



Sustainable Blue
Economy Partnership

CALL FOR INTEREST 2025

2 THEMATIC PORTFOLIOS

*INNOVATIONS AND DIGITALISATION FOR LOW-IMPACT
SUSTAINABLE SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT IN EU
SEA-BASINS.*

*INNOVATIONS FOR BOOSTING SUSTAINABILITY IN MARINE
ALGAE CULTIVATIONS AND CIRCULARITY IN THE BLUE
BIOECONOMY.*

Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership 2025

- ▶ Call launch: July 31st 2025, 15H00 CEST
- ▶ Submission form: [link to excel](#)
- ▶ Submission deadline: November 12th 2025, 15H00 CET

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2025 Call for Interest - 2 Thematic Portfolios

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1.0 CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVE OF THE CALL

The Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership (SBEP, hereafter ‘the Partnership’) is a Research and Innovation (R&I) Partnership started in 2022 under the Horizon Europe Program, and is part of the Cluster 6 (Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment).

The vision of the Partnership, defined in the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) 2024 1 is to:

- ▶ *Design, steer and support a just and inclusive transition to a regenerative, resilient, and sustainable blue economy.*
- ▶ *Boost the transformation needed towards a climate-neutral, sustainable, productive, and competitive blue economy by 2030.*
- ▶ *Create, enhance and sustain ocean health and the social, environmental and economic well-being of the people by 2050.*

The **Thematic Portfolios Call for Interest** is launched with the aim **to connect on-going research & innovation projects funded by the partnership and by other national/regional/EU instrument for a two-year period**, from early 2026 to early 2028. This call will allow the implementation of two thematic portfolios of projects on two topics covered by the Intervention Area «Blue Bioresources» defined in the partnership SRIA¹ and entitled:

- ▶ *Innovations and digitalisation for low-impact sustainable small-scale fisheries management in EU sea-basins.*
- ▶ *Innovations for boosting sustainability in marine algae cultivations and circularity in the blue bioeconomy.*

The primary goal of the 2 Thematic Portfolio activities is **networking**: they will exert a maximum leverage effect, increase efficiency, create thrust and boost synergistic collaborations between projects. The 2 Thematic Portfolios of projects aim to improve communication across projects by enabling channels of networking and knowledge sharing to possibly facilitate production of joint outputs and outcomes. Each portfolio will design its own roadmap comprising, for instance, joint actions to avoid duplication, competition, overlap, to foster complementarities, to create exchanges of results, to co-deliver impactful and innovative solutions for reaching a sustainable blue economy in the EU.

¹ Benjamin Kürten, Margherita Cappelletto, Margherita Zorgno, Giorgio Carpino, Anne Magnussøn, Jon Flæten, Marianne Areng (2024) Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership – Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda 2024.DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14243414>

With the support of the partnership, the 2 Thematic Portfolios are expected to increase transnational synergies at the EU Scale, boost quadruple helix multi-stakeholders' collaboration, and respond to the challenges and opportunities identified within each topic. It is worthy to note that, participation in the Thematic Portfolios offers not only the opportunity to contribute to cross-project collaboration but also visibility in high-level SBEP contexts, access to EU Commission experts, and the possibility to co-develop policy briefs, joint research outputs, and prepare future project proposals.

Several benefits to participate in the Thematic Portfolios are:

- ▶ *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)*

2.0 TOPICS OF THE THEMATIC PORTFOLIOS

Projects expressing interest to participate to one of the two Thematic Portfolios must fit the scope of at least one sub-thematic of one of the two proposed topics under the present call, as described hereafter.

2.1 1st Thematic Portfolio topic: Innovations and digitalisation for low-impact sustainable small-scale fisheries management in EU sea-basins

The first Thematic Portfolio entitled “Innovations and digitalisation for low-impact sustainable small-scale fisheries management in EU sea-basins”, aims to regroup projects under this topic and related R&I activities to attract complementary projects and to build a strong portfolio responding to the following targeted objective:

- ▶ *‘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.’*

Expected types of R&I activities to be covered by the projects participating in the Portfolio, are listed below.

2.1.1 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 Directives²).*

2.1.2 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.*

² Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/1992/43/2013-07-01>

2.1.3 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.*

2.2 2nd Thematic Portfolio topic: Innovations for boosting sustainability in marine algae cultivations and circularity in the blue bioeconomy

The second Thematic Portfolio entitled “Innovations for boosting sustainability in marine algae cultivations and circularity in the blue bioeconomy”, aims to regroup projects under this topic and related R&I activities to attract complementary projects and to build a strong portfolio responding to the following targeted objective:

- ▶ *‘To address challenges and opportunities associated with further development and expansion of marine algal production for a low-impact³, productive and circular marine bioeconomy.’*

Expected types of R&I activities to be covered by the Projects participating in the Portfolio, are listed below.

2.2.1 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*

³ Low impact in terms of e.g., carbon footprint reduction targets, bycatch reduction percentages etc

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

2.2.2 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.*

2.2.3 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.*

2.2.4 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.*

2.2.5 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...).*

3.0 THEMATIC PORTFOLIOS GOVERNANCE

The Thematic Portfolios are governed by the Portfolio Board chaired by the Portfolio Secretariat, these bodies will collaborate to ensure the effective coordination of projects and the achievement of the proposed roadmap of activities.

3.1 Thematic Portfolios Board

The thematic Portfolio Board, composed of General Assembly members (or representatives) of the partnership, constitutes the decision-making body of the Portfolio Action. General Assembly members and other representatives will act for the benefit of the whole partnership, and will not represent an organisation, a country.

The primary responsibilities of each Portfolio Board include the following:

- ▶ *Make decisions on the management/governance/implementation of the Thematic Portfolio action.*
- ▶ *Review and approve a list of projects to participate in the Thematic Portfolio activities.*
- ▶ *Provide support and guidance to the projects during the Portfolio activities, as required.*
- ▶ *Oversee the monitoring of the Thematic Portfolio activities (KPIs relevant to the partnership can be requested to the Portfolio, and/or any relevant reporting requirements).*

3.2 Thematic Portfolios Secretariat

The Thematic Portfolio Board is chaired by the Portfolio Secretariat, who has the responsibility for carrying out and coordinating the setting up and the implementation of the Thematic Portfolios.

The role of the Secretariat is to (but not limited):

- ▶ *Lead the practical implementation of the Portfolio related activities.*
- ▶ *Ensure the selection and monitoring process across all portfolios is homogeneous.*
- ▶ *Organise online Thematic Portfolio Board meetings (agenda, documentation, minutes).*
- ▶ *Coordinate the Call process and its implementation.*
- ▶ *Ensure the compliance with defined rules and process.*

- ▶ *Organise remote and physical meetings of the Portfolio activities.*
- ▶ *Facilitate communication within the Thematic Portfolio projects and with the Board.*
- ▶ *Provide support the two Thematic Portfolio Chairs.*

4.0 COMPOSITION OF THE 2 THEMATIC PORTFOLIOS

The 2 Thematic Portfolios will be composed of on-going co-funded projects by the partnership (from Joint Transnational Calls 2023 and 2024) along with other on-going projects funded by other national/regional/EU schemes. A Chairperson will be appointed for each Thematic Portfolio.

Each Portfolio is composed of a **maximum of 20 projects**.

4.1 Project Representatives

The projects selected will be represented by their Consortium PIs and will be required to participate in the Thematic Portfolio Activities. One additional representative i.e. a PI of a consortium Partner, can be proposed as alternate for each project, and could also participate in the Thematic Portfolio Activities. The Consortium PI is the Project main representative.

The roles of the Thematic Portfolio representatives are the following:

- ▶ *Actively participate in the Thematic Portfolio activities including (on-site and remote) attendance at meetings.*
- ▶ *Contribute to the definition of the Action Plan/Roadmap.*
- ▶ *Implement the plan during the two years of the activities.*
- ▶ *Contribute to the dissemination of the outputs of the Thematic Portfolio Action.*
- ▶ *Submit a comprehensive final report to the thematic Portfolio Board.*

4.2 Chairpersons of the Thematic Portfolios

A Chairperson will be appointed for each Thematic Portfolio. Each Chairperson will be elected among the Principal investigators i.e. PIs (or alternates) of the Portfolio projects (see 4.2.). The nomination of the Thematic Portfolio Chairpersons will be confirmed by the Portfolio Board. Candidacy for this role will be on a voluntary basis.

Role of Chairpersons:

- ▶ *Ensure the coordination of the Thematic Portfolio activities (meetings, preparing minutes, coordination of certain activities, with the support of the Secretariat, and a Facilitator);*

- ▶ *Represent the Thematic Portfolio projects in all dialogue with the Thematic Portfolio Board;*
- ▶ *Lead the work in developing the Thematic Portfolio's Action Plan/Roadmap;*
- ▶ *Lead the work in defining and developing the Thematic Portfolio expected outcomes and outputs;*
- ▶ *Lead the work in developing the final follow up of the Thematic Portfolio Action Plan/Roadmap;*
- ▶ *Deliver a final report that describes all joint activities and outcomes of Thematic Portfolio projects.*

5.0 DURATION, ACTIVITIES AND CONSTITUTION OF THE THEMATIC PORTFOLIOS

5.1 Duration of the Thematic Portfolios

The duration of the Portfolio activities is set at two years to build a strong link, ensure the effective coordination of projects and the achievement of the proposed activities.

5.2 Meetings and indemnities

The kick-off meeting of the 2 Thematic Portfolios will be organised back to back with the Partnership Symposium event planned in Bucharest in February 2026. Expected attendees include Projects' representatives, the Portfolio Secretariat and Board, and any partnership's members (as observers).

For each Portfolio, the objectives of the inaugural meeting are to:

- ▶ *provide clarification on the objectives and expectations of the Thematic Portfolio.*
- ▶ *nominate a Thematic Portfolio Chair.*
- ▶ *define an acronym and name for the Thematic Portfolio.*
- ▶ *pitch the participating projects.*
- ▶ *exchange and networking.*
- ▶ *start the process on the definition of the Action Plan and clear road map of activities (an exploratory survey is envisaged prior to the kick-off meeting as a basis for discussion).*

The initial year should focus on establishing trust and fostering collaboration among participating projects. As soon as possible, an action plan and clear road map of activities will be produced by each portfolio, led by the Chair with the support of the Portfolio Secretariat and Facilitator. The plan will include, at least:

- ▶ *The main objectives.*
- ▶ *The road map of activities to reach the objectives (incl. progress monitoring (KPIs)).*
- ▶ *The key expected outcomes and overall impact.*
- ▶ *A dissemination and exploitation plan, including communication activities.*

Thereafter, according to the action plan, additional interactions are foreseen and online meetings will be held frequently. A virtual collaborative platform will be provided, if required.

A final meeting will be organised on-site to promote the Portfolio outcomes and achievements and leverage knowledge transfer to a large audience from SBEP and beyond.

At the end, a comprehensive final report is also expected. This report will summarise the collaborative activities, and key outcomes, findings, and recommendations. The report will be submitted to the Portfolio Board for review and subsequently distributed widely to the general public and targeted stakeholders, including representatives from various European Commission Directorates-General (DGs), national authorities, and regional bodies.

A total of 10K€ is to be used as support of the projects, that could be used e.g. to partially cover travels or accommodations' costs. Modalities of use are to be defined by the Portfolio Board.

No additional fee, no full reimbursement of travel and accommodation, no allowance will be granted to the Projects for their participation in the Thematic Portfolio activities. They must demonstrate their abilities to cover their self-participation in the Portfolio Activities.

5.3 Networking and other activities

The first aim of the portfolio activities is **networking**. Each portfolio will produce its own action plan, and define its own roadmap of activities (with the partnership's help) to respond to the challenges and opportunities identified within each topic.

Please see below a list of potential activities that could be covered by the Portfolios:

- ▶ *Mutual presentations: Sharing project roadmaps to establish a clear understanding of individual and collective goals.*
- ▶ *Communities of practice: Building networks to share methodologies, tools, and expertise.*
- ▶ *Data sharing and collaboration (in accordance with FAIR data principles and relevant EU data governance frameworks, including GDPR requirements where applicable): Developing and managing common databases for comparative analyses and synthesis ; creating standards for data formatting and interoperability ; Comparing results to identify key drivers of efficiency or best practices..*
- ▶ *Comparative analyses and syntheses: Conducting comparative analyses of results obtained by multiple projects to identify trends, commonalities, and differences ; Drafting a cross-project synthesis for policymakers and stakeholders.*

- ▶ *Joint outputs: writing collaborative scientific papers, protocols, and strategies that combine results from multiple projects, in order to achieve shared goals ; developing standardized protocols for future experiments.*
- ▶ *Knowledge Transfer to Industry: Co-organizing workshops or demonstrations to present innovations to industry stakeholders ; Identifying and developing market-applicable solutions based on research findings.*
- ▶ *Policy Dialogues and Recommendations : Hosting roundtables involving researchers, policymakers, and industry representatives to discuss project results and their implications ; Drafting joint policy recommendations to influence regional, national, or European strategies.*
- ▶ *Outcome promotion: Creating an online platform to disseminate project results, events, and developments to a wider audience ; Developing a joint communication campaign on social media and other channels to increase the Portfolios' visibility.*
- ▶ *Training and Awareness: Organizing training workshops for young researchers or stakeholders on methodologies developed in the projects ; Producing educational content (videos, infographics, guides) to popularize project results for the general public.*

These activities aim to maximise synergies among projects, enhance their collective impact, and accelerate the application of the generated knowledge.

Care will be taken to connect the Thematic Portfolios with other initiatives of the partnership and optimise the organisation of back to back events.

5.4 Confidentiality and absence of conflict of interest

A Code of Conduct related to Conflict of Interests, confidentiality and non-disclosure will apply to the Projects' representatives. This Code of Conduct will have to be approved and manually signed, and returned to the Portfolio Secretariat. Projects' representatives are required to demonstrate ethical conduct and respect the confidentiality of all information and documents as part of the Portfolio activities. They must declare the absence of any conflict of interest.

6.0 CALL FOR INTEREST

The Call for Interest will allow to dress a list of projects willing to participate in the two Thematic Portfolios.

The Call for Interest is published on the Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership and promoted through various channels at national/regional and EU level to reach projects targeting different EU Sea Basins (North Sea, Baltic Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea and Atlantic Ocean), and funded by different national/regional/EU instruments. Geographical/Gender balance, and a wide

representation of quadruple-helix stakeholders⁴ (industry, government, research institutes, and the public), from the blue economy are expected.

6.1 Selection procedure

The process for appointing Thematic Portfolio Projects (and representatives) in the two Thematic Portfolio is launched by the partnership through the Call for Interest.

The Call consists in a single step submission of interest process and is overseen by the Portfolio Board with the support of the Portfolio Secretariat. The deadline for submitting an interest to join one of the two Thematic Portfolios is the 12th of November (15:00 CET).

The Secretariat will conduct an eligibility assessment of the submitted interest based upon the eligibility criteria as defined in 6.2.

Based on the eligibility results, the Portfolio Secretariat will present to the Portfolio Board a list of projects, deemed eligible, to participate in the two Thematic Portfolio, highlighting the gender/geographical balance, the stakeholders involved in the projects, and the source of funding (SBEP/regional/national/EU level).

Based on this list, the Portfolio Board will recommend a list of projects to be appointed to the two Thematic Portfolio with the ambition of maximizing as far as possible:

- ▶ *the geographical reach,*
- ▶ *the gender balance,*
- ▶ *the representation of quadruple-helix stakeholders,*
- ▶ *the efficiency and the impact of the portfolios by limiting the size of the portfolios (20 projects max per portfolio)*
- ▶ *the variety and the balance of the funding sources (mix of 1/3 SBEP projects, and 2/3 regional/national/EU funding streams projects)*

The Secretariat will send an official invitation to the recommended projects on behalf of the Portfolio Board to participate in the Portfolio activities.

A final list of selected projects will be published on the partnership website.

⁴ A quadruple-helix collaboration ('QHC') is a form of collaboration in research and development between the four major sectors of society: industry, government, research institutes, and the public. For more information, please consult the report entitled 'Quadruple Helix Collaborations in Practice: Stakeholder Interaction, Responsibility and Governance' from RICONFIGURE

6.2 Eligibility criteria

Applicants must fulfill the following eligibility criteria. Applicants that do not meet 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 (as described in 2.0).

- **Source of Funding:** Projects must be recipient of national/regional/EU grant

Example: projects to join the Portfolios may be financially supported by the following funding streams:

- ▶ *The EU Missions, esp. the Mission "Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030"*
- ▶ *EU Partnerships of the Cluster 6 (Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment) or instruments from other HE relevant Cluster*
- ▶ *Other relevant Initiatives like the JPIs: OCEANS, Climate, Water*
- ▶ *EC DG-RTD funding streams in H2020, EC DG-MARE funding streams including EMFAF, EC DG-ENV including Life*
- ▶ *INTERREG and Interregional Innovation Investments (I3) and structural funds (ERDF)*
- ▶ *National/regional funding instruments*

- **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 target 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.

- **Principal Investigator and Alternate (if any):**

Each project should be represented by the principal investigator. Another representative of the project consortium (as PI of a Partner) can be proposed at the submission step.

- ▶ *The PI has the responsibility for submitting the interest on behalf of the project's consortium*
- ▶ *The PI and alternate (if any) must be employed by an organisation belonging to one of the countries participating in the Partnership⁵.*

⁵ Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Faroe Islands, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine.

- ▶ *The PI and alternate (if any) must belong to one of the four major sectors of the quadruple helix: industry, government, research institutes, and the public.*
- ▶ *Representatives must have the professional capacity and relevant expertise to participate in the Thematic Portfolio Activities. Representatives must have good oral and written communication skills in English, to ensure effective exchanges and activities of the Thematic Portfolio. The fulfilment of the relevance of the profiles (as representatives of the project)/expertise/communication skills must be demonstrated as part of the application (through mandatory CV or other relevant information).*

- Commitment, availability capacity to engage:

Representatives must be in a capacity to commit to the Thematic Portfolio Activities (including 2 on-site meetings) and must prove their ability to allocate the necessary resources to participate in the Portfolio activities (self-funding).

A declaration of commitment (letter signed by the PI/alternate, and their respective organisations (e.g. relevant financial service) are mandatory to confirm:

- ▶ *the availability and the commitment to participate in the Portfolio activities, including two on-site meetings (venues to be determined).*
- ▶ *the capacity to engage with other projects' quadruple helix stakeholders operating at (local)regional/national/European scale.*
- ▶ *the ability to cover the cost of participation to the Portfolio activities, including the travel/accommodation costs related to the two on-site meetings (venues to be determined).*

- Submission of an interest: a single-step process will apply, with a mandatory submission of interest (see 6.3.).

6.3 How to apply

Projects PIs are requested to submit their interest by filling out a structured application form which can be downloaded on the SBEP website and by providing the following supporting document: declaration of commitment as described in 6.2, to sbep-portfolio@agencerecherche.fr by November 12th at 15H00 CET.

In the application, the fulfillment of the eligibility criteria should be clearly stated and projects representatives nominated.

The Portfolio Secretariat and Board reserve the right to request any further evidence it deems fit and relevant to verify the fulfillment of the above-mentioned eligibility criteria, the organisation status or/and the expertise and experience the nominated representatives. All submissions of interest will be treated as confidential.

7.0 TIMELINE

DATE	ACTIVITY
July 31 st 2025, 15H00 CEST	Launch of Call for interest
September 18 th 2025, 14H00 to 15H30 CEST	Information Webinar for potential applicants Registration link
November 12 th 2025, 15H00 CET	Submission deadline of the Call
November 2025	Eligibility assessment of submitted projects by Portfolio Secretariat Selection of projects by the Portfolio Board
December 2025	Announcement of selection to project leaders
February 2026	Kick-off meeting (on site and back to back with the SBEP Symposium, in Bucharest, Romania)
2026 to 2028	Online meetings for Thematic Portfolio members
Early 2028	Final meeting (on site and preferably back to back with other SBEP event)

8.0 PUBLISHABLE INFORMATION

A list of the selected projects will be published at the end of the call process (once the projects have been selected) on the Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership Website. Therefore, applicants should be aware that the following information from the projects may be published by the partnership: (1) Project Title and Project Acronym, (2) Publishable abstract, (3) Duration of the project, (4) Consortium composition of the project (organisation and country), (5) Name of the Project Representatives, (6) Origin of funding grant.

9.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The partnership applies the EU policy of equal opportunities and accepts applications without distinction on the grounds of age, race, political, philosophical or religious conviction, gender or sexual orientation and regardless of disabilities, material status or family situation.

10.0 PRIVACY POLICY

By applying, the Representatives agree to the use, share (for specific purposes: e.g. selection process, Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership-specific communication) and the storage of projects-related information according to the Partnership Privacy Policy and the General Data

Protection Regulation (GDPR). The Thematic Portfolio Representatives shall comply with the SBEP Privacy Policy according to the Grant Agreement number #10186379 and relevant national, regional and EU regulations.