



Sustainable Blue
Economy Partnership

Thematic Portfolios of projects 2025

Informative Webinar

18 September 2025 – 14h



Webinar Instructions

- ▶ The webinar is recorded and will be available on replay
- ▶ Audio available to Speakers only
- ▶ Several Q&A Sessions
- ▶ Please ask your questions using the Webex Chat



Agenda of the webinar



Time	Topic
14h-14H05	Welcome
14h05-14h10	Introduction to the Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership
14h10-14H25	Introduction to the Thematic Portfolio Call for interest
14H25-14H40	Presentation of the topics
14H40-14H55	Call process, eligibility rules, selection procedure and evaluation criteria
15H40-15H	How to apply
15H25-15H30	Closure and Next Steps



Introduction to Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership



Research & Innovation Partnership under Horizon Europe Program, and part of the Cluster 6: Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment

Started in 2022 and on-going until 2029

74 partners from 30 countries + support from the European Commission

Focus on the European sea-basins (Mediterranean, Black Sea, Baltic and North Sea) and Atlantic Ocean dimension

Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership



Aim of the Partnership:

- ▶ Boost the transformation towards a climate-neutral, sustainable, productive and competitive blue economy.
- ▶ Restore the ocean's health, resilience and services to people by enabling economic activity that is climate-neutral, sustainable and productive.

Coordinated by:

Ministry of University and Research (Italy)
sbep@mur.gov.it

Co-coordinated by:

Research Council of Norway

Quick facts and figures:

- ▶ **450 million euro** planned investments over 7 years
- ▶ **6 co-funded calls** for R&I proposals
- ▶ focus on **5 intervention areas**



Interventions areas



Planning and managing
sea-uses at the
regional level



Blue economy sectors,
development of
marine multi-use
infrastructures



Blue Bioresources



Digital Twins of the
Ocean (DTOs) at
regional sub-basins
scale



**Resilient coastal
communities and
businesses**



'The Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership will design, steer and support a just and inclusive transition to a regenerative and circular blue economy.'

'The Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership aims to boost the transformation towards a climate-neutral, sustainable, productive and competitive blue economy by 2030, while creating and supporting the conditions for healthy oceans for the people by 2050.'





Thematic Portfolios of projects



Thematic portfolios

GOAL OF ACTION

- Create and boost networking activities between ongoing projects funded by a range of national/regional/EU funding streams on topics covered by the Intervention Area « Blue Bioresources » defined in the SBEP SRIA, in particular towards “Innovation for responsible fisheries”, and “Innovation for carbon neutrality in aquaculture.
- Contribute to leveraging the projects’ impact at the European level by e.g. providing efficient scientific support for strategic and political decision making, whilst also addressing research gaps and avoiding duplication.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- ◀ The Thematic Portfolios of projects will be connected and will define their own roadmap of activities with the expectations to increase transnational synergies at the EU Scale, boost quadruple helix multi-stakeholders collaboration.

STRATEGY OF ACTION

- ◀ **Call for Interest** to establish the two Thematic Portfolios of projects to collaborate in joint activities over a two-year period.
- ◀ **Meetings between projects will be held twice a year** (to create strong links and ensure effective coordination between projects).
Two in-person meetings : kick-off and concluding meeting (organised back-to-back with other SBEP events)
- ◀ **A comprehensive final report** will be prepared to summarize the key outcomes, findings, and recommendations arising from the collaborative activities,
Distributed widely to stakeholders, including representatives from various European Commission Directorates-General (DGs), national authorities, and regional bodies.



Thematic portfolios

MAIN GOAL

→ Networking between projects

SECONDARY GOALS

- ▶ **Each portfolio will set-up its own work-plan in close dialog with SBEP**
 - ▶ Examples of activities:
 - ▶ Communities of practice
 - ▶ Data sharing and collaboration
 - ▶ Comparative analyses and syntheses
 - ▶ Joint outputs
 - ▶ Knowledge Transfer to Industry
 - ▶ Policy Dialogues and Recommendations
 - ▶ Training and Awareness
- ▶ **Projects of the Thematic Portfolio Action will benefit of:**
 - ▶ *increased visibility at the International level*
 - ▶ *networking with quadruple-helix stakeholders*
 - ▶ *career boost especially for early career scientists*
 - ▶ *identification of new opportunities for cooperation*
 - ▶ *identification of potential beneficiaries of the project outputs*
 - ▶ *co-design market-uptake plans*
 - ▶ *meetings with EU Commission experts*
 - ▶ *participation to SBEP events (e.g. symposium)*



Thematic Portfolio governance

PORTFOLIO BOARD

GA members – Chaired by Secretariat; Observers
Decision body: advise and contribute to the Action implementation and the clustering of activities

FUNDING AGENCY

MVZI, Slovenia

AIR Centre, Portugal

RCN, Norway

MUR, Italy

UEFISCDI, Romania

Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of Georgia

ANR, France

PORTFOLIO OF PROJECTS

Chairperson

Implementation of the Portfolio activities

PORTFOLIO SECRETARIAT

sbep@agencerecherche.fr

Led by the ANR

Leads the practical implementation of the Portfolio



Presentation of the topics



Innovation for responsible fisheries

TOPIC

Innovations and digitalisation for low-impact sustainable small-scale fisheries management in EU sea-basins

Objectives: 'To support the sustainable management, the transitioning and the empowerment of small-scale fisheries, through industry co-development of innovative fishing techniques, new technological and digital tools, novel resources, and new practices.'

R&I ACTIVITIES TO BE COVERED

1. Reduction of environmental impacts of small-scale fisheries
2. Sustainable management of small-scale fisheries considering the impact and societal costs of stressors such as habitat degradation, pollution, and climate change
3. Economic sustainability of small-scale fisheries



Innovation for responsible fisheries

1. Reduction of environmental impacts of small-scale fisheries

▶ **Pollution reduction from fishing activities**

- ▶ The development of innovative fishing gears using: (i) biodegradable materials that decompose within defined timeframes to prevent long-term environmental persistence, and (ii) trackable materials with embedded monitoring technologies to enable gear recovery and reduce gear loss, both aimed at minimizing ghost fishing impacts. The development of new on-board practices to reduce material lost and waste (reduction of on-board plastic use and promotion of waste collection and recycling)
- ▶ The development of digital tools for data collection and real-time monitoring (fishing effort, stock and catch data, restricted zones) to reduce the carbon footprint of the fishing industry
- ▶ The development of AI and sensor technologies to enhance surveillance monitoring system and decision-making”.

▶ **Bycatch reduction**

- ▶ The development of selective fishing gear incorporating appropriate mesh sizes and escape devices for juveniles and protected species, while integrating fish welfare considerations and traceability systems to minimise environmental impact. The development of detection or deterrent technologies to avoid accidental catches of marine megafauna (e.g. marine mammals, birds, large fish, sea turtles). The R&I needs identified in this subtheme is connected to EU Directives such as the Birds and Habitats Directives).



Innovation for responsible fisheries

2. Sustainable management of small-scale fisheries considering the impact and societal costs of stressors such as habitat degradation, pollution, and climate change

- ▶ *The development of digital monitoring tools for responsive, informed management in the face of multiple stressors e.g. tools to investigate shifts in migratory fish stocks due to ocean warming.*
- ▶ *The diversification of target species to reduce pressure on overexploited populations and enable the utilization of emerging catches.*

3. Economic sustainability of small-scale fisheries

- ▶ *The understanding of species' roles in trophic webs and their growth potential, within frameworks of biodiversity resilience and sustainability, to inform practical management tools aligned with stakeholder needs.*
- ▶ *The analysis of socioeconomic drivers of change in commercial fisheries to guide small-scale fisheries, economic, and regional development strategies.*



Innovation for carbon neutrality in aquaculture

TOPIC

Innovations for boosting sustainability in marine algae cultivations and circularity in the blue bioeconomy

Objectives: 'To address challenges and opportunities associated with further development and expansion of marine algal production for a low-impact , productive and circular marine bioeconomy.'

R&I ACTIVITIES TO BE COVERED

1. Strain development and genetic engineering
2. Sustainable, circular and low-impact Algae Cultivation Systems
3. Biorefinery and Valorization of Algae Biomass
4. Synthetic Biology and AI Integration
5. Economic, Policy, and Social Research



Innovation for carbon neutrality in aquaculture

1. Strain development and genetic engineering

▶ **Microalgae**

- ▶ *To investigate genome editing (e.g. CRISPR/Cas) for higher production of specific compounds such as lipid/protein yields.*
- ▶ *To examine enhanced resistance to environmental stress (e.g. salinity, temperature).*
- ▶ *To improve photosynthetic efficiency.*

▶ **Macroalgae**

- ▶ *To develop selective breeding for faster growth, disease resistance, or specific biochemical traits.*
- ▶ *To conduct genome sequencing and transcriptomics of key commercial species.*



Innovation for carbon neutrality in aquaculture

2. Sustainable, circular and low-impact Algae Cultivation Systems

- ▶ *To develop innovative Offshore and Low Trophic Aquaculture (LTA) /Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture (IMTA) systems (for macroalgae) considering challenges related to impact of climate change (acidification, temperature) on yield and composition. Other environmental stressors such as effects on local biodiversity, water quality parameters. (nitrogen/phosphorus loading, dissolved oxygen levels), benthic habitat modification, and carrying capacity thresholds for cultivation areas, are also to be considered.*
- ▶ *To propose novel Photobioreactor (PBR) and open pond optimization for microalgae.*
- ▶ *To include circularity in cultivation systems: Sustainable nutrient sourcing and recycling.*
- ▶ *To develop sustainable and cost-efficient cultivation systems e.g. reduce Optimization of energy usage.*



Innovation for carbon neutrality in aquaculture

3. Biorefinery and Valorization of Algae Biomass

- ▶ *To propose new methods for processing harvested seaweed, taking into account the subsequent value chain (e.g. through biorefinery).*
- ▶ *To develop green chemistry approaches: Circular economy models and low-waste valorization chains.*

4. Synthetic Biology and AI Integration

- ▶ *To promote the use of AI and machine learning for: Optimizing growth conditions; Predictive modeling of biomass composition and Automating harvesting and processing.*
- ▶ *To examine Synthetic biology for novel compound production or cell-factory design.*

5. Economic, Policy, and Social Research

- ▶ *To conduct market uptake/business models analysis for new algae-based products.*
- ▶ *To perform Life cycle assessments (LCA) to specify environmental impact categories relevant to marine cultivation: eutrophication potential, marine ecotoxicity, habitat modification index, and carbon sequestration vs. emission balance, and techno-economic assessments. These assessments would provide concrete metrics for comparing different cultivation approaches.*
- ▶ *To include Public perception, social and consumer acceptance of new algae products (feed, biomaterials...).*



**Call process, eligibility rules, selection
procedure and evaluation criteria**



Call eligibility criteria

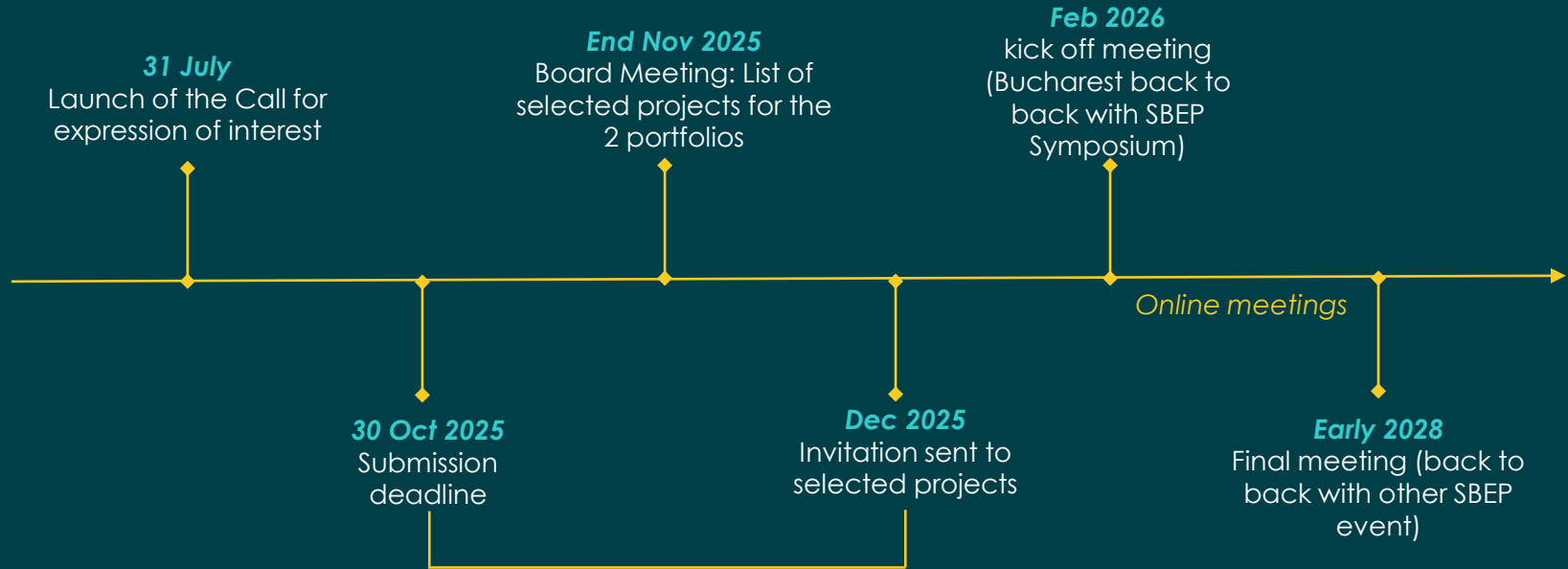
Applicants must fulfill the following eligibility criteria. Projects that do not fulfil all the eligibility criteria will be declined without any review by the Portfolio Board.

- ▶ **Scope of projects' R&I activities:** Projects must fall in the scope of at least one sub-thematic of one of the two proposed topics
- ▶ **Source of Funding:** Projects must be recipient of national/regional/EU grant
- ▶ **Duration of Projects:** Projects must be active and ongoing during the Thematic Portfolio Activities timeframe (From Jan 2026 to Early 2028)
- ▶ **Geographical scope of Projects:** Projects must address at least one geographical area among: Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea, Baltic Sea, North Sea, Atlantic Ocean. If applicable, projects 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.
- ▶ **Commitment, availability capacity to engage:** The applicants (PIs, other consortium member designated as alternate, if any) must prove their ability to allocate the necessary resources to participate in the Portfolio activities as self-funded members (including the 2 on-site kick-off and final meetings).
- ▶ **Principal Investigator and Alternate (if any):** submit the project on behalf of the consortium, must be employed by an organization belonging to one of the countries in the Partnership, must belong to one of the four major sectors of the quadruple helix.

In order to submit an interest : a single-step process will apply, with a mandatory submission of interest



Thematic Portfolio timeline



- Eligibility assessment of submitted projects
- The selection of projects by the Board is based on the gender/geographical balance, the stakeholders involved in the projects, and the source of funding (SBEP/regional/national/EU financial stream).



How to apply



How to apply?

- ▶ The Project Principal Investigator (and alternate, if any) is required to fill out a structured application form (Excel file): administrative details and brief introduction of the project and interest to join
- ▶ The Excel file which must be returned via email to the Portfolio Secretariat: **sbep-portfolio@agencerecherche.fr** accompanied by a declaration of commitment.

To apply:

- Please consult and download the Call documents (including the Call text and its Annex) at the bottom of this page.
- The Project Principal Investigator (and alternate, if any) is required to fill out a structured application form detailing the project's interest to join. This application form is an Excel file which must be returned via email to the Portfolio Secretariat: sbep-portfolio@agencerecherche.fr accompanied by a declaration of commitment.
 - Please download the application form using this [link](#) and password: %HJo@z42&06WxDZ0P
- Applicants will have up to **30 October 2025** (15:00 CET) to submit their interest in one of the thematic portfolio.
- A single step selection process will apply and selected projects will be announced in December 2025.



How to apply?

- ▶ [Link to the SBEP Thematic Portfolios website](#)
- ▶ Excel file to fill out:

TAB	CONTENT
1_Portfolios	THEMATIC PORTFOLIO TOPIC
2.1_PI	PROJECT PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (mandatory)
2.2_ORG PI	ORGANISATION OF THE PROJECT PI
2.3_ALT	ALTERNATE TO THE PI (if any)
2.4_ORG ALT	ORGANISATION OF THE ALTERNATE TO THE PI
3_CRITERIA	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA



Q&A Session

Thank you for your attention



Sustainable Blue
Economy Partnership

For technical help
sbep-portfolio@agencerecherche.fr



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