SBEP TA Call to RIs]. They can also be consulted in case a dispute is put forward e.g. by an applicant on the outcome of the evaluation.*

- *Follow-up of Projects: Providing the subscription of or compliance with the user-provider agreement, RI Providers can request specific information to the users. Also the TA Management Working Group can make inquiries about the state of play.*

Furthermore, the following firewall measures apply: (i) an organisation from a given country is not allowed to request access as Project Leader to a RI run by an organisation of the same country, under this TA to RIs Call; (ii) the majority (> 50%) of the team members must be employed in a country other than the country that owns and operates the infrastructure.

Concrete measures to avoid potential Conflicts of Interest or unequal treatment of applicants are ensured.

## **4.4 Publishable information**

A list of the projects for which access to RIs will be granted will be published at the end of the call process (once the projects have been selected) on the Partnership website. Therefore, applicants should be aware that the following information from the proposals may be published by the Partnership and RI Providers for promotional purposes: (1) Project Title and Project Acronym, (2) Publishable short abstract, (3) Main Research Infrastructure requested for access, (4) Duration of the project, (5) Total costs of the project, (6) Organisation name and country of each Partner, (7) Name of the PI.

The Partnership, through the dedicated TA Management Working Group, will subsequently handle projects approved for access. Those will be governed by the confidentiality rules according to the provision of the user-provider agreement.

## **4.5 Privacy policy**

By applying, the PIs and team members agree to the use, share (for specific purposes: e.g., evaluation, for the future nomination of experts, Partnership-specific communication) and the storage of projects-related information according to the Privacy Policy and the General Data

Protection Regulation (GDPR). The Online Submission Tool presents further information on the Privacy Policy at this link <https://proposals.etag.ee/sbep-ris/>.

## 4.6 Eligibility criteria

Applicants to the 2025 SBEP TA Call to RIs can be employed by an organisation in any country of the world while the Project Leader PI shall be employed by an organisation in one of the Countries involved in the Partnership<sup>13</sup>. It must be noted that access for team members of a proposal selected for access with a majority of Partners not working in an EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated country is limited to 20% of the total amount of units of access provided.

The organisations can be any legal entity including public organisations, private companies, non-profit organisations, etc. Participation of legal entities from third countries (not Member States nor associated to Horizon Europe) shall be demonstrated as essential for the implementation of the action.

Proposals must comply with the following 15 strict **general eligibility criteria**:

Scope	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Proposals must address <b>at least one intervention area</b> of the Partnership</i></li> <li>2. <i>Proposals must formulate a clear <b>request of access to at least one and up to two RIs</b>.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Proposals must address <b>at least one geographical area</b> among: Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea, Baltic Sea, North Sea, Atlantic Ocean. If applicable, proposals must indicate regional areas (e.g. Arctic Ocean, Barents Sea, Celtic Sea, Adriatic Sea, Aegean Seas, etc.) or their scope must be proved to be relevant for one or more above mentioned geographical areas.</i></li> </ol>
Feasibility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. <i>The PIs of the Project Leader and Partners must prove the feasibility of the project as far as regard the self-funded component, e.g.</i></li> </ol>

<sup>13</sup> Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Faroe Islands, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine

	<p>through a <b>declaration of commitment</b> by the supervisor/financial manager</p> <p>5. The applicant, through the Project Leader PI, must <b>confirm the consensus by the RI provider</b> on the feasibility of the proposal. In the case of Research Vessels, a Letter of Intents must be uploaded.</p>
<p>Team composition</p>	<p>6. <b>International cooperation</b> - Proposals must involve <b>at least two Partners from two different countries</b> and requesting access to a beneficiary making RIs available as provider. <b>Not all team members shall necessarily access the infrastructure</b> and can be involved in other activities in support to the project, also considering the availability of RI provider.</p> <p>7. <b>Firewall measure</b> - An organisation being RI provider cannot be <b>Leader/Partner in a proposal requesting access to the same RI it owns/runs</b>. Users-providers' synergies are anyway encouraged and can be outlined as part of the user-provider agreement.</p> <p>8. <b>Firewall measure</b> - The <b>Project Leader PI and the majority (&gt; 50%) of the team members must be employed in a country other than the country that owns and operates the infrastructure</b>. They cannot apply for access to a research infrastructure from their own country.</p> <p>Example 1: A PI based in a Country is entitled to apply for access to all of the listed RIs, except the RIs run by the same Country, and/or any piece of equipment provided by the same Country.</p> <p>Example 2: If an application is requesting access to an infrastructure based in Country 1 to be located on/used together with another infrastructure based in Country 2, the PIs and the majority (&gt; 50%) of team members must be employed in a country other than both Countries (1 and 2).</p>
<p>Principal Investigator (PI) of the Project Leader</p>	<p>9. In each proposal, <b>one entity must act as the Project Leader</b>.</p> <p>10. The <b>PI of the Project Leader</b>, who has the responsibility for submitting the proposal, must be <b>employed by an organisation belonging to one of the countries participating in the Partnership</b><sup>13</sup>.</p> <p>11. The PI of a given entity submitting a proposal can act as <b>PI of the Project Leader (coordinator) only in one proposal</b>. He/she can apply as PI/team member of a Project Partner in other proposals.</p>

Duration of the requested access	<p><i>12. The access must be initiated within 6 months from the reception of the outcomes of the evaluation and terminated within 18 months from the starting date.</i></p>
Proposals submission	<p>A single-step process will apply, with a mandatory submission of proposals. Proposals must be:</p> <p><i>13. Written in English.</i></p> <p><i>14. Submitted electronically with the Electronic Proposal Submission System (EPSS) before the set deadlines at <a href="https://proposals.etaq.ee/sbep-ris/">https://proposals.etaq.ee/sbep-ris/</a> (instructions for electronic submission will be available on the Partnership website at <a href="https://www.bluepartnership.eu/transnational-access-call-research-infrastructures">https://www.bluepartnership.eu/transnational-access-call-research-infrastructures</a>) in February 2025.</i></p> <p><i>15. Complete, respectful of the page limits and the number/type of attachments allowed, including CV template (to be filled in online) that are in line with sound principles for research assessment according to the proposal form (<b>Annexes D and E</b>) and information provided in the EPSS.</i></p>

Table 2 - 2025 SBEP TA Call to RIs general eligibility criteria

When applying to this call, applicants must be aware that their proposals must meet the general eligibility criteria as summarised in Table 2.

A proposal that does not fulfil all the general eligibility criteria reported above will be considered ineligible, declined from any further review and not considered for access to any RIs.

Please note:

- *If the Partner acting as Project Leader is not eligible, i.e. the organisation is not from one of the Partnership’s countries, the whole proposal will be considered ineligible and will not be evaluated.*
- *If any other Partner (not applicable to the Project Leader) is declared ineligible, i.e. the organisation is not from one of the Partnership’s countries, the other Partners could engage themselves to cover the tasks of the ineligible partner.*

Any change in the Partners’ composition must conform to the general eligibility criteria defined in this section and be validated by the TA Management Working Group.

Proposals that fulfil all requirements i.e., general eligibility criteria, will enter the evaluation process described in **Annex C**. The TA Management Working Group will communicate the results of the eligibility check and the decisions taken to the PI of the Project Leader.

#### 4.6.1 Recommendations for the applicants

Collaborative applications from teams and institutions where no equivalent RI exist are strongly encouraged, as well as applications from female, young and early career scientists. International and/or industrial partners are welcome.

All partners within a team should take into consideration the following recommendations for setting up their project proposals:

*Scope:*

- *Proposals should go beyond the state of the art by providing high-quality R&I and, when appropriate, make use of innovative technologies, approaches, and concepts to do so;*
- *Proposals should be scientifically excellent and relevant to policies framed under the Blue Economy and consider ongoing research activities funded by other EU Missions, INFRA projects, European RI Consortia, other instruments, programmes, or projects. Cooperation with these activities is of high importance to avoid redundancy, favour complementarity and increase synergies;*
- *Proposals should highlight the added value of the requested RIs to address the challenges outlined in the Intervention areas and are recommended to address more than one IA, valuing opportunities for cross-fertilisation;*
- *Proposals should contribute to cross-cutting themes such as the open data policy, development of capacity-building activities and ocean literacy activities, promote the inclusion of young people in the activities and knowledge transfer, follow partnership communication guidelines using a common visual identity, to promote equal opportunities for participation of women and men in the research consortia and comply with EC ethics self-assessment principles;*
- *Where applicable, proposals are strongly encouraged to envisage fertilisation measures across sea-basins, including by covering a broad geographic scale (i.e., more than one sub-sea basin) and/or considering the impact of the projects on other EU sea basins.*

*Team composition:*

- *All proposals are encouraged to consider the geographical balance of the applicants and the implementation in appropriate geographic settings and according to the objectives of the proposal, including in low- and middle-income countries/regions, and less-performing countries; a particular consideration for PIs/team members working in countries/regions where no equivalent infrastructures exist or are presently unavailable for use is also encouraged.*
- *It is encouraged to involve stakeholders from the blue economy community (i.e., SMEs), industries, authorities, public administrations, associations, as well as civil society organisations) at the appropriate scale. Stakeholder engagement in the research projects will enhance innovation, policy, and societal relevance and ultimately the impact of the projects;*
- *All proposals should integrate the gender dimension<sup>14</sup> of R&I activities;*

*Budget:*

- *Successful applicants will be granted free access to the selected RIs. The cost for using the RIs are co-funded by the Partnership, the European Commission and the RI provider.*
- *No other costs of the project nor personnel effort/travel/shipping of equipment or any other support will be provided to the members of the team. Therefore, the feasibility of the project through own resources shall be proved.*

*Data management:*

Please note that you will be requested to produce a data management plan as part of the proposal. The guide in **Annex E** ‘OPEN ACCESS AND FAIR DATA’ presents the core requirements for the establishment of a data management plan and the expectations at the stages of proposals and awarded projects.

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<sup>14</sup> [https://erc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document/file/GEPs\\_in\\_HE\\_guidelines.pdf](https://erc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document/file/GEPs_in_HE_guidelines.pdf)

## 4.6.2 Ethical issues

The TA Management Working Group will include the evaluation of compliance with relevant ethical criteria. Applicants should always describe any relevant ethical aspects in their research plans. If a research permit or a statement by an ethics committee is required for the implementation of the project, applicants should provide information on the permits or permit proposals.

Applicants are required to adhere to the principles of good scientific practice and to follow the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity by ALLEA<sup>15</sup> (All European Academies) and the Global Code of Conduct for Research in Resource-Poor Settings<sup>16</sup>. Projects must comply with the 'Do no significant harm principle'<sup>17</sup>. Furthermore, in case of physical access to a RI, any investigation will be observed and carried out in accordance with the general principles of the 'Code of Conduct for Responsible Marine Research in the Deep Seas and High Seas of the OSPAR Maritime Area'<sup>18</sup>, regardless of the area of operation.

Any proposal which seems to contravene fundamental ethical principles will not be selected and may be excluded from the selection procedure by the IEP. Judgment of the significance of ethical issues will be made by using the criteria published by the European Commission in its guidelines on How to Complete your Ethics Self-Assessment<sup>19</sup>.

## 4.7 Submission procedure

A single step procedure will apply to this Access Call; the submission of proposals is mandatory.

Proposals must be submitted electronically using the Electronic Proposal Submission System (EPSS): <https://proposals.etag.ee/sbep-ris/2025>.

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<sup>15</sup> <https://allea.org/code-of-conduct/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.globalcodeofconduct.org/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/support/faq/15485>

<sup>18</sup> [https://www.ospar.org/site/assets/files/1357/mou\\_isa.pdf](https://www.ospar.org/site/assets/files/1357/mou_isa.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/how-to-complete-your-ethics-self-assessment\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/how-to-complete-your-ethics-self-assessment_en.pdf)

Instructions for electronic submission will be available on the Partnership website at <https://www.bluepartnership.eu/transnational-access-call-research-infrastructures>, in February 2025.

For any technical questions regarding the submission procedure using the EPSS, please contact the SBEP EPSS technical helpdesk: [epss.sbep-ris@g.etag.ee](mailto:epss.sbep-ris@g.etag.ee).

Please note that:

- *The online system may experience high traffic volumes in the last hours before the submission deadline and it is therefore highly recommended to submit the final version of the proposal well in advance of the deadline to avoid any last-minute technical problems;*
- *The submission system will close at 15:00 CEST of the deadline date. Please note that the TA Management Working Group can only ensure responses to email support requests up to 12:00 CEST;*
- *Requests for extensions of the deadline due to last-minute technical problems will not be considered. Any proposals not correctly submitted at this moment will be declared ineligible;*
- *All complete proposals will be submitted automatically when the platform closes, to avoid a situation where an applicant does not have time to click on the submit button. In this situation, the proposal will be evaluated as it stands;*

#### **4.7.1 Submission of a Proposal (mandatory stage)**

Applicants must submit proposals within the established deadline and according to the procedure illustrated below. It is not possible to enter the procedure at a later stage.

A proposal eligibility check will be carried out by the TA Management Working Group, based on the general eligibility rules. The eligible proposals will be sent to the scientific evaluation at the international level.

Submission on the EPSS:

- *The Principal Investigator (PI) of the Project Leader creates an account on the EPSS (<https://proposals.etag.ee/sbep-ris/>);*
- *The Project Leader can enter, edit and save the electronic forms, add team members, indicate the required infrastructure(s) (up to max 2), upload the project description (12*

*pages maximum) and submit the proposal. Partners can enter and edit their own data only.*

- *All PIs of the Project Partners shall create an account and log into the EPSS to provide the information required for the participation;*
- *All information must be written in English. The proposal is a self-contained document. Links and hyperlinks are not allowed;*
- *Information entered or uploaded on the platform can be updated until the submission deadline.*

## **4.8 Evaluation of proposals**

Access to any infrastructures offered by the Partnership will be regulated according to the Excellence-driven access mode. This mode of access is dependent on the scientific excellence, originality, quality and technical and ethical feasibility of an application evaluated through peer review conducted by IEP. Only scientifically top-ranked proposals will be considered for the logistical fine-tune, ensuring that only excellent proposals are considered for access.

The TA Management Working Group in supporting the IEP will apply the principles of transparency, fairness and impartiality. The TA Management Working Group accompanies the proposals throughout the different steps of the evaluation process and – if the proposal is successful – even afterwards for the access and reporting.

A single-step procedure will apply for the proposals' evaluation.

### **4.8.1 The International Evaluation Panel**

#### **4.8.1.1 Selection of reviewers**

The TA Management Working Group will establish an International Evaluation Panel (IEP) for access to RI upon input of the RI providers, the General Assembly of the Partnership as well as making profit of the portfolio of evaluators of the transnational Joint Calls #1 and #2 and/or the

portfolio of evaluators from other relevant RI TA projects/networks (e.g. Science Europe<sup>20</sup>, the European Marine Board<sup>21</sup>, EurOcean<sup>22</sup>, etc.).

The composition of evaluation panels will consider the gender and geographical balance.

The IEP will comprise international scientific and technical experts from the relevant research areas covered in this call, including experts in ethics. The IEP composition should allow covering, as far as possible, the range of intervention areas of the present call as well as consider RIs' management competences.

The experts examine the proposal(s) assigned to them, score and comment each proposal following strictly the Evaluation Criteria (see **Annex C**) using an individual Proposal Assessment Form.

IEP members will have to sign a confidentiality, non-disclosure and conflict of interest policy and will have to declare all their potential conflicts of interest with submitted proposals (Declaration of Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Form). The TA Management Working Group will also check that no conflict of interest exists concerning the proposals evaluated.

IEP members cannot be applicants in the joint call and cannot evaluate proposals with which they declared a conflict of interest, to ensure a fair evaluation process and equal treatment of applicants. The IEP will be headed by a Chair and a Vice-Chair. The Chair and the Vice-Chair will be regular members of the IEP with the added duties of moderating the IEP meeting and conveying the results of the discussions through the TA Management WG to the RI providers for validation and to the General Assembly for information.

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the IEP will be selected from a country not represented within the RIs providers to avoid as much as possible conflicts of interest. Members take part in the IEP as independent experts and do not represent any organisation, nor can they send any replacements. This means that their work on this Panel does not represent any organisation or nation.

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<sup>20</sup> <https://scienceeurope.org/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.marineboard.eu/>

<sup>22</sup> <https://eurocean.org/>

#### 4.8.1.2 Review process

All eligible proposals will be subject to a scientific evaluation by three IEP members, one of the IEP members will be nominated as a rapporteur. They must assess the proposal and prepare individual evaluation reports, in advance of the IEP meeting while the rapporteur prepare a Proposal Assessment Summary Form (PASF). Information about the assessment criteria and scoring of proposals are detailed in **Annex C**.

During the IEP consensus meeting, the evaluation results for each proposal will be presented by the rapporteur. The IEP will discuss the proposals, agree on the final individual score for each criterion and the overall score for each proposal and establish the final ranking of proposals based exclusively on the set of criteria defined. With the support of the TA Management WG and the Executive Committee of the Partnership, projects over the threshold will be set by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the IEP to the 'High' or 'Low' priority category. Proposals falling in the category A will then be ranked by infrastructure according to their overall score.

The decisions of the IEP should be taken collectively, preferably by consensus or by a simple majority of the panel members in case consensus cannot be reached. The IEP will produce a final Evaluation Summary Report for each proposal, which will be transmitted to the applicants.

In case of a dispute that may occur with an applicant, e.g. in relation to the ranking list, the IEP can be asked by the TA Management WG, if needed supported by the Executive Committee of the Partnership, for a binding opinion.

## 5. AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE RI PROVIDERS AND THE PROJECT LEADERS

Projects granted for access to RIs need to be concluded within 18 months from the starting date. It is necessary for user and RI provider to sign an agreement for the implementation of the activity, providing an implementation plan and list of duties (standard template in **Annex F**). From the user side, the **legal representative of the Project Leader will sign the agreement**.

The Partnership, through the TA Management Working Group, will assist users and providers in this process.

It is up to the Partners to decide whether to make an agreement among themselves.

## 5.1 Specific Access Conditions/Funding

Access is offered by the Partnership through the relevant Partners being RI providers and making available the RI they operate. The Partnership does not support any costs of the project nor personnel effort/travel/shipping of equipment. Projects activities will need to be self-funded.

## 5.2 Formalisation of the agreement between the providers and the users of the RIs

Before accessing to the requested RI, the **Project Leader** on behalf of all Partners is required to **sign the user agreement with the RI provider**. The TA Management Working Group should also be notified of the signed agreement.

# 6. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND REPORTING

For the whole duration of the project, it is the responsibility of the Project Leader to inform the RI provider and the TA Management Working Group about any changes in the project, i.e., modifications of the work plan or the project team.

Any financial issue is under the responsibility of each Partner involved in the selected project.

## 6.1 Communications, meetings and reports

The Project Leader, on behalf of the Partners, should **communicate** to the TA Management Working Group **the starting of the activities**. The access projects must be completed within a maximum of 18 months and are part of an international research programme for which some joint activities may be organised, with reference to those providing networking and future collaboration opportunities, including remote and in-person meetings/workshops/events and contribution to communication and dissemination. Also RIs providers can be invited to such

gatherings. A **final meeting**, preferably on-line, with all projects will be organised for assessing the results and discussing how the activity was developed.

Besides this, on behalf of the user team, the PI will be required to submit a **digital final access report** to the relevant RI provider and the Partnership within two months after the conclusion of the project. All Partners will have to deliver input for this report. The Partnership will provide a template for this task (after the starting of projects). The access report should be notified to the Partnership.

The TA Management Working Group will check and validate the report with possible support of experts from the IEP.

## 6.2 Data Policy

In compliance with the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (2016/679)<sup>23</sup> (GDPR) and with specific regard to personal data, data protection is regulated as detailed in the relevant document published in the EPSS platform addressing data provided to the Partnership and the purpose of processing of these data for (1) application submission, (2) application evaluation by an independent International Evaluation Committee, (3) application eligibility check, (4) monitoring and evaluation of the call process, (5) general use of the EPSS.

In terms of data generated by the projects, specific data policy will be further regulated in the user-provider agreement. Not only each project will be requested to develop a preliminary Data Management Plan, but some specific clauses can be further specified; for instance, in terms of data ownership, it can be agreed that data stemming from the projects can also be used by the Provider, eventually after a moratorium period in which they remain for the exclusive use of the project's Partners (see **Annex F**).

Moreover, a copy of any datasets generated together with sufficient metadata and, when possible, all the raw data collected during the access shall be submitted to the EMODnet Data Ingestion portal <https://submission.emodnet-ingestion.eu/>.

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<sup>23</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/679/oj/eng>

## 6.3 Acknowledgments and Dissemination requirements

Dissemination of project outputs is the responsibility of the Partners. Measures for dissemination of the results must be described in the proposal and are considered in the evaluation procedure. This can be organised in the form of various communication routes such as (contribution to) scientific papers, posters, course or training material, web-based tools, stakeholders' engagement, workshops, or direct intervention towards end users, including citizens.

Further, the Partners must acknowledge the support of the Partnership under Horizon Europe in any document that is published (in written, oral, or electronic form) within the research project, mention the RI and the organisation that has provided access to the RI. In accordance with good scientific practice, users are encouraged to offer co-authorship to those working at the RI having made genuine scientific contributions to their work<sup>24</sup>.

RIs providers and users must ensure that all outcomes (publications, etc.) of TA to RIs projects include a proper acknowledgement of the Partnership. All the publications resulting from the TA projects must be published in adherence to the EC Open Science Policy (see **Annex E**) but for private companies and SMEs.

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<sup>24</sup> In line with the European Charter for Access to Research Infrastructures", November 2024,

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ec4692ae-ac6f-11ef-acb1-01aa75ed71a1>

## ANNEX A – THEORY OF CHANGE

# ANNEX B – RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES’ PROVIDERS CONTACT POINTS

# ANNEX C - EVALUATION PROCEDURE AND CRITERIA

# ANNEX D – GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS AND PROPOSAL FORM

# ANNEX E – OPEN ACCESS AND FAIR DATA

# ANNEX F – USER-PROVIDER STANDARD AGREEMENT TEMPLATE