



Sustainable Blue
Economy Partnership

General Information Webinar

2026 Fourth Joint Transnational Co-Funded Call

***“Building a sustainable and innovative Blue Economy:
mastering digital opportunities and fostering resilience”***

29/09/2026

Co-branded by



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EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIP



Webinar Agenda

Time (CET)	Topic	Speaker	
14H00-14H10	Welcome	Margherita Cappelletto (MUR) Michaela Gigli, European Commission	
14H10-14H20	Introduction to the Fourth Co-funded Call	Domnica Coteț (UEFISCDI)	
14H20-14H40	Presentation of the Priority Areas (scientific content)	Beverley Ray (ANR)	Q&A
14H40-15H10	General information towards applicants ▶ General recommendations ▶ Theory of change; Open Access and Fair Data ▶ Ocean Literacy ▶ Projects monitoring	Cristina Muscalu /Domnica Coteț (UEFISCDI) Sylvain Pasquier (ANR) Gabrielle Aubert (JPI Oceans) Nora Matanzas Valtuille (AEI)	Q&A
15H10-15H35	Call process, eligibility rules, selection procedure and evaluation criteria	Mihaela Iorgulescu – Aioanei (UEFISCDI)	Q&A
15H35-15H50	Presentation of the submission system (EPSS) and the Partner Tool	Katrin Saar (ETAG)	Q&A
15H50-15H55	Presentation of the Brokerage Event	Sylvain Pasquier (ANR)	Q&A
15H55-16H00	Closure and Next Steps	Domnica Coteț (UEFISCDI)	Q&A



Webinar guidelines

- ▶ The webinar is recorded and will be available on replay
- ▶ Audio available to Speakers only
- ▶ Q&A sessions throughout the presentation
- ▶ Please ask your questions using the ZOOM Chat
 - ▶ Your question(s) must be related to the ongoing topic session
 - ▶ If you have question(s) related to your National/Regional Funding Organisation, please consult the ANNEX B and/or contact your national/regional contact points
 - ▶ For any other specific questions about the call, please contact the Joint Call Secretariat.



Welcome

*by Margherita Cappelletto, Coordinator, Ministry
of University and Research - MUR, Italy*

and

by Michaela Gigli, European Commission



Presentation of the 4th Co-funded Call

*by Cristina Muscalu/Domnica Cotet,
UEFISCDI*



SBEP Fourth Joint Transnational Call



Call title: **“Building a sustainable and innovative Blue Economy: mastering digital opportunities and fostering resilience”**

Key facts

- Funding: €37,000,000 (with EU contribution)
- Opening: 14 Sept 2026
- Deadline pre-proposals: 16 Nov 2026
- Deadline full proposals: 14 Jun 2027



The Partnership aims to...

- ▶ *Design, steer and support a just and inclusive transition to a regenerative, resilient and sustainable blue economy.*
- ▶ *Boost the transformation 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.*





Background of the call

A Blue Economy to build a more competitive, sustainable, resilient and secure European Union.

- ▶ The Blue economy enables :
 - ▶ The employment of 4.82 million people (€890.6 billion turnover and 250.7 gross added value.)
 - ▶ Development of off shore wind sector and coastal tourism
- ▶ The Blue economy's growth is impacted by :
 - ▶ Geopolitical context
 - ▶ Environmental disasters and acceleration of climate change
 - ▶ Slow innovation and lack of business dynamism
- ▶ The European Ocean Pact allows:
 - ▶ Europe to leverage vast maritime area and coastline to boost innovation through blue technologies, regenerative blue economy, clean energy production and food security.





'The Blue arm of the Green Deal'

The European Green Deal
Digital Europe
The Marine Strategy Framework Directive
A Healthy Planet for All
2030 Climate target Plan
European Climate Law
EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030
Farm to Fork Strategy
Next Generation EU
Circular Economy Action Plan
Eighth Environment Action Programme
Strategy Framework Directive
Nature Restoration Regulation
Common Fisheries Policy



'The Blue arm of the Green Deal'

Connect, build synergies and create complementarities with other EU Partnerships:

- ▶ Animal Health and Welfare,
- ▶ Rescuing biodiversity to safeguard life on Earth (Biodiversa+),
- ▶ Clean Energy Transitions (CETP),
- ▶ Driving Urban Transitions (DUT),
- ▶ FutureFoodS,
- ▶ Agroecology
- ▶ Water Security for the Planet (Water4All),
- ▶ Zero Emission Waterborne Transport (ZEWT).

Other initiatives and programs:

- ▶ JPI Oceans,
- ▶ Restore our Ocean and Waters → Mission 'Lighthouses'.



Co-Branding



2021
2030 United Nations Decade
of Ocean Science
for Sustainable Development

- ▶ This call is co-branded as part of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, which is coordinated by UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (**IOC/UNESCO**) on behalf of the UN system, with the aim that the selected funded research and innovation projects are endorsed as **Ocean Decade projects**.
- ▶ The Ocean Decade co-branding of this call will ensure that funded projects are endorsed as Decade Actions and are a part of a highly visible, shared, and global effort that opens up opportunities to create new collaborations across disciplines, geographies and generations, and to establish access to new sources of support.



SBEP 4th Call - Priority Areas

This fourth co-funded call aims to support transnational research and innovation projects (36 months) addressing one of the four priority areas below.



Transitioning the blue economy sectors for sustainability and strategic autonomy



Managing sea-uses by advancing digital and ecosystem-based approaches



Promoting sustainable blue bioresources through innovation in production and harvesting



Building resilience in coastal communities with infrastructure and businesses

Three specific cross-cutting enablers to consider:

- *The use and application of digitalisation;*
- *The inclusion of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) perspectives;*
- *The implementation of Nature-Based Solutions (NbS)*



Participating Funding Organisations

- **33 funding organisations from 28 countries:** 20 Member States, 7 Associated Countries and 1 Third Country are participating
- Member States: Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands.
- Associated Countries: Faroe Islands, Georgia, Montenegro, Norway, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine.
- Third Country: Brazil.



Please refer to the [Annex B](#) of the Call Announcement



Call process

- 
- Financial resources from 33 PFOs and co-funding from the EU
 - Two-step submission procedure (pre-proposal and full-proposal)
 - One single International Evaluation Committee (IEC) + independent observer + observer from the Decade Coordination Unit.



STEP 1: pre-proposal assessment

1. Eligibility checks by the Call Steering Committee
2. Pre-proposal evaluation by the IEC and issue of one single ranking list
3. Highest ranking pre-proposals invited to submit to Step 2 base on funding availability.

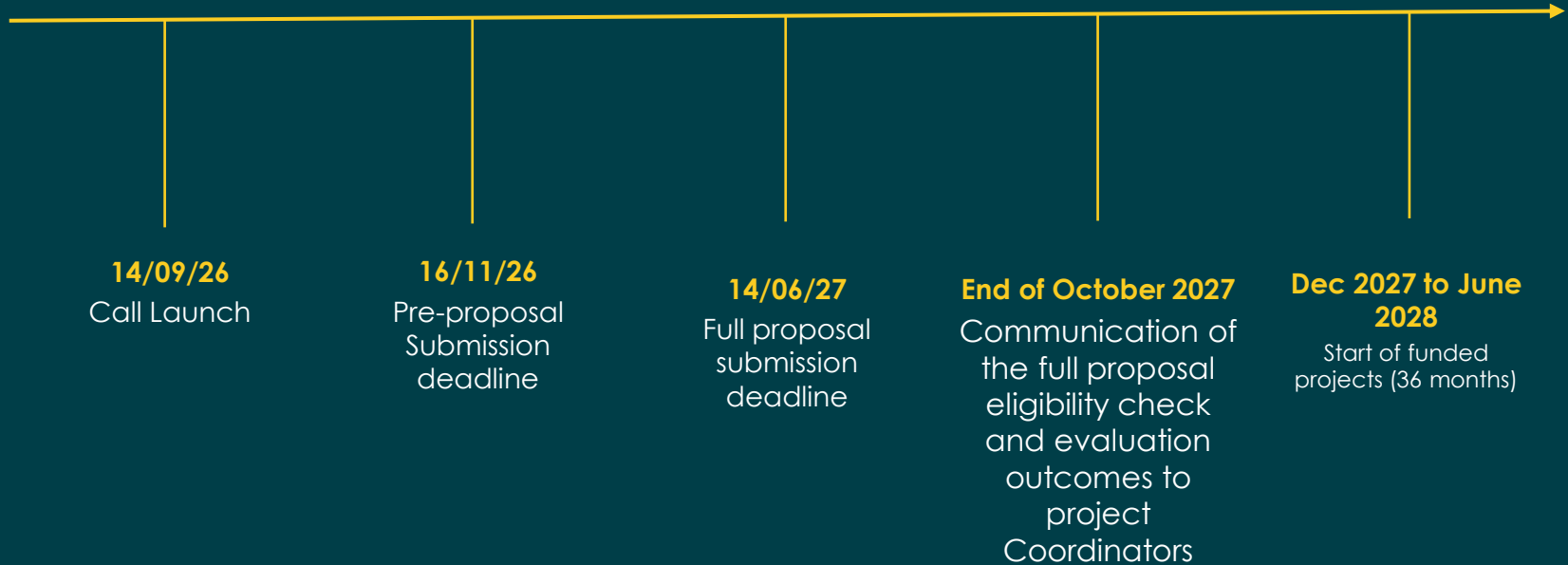


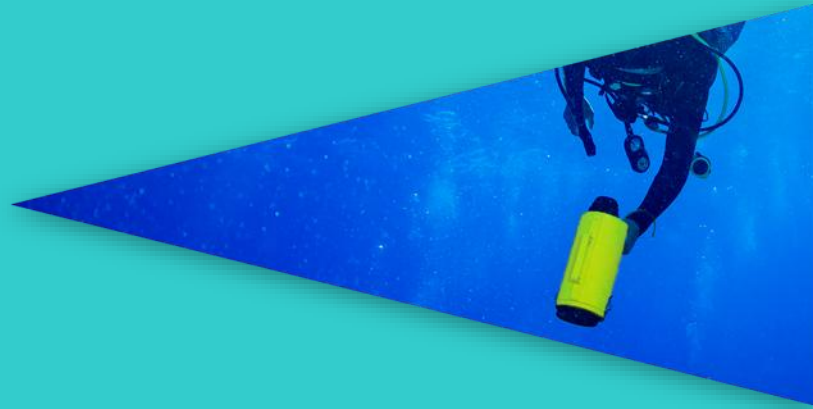
STEP 2: full proposal assessment

1. Eligibility checks by the Call Steering Committee
2. Full proposal evaluation by the IEC and issue of one single ranking list
3. Funding the highest-ranked projects based on funding availability.



General Call 4 timeline PROVISIONAL





Priority Areas (scientific content)

by Beverley Ray, ANR



2026 4th Joint Transnational Call

***“Building a sustainable and innovative Blue Economy:
mastering digital opportunities and fostering
resilience”***



Addressing geographical differences

Proposals are strongly encouraged to cover a broad geographic scale. The proposals are encouraged to consider **a minimum of two European sea basins and to assess the project proposal's impact on various basins.**

RECOMMENDED EU SEA BASINS

the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, the North Sea and the Atlantic Ocean

Proposals can target European regional seas such as Adriatic Sea, Aegean Sea, Arctic, Barents Sea, Celtic Sea, etc.



Impact driven: addressing industry and stakeholder involvements

- The ambition of the Partnership is to support impact-driven R&I projects and to create significant societal and environmental impacts, in line with the overarching objectives of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030). (see [Annex 1](#))

→ **Strong recommendation to engage stakeholders from the quadruple helix (industry, government, research institutes, and the public) in consortia as partners or self-funded partners,** to enhance innovation, policy, and societal relevance and ultimately, to increase the impact of the projects.

- The **quality of the Impact plan** will be considered in the evaluation of the proposals. In particular, the clarity and credibility of the Impact Pathway will be assessed, as well as the quadruple-helix ambition, i.e. if the Impact plan includes clear activities and an effort to liaise with the different stakeholders.



4 Priorities areas in relation with the 4 Intervention Areas and the SRIA

- ▶ **Priority area 1:** Transitioning the blue economy sectors for sustainability and strategic autonomy
- ▶ **Priority area 2:** Managing sea-uses by advancing digital and ecosystem-based approaches
- ▶ **Priority area 3:** Promoting sustainable blue bioresources through innovation in production and harvesting
- ▶ **Priority area 4:** Building resilience in coastal communities with infrastructure and businesses



PA 1: Transitioning the blue economy sectors for sustainability and strategic autonomy (1)

This Priority area accelerates the transformation towards sustainability, competitiveness, and strategic autonomy of the blue economy sectors, including energy, food, the underwater domain, and communication, while addressing the resilience and integrity of all associated critical infrastructures.

It is structured around **three thematic areas**:

- Marine Infrastructures
- Circularity and Ecosystem-Based Transition
- Digital Transition



PA 1: Transitioning the blue economy sectors for sustainability and strategic autonomy (2)

- Activities under this Priority area contribute to the just and digital transitions, as well as to the co-existence and multi-use of activities and infrastructures at sea. Maintaining the integrity and resilience of critical infrastructures is essential, while ensuring sustainability, security and safety for both the environment and society remains a fundamental requirement. These efforts aim to strengthen societal and economic resilience, grounded in principles of inclusive social innovation.
- The Priority areas also promote the development of tools, methodologies and management approaches to assess and mitigate the impacts of marine interventions. Research and innovation activities are expected to improve the understanding of ecosystem responses to anthropogenic pressures and support ecosystem-based approaches to the sustainable transition of blue economy sectors.
- In particular, proposals are expected to contribute, where relevant, to the European **Digital Twin of the Ocean (EDITO)** and are encouraged to explore the use of **digital twinning, AI and other data-driven approaches**.



PA 2: Managing sea-uses by advancing digital and ecosystem-based approaches (1)

The overarching goal of this Priority area is to support **science-based decision-making** that integrates the current environmental status, the legacy of human impacts, climate change trends, and future scenarios, while accounting for the multitude of pressures arising from the use of marine space and resources.

The Priority area is structured around **two thematic areas**:

- Effective management, conservation and restoration
- Innovative Decision Support Tools (DSTs)



PA 2: Managing sea-uses by advancing digital and ecosystem-based approaches (2)

- Research and innovation efforts will **focus on a source-to-sea approach, ecosystem-based management and Maritime Spatial Planning**, aiming to enhance cross-border cooperation in the management, protection and restoration of marine space and marine protected areas, develop innovative decision-making tools that combine data from various sectors, such as decision support systems (e.g., WISE Marine, WISE Freshwater, EMODnet and others), as well as generate knowledge on key areas, including Good Environmental Status (GES).
- Address challenges such as the lack of standardised procedures and indicators, fragmented governance with weak cross-border coordination, and significant data and knowledge gaps, particularly regarding ecosystem functioning, cumulative impacts, and socio-ecological linkages.
- Through targeted actions at a sufficient scale, this Priority area has the potential to make a substantial contribution to the implementation of the MSFD, the upcoming Ocean Act proposal, its relationship with nature restoration, as part of the broader objectives of the EU Ocean Pact.



PA 3: Promoting sustainable blue bioresources through innovation in production and harvesting (1)

This Priority area addresses **research and innovation needs to support a just transition toward the sustainable production and utilisation of blue bioresources**. The goal is to **minimise environmental impacts while meeting the growing demand for healthy, affordable, and traceable blue food, feed and bio-based products**.

The Priority area is structured around **three thematic areas**:

- Fisheries and harvesting,
- Aquaculture,
- Circular blue bioeconomy.



PA 3: Promoting sustainable blue bioresources through innovation in production and harvesting (2)

- A **holistic, value-chain approach**, from production, including capture fisheries and aquaculture, to seafood processing and valorisation, is essential to achieve this transformation.
- To bring Europe's fish stocks back to healthy and sustainable levels, **targeted fisheries and harvesting practices must be prioritised**, including improved management of overfished stocks, optimised fishing technologies to reduce bycatch and discards, and increased utilisation of underutilised species such as zooplankton, invertebrates, macroalgae, and invasive species.
- **Digital tools**, including remote electronic monitoring systems, mobile catch reporting applications, ecosystem modelling, and artificial intelligence, offer **opportunities to optimise both small- and large-scale fishing operations** while enabling data-driven sustainable management practices and ensuring full traceability of seafood.
- Approaches such as **regenerative aquaculture**, including the protection of natural spawning and nursery habitats, integrated multitrophic aquaculture (IMTA), near and offshore production (including multi-use platforms), closed systems, and land-based recirculating aquaculture systems (RAS) present viable pathways for culturing both established and new species.



PA 4: Building resilience in coastal communities with infrastructure and businesses (1)

The goal of the Priority area is to **deliver knowledge to inform policy and planning interventions which can generate increased resilience for coastal communities, particularly those in rural and peripheral coastal areas** (not including cargo/industrial ports) where there is often an over-reliance on coastal and maritime tourism or another narrow economic base.

The Priority area is structured around **two thematic areas**:

- Small-scale businesses:
- Coastal infrastructures



PA 4: Building resilience in coastal communities with infrastructure and businesses (2)

- PA 4 tackles the risks and opportunities for European coastal communities, businesses and infrastructures in the context of climate change, marine environmental degradation, technological advances, and of cyclical economic and political shocks.
- Projects require **interdisciplinary research** to enable a just and efficient transition to low-impact, sustainable coastal economy, fostering resilience and delivering a diversity of economic opportunities and thriving coastal communities.
- Projects under PA 4, as to boost and support coastal communities that urgently must implement adaptation strategies and planning, the Commission adopted the EU Strategy on Resilient, Prosperous and Liveable Coastal Communities in June 2026, should aim to:
- **develop and deploy new sustainable coastal business models, support business diversification, promote regenerative and restoration activities, early warning systems, climate adaptation plans etc.**

«Coastal communities are the driving human force behind a sustainable and competitive blue economy on the road to regenerative practices and play a crucial role in providing Europeans with healthy and sustainable food, clean and affordable marine renewable energy and in connecting Europe to the rest of the world.» (The European Ocean Pact)



Q&A Session

***Presentation of the Priority Areas
(scientific content)***



General information towards applicants



1. General recommendations; *by* *Domnica Cotet, UEFISCDI*



General recommendations

Projects should/are encouraged to:

- ▶ **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;
- ▶ **Be scientifically excellent and relevant to policies framed under Blue Economy and consider ongoing research activities funded by other EU Missions, instruments, programmes, or projects.** Cooperation with these activities is of high importance to avoid redundancy, favour complementarity and increase synergies;
- ▶ **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
- ▶ Integrate the **gender dimension** of R&I activities
- ▶ Promote equal opportunities for participation of women and men in the research consortia
- ▶ Follow partnership communication guidelines using a common visual identity
- ▶ **Comply with EC ethics self-assessment principles and EU taxonomy**



General recommendations

Projects should/are encouraged to:

- ▶ **Consider geographical balance** and 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
- ▶ **Self-funded participation** of legal entities from countries (and/or regions) participating in the call, is welcome; Project partners that are not eligible for funding may participate as self-funded if they have their separate source of funding
- ▶ **Every partner in a (pre-)proposal, including a self-funded partner, needs a Participant Identification Code (PIC) from the EC** to be included in the submission. The applicants must check their PIC or ask for the creation of a PIC well in advance of the submission. The same request applies to subcontractors.



2. Theory of change and Open Access - Fair Data; *by Sylvain Pasquier, ANR*



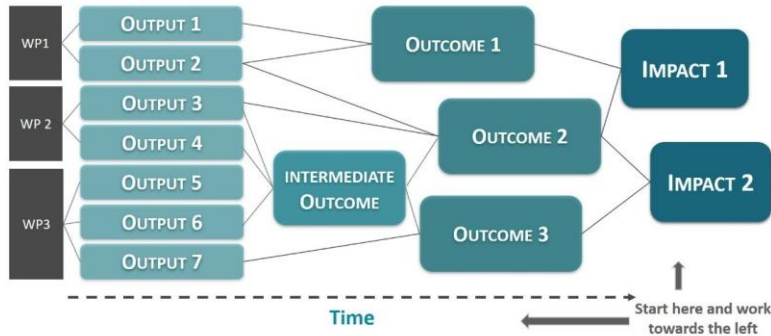
Annex A - how to develop an Impact plan

- ▶ Applicants are requested to include **an Impact plan** that describes what impact the research is expected to achieve in the long run, using a methodology of Theory of Change (ToC):
 - ▶ the potential for impact beyond the academic world, such as in societal, technical, environmental, economic, policy-making, or behavioral realms.
 - ▶ how quadruple-helix stakeholders can be involved in, and/or benefit from, the design and achievements of the R&I project.
 - ▶ to what extent the project addresses the uptake of research findings and innovative outputs into decision-making processes and policymaking.
 - ▶ how approaches for achieving impact are integrated into the R&I design and conducted by the consortium.



The Impact pathway

Diagram of Impact Pathway



- ▶ **Outputs** relate to the direct and immediate insights obtained by a research project or programme.
- ▶ **Outcomes** relate to the changes in behavior, relationships, actions, or activities of stakeholders because of sharing and uptake of research. These processes start during the project but continues after the end of the project.
- ▶ **Impact** is defined as changes in economic, industrial, environmental, and social conditions that a project or programme is aiming at. The actual impact is often long after the project ends



Annex A - how to develop an Impact plan

- ▶ To be included in the project description (pre-proposal and full proposal)
- Refer to the Annex A – Theory of change and to the online workshop Working with an Impact plan, produced by the Dutch Research Council (NWO).



Annex F - Open Access and FAIR data

- Data generated by SBEP projects, including metadata and raw data, should be made publicly available, possibly after a short period of exclusivity. Sharing of data should be done:
 - in accordance with the FAIR principles for data management: Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable.
 - with a balanced approach towards openness, according to the principle “as open as possible, as closed as necessary”.
- A Data Management Plan (DMP) is requested by SBEP from the development phase (pre and full-proposal)



Open Access

- ▶ Projects funded have to comply with full and immediate Open Access principles for scientific publications: Use of Open Access journals or publishing platforms, or Open Access Repository



Annex F - Open Access and FAIR data

- ▶ Refer to the Annex F “Open Access and FAIR data” on how to develop the preliminary Data Management Plan – to be included in the project's description.
- ▶ Regional and national PFOs might also have specific requirements in terms of open access to data.
- ▶ Applicants are encouraged to plan resources in their proposal for the management of their research data and to comply with the requirements of their PFOs (if any)



Q&A Session

*Theory of change; Open Access -
Fair Data*



3. **Ocean Literacy**, *by Gabrielle Aubert, JPI Oceans*



Ocean literacy



Ocean literacy

[the Partnership's ambitions]

- ▶ Promote **behavioural change** to enable the just and sustainable transformation of Europe's blue economy
- ▶ Generate **interest** in sustainable marine innovation, career and investment options across Europe
- ▶ Target **industry actors** to influence Corporate Social Responsibility for the just transition





Ocean literacy

[opportunities for impact]



- ▶ Integrate ocean literacy in **funded projects** through innovative tools and approaches
- ▶ Integrate **citizen science** in the Partnership's R&I activities
- ▶ Highlight the value of a '**sustainable blue economy literacy**'



Ocean literacy [in practice]

- ▶ Applicants are strongly encouraged to **integrate ocean literacy and citizen participation activities in their proposals**
- ▶ **Training on Ocean Literacy and Science communication** for co-funded projects
- ▶ **Ocean Literacy Toolkit**: compilation of resources, with increasing links to co-funded projects
- ▶ **Innovative tools**: videos and podcasts featuring projects
- ▶ **Ocean Literacy for Business**: strengthening links



Ocean literacy

[wider context]

- ▶ **Partnership:** Work Package including **Ocean literacy**; recognised as a cross-cutting enabler
- ▶ **Europe:** **EU4Ocean** coalition and **Mission** Ocean & Waters
- ▶ **Global:** **UN Ocean Decade** ocean literacy actions



Q&A Session

Ocean Literacy

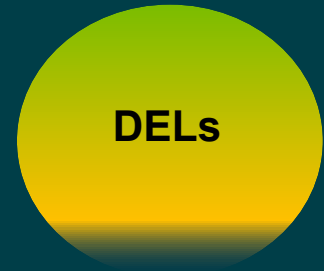


4. Projects monitoring, *by* Nora Matanzas Valtuille , AEI



Monitoring of the selected projects - Call 2026

Nora Matanzas Valtuille
Agencia Estatal de Investigación –
Spanish Research State Agency
oceans@aei.gob.es



SBEP PROJECT MONITORING

During the project, the Follow-up Secretariat will monitor:

- **Consortium Agreement (CA)**
Signed by all Project partners
- **Data Management Plan (DMP)**
Initial DMP + updates throughout the Project (where applicable)
- **Mid-term Report**
Scientific & technical progress, and Project implementation
- **Final Report**
Overall progress, Results, and Outcomes



TIMELINE PROJECT MONITORING

Projects will have a duration of 36 months.

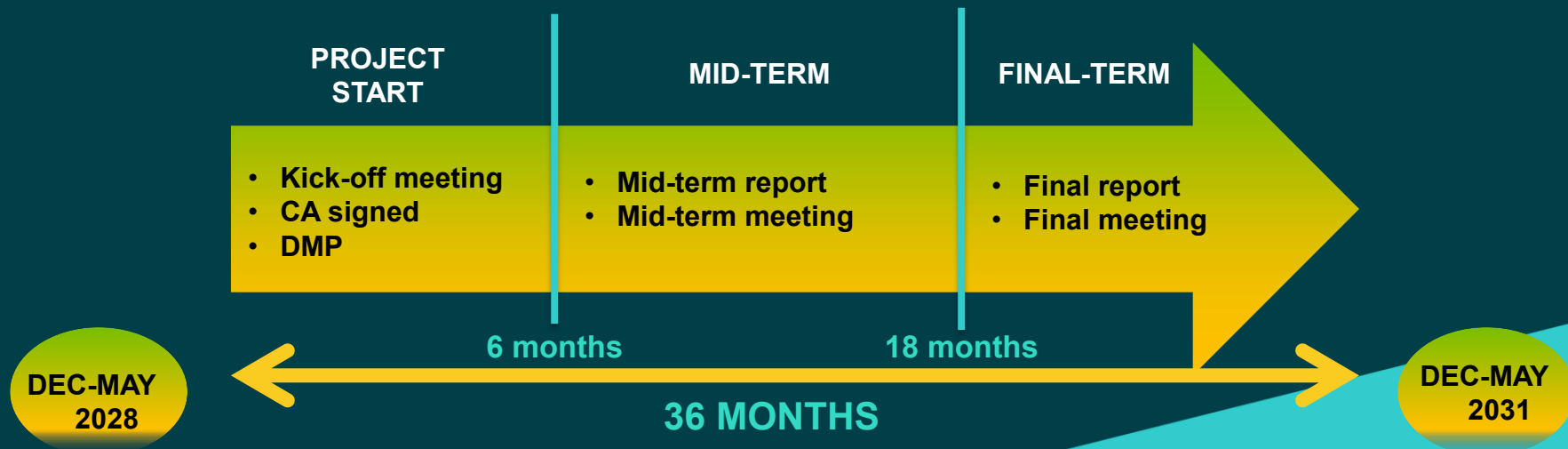
The monitoring process follows the **main stages** of the project.

At the beginning of the project, there will be a **Kick-off meeting**. During the **first six months**, we will collect the **Consortium Agreement** and the **initial Data Management Plan**.

The main monitoring point during the implementation phase will be the **mid-term stage**, around **month 18**. At this stage, the consortium will submit the **mid-term report**, and a **mid-term meeting** will be organised (*in-person*).

Finally, **at the end of the project**, the consortium will submit the **final report** and participate in the **final meeting**.

Project coordinators are expected to actively participate in these activities.





PRACTICAL ASPECTS

Project deliverables are Submitted and managed at consortium level

For the mid-term and final reports, SBEP will provide the corresponding templates and instructions in advance

As mentioned, the projects are also expected to **actively participate in the three joint activities: the Kick-off, the Mid-term meeting and the Final meeting.**

And finally, our role as the Follow-up Secretariat is not only to collect reports. We will support projects throughout their implementation and provide the relevant information, templates and instructions ahead of each reporting stage.

Our aim is to make the monitoring and reporting process as clear as possible for the projects.



Sustainable Blue
Economy Partnership

Thank you 😊

oceans@aei.gob.es



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Q&A Session

Project monitoring



Call process, eligibility rules, evaluation criteria and selection procedure

by Mihaela Iorgulescu - Aioanei, UEFISCDI



Call process

Stage 1: Pre-proposal Submission

- **Mandatory Step**
- General and national/regional **eligibility checks**
- **Evaluation** by an International Evaluation Committee (IEC)
 - a minimum of **2 independent evaluators of the IEC**, as far as possible 3 independent evaluators
 - **2 evaluation criteria: Excellence and Impact**

Stage 2: Full proposal Submission

- **Invited applicants only**
- General and national/regional **eligibility checks**
- **Evaluation** by an International Evaluation Committee (IEC)
 - **3 independent evaluators**
 - **3 evaluation criteria: Excellence, Impact, Quality and efficiency of implementation**



General Eligibility Criteria

- ▶ **Scope:** (Pre-)proposals must address **one main priority area**.
 - ▶ Not all sub-themes within the priority area must be addressed
- ▶ **Duration:** 36 Months
- ▶ **Requested Budget:** Partners from the same country cannot request more than 60% of the total funding requested by a proposal
- ▶ **(Pre-)proposal must:** be written in English, submitted using the EPSS, be complete, respect pages limits, number/type of attachment files
- ▶ **(Pre-)proposals must** be submitted before the deadline

Do not wait the last minute to submit!



General Eligibility Criteria

▶ Consortium composition:

- Each consortium must be composed of eligible partners from at least **three different countries** participating in the call and requesting financial support from at least three different PFO participating in this call
- The projects must involve at least two independent legal entities from two different EU Member States or Horizon Europe Associated Countries for this call for (pre-)proposal



General Eligibility Criteria

▶ Consortium composition:

- **Self funded partners are allowed** but they are not counted for the minimum requirement of eligible partners and countries
 - They cannot act as a consortium coordinator
 - They must demonstrate the willingness to self-fund their own activities or show evidence that other partners are willing to fund their activities
 - A letter of intent/commitment must be submitted with the full proposal at stage 2



General Eligibility Criteria

▶ Consortium coordinator

- One entity must act as the consortium coordinator
- The consortium coordinator must be eligible for funding by a funding organisation of this call
- The consortium coordinator has the responsibility for submitting the (pre-)proposal
- The PI of an entity can act as consortium coordinator only in one proposal.
- The PI of the entity acting as consortium coordinator must be employed by an eligible organisation in one of the countries participating in the call (according to the terms and conditions of the participating funding organisation from which he/she applies for support).



National/Regional Eligibility Criteria

National/Regional regulations and National Contact Points → ANNEX B at (be careful of updates)

Each National / regional Funding Organisation funds its own national / regional Partner

- ▶ The consortium must comply with all the relevant national/regional eligibility rules
- ▶ **Before applying, each and every partner should verify their corresponding national/regional regulations and check their eligibility with their National contact points (NCPs).** The Consortium Coordinator should verify that all partners of the consortium checked their eligibility.



Pre-proposal - Evaluation/Selection Procedure (1st Stage)

- ▶ Evaluated by minimum 2 independent evaluators, preferably, as far as possible **3 independent evaluators** (International Evaluation Committee, IEC)
- ▶ **2 assessment criteria: Excellence (Threshold: 3/5) and Impact (Threshold: 3/5)**
- ▶ **A ranking list of pre-proposals will be produced** by IEC, including only pre-proposals that meet the minimum threshold
- ▶ Selection of pre-proposal based on **1) ranking list** and **2) funding availability**



Proposal - Evaluation/Selection Procedure (2nd Stage)

- ▶ Evaluated by **3 independent evaluators** (International Evaluation Committee, IEC)
- ▶ **3 assessment criteria: Excellence (Threshold: 3/5), Impact (Threshold: 3/5) and Quality and Efficiency of implementation (Threshold: 3/5)**
- + **threshold on the final score: 10/15**
- ▶ **A ranking list of proposals will be produced** by IEC, including only proposals that meet the minimum thresholds
- ▶ Selection decision: **the CSC will strictly follow the order of the ranking list from the IEC and the funding availability**
- ▶ Official letters on evaluation and selection results will be sent to Consortium coordinators



Evaluation criteria: Excellence (Stages 1-2)

- ▶ **Fit to the scope:** clarity and pertinence of the project's objectives to the call priority areas
- ▶ **Novelty of research**
- ▶ **Is the proposal addressing the knowledge gaps?**
- ▶ **Are risks properly identified and managed?**
- ▶ **Soundness of the proposed methodology**
 - ▶ including the underlying concepts, models, assumptions, interdisciplinary approaches, **appropriate consideration of the ethical issues** according to the EU "Do no significant harm" principle (DNSH), **gender dimension** in research and innovation content, and the **quality of open science practices**, including sharing and management of research outputs and engagement of citizens, civil society and end users where appropriate.



Evaluation criteria: Impact (Stages 1-2)

- ▶ The credibility of the **pathways** to achieve the expected **outcomes and impacts** specified in the call text, and the likely scale and significance of the contributions to the project
- ▶ Suitability and quality of the measures to **maximise expected outcomes and impacts**, as set out in the **dissemination** and **exploitation** plan, including **communication** activities component of ocean literacy
- ▶ **The added value of European transnational cooperation and networking**
- ▶ **The quadruple-helix ambition** (*i.e. stakeholders engagement – societal/industrial impact – link between: industry, government, research institutes, and the public.*)
- ▶ **European Sea basins** (*i.e. projects are strongly recommended to cover at least two EU sea basins and to assess the impact on various EU sea-basins*)
- ▶ **EU Taxonomy compliance**



Evaluation criteria: *Threshold 3/5*

Quality and efficiency of implementation *(only at Stage 2)*

- ▶ **Quality and effectiveness of the work plan, assessment of risks, appropriateness of the effort** assigned to work packages, and the **resources** overall
- ▶ **Capacity and role** of each participant, and the extent to which the consortium brings together the necessary expertise
- ▶ **Appropriateness of the partners and justification of the resources** to be committed (budget, staff, equipment ...)
 - ▶ Including balance of scientific and financial contributions from respective countries' partner



Reminders

- ▶ Please consult the **Call Announcement** and **Annexes** including the National/Regional Regulations and National contact Points (ANNEX B) and the Pre-proposal and full proposal forms (ANNEX D and ANNEX E)
- ▶ (Pre)proposal Submission using the **Electronic Proposal Submission System** (EPSS)
- ▶ EPSS technical help desk email is epss.sbep@g.etag.ee
- ▶ For question regarding the call (except national/regional rules), contact the Joint Call Secretariat: sbep.call-secretariat@uefiscdi.ro

The JCS does not intend to answer any questions on the scientific content of (pre-) proposals.



Q&A Session

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



16H00-16H15

Presentation of the submission system (EPSS) and the Partner Tool

by Katrin Saar, ETAG



▶ To facilitate consortia building → **Partner Search Tool**

[Home](#) > [SBEP 2026](#) > [partner / project search](#)

Sustainable Blue Call 2026 on "Building a sustainable and innovative Blue Economy: mastering digital opportunities and fostering resilience"

If you are looking for a partner or for a project to join:

[Submit new partner / project search](#)

Filter entries by:

Those looking for: [a partner](#) [a project to join](#) [display both](#)

Country:

Priority area:

Keyword:

Description:

**Submit your
search**

**Find submitted
profiles/projects**

Contact

Looking for a Country

Description



Submission platform EPSS

1. Click „Sign in” button → Choose „Create your EPSS account”
2. Fill in the form + accept the checkbox bellow = Create new user account
3. Account created → Sign in EPSS
4. Choose 2026 Call → For applicants → Create new project proposal
5. Proposal acronym → Create new project proposal → Pre-proposal SBEP2026-nr

Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership Calls for Proposals

A climate neutral, sustainable and productive blue economy Partnership

SBEP Rolling TA Call to RIs 2026-2028

"Enabling pan-European access to marine and maritime Research Infrastructures to foster innovation, capacity building and the transition to a sustainable blue economy"

Select Rolling TA Call

Sustainable Blue Call 2026

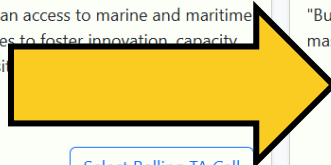
"Building a sustainable and innovative Blue Economy: mastering digital opportunities and fostering resilience"

Select Call 2026

Sustainable Blue Call 2025

"Digitalisation and Innovation for Resilient Marine Ecosystems, Businesses, and Communities to Strengthen the EU Blue Economy's Competitiveness"

Select Call 2025





- ▶ Coordinator – can edit all parts
- ▶ Only the Coordinator can submit proposal

1. General information
2. Add/edit/remove participants, change participant type or PI
3. Participants' details:
 - ▶ participant's details
 - ▶ brief CV of the PI
 - ▶ budget
 - ▶ preview this part of the proposal
4. Project summary
5. Short project description
6. Exclude/suggest reviewers (*optional*)
7. Do no significant harm principle
8. Preview the entire proposal
9. Download proposal budget (*optional*)

Coordinator view

1. [General information](#) - edit proposal title, acronym
2. [Add / edit / remove participants](#) - add or remove participants
3. Participants:
 - **Partner 1** - Katrin Saar <katrin.saar@etac>
 - [Participant's details](#)
 - [Brief CV of the Principal Investigator](#)
 - [Budget](#)
 - [Preview this part of the proposal](#)
4. [Summary of the project](#) - summary of the project and contribution to Ocean Decade Challenges
5. [Short description of the project](#) - upload a PDF
6. [Exclusion / suggestion of potential reviewers](#) (*optional*)
7. [Compliance with EU requirements](#)
8. **[Preview the entire proposal](#)** - view the work
9. [Download proposal budget \(optional\)](#) - view / download

Adding partners

- ▶ Coordinator can add/remove participants for them to get access to the proposal
- ▶ Participant must create EPSS user + accept proposal

Add / remove project participants

After adding your project participants, please ask them to:

1. sign up for a SBEP EPSS user account at <https://proposals.etag.ee/sustainable-blue/>
2. go to the applicant's desktop page <https://proposals.etag.ee/sustainable-blue/2026/applicant>
3. accept the invitation to join the proposal.

The steps above should be completed by all project participants whose status in the participants' list below shows 'has not joined yet'.

Please note that the EPSS **does not send invitation emails** to the participants. Please inform them yourself via email, etc.

Participant number	Status	Edit	Country	Principal Investigator / Subcontractor's organisation name
--------------------	--------	------	---------	--

Partner 1				Katrin Saar <katrin.saar@etag.ee>
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Add participant

Continue

Type of the participant

- ☒ Eligible for direct funding
- ☐ A subcontractor, is subcontracted by an eligible partner
- ☐ Fully self-funded, brings their own secured budget

First name

Last name

Email

Cancel

Add participant

Choose participant type



Invitation to join a proposal

Please review the invitation(s) below and click either Accept or Decline. After accepting an invitation you can start editing your part of the proposal.

In case you have any questions regarding the proposal and/or the invitation, please contact the Consortium coordinator.

Proposal No	Acronym	Consortium coordinator	Title of the proposal
-------------	---------	------------------------	-----------------------

SBEP2025-706			
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You have been invited to become a Partner 2 in this proposal.

Accept

Decline

Accept/Decline

- ▶ 24 h link to create participant account → join the proposal + fill in their data
 - ▶ edit participant's details, the budget or the CV
- ▶ PI - preview all sections of the proposal
- ▶ PI cannot give access to team members/assistants

Participant details

PI info

Must be filled in the system, can't be uploaded

Participant details:

- ▶ PI + organisation info
- ▶ other team members

Brief CV of PI:

- ▶ education
- ▶ positions
- ▶ up to 5 most important achievements, publications etc
- ▶ awards and general expertise

PIs organisation

First name Last name Email

Title Enter title

Nationality (choose from the list) Type to search... Choose nationality from the list

Choose PI identificatory type or specify other type

☐ Google Scholar ☐ ORCID ☐ Researcher Id ☐ SCOPUS Author Id ☐ LinkedIn ☐ ResearchGate ☐ Pubmed ☐ Webpage ☐ Other type

Choose identificatory type or specify other type

Enter PI identificatory value or associated link Enter identificatory value or associated link

Principal investigator's website (including complete list of publications, if any)

Phone Enter phone number

Details of the organisation

Legal full name of the research organisation / Company Enter legal full name of the research organisation / Company

Short name (acronym) of the organisation, if any (max 10 characters)

Participant Identification Code (PIC) number of the organisation Enter PIC

Website

Street name

Enter postal address

PO Box (optional) Postal code Enter postal code Cedex (optional)

Town Enter town Country (choose from the list) Type to search... Choose country from the list

Participant Organisation Type



Budget

- ▶ **Each partner - comply with budget limits set by funding organisation (FO)**
- ▶ **Note!** Some FOs cannot provide 100% of eligible costs
- ▶ Partners from same country - budget limit 60% of the total requested project budget
- ▶ Mandatory costs must be included in the budget
- ▶ **Total cost** – all costs related to project
- ▶ **Funding request from FO** - costs/expenses for personnel, travelling, consumables, overheads (if fundable), subcontracts etc.

Cost category	Total cost (in EURO, incl. VAT depending on rules)	Funding request (in EURO, incl. VAT depending on rules)
Permanent salaries	0	0
Non-permanent salaries	0	0
Salaries total	0	0
Travel	0	0
Participation to joint activities of the SBEP Initiative	0	0
Consumables	0	0
Equipment	0	0
Other costs	0	0
Subcontracting costs	0	0
Overheads	0	0
Total	0	0

Summary of the project

Priority areas in the Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership joint call 2026

- PA1 - Transitioning the blue economy sectors for sustainability and strategic autonomy
- PA2 - Managing sea-uses by advancing digital and ecosystem-based approaches
- PA3 - Promoting sustainable blue bioresources through innovation in marine production and harvesting
- PA4 - Building resilience in coastal communities with infrastructure and businesses

Choose one priority area

Sea-basins/ocean covered by the project

- ☐ Mediterranean Sea
- ☐ Black Sea
- ☐ Baltic Sea
- ☐ North Sea
- ☐ Atlantic Ocean

Choose sea-basins/ocean from the list

Study areas / countries covered by the project

(please do not indicate here the nationality of the members of the consortium but etc.))

Study areas / countries covered by the project (3500 characters including spaces)

Contribution to Ocean Decade Challenges

Please select which of the Ocean Decade Challenges your

Contribution to Ocean Decade Challenges

- ☐ **Challenge 1:** Understand and map land and sea-based so and develop solutions to remove or mitigate them.
- ☐ **Challenge 2:** Understand the effects of multiple stressors biodiversity under changing environmental, social and climate

Choose:

- priority area
- scientific disciplines
- sea-basins/ocean covered in project

Write:

- describe study areas/countries
- summary of the project
- preliminary data management information

Character limit in each section!



Short project description

- ▶ **Upload to EPSS as PDF!**
- ▶ **Automatic page limit! 5 pages**
 - ▶ After deadline -excess pages will be made invisible and will not be taken into consideration by the evaluators
- ▶ Tables, figures, references etc. must be included in this section
- ▶ **Links and hyperlinks are not allowed!!!**
- ▶ Formatting conditions listed in the system (also to references) + list of elements that must be included in the description



Important

- ▶ Proposal can be submitted by Coordinator multiple times before deadline on **2026-11-16 15:00 CET**. Only last submitted copy will count
- ▶ **Not possible to edit/submit the proposal after deadline!**
- ▶ Incomplete proposal cannot be submitted
- ▶ Nearly all fields must be filled in
- ▶ Complete any missing parts or fix any detected problems well before the deadline
- ▶ Information given in the pre-proposals is binding → no major changes between pre- and full proposal allowed



Sustainable Blue
Economy Partnership

Thank you for your attention



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EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIP



Q&A Session

Ongoing Topic: Presentation of the Partner Tool and the submission system (EPSS)

▶ SBEP EPSS technical help desk: epss.sbep@g.etag.ee



Presentation of the Brokerage Event (Matchmaking platform) *by the Sylvain Pasquier, ANR*



4th Call Matchmaking event

Objective: Connect researchers, companies and stakeholders from marine and maritime communities interested in the Partnership's fourth transnational Call - [Registration](#) | [Fourth Joint Transnational Co-Funded Call - SBEP 2026](#) - **Until 13 November**



Sustainable Blue
Economy Partnership



Co-funded by
the European Union

14 September 2026 - 13 November 2026

Fourth Joint
Transnational Co-
Funded Call - SBEP
2026

 Share

Welcome to the Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership – 4th Call - Brokerage event!



4th Call Matchmaking event

- Create your profile and set up 20-minute meetings with other participants during one of the matchmaking sessions.
- Two matchmaking sessions per week (two-hours) until 13 November, save the date!
- Already 80 participants to the event!

Thursday, 1 October 2026

10:00 - 12:00

Meetings

Add

Matchmaking session 6

🕒 20 minutes time slots

Monday, 5 October 2026

14:00 - 16:00

Meetings

✓ Added

Matchmaking session 7

🕒 20 minutes time slots

All time slots selected as available for meetings. [Edit availability](#) >

8 RESULTS

DAYS

☐ Mon, 21 Sept 2026

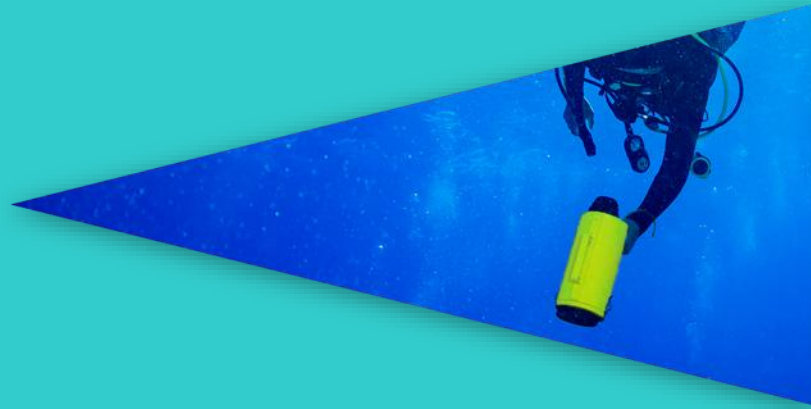
☐ Wed, 23 Sept 2026

☐ Tue, 29 Sept 2026

☐ Thu, 1 Oct 2026

☐ Mon, 5 Oct 2026

Show all 8 ▾



16H25-16H30

Closure and Next Steps

by Domnica Cotet, UEFISCDI



Closure-Next Steps

- ▶ For any information about the Partnership, please check the Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership website: [Homepage | Bluepartnership](#)
- ▶ You can follow the Partnership on the Social media channels: **@BlueEconomyEU** on #Facebook, #Linkedin and #Instagram
- ▶ All call documents available at: [The Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership's third joint transnational call | Bluepartnership](#)
- ▶ **Pre-proposal submission deadline: 16 NOVEMBER 15H CET**



Sustainable Blue
Economy Partnership

Thank you for your attention
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