JPI OCEANS

Joint call for proposals

# Blue Carbon Ecosystems

Call text

Participating countries:

2021 United Nations Decade of Ocean Science

JPI OCEANS

# JOINT CALL FOR PROPOSALS:
# BLUE CARBON ECOSYSTEMS

### CALL THEMES:

Theme A: Carbon stocks and fluxes at local and regional scales

Theme B: Blue carbon ecosystems' resilience and vulnerability to climate change and anthropogenic activities

Theme C: Effectiveness and scalability of restoration and protection measures

### PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES AND AGENCIES:

Ireland, Canada, Germany, Malta, Norway, Poland, Greece (in-kind)

### CO-BRANDING:

UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development

### SUBMISSION DEADLINE:

2 March 2026, 14:00 CET

### OVERALL BUDGET:

€5.3 million

### MAXIMUM PROJECT DURATION:

36 months

### JOINT CALL SECRETARIAT

Marine Institute, Ireland

### ONLINE SUBMISSION:

Proposals must be submitted through the following link: https://marine.smartsimple.ie/

Coordinators - to register as a new user, please contact the Call Secretariat at rims.support@marine.ie with a request for a password and provide details of your organisation and your role (in your organisation).

Please check the JPI Oceans homepage for updates.

Marine Institute
Foras na Mara

MEOPAR

Federal Ministry
of Research, Technology
and Space

XJENZA
MALTA

The Research
Council of Norway

NCBR
National Centre for Research
and Development

hcmr
ΕΛΚΕΘΕ

2021
2030
United Nations Decade
of Ocean Science
for Sustainable Development

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# DEFINITIONS

**JOINT CALL:** A collaborative mechanism through which multiple countries pool their resources to address shared challenges. A Joint Call invites research institutions and other stakeholders across participating countries to submit project proposals on specific topics.

**PROJECT PROPOSAL:** A detailed and structured document that outlines the objectives, methodology, timeline, budget, and expected outcomes of a planned project or initiative.

**PROJECT:** A collaborative research endeavour that has been selected through the Joint Call evaluation process and will receive financial support.

**FUNDING PARTNER:** One of the Ministries or Funding agencies listed below who have committed themselves to fund the projects selected through this Call for proposals.

**JOINT CALL SECRETARIAT:** The primary organisation tasked with overseeing and coordinating the entirety of the Joint Call process.

**PROJECT COORDINATOR:** S/he is the Principal Investigator of the partner who is leading the project.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

**The JPI Oceans 'Blue Carbon' Joint Action aims to enhance knowledge and understanding of blue carbon processes and ecosystems across Europe. Led by Ireland, the earlier activities of the Action included Germany, Greece, Malta, Norway, Portugal, and the United Kingdom as participating countries. This collaborative initiative represents an interdisciplinary effort to facilitate the exchange and generation of knowledge and best practices on blue carbon and is comprised of two working streams.**

A **Blue Carbon Knowledge Hub** was launched in 2024 with three distinct Working Groups (WGs): State-of-the-Art, Policy, and Vulnerability. The State-of-the-Art WG assessed existing knowledge, outlined limits and confidence in current data, identified gaps, and prioritised research areas based on data confidence, information consistency, technical feasibility, and potential mitigation impact (e.g., in relation to climate and ocean health/biodiversity). The resulting report the group produced aimed to capture the state of knowledge across blue carbon habitat types (salt marsh, seagrass, macroalgae (primarily kelp), mangroves, and non-vegetated subtidal elements) with summary analyses on key parameters such as carbon stocks, sequestration rates, greenhouse gas fluxes, dissolved organic carbon, and ecosystem degradation.

The report introduced key research priorities to advance research on blue carbon, which sets the foundation for the next working stream of the Joint Action: **the Joint Call for funding R&I proposals 2025 described here, with Ireland, Canada, Germany, Malta, Norway, Poland and Greece (in-kind) as participating countries.**

## 1.1 Rationale

Marine and coastal benthic habitats play a critical yet often overlooked role in combating climate change. These ecosystems provide numerous ecosystem services, including, but not limited to, nutrient cycling, air quality improvement, and feeding and spawning grounds for marine species, while also supporting economic activities such as tourism and fisheries. In addition to these benefits, these habitats have the potential to capture and store carbon – commonly referred to as 'blue carbon' - contributing significantly to global climate mitigation.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) defines 'blue carbon' as "biologically-driven carbon fluxes and storage in marine systems that are amenable to management"[1]. To date, much of our understanding of blue carbon dynamics comes from studies of vegetated coastal ecosystems – **namely saltmarshes, seagrass meadows, and mangrove forests** – which are known for their high carbon sequestration and storage potential and are recognised as 'coastal wetlands' in the 2013 IPCC guidelines.

However, recent scientific and policy developments are expanding the scope of blue carbon to include non-vegetated and less-studied systems such as **macroalgae, unvegetated mudflats, and the water column**. These ecosystems play a role in capturing, fixing, and transferring carbon dioxide ($CO_2$) to long-term storage in sediment and deep ocean water bodies.

*1 Pörtner, H-O., Roberts, D.C., Masson-Delmotte, V., Zhai, P., Tignor, M., Poloczanska, E., Mintenbeck, K., et al., 2019. IPCC special report on the ocean and cryosphere in a changing climate." IPCC Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change: Geneva, Switzerland 1, no. 3.*

Yet, significant scientific uncertainties remain regarding carbon fluxes, storage rates, and transfer mechanisms, which currently limit their inclusion in greenhouse gas (GHG) accounting.

Blue carbon ecosystems are increasingly vulnerable to climate change impacts (e.g., rising sea-level and water temperature) and anthropogenic pressures such as coastal development, pollution, dredging, bottom-trawling, and tourism. Despite ongoing degradation, recent studies show that effective management, including conservation and restoration, can deliver a wide range of benefits, from climate mitigation and adaptation to enhanced ecosystem resilience[2]. These actions also support global targets, such as the 30% restoration goal under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

The climate co-benefits of conserving and restoring blue carbon habitats include coastal protection from storm surges and erosion, and increased resilience to ocean acidification. As such, integrating blue carbon ecosystems into policy and management frameworks is critical. The blue carbon approach represents a Nature-based Solution (NbS) that delivers benefits for climate, biodiversity, and human well-being.

At the EU level, the Nature Restoration Regulation– a key component of the EU Biodiversity Strategy and the European Green Deal – calls for binding targets to restore degraded ecosystems, particularly those with high carbon capture and storage potential. However, climate change can also alter the processes that enable carbon sequestration and storage in marine systems.

The JPI Oceans Blue Carbon Knowledge Hub identified key scientific knowledge gaps in a state-of-the-art report to help inform this Joint Call. In Europe, knowledge gaps persist regarding **local and regional scale variations in carbon stocks and fluxes,** including the climate protection (or mitigation) impact of CO2 and of the relevant non-CO2 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions such as methane (CH4) and nitrous oxide (N2O). Other research priorities include **understanding ecosystem resilience and vulnerability, identifying optimum management interventions, and understanding the impact of their implementation at scale.** To support harmonised monitoring and reporting, this Call encourages the development of **standardised methodologies and intercalibrated measurement protocols** for carbon and GHG fluxes across diverse blue carbon ecosystems.

To address the research priorities outlined above and support evidence-based policy and management, this Joint Call seeks to advance research on blue carbon ecosystems, with a focus on expanding knowledge, improving methodologies and measurement protocols, and identifying interventions to enhance their climate mitigation and adaptation potential. Higher level key objectives of the Call are to contribute to a comprehensive European and Canadian understanding of natural climate protection services, enabling coordinated action across Member States, and supporting national, EU-level, and international policy formulation and implementation.

*2 Blue Carbon – Integrating Ocean Ecosystems in Global Climate Action. IUCN: https://www.conservation.org/docs/default-source/publication-pdfs/blue-carbonintegrating-ocean-ecosystems-october2021a.pdf?Status=Master&sfvrsn=304117ec_2*

*Building on the Ocean-Climate Dialogue Options for strengthening action on the ocean under the UNFCCC. IUCN: https://www.conservation.org/docs/defaultsource/publication-pdfs/building-on-the-ocean-climate-dialogue_6-october-2021.pdf*

### 1.2 About JPI Oceans

The Joint Programming Initiative Healthy and Productive Seas and Oceans (JPI Oceans) was established in 2011 as a pan-European platform, open to countries in Europe and beyond that invest in marine and maritime research. Our members are ministries and funding agencies that develop, fund, and implement national research agendas. The distinctive role of JPI Oceans is to strategically prioritise and fund transnational research and innovation to increase the efficiency and impact for sustainably healthy and productive seas and oceans.

### 1.3 Alignment with European and Global Agendas

The Call aligns closely with the European Union's overarching environmental and climate objectives, including climate targets to achieve by 2050 and the implementation of the Nature Restoration Regulation. It also supports the objectives of the European Ocean Pact, namely, to protect and restore ocean health and to advance ocean research, knowledge, skills and innovation.

Looking ahead, the Call is also expected to contribute to the forthcoming EU Ocean Act, which aims to bring coherence to marine policies.

At the global level, the Call contributes to achieving the targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, particularly Target 2 on restoring 30% of all degraded ecosystems and Target 8 on minimising the impacts of climate change on biodiversity and building resilience. Furthermore, it supports the objectives of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and its Global Programme for Blue Carbon (GO-BC), as it aims to generate new knowledge and solutions to mitigate the impacts of climate change. It aligns with three Decade challenges, namely challenge 2- Protect and restore ecosystems, 5- Unlock ocean-based solutions to climate change, and 10- Restoring society's relationship with the ocean. Under the name EURO-BC, the JPI Oceans Blue Carbon Knowledge Hub is affiliated with the GO-BC Programme.

The Joint Call is co-branded under theUN Ocean Decade (see Section 7 for an explanation of the funded projects' contribution to the UN Ocean Decade and endorsement criteria for applicants).

In Canada, it aligns well with the 2030 Emissions Reduction Plan, Canada's National Adaptation Strategy, Canada's Blue Economy Strategy, Arctic and Northern Policy Framework, Climate Science 2050, and the Oceans Protection Plan.

# 2. SCIENTIFIC AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Thematic Scope

This Call supports research that addresses critical knowledge gaps in the understanding and management of blue carbon ecosystems. It focuses on advancing scientific insight into the processes that govern carbon sequestration and greenhouse gas fluxes in these ecosystems, and on generating evidence to inform effective policy and management responses.

The scope is broad to accommodate the diversity of blue carbon ecosystems (including emerging ones), and the complexity of the impacts of environmental and anthropogenic pressures on them. Research is encouraged across a range of ecosystems, with attention to their associated biogeochemical processes, vulnerability, and resilience, and management interventions that influence carbon and GHG storage and emissions.

### 2.2 Strategic Context

The projects funded under this Joint Call are expected to generate knowledge to better understand the aspects of blue carbon ecosystems identified in the Call outline below. It is also expected that the projects provide evidence-based recommendations for the sustainable management of these ecosystems. Projects should include dissemination activities on their results, including policy implications.

Projects are encouraged to build on or link with ongoing initiatives, projects, and programmes on blue carbon that would strengthen the work. Synergies between existing observation infrastructures, modelling, and remote sensing services should be sought when applicable to ensure efficient use of resources.

# 3. CALL OUTLINE

**The main objective of this Call is to address critical knowledge gaps related to the dynamics, resilience, and management of blue carbon ecosystems. The Call aims to support research that contributes to climate mitigation and adaptation and sustainable management of blue carbon ecosystems, while informing relevant policy frameworks at national, EU and international levels.**

Projects should focus on marine and coastal ecosystems with blue carbon potential, including both vegetated and non-vegetated habitats. Research should address ecosystem processes related to carbon and GHG dynamics, the impacts of restoration and protection, and the resilience of these systems to environmental and anthropogenic pressures.

Proposals should increase knowledge and understanding in one or more of the following thematic areas:

**A. Carbon stocks and fluxes** at local and regional scales, including the climate protection (or mitigation) impact of $CO_2$ and of the relevant non-$CO_2$ GHG emissions such as methane ($CH_4$) and nitrous oxide ($N_2O$).

**B. Blue carbon ecosystems' resilience and vulnerability** to climate change impacts, eutrophication, dredging, trawling, tourism, and other anthropogenic pressures.

**C. Effectiveness and scalability of blue carbon restoration and protection measures,** including Nature-based Solutions.

Furthermore, in all thematic areas, projects are strongly encouraged to contribute to the development of **standardised methodologies and intercalibrated measurement protocols that allow direct comparison** of carbon and/or GHG fluxes and stocks across diverse blue carbon ecosystems. Projects are also encouraged to support the **integration of scientific findings into policy and management frameworks,** including the Nature Restoration Regulation and the Ocean Pact. This allows for greater synergies between the projects at a later stage and ensures a stronger outcome.

It should be noted that habitat mapping is not expected in funded projects. Instead, project designs should be based on existing knowledge of the distribution of habitats for the ecosystems they address.

Funded projects are expected to deliver knowledge that contributes to several of the following outcomes:

- Scientific data and model simulations on carbon and GHG fluxes
- Standardised methodologies and intercalibration protocols, to allow a direct comparison across different ecosystems
- Policy- and management-relevant recommendations, including best practices for restoration and protection of ecosystems
- Contributions to national, European and international policy planning and reporting obligations
- Knowledge products for use by national and regional authorities and other stakeholders

Proposals should:

- Clearly align with one or more of the thematic areas listed above
- Express how they contribute to the outcomes listed above
- Demonstrate relevance to international, European and/or national policy frameworks
- Include plans for stakeholder engagement and knowledge transfer
- Outline how results will support sustainable management

# 4. CRITERIA

Proposals should address one or more of the themes defined in more detail above in Section 3:

**A. Carbon stocks and fluxes at local and regional scales**

**B. Blue carbon ecosystems' resilience and vulnerability**

**C. Effectiveness and scalability of blue carbon restoration and protection measures**

## 4.1 Eligibility

### NUMBER OF APPLICANTS PER PROPOSAL

Each application must involve eligible research partners from at least three participating countries (countries of the FUNDING PARTNERS). No maximum number of partners is specified.

The Call is further open to proposals that meet the following criteria:

- Applications must be submitted by the set deadline, complete and in accordance with all the requirements defined by this document.
- Research partners who are eligible to apply for financial support from any of the national FUNDING PARTNERS (see table 1 or Annex 2) are eligible to apply for funding within this Call for proposals.
- Research partners ineligible for funding, either because they are not eligible for funding by the FUNDING PARTNERS or they are from a country not represented in this Call, can participate in PROJECT PROPOSALS on the condition that they provide written proof that their part of the project will be covered independently of this Call (in-kind). However, they cannot coordinate a project, and their contribution to the project should not be critical. Associated Partners are not counted for the minimum requirement of eligible partners and countries, see below.
- The PROJECT COORDINATOR leading a proposal must be eligible for funding by one of the FUNDING PARTNERS.

- Proposals must align with the aims, scope and relevance criteria defined in the Call text.
- Input of in-kind national scientific contributions of researchers to the joint project must be visible and marked in the proposal.

Consortia must be aware that failure of one partner within the consortium to meet the national eligibility criteria may result in the rejection of the entire proposal. It is therefore strongly recommended that the PROJECT COORDINATOR verifies that the project partners contact their National Contact Points to check their eligibility prior to planning and submitting the proposals.

### DURATION

- The project duration is a maximum of three years (36 months).
- Projects are expected to start before 15 December 2026 (see Annex 1 to check the national funding rules for each FUNDING PARTNER).

### NATIONAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The eligibility criteria specified by the respective FUNDING PARTNERS must be met. For details, potential applicants must consult the national funding rules in the national guidelines of their respective FUNDING PARTNERS participating in the Call (Annex 1). If they have questions on the national requirements, they should contact the relevant National Contact Point of the national FUNDING PARTNERS (see Annex 1) before applying.

### ELIGIBLE BUDGET ITEMS

- Eligible costs are ruled by national funding rules (see Annex 1).
- The project costs for individual PROJECT PROPOSALS must meet the project goals and consider the national eligibility criteria about minimum and upper limits of costs.
- Budgetary issues, including potential restrictions for funding should be checked with the national funding rules and by contacting the National Contact Points (Annex 1).
- The total amount of funding requested from a FUNDING PARTNER in a proposal cannot exceed the budget limitations set by this organisation and in no case can it exceed the total available budget of this FUNDING PARTNER.
- Project consortium costs should be balanced.

### OTHER

Applications must comply with the Do No Significant Harm Principle and ethics principles (see Annex 2).

## 4.2 Evaluation criteria

Potential applicants are advised to take careful notice of the aims, scope and relevance of the Call as described above. The following criteria will be applied to assess the quality of proposals:

**1. Scientific quality (Threshold 3/5)**

- Coherence with the scientific objectives of the Call
- Sound concept and quality of objectives
- Innovation level (progress beyond the state of the art)
- Added value to European and international science-policy agendas (including contributions to the UN Ocean Decade objectives)

**2. Quality of applicants and suitability of the consortium (Threshold 3/5)**

- Capacity, role, and complementarity of partners, and the extent to which the consortium as a whole demonstrates the necessary expertise and capability to deliver the proposed work
- Interdisciplinarity and, where relevant, cross-sectoral collaboration (e.g., engagement of practitioners and the private sector)
- International / European added value of working as a transnational consortium
- Appropriate considerations of equality, diversity and inclusion dimensions

**3. Impact and knowledge transfer (Threshold 3/5)**

- Outreach and dissemination plan, including knowledge transfer activities
- Integration of stakeholder engagement activities
- Promoting training and networking activities for early career professionals or students
- Contributions of research outcomes to policy development and implementation (including but not limited to policies mentioned in Section 1.3)

**4. Feasibility and applicability in relation to the Call objectives (Threshold 3/5)**

- Soundness of approach including work plan and methodology
- Feasibility and assessment of risks for deliverables and milestones
- Suitability and coherence of the budget request
- Management structure and procedure (incl. data management plan)

# 5. FUNDING, IN-KIND AND RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE AVAILABILITY

A total amount of approximately €5.3 million has been allocated by the FUNDING PARTNERS from Ireland, Canada, Germany, Malta, Norway and Poland (see Table 1 below). Each research partner will be funded by its national FUNDING PARTNER. In addition, Greece is offering in-kind research infrastructure.

Applicants from countries not funding this Call may participate as associate partners with their own resources (cash or in-kind).

| Country | Funding Organisation | Total maximum budget | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ireland | Marine Institute | €1,000,000 | Maximum requested funding per project with Irish partners: €300,00; or €350,00 for Irish partner coordinating a proposal.<br>Maximum request funding for two Irish partners: €600,000, or €650,000 with an Irish coordinator. |
| Norway | Research Council of Norway | €1,000,000 | Maximum requested funding per project with Norwegian partners: €333,000 |
| Germany | Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space (BMFTR) | €1,500,000 | Maximum requested funding per project with German partners: €500,000.<br>Projects start 1st Nov 2026 |
| Malta | Xjenza Malta | €150,000 | Maximum requested funding per project with Maltese partners: €150,000 |
| Poland | NCBR | €900,000 | Maximum requested funding per project with Polish partners: €300,000 |
| Canada | MEOPAR | $1.2M CAD | Maximum requested funding per project with Canadian partners: CAD 100,000 per year. |
| Greece | HCMR | In-kind contribution including infrastructure sharing | |

**Table 1: Overview of funding opportunities of each participating funding organisation**

# 6. PROCEDURES

## 6.1 Dates and Deadlines

Launch of the Call: Tuesday 4 November 2025

Deadline for submitting proposals: Monday 2 March 2026 – 14:00 CET

End of peer-review process: Thursday 30 April 2026

Inform positively ranked institutions: Thursday 07 May 2026

Start of projects: before Tuesday 15 December 2026

## 6.2 Submission of proposals

- The maximum length of the proposal is 30 pages.
- The language of the application is English.
- Applications must be submitted electronically by the PROJECT COORDINATOR to the JOINT CALL SECRETARIAT via the following link: https://marine.smartsimple.ie/. The use of the official application form for this Call is mandatory. Instructions and guidelines for submitting applications can be found on the website. To register as a new user, coordinators please contact the Call Secretariat at rims.support@marine.ie with a request for a password and provide details of your organisation and your role (in your organisation). In case of technical questions, please also contact the Call Secretariat at: rims.support@marine.ie.

**The deadline for submitting proposals is Monday 2 March 2026 – 14:00 CET. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered**.

## 6.3 Evaluation of proposals

1. A one-step procedure (proposal submission and evaluation procedure) will be applied to this Call.
2. Proposals must be submitted via the submission platform by the coordinator of the proposal.
3. After the submission deadline, all proposals are checked against the Call eligibility criteria (Section 4.1) by the JOINT CALL SECRETARIAT. FUNDING PARTNERS will check against the national eligibility criteria specified in the respective National funding rules (Annex 2) and the coherence between requested and available funds at the national level.
4. Eligible proposals are sent for scientific evaluation that will be carried out by at least three independent reviewers (jointly selected by the FUNDING PARTNERS), one of them acting as rapporteur. Independent reviewers will make sure that proposals generally adhere to the aims, scope and relevance of the Call.
5. The evaluation of each proposal will be based on the criteria described in Section 4.1. Sub-criteria are elements the expert reviewers will consider in the assessment of that criterion. These will be scored on a 5-point scale (see explanation of scale below) and equally weighed (only full scores allowed).
6. The scores of the evaluators will be agreed on by the experts involved. The final score for each proposal will be established through discussion and consensus among the evaluators

involved during the Evaluation panel. Any proposal receiving a mean score below 3 for one of the main criteria and/or a final score below 10 will not be selected for funding, and the thresholds will be considered during the Evaluation panel. Evaluation will result in a ranking list according to the final scores and a review report for each eligible proposal.

7. An Evaluation Panel, consisting of the independent, international peer referees, ranks the proposals based on the results of the review reports. The Evaluation Panel groups the proposals in three categories:

   A. Very good proposals recommended for funding
   B. Good proposals to be funded if sufficient funds are available
   C. Poor proposals, not recommended for funding

   Proposals in groups A and B shall be ranked by the Evaluation Panel. No ranking is requested for the proposals in group C. For each proposal, the Evaluation Panel will provide to the FUNDING PARTNERS a consensus report summarising the results of the evaluation.
8. Based on the Evaluation panel recommendations described above and the available funding, the FUNDING PARTNERS jointly agree on a short-list of proposals selected for funding assuring, to the extent possible, a maximum use of available funds and a balanced coverage of the scientific themes of the Call.
9. The outcome of this process will be communicated by the Joint Call Secretariat to the PROJECT COORDINATOR of the proposal, who will inform their respective partners accordingly. The evaluation by the Evaluation Panel will be made available to the PROJECT COORDINATOR of the proposal upon request.
10. The funding decision is irrevocable and therefore no redress procedure is possible.
11. Formal funding decisions are made by the participating FUNDING PARTNERS, and where applicable, are followed up by national requests for application submissions.
12. Consent provided, the composition of the evaluation panel will be made available on the website of the JOINT CALL SECRETARIAT after the funding procedure has been completed. Strict confidentiality is maintained with respect to the identities of applicants and the contents of the proposals throughout the duration of the entire procedure. The list of funded projects will be published on the website of JPI Oceans.

### SCORING SYSTEM

0 – LIMITED - The proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.

1 – POOR – The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.

2 – FAIR - The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.

3 – GOOD - The proposal addresses the criterion well, but several shortcomings are present.

4 – VERY GOOD - The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.

5 – EXCELLENT - The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

## 6.4 Other requirements

### Conflicts of interest

Investigators must disclose any financial or beneficial relationships with a commercial interest (and those of the Investigator's spouse and dependent children) that could be viewed as presenting a potential conflict of interest and must declare any relationship that may lead to a potential commercial bias. All relevant sources of revenue paid, or promised to be paid, by a commercial entity either directly to the investigator, or to the investigator's institution on their behalf, over the preceding 12 months must be included in the disclosure form.

Public funding sources such as government agencies, charitable associations, etc., generally need not be disclosed. However, if a particular relationship with one of these public funding sources might be perceived as creating an actual or potential conflict of interest, the investigator must disclose the relationship and provide relevant information. Similarly, any royalties (defined as use-based payments made to the investigator or their institution as the holder of a patent, copyright, registered trademark, or other property) should be disclosed.

### Access to data and information

Projects should contribute to improved access to data and information, to an enhanced data basis and/or promote the harmonization of data to support knowledge-based decision-making. Therefore, the project should ensure that all data and resulting knowledge are provided in an open access, shared, discoverable manner, also accordingly to national rules.

### Dissemination of results

Projects should include clear and precise procedures to disseminate results for further use by policy and practice, especially to decision-makers and non-scientific target audiences creating a user-oriented knowledge product.

Awarded projects are required to follow Open Access and Research Data guidelines and to acknowledge the JPI Oceans Blue Carbon Call in all dissemination activities. Additionally, any requirements set by the Funding Partner must also be respected.

### Project management and reporting

Following projects selection of awarded beneficiaries, beneficiaries will be signing Grant Agreement with the respective FUNDING PARTNER. All partners in a project selected for funding shall sign a Consortium Agreement in accordance with national regulations.

Funded projects are required to report to their national funding agencies under the administrative rules of the relevant funding organisation. In addition, the PROJECT COORDINATOR is required to submit a mid-term English summary covering all work packages to the JOINT CALL SECRETARIAT. The PROJECT COORDINATOR will also be responsible for submitting a final report to the JOINT CALL SECRETARIAT, in English, within six months after the end of the project. This report should cover the work undertaken by all the proposal partners. National participating partners will have to submit reports of their own work to respective national funding agencies.

Independent of the international reporting mentioned above, all project partners need to report to their national FUNDING PARTNER in accordance with the national rules of each country.

### Budgetary requirements

At the start of the project, a kick-off meeting will be organised. A joint mid-term meeting will be organised half-way through the funding period. A final conference will be organised at the end of the funding period. The FUNDING

PARTNERS, together with the JPI Oceans Secretariat, will organise these three meetings in cooperation with the PROJECT COORDINATOR of the funded projects.

Participants of the funded projects are expected to participate in these meetings and should include the relevant costs in their proposal budgets.

### Further information

Potential applicants are advised to consult the general funding requirements of the national organisations participating in the Call and to contact the national contact persons whenever necessary, especially with regards to eligible costs and other country-specific aspects of the Call.

### Joint Call Secretariat

The Call will be run by the Marine Institute.

The Joint Call Secretariat is responsible for organising the evaluation procedure and for all communications with Coordinators regarding their applications.

### Visibility on Ocean Matcher

In line with the Memorandum of Understanding between JPI Oceans and the Ocean Matcher platform, PROJECT PROPOSALS may be offered the opportunity to be featured on Ocean Matcher. Ocean Matcher is a digital platform designed to connect high-quality ocean research proposals with potential philanthropic and other funding partners. PROJECT PROPOSAL information will only be shared with Ocean Matcher subject to the explicit consent of the PROJECT COORDINATOR. Participation is entirely voluntary and has no bearing on the evaluation, selection, or implementation of the project.

# 7. CO-BRANDING

### Contribution to the UN Ocean Decade

The United Nations (UN) Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030) is being coordinated by UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC/ UNESCO). The objective of the Ocean Decade is to increase knowledge of the ocean and ensure that society uses the knowledge to achieve sustainable development with respect to the 2030 Agenda and associated Sustainable Development Goals.

After decisions on funding are made, the projects funded in this Call will be introduced to the Ocean Decade's Coordination Unit to be considered for endorsement as Ocean Decade Actions, thus, becoming part of the Ocean Decade. To be eligible for endorsement, any project must support one or more of the Ocean Decade's Challenges and promote relevant endorsement criteria as described in the below. Decisions on any future endorsement would be made following the procedures outlined in the Implementation Plan for the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and would relate solely to the research projects.

### Endorsement criteria

To be considered for endorsement, projects selected through the JPI Oceans Joint Call should contribute to the following overarching objectives of the UN Ocean Decade and elaborate briefly how they intend to achieve this:

**A. Access to data and information:** Funded projects contribute to improved access to data and information, to an enhanced data basis and/or promote the harmonisation of data to support knowledge-based policies, decision-making, management, and/or innovation. This contribution thus ensures co-design or co-delivery by both knowledge generators and users. Furthermore, funded projects ensure that all data and resulting knowledge are provided without any embargo period in an open

access, shared, discoverable manner in accordance with the provisions of United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and are appropriately deposited in recognised data repositories consistent with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) Oceanographic Data Exchange Policy or the relevant UN subordinate body data policy.

**B. Dialogue and Transfer:**

i. Dissemination of results: Projects include clear and precise procedures to disseminate results for further use by policy and practice, especially to decision-makers and non-scientific target audiences (such as local populations and industries), creating user-oriented knowledge products.

ii. Contribution to Ocean Decade Action Framework: Contribute to fulfilling one or more of the Ocean Decade Challenges and one or more of the Ocean Decade objectives and accelerate the generation or use of knowledge and understanding of the ocean including knowledge that will contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals and complementary policy frameworks and initiatives.

iii. Capacity Development: Projects build capacities on the institutional and individual level among their partners and non-scientific actors through specific measures, including, but not limited to, beneficiaries in Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs), and Land-Locked Developing Countries (LLDCs).

In addition to the above criteria, applicants are encouraged to consider the following remaining set of endorsement criteria for Decade Actions in the preparation of their submissions and demonstrate in their applications how they are contributing to fulfilling these:

- Strengthen existing or create new partnerships across nations and/ or between diverse ocean actors, including users of ocean science.
- Overcome barriers to diversity and equity, including gender, generational, and geographic diversity.
- Collaborate with and engage local and indigenous knowledge holders. This information will be used to evaluate the suitability of funded projects to be endorsed as Decade Actions following the procedures set out in the Implementation Plan of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

# 8. PRIVACY POLICY

By submitting the application, the Consortium Coordinator and partners agree to the use, to the share (for specific purposes: e.g., evaluation, for the future nomination of experts, JPI Oceans -specific communication) and the storage of projects-related information according to the Privacy Policy and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Further information on the Privacy Policy is presented on the JPI Oceans website.

# ANNEX 1: NATIONAL FUNDING RULES AND CONTACT PERSONS

## MARINE INSTITUTE, IRELAND

### GENERAL

Marine Institute, Rinville, Oranmore, Co. Galway, H91 R673, Ireland

**National Contact:** Veronica Cunningham, veronica.cunningham@marine.ie, +353 91 387532 (Direct) or 387200

### BUDGET

**Anticipated amount of funding for this call:**

The Marine Institute's budget commitment for this call is €1,000,000.

**Maximum amount per partner and/or proposal/project:**

The maximum per individual Irish partner is €300,000 for a project of three years in duration. This increases a maximum of €350,000 for an Irish partner that is coordinating a proposal.

Within a single project proposal, the maximum contribution for two Irish partners is €600,000 (€650,000 with an Irish coordinator) for three years.

For projects of two years in duration, the funding limits are 66% of the above.

**Name of & link to the funding programmes:**

Information on the call will be published on the Marine Institute website at the following link: https://www.marine.ie/Home/site-area/research-funding/research-funding/current-funding-opportunities

Applicants must advise their National Contact Point (details above) prior to submission of any application under this call, and to request a budget template for Irish Partners.

### ELIGIBILITY AND NATIONAL FUNDING MODALITIES

**Eligible Institutions and/or partners:**

Legal entities in the Republic of Ireland with the appropriate scientific and technical qualifications and expertise can be funded as partners in a joint proposal.

The eligible partners are Higher Education Institutions, Other Public Research Bodies, Companies, Industry and Private Organisations in the Republic of Ireland.

The maximum Grant-Aid reimbursement for Industry is 50% for Large Scale Enterprises and 75% for Small-Medium Sized Enterprises of eligible costs. Grant-Aid reimbursement for Higher Education Institutions and Other Public Research Bodies is up to 100% of eligible costs.

Companies must be registered with the Companies Registration Office in Ireland, and will be asked to provide their registration number as part of the national eligibility checks.

**Minimum and/or Maximum project duration:** 24 to 36 months

**Eligible costs:**

*Personnel costs (permanent/temporary)*

- Eligible staff costs include gross salary and employer's PRSI (pay-related social insurance) and employer's pension costs (max 20% of gross salary). Temporary or contract research staff are eligible for Higher Education Institutions and Other Public Research Bodies, but staff costs for permanent staff are not. Both temporary and permanent staff costs are eligible for Industry partners.
- Master's and PhD student costs (stipend €25,000 per annum and college fees €6,000 per annum) are also eligible costs.
- Master's and PhD students must be registered, on a full-time basis, for a higher degree at an eligible Higher Education Institute.
- Successful applicants must provide a written confirmation of available funding for the fourth year of a PhD scholarship at the time of signature of the Grant Agreement.

*Operating costs (travel and consumables)*

- Project-related travel and consumables are allowable costs e.g. travel and subsistence for project fieldwork and meetings, workshops, conferences, laboratory supplies, computer supplies, software, etc

*Equipment*

- The purchase and installation of small-scale scientific equipment and instruments for the project is allowable. Depreciated cost reimbursed with be either 36 or 60 months.
- The purchase of a personal computer/ laptop is eligible at a maximum cost of €2,000 per person and must be used solely for carrying out the project work.

*Overheads*

- Overheads are allowed at maximum of 30% of all costs excluding Equipment and Subcontracting.

*Subcontracting (External Services)*

- Subcontracting to a third party for specialist resources/skills is allowable, subject to normal procurement guidelines. Subcontracting costs are limited to 20% maximum.

## OTHER ISSUES

**Relevant national documents:**

Projects with Irish partners should address requirements under national strategies and policies.

**Subject, relevance criteria:**

Irish project partners will be required to sign a Grant Agreement with the Marine Institute, if their proposal is successful under this call.

Industry partners will be subject to the EU De Minimis which states that "State Aid given to an enterprise cannot exceed €300,000 over any three fiscal years to any company irrespective of size or location." Industry project partners will also be required to sign a De Minimis Declaration, if successful under this call.

Projects that receive funding from the Marine Institute are required to submit progress and final reports pursuant to their Grant Agreement with the Marine Institute.

Successful grantees will receive payment in instalments, 20% on signature of the grant-aid agreement and the remaining 80% in annual instalments following submission of the required reports (financial and technical).

Projects that receive funding from the Marine Institute are required to follow Open Access guidelines.

Any queries regarding this call should be directed to the National Contact Point or by email to funding@marine.ie quoting JPI Oceans Blue Carbon Call as the subject title.

## MEOPAR, CANADA

### GENERAL

Marine Environmental Observation Prediction and Response Network. Steele Ocean Science Building, 6375 Edzell Castle Circle, 2nd floor. Halifax, Nova Scotia, B2H 4J1

**Contact person:**

Isabelle Tremblay, PhD. Senior Program Manager, MEOPAR.
Email: Isabelle.Tremblay@meopar.ca

Jamie Snook, PhD. Executive Director, MEOPAR.
Email: Jamie.Snook@meopar.ca

### BUDGET

MEOPAR has allocated $1.2M CAD to this funding call.

Maximum amount per partner and/or proposal/project (indicate what applies): MEOPAR expects to fund 3 to 4 projects. Within a single project proposal, the maximum requested funding for all Canadian partners collectively should not exceed $100,000 CAD per year.

### ELIGIBILITY AND NATIONAL FUNDING MODALITIES

**Eligible Institutions**: Eligible recipients of MEOPAR funds include not-for-profit organizations, Indigenous organizations and governments, municipalities, research networks, public engagement networks, organizations and private sector companies that deliver public engagement activities, or start-up companies (including those housed in Canadian post-secondary-linked incubators), and post-secondary institutions. Eligible recipients do not include federal departments, agencies, or Crown Corporations of the Government of Canada.

**Eligible applicants:** Eligible applicants must hold a research related position at an Eligible Institution.

**Maximum project duration**: Projects with Canadian partners must start in 2026, and all funds should be expended by December 31, 2028. A final report is due in March 2029, and the final project will be made before March 31, 2029. There are no carry forward provisions for this grant.

**Eligible costs:**

Includes expenses related to:

- Incremental research costs, including salaries of researchers and research staff, related costs of students, highly qualified personnel (HQP), trainees;
- Operations of core research facilities;
- Equipment (except for Major Research Equipment, as described under ineligible costs); scientific collections; costs of computer hardware or software (except where the scale of costs fall within the mandate of the Digital Research Alliance of Canada); information databases;
- Direct cost of knowledge creation;

- Professional and technical services;
- Material and supplies; and
- Research-related travel and accommodation costs.

Travel and hospitality costs must comply with and be reported in accordance with MEOPAR's Travel and Hospitality Policy and may be subject to additional review and evaluation for compliance with the policy.

MEOPAR can provide support for overhead (indirect costs) at a rate appropriate for the context of the project, up to a maximum of 15% of the project budget. The rate must be established considering the scale of the project (i.e., Including a flat rate without an accepted justification will be deemed ineligible). Justification is required for use of this category in the form of a narrative description that explains how the funds will be used under this category, how each expense is calculated, and why it is required. If you require administrative support but do not charge it to the project, it may also be described as an in-kind contribution to assist with the matched funding requirements.

See the Strategic Science Fund (SSF) Program Guideline for details on eligible and ineligible costs.

## OTHER ISSUES

**MEOPAR Funding Call Regulations:**

The budget shall be stated in Canadian dollars.

MEOPAR retains the right to adjust the budgets of proposals, if necessary, based on possible ineligible expense categories. The applicant still reserves the right to enter a funding agreement or not.

Canadian project partners will sign a separate contract with MEOPAR (see Requirements of Funding below). Canadian partners that are coordinators of the projects will be asked to also coordinate the Canadian partners of the projects.

Projects that receive funding from MEOPAR are required to submit progress and final reports pursuant to their contracts MEOPAR (see Requirements of Funding below).

**National additional application:**

- Project partners of projects granted funding will have to submit budget forms (Appendix – Budget; Appendix C – Partners Contribution) to MEOPAR after notification by the Research Council.
- Detailed budgets (i.e., project and partner contribution), with accompanying justification, are required in addition to the work plan. The budget must be submitted in the format of the template Appendix B (available on MEOPAR website).
- For non-MEOPAR contributions, indicate in the template Appendix C (available on MEOPAR website) whether partner contributions are cash or in-kind, matched or leveraged, and if the contribution is expected or secured. Matching funds must be equal to or above the ratio of 1:1 from non-federal government partners for every dollar of MEOPAR funding requested, with additional points awarded for increasing matched funding. See the explanation of matched and leveraged partner contributions, the Strategic Science Fund Program Guideline for details on eligible and ineligible costs, and Appendix C - Guidelines for calculating the value of in-kind contributions.

**Subject, relevance criteria:**

MEOPAR aims at funding the highest-ranked proposals according to the criteria and procedures stated in the description of the call. Projects must also align with MEOPAR's long-term vision and core priorities. We encourage applicants to consult the MEOPAR Science Strategy 2025–2030.

### Requirements of Funding

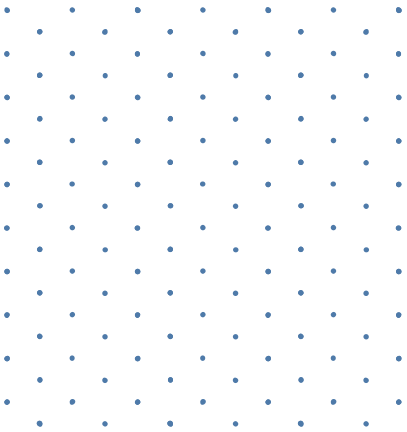
Each project partner receiving MEOPAR funding will enter into an agreement with MEOPAR called an Ultimate Recipient Agreement (URA) in which the project partner is the Ultimate Recipient (UR). The URA identifies the funding schedule, reporting timeline, project milestones and deliverables, and key performance indicators (KPIs). The URA must be reviewed at the time of submission to ensure timely execution upon a successful award. If an applicant fails to review the URA, or disagrees with the terms of the URA, MEOPAR reserves the right to reallocate the funding to other funding applicants.

### Open access / Open science

MEOPAR strongly encourages data management plans (DMPs) that result in data that are Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable (FAIR) and follow the CARE Principles of Indigenous Data Governance and First Nations Principles of OCAP, if applicable. Guides to develop DMPs are provided by the Canadian Integrated Ocean Observation System (CIOOS) and the Alliance.

Research occurring in Indigenous waters should contact the local Nation(s) to determine how the research may proceed in a responsible way, including following any research review processes that an applicant Indigenous entity may have in place.

Data obtained with MEOPAR funding should be made as open as possible, but as restricted as necessary in the relevant domain specific repository. In addition, metadata and a link to the data should be made available in CIOOS. Metadata should be findable through a repository within 6 months of the end of project funding. These steps will improve findability and accessibility of the data for future reuse of publicly funded observations. If restrictions are necessary, justify the reasoning.



Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space

## FEDERAL MINISTRY OF RESEARCH, TECHNOLOGY AND SPACE, GERMANY

### GENERAL

Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space (BMFTR). Heinemannstr. 2, 53175 Bonn | Postal address: 53170 Bonn, Germany

**Contact person:** Dr. Julia Getzlaff, Project Management Jülich (PtJ) | Forschungszentrum Jülich GmbH, Tel.: +49 (0)381 20356-292, Email: j.getzlaff@ptj.de

### BUDGET

**Anticipated amount of funding for this call:** €1,500,000 (conditional budget)

**Maximum amount per proposal/project (indicate what applies):** Within a single project proposal, the maximum requested funding for all German partners collated should not exceed €500,000.

**Name of & link to the funding programmes:** MARE:N – Coastal, Marine and Polar Research for Sustainability, https://www.bmftr.bund.de/SharedDocs/Publikationen/DE/7/31173_Mare_N.html

### ELIGIBILITY AND NATIONAL FUNDING MODALITIES

**Eligible Institutions and/or partners:** Universities, research institutions, and commercial enterprises are eligible to apply for funding. Institutions of the municipalities, the federal states, and the federal government as well as associations and other non-governmental organisations are only eligible for funding if they make a substantial research and development contribution of their own to the proposed research project.

**Eligible applicants:** The applicant is affiliated with an eligible institution.

**Maximum project duration:** 36 months

**Eligible costs:** The funding can be used for project-related personnel, travelling, and material expenses. However, funding for investments and large-scale equipment is only feasible in exceptional cases. Priority must be given to examining all options for involving suitably equipped partner institutions. Only if it can be proven that these options cannot be utilised, the funding provider will consider a case-by-case review, provided that the recipient of the funding can ensure long-term operation.

**Funding rates:** 100% for universities, research institutions, and 50-80% for commercial enterprises (matter of national eligibility check within the final approval phase).

### OTHER ISSUES

**National Regulations:** The applicant is referred to the corresponding national call (https://www.bundesanzeiger.de/pub/de/amtlicher-teil?1).

**National additional application:** According to national regulations successful applicants are required to submit full proposals via https://foerderportal.bund.de/easyonline/formularassistent.jsf

## XJENZA MALTA

### GENERAL

Xjenza Malta. Villa Bighi, Dawret Fra Giovanni Bichi, Kalkara KKR 1320.

**Contact person:** Oksana Pachomcik, oksana.pachomcik@gov.mt +356 23602257, cc eusubmissions.xjenzamalta@gov.mt

### BUDGET

**Anticipated amount of funding for this call:** €150,000

**Maximum amount per partner and/or proposal/project (indicate what applies):** The maximum amount that national partner/s can jointly request per project is €150,000.

**Name of & link to the funding programmes:** https://xjenzamalta.mt/media/open-funding-schemes/

### ELIGIBILITY AND NATIONAL FUNDNG MODALITIES

**Eligible Institutions:** Public, private and academia (Limited Liability Companies, Partnerships, Non-profit making Organisations, Voluntary Organisations, Professional Bodies, Cooperatives, Public entities, Research & Knowledge - Dissemination Organisations). Further information can be found in the detailed National Rules accessible from the Xjenza Malta website: https://xjenzamalta.mt/media/funding-schemes/

**Eligible applicants:** Researchers, technicians, and supporting staff, to the extent that they are employed on the relevant project or activity by the eligible Malta-based entity. Further information can be found in the detailed National Rules accessible from the Xjenza Malta website: https://xjenzamalta.mt/media/funding-schemes/

**Maximum project duration:** 36 months

**Eligible costs:** Eligible costs and rates of funding depend on the type of the Malta-based entities and the funding route chosen.

**Eligible costs include the following:** personnel; instruments, specialised equipment, and research consumables; IP and knowledge transfer activities; travel and subsistence; subcontracted activities; overheads and other operating expenses.

Further information can be found in the detailed National Rules accessible from the Xjenza Malta website: https://xjenzamalta.mt/media/funding-schemes/

**Funding rates:** Kindly consult the detailed national rules or contact Ms Oksana Pachomcik to determine the funding rates

according to the funding modality chosen.

## OTHER ISSUES

**National Regulations:** accessible from the Xjenza Malta website: https://xjenzamalta.mt/media/funding-schemes/

**National additional application:** The national application form together with the required annexes can be downloaded from the Xjenza Malta website (https://xjenzamalta.mt/media/funding-schemes/) and must be sent to eusubmissions.xjenzamalta@gov.mt by the national deadline specified in the detailed National Rules.

*As indicated in the National Regulations, a Grant Agreement will be signed between the Malta-based successful applicant and Xjenza Malta. This Agreement will form the basis for project funding and will regulate the transfer of funds to national beneficiaries. To proceed with the Grant Agreement, the Project Consortium Agreement must be provided.*


## THE RESEARCH COUNCIL OF NORWAY

### GENERAL

The Research Council of Norway, Drammensveien 188, 0283 Oslo

**Contact persons:**

Hanna Lee Behrens, the Research Council of Norway. Address: Drammensveien 288, 1327 Lysaker. Tel: +47 481 81 290. Email: HLB@RCN.NO

Torunn Hancke, the Research Council of Norway. Address: Drammensveien 288, 1327 Lysaker. Tel: +47 948 18 296. Email: TOHAN@RCN.NO

### BUDGET

**Anticipated amount of funding for this call:** up to €1,000,000

**Maximum amount per proposal/ project:** Norway expects to fund up to 3 projects. Within a single project proposal, the maximum requested funding for all Norwegian partners collated should not exceed €333,000. See *National regulations* below for details on official exchange rate from Norwegian kroner to Euro.

**Name of & link to the funding programmes:** Portfolio board Climate and environment

### ELIGIBILITY AND NATIONAL FUNDING MODALITIES

**Eligible Institutions:** Research organisations, companies and entities in the public sector can apply for funding from the Research Council of Norway.

Support from the Research Council of Norway awarded to research institutions is normally awarded for non-economic activity. When an entity also pursues economic activities ("undertaking"), the financing, the costs and the revenues of those economic activities will be granted under the state aid guidelines and must be entered into separate accounts.

Sole proprietorships cannot apply for funding from the RCN. Private individuals cannot apply.

**Eligible applicants:** See *Eligible institutions.*

**Maximum project duration:** Maximum project duration is up to 36 months. Projects with Norwegian partners must start in 2026.

**Eligible costs:**

- Eligible Personnel costs (permanent/ temporary)
- Operating costs (travel and consumables)
- Equipment
- Overheads
- Subcontracting

All applications for project support from the Research Council must contain a complete budget. The budget includes a cost plan detailing all the expected project costs and a funding plan showing how these costs will be covered under the project. The budget is to be specified by calendar year. For further details: What to enter in the project budget.

Funding rates: See *Eligible costs*.

## OTHER ISSUES

**National Regulations:**

The participation must follow RCN's General Terms and Conditions for R&D Projects.

The budget for the Norwegian partners shall follow RCN cost model and RCN regulations.

The budget applied for shall be stated in Euro. Conversion from Euro to Norwegian kroner is based on the official exchange rate per date for submitting the application. The official exchange rate can be found here: https://www.ecb.int/stats/exchange/eurofxref/html/index.en.html

The Research Council of Norway retains the right to cut the budgets of proposals if found necessary.

Norwegian project partners will sign a separate contract with the RCN. Norwegian partners that are coordinators of the projects will be asked to also coordinate the Norwegian partners of the projects.

Projects that receive funding from the Research Council of Norway are required to submit progress and final reports pursuant to their contracts with the Research Council of Norway.

**National additional application:**

Project partners of projects granted funding will have to submit national application forms to The Research Council of Norway after notification by the Research Council.

**Subject, relevance criteria:**

The Research Council of Norway aims at funding the highest-ranked proposals according to the criteria and procedures stated in the description of the call.

**State aid guidelines:**

The funding of a research and development project granted in this call is set by the State Aid Rules: https://www.forskningsradet.no/en/apply-for-funding/funding-from-the-research-council/Conditions-for-awarding-state-aid/

State aid awarded by the Research Council in this call is granted under the General Block Exemption Regulation for state aid, Article 25: Aid for research and development projects.

Support from the Research Council constitutes state aid when it is awarded to an "undertaking", i.e., an actor that carries out an economic activity consisting of offering products or services on a given market.

To ensure that support is awarded in compliance with the state aid rules, the Research Council will ask applicants selected for conditional allocation of funding to provide supplementary information. The Project (Principal) Investigator must be able to document that they're own institution and all its partners (all recipients of state aid) are eligible to receive state aid.

**Open access / Open science:**

The Research Council seeks to lead the way in making research as open as possible and as closed as necessary. The Research Council of Norway has stipulated requirements relating to self-archiving and open access to publications and research data produced in connection with R&D projects funded by the Research Council. Read more about The Research Council's Principles for Open Science: https://www.forskningsradet.no/en/Adviser-research-policy/open-science

National Centre for Research and Development

# NATIONAL CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (NCBR), POLAND

## GENERAL

Narodowe Centrum Badań i Rozwoju (NCBR), ul. Chmielna 69, 00-801 Warsaw, Poland

Contact person Monika Włoszek . T: +48 22 39 07 180. M: +48 515 061 531 Email: monika.wloszek@ncbr.gov.pl

## BUDGET

**Anticipated amount of funding for this call:** €900 000

**Maximum amount per partner and/or proposal/project (indicate what applies):**

- €300 000[1]
- All costs associated with proposals must be covered by the funding available for each project.

No additional funding will be available to cover any additional costs associated with projects

(e.g., services and facilities costs, ship-time costs).

Name of & link to the funding programmes: More details in the national call announcement.

## ELIGIBILITY AND NATIONAL FUNDING MODALITIES

Eligible Institutions / Eligible applicants:

- Enterprises - SME and Large[2],
- Research organisations (research and knowledge-dissemination organisations[3],
- Groups of entities composed of at least two enterprises,
- Groups of entities composed of at least one research organisation and at least one enterprise,
- Group of entities composed of at least two research organisations.

Participating entities must be established as legal persons[4] and conduct business, R&D activity or other activity on the territory of the Republic of Poland, confirmed by an entry into the relevant Polish official register[5].

*1 The maximum amount per the project is €300 000 and it will be allocated to all Polish partners, regardless of their number*

*2 As defined in Annex I to Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty (hereinafter referred to as "Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014")*

*3 As defined in Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014*

*4 Legal person - an entity that is capable of having and amending legal rights and obligations within a certain legal system, in particular to enter into contracts, sue and be sued, excluding natural persons*

*5 If applicable. Does not apply to legal persons that are not obliged to register in a relevant Polish official register according to Polish law*

For a group of entities to participate as an Applicant in the call, it must formally exist on the date the proposal is submitted. This existence must be evidenced by an agreement made by the members - at least conditionally - to create the group of entities (consortium).

**Maximum project duration:** 36 months

**Eligible costs:**

The eligible costs shall be the following:

- For research organisations:

1. personnel costs
2. consumables
3. equipment
4. travel
5. subcontracting – used exclusively for the research activity; this cost category shall not exceed 70% of all eligible costs of a project
6. additional overheads – incurred indirectly as a result of the research project. That costs should account 25% of all eligible direct costs and are counted as a multiplication by percentage given above (called x%) and the rest of direct costs for research organizations, excluding subcontracting (5); It means 6 = (1+2+3+4)x25%.

- For enterprises:

1. personnel costs
2. equipment
3. subcontracting – used exclusively for the research activity; this cost category shall not exceed 70% of all eligible costs of a project
4. additional overheads – incurred indirectly as a result of the research project. That costs for enterprises include costs related to consumables, travel and other direct costs. Additional overheads costs should account 20% of eligible direct project costs and are counted as a multiplication by percentage given above (called x%) and the rest of direct costs;

It means 4 = (1+2+3)x20%.

For more details on eligible costs, applicants are advised to check cost eligibility guide (przewodnik kwalifikowalnosci kosztow) in the call announcement on NCBR webpage.

**Funding rates:**

Research organisations: all types of research may be funded. Basic research must not exceed 10% of value of national requested budget. Other types of activities (e.g. coordination, dissemination, management) are not eligible for funding as separate WP/Task.

Enterprises: Only Industrial/Applied Research and Experimental Development will be funded. Other types of activities (e.g. coordination, dissemination, management) are not eligible for funding as separate WP/Task.

Funding quota of Polish participants can be up to 100% for research organisations. In the case of enterprises, funding quota

| Type of Organization<br>Type of Activity | Micro/Small Enterprises | Medium Enterprises | Large Enterprises | Research Organizations |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Fundamental/ Basic Research** | n/a | n/a | n/a | Up to 100 % |
| **Industrial Research** | 50+20+5/15/25 (max. 80%) | 50+10+5/15/25 (max. 80%) | 50+5/15/25 (max. 75%) | Up to 100 % |
| **Experimental development** | 25+20+5/15/25 (max. 70%) | 25+10+5/15/25 (max. 60%) | 25+5/15/25 (max. 50%) | Up to 100 % |

If an enterprise applies individually at the national level (i.e. there is no Polish group of entities or group of enterprises), the state aid intensity for industrial research and experimental development shall not be increased on the basis of "effective cooperation" between enterprises or between enterprises and research organisations.

## OTHER ISSUES

**National Regulations:**

• For enterprises it is strongly advised to state in the proposal application form in table for Project partner: the KRS (Polish National Court Register) number of the enterprise and the size of the enterprise (micro/small, medium, large).

• Polish applicants shall declare the TRL (Technology Readiness Level) of their research in the proposals.

All proposals must be aligned with national regulations, inter alia:

• The Act of 20 July 2018 - Law on Higher Education and Science;

• The Act of 30 April 2010 on the National Centre for Research and Development;

• The Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 19 August 2020 on granting state aid by the National Centre for Research and Development, which is in line with the Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014;

• The Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 17 September 2010 on the detailed mode of performance of tasks of the National Centre for Research and Development.

**National additional application:**

Participants from Poland will be informed and invited to submit a national application once the international evaluation and the ranking list have been established.

Only projects recommended for funding will be asked to submit a national application form (NAF).

All eligible entities invited to submit Polish full proposal are obliged to use European Central Bank's exchange rate in force on the day the call is opened. If more than one Polish entity participates in the project, the national application must be submitted jointly by a consortium (group of entities) comprising Polish entities only.

Detailed information about scope, financial rules, national procedure and national regulations is available on the NCBR's homepage: https://www.gov.pl/web/ncbr

## HELLENIC CENTRE FOR MARINE RESEARCH (HCMR), GREECE

*IN-KIND CONTRIBUTION*

### GENERAL

Hellenic Centre for Marine Research (HCMR). 46,7 km Athens Sounio ave. P.O. Box 712, P.C. 19013 Anavyssos. Attiki Greece. Phone: +302291076462

**Contact person:** Eugenia Apostolaki, Institute of Oceanography, HELLENIC CENTRE FOR MARINE RESEARCH (HCMR)

Thalassocosmos, Gournes Pediados, P.O. Box 221. HERAKLION CRETE, GR 71 003 GREECE: eapost@hcmr.gr

### BUDGET

**Anticipated amount of funding for this call**: In-kind contribution including infrastructure sharing

**Maximum amount per partner and/or proposal/project (indicate what applies):** No limit to the in-kind

**Name of & link to the funding programmes:** The Greek in-kind contribution to this call is provided by the Hellenic Centre for Marine Research (HCMR).

### ELIGIBILITY AND NATIONAL FUNDING MODALITIES

**Eligible Institutions/Eligible applicants:**

Access to the research infrastructure is open to individuals from all partners in a consortium, not limited to Greek institutes. However, to design and implement experiments using the HCMR infrastructure, it is required to include HCMR as Associate Partner in the project proposals. Requests for access to the infrastructure should be submitted through the Greek national contact point listed in this annex.

**Infrastructure offered**

The Seagrass Ecology Laboratory of the Institute of Oceanography is dedicated to the study of the structure, function and dynamics of Mediterranean seagrass ecosystems, with particular emphasis on their responses to global change. The laboratory conducts both field-based and experimental research, integrating cutting-edge approaches across multiple scientific disciplines.

The laboratory is equipped for visual assessments, sample collection, and the processing and analysis of seagrass and associated sediment and water samples. Core facilities include:

- Remote imaging equipment: High-resolution underwater cameras, drones and ROVs for habitat mapping
- Field equipment: Quadrates and sediment cores, as well as underwater sensors for measuring temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen, pH and light intensity

- Experimental systems: Incubation chambers for in situ experiments and controlled-environment aquaria for manipulation experiments under variable light, temperature and nutrient conditions
- Sample processing area: Drying oven and freeze-drier, muffle furnace, precision balances, mills and desiccators for the preparation of seagrass and sediment sample.

The Seagrass Ecology Laboratory operates in close collaboration with other units of the Hellenic Centre for Marine Research, enabling access to specialised infrastructure and analytical support, including:

- Research vessels: Equipped with multibeam echosounder, side-scan sonar and sub-bottom profiler for habitat mapping
- Scientific Diving (SD) Unit: Fully equipped with personal diving gears, a tank-filling station and diver propulsion vehicles to support underwater research
- Mobile laboratory: Designed to support coastal activities and facilitate sample processing in the field
- Chemical Laboratories (Institute of Oceanography): Equipped with advanced analytical facilities for the measurement of dissolved nutrients (accredited by the Hellenic Accreditation System SA – ESYD according to ELOT EN ISO/IEC 17025:2005), dissolved organic carbon, greenhouse gases and elemental carbon content in seagrass tissues and underlying sediment
- Sedimentology Laboratory (Institute of Oceanography): Equipped with specialised instruments for the analysis of grain size distribution and the measurement of sediment accretion rate in seagrass sediments

**Maximum project duration:** 36 months

**Eligible costs:** in-kind

**Funding rates:** in-kind

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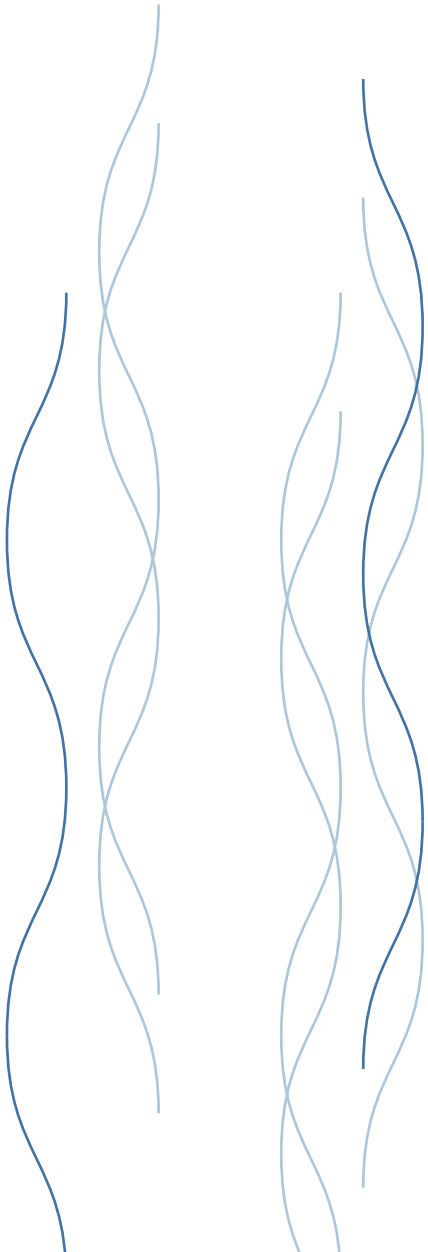


# ANNEX 2: DO NO SIGNIFICANT HARM PRINCIPLE & ETHIC ISSUES

**Do No Significant Harm principle (DNSH)**

The Do No Significant Harm principle was introduced in the European Green Deal to ensure that the research and innovation activities do not make a significant harm to any of the six following environmental objectives (EU Taxonomy Regulation): Climate change mitigation, climate change adaptation, sustainable use & protection of water & marine resources, pollution prevention & control, transition to a circular economy, and protection and restoration of biodiversity & ecosystems. You can find more information on what is considered as doing significant harm to the above objectives in the following note:

EUR-Lex - 52021XC0218(01) - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)

Each project consortium is required to declare if its proposal respects this principle and, if not, to explain why.

**Ethics self-assessment**

The applicant shall self-assess the respect of the ethics principles by answering the following questionnaire. Whenever an answer is positive the applicant shall describe how he/she is planning to deal the ethic issue.

1. HUMAN EMBRYONIC STEM CELLS AND HUMAN EMBRYOS

Does this activity involve Human Embryonic Stem Cells (hESCs)?

• If yes, will they be directly derived from embryos within this project?

• If yes, are they previously established cells lines?

• If yes, are the cell lines registered in the European registry for human embryonic stem cell lines?

2. HUMANS

Does your research involve human participants?

• If yes, are they volunteers for nonmedical studies (e.g., social or human sciences research)?

• If yes, are they healthy volunteers or medical studies?

• If yes, are they patients for medical studies?

• If yes, are they potentially vulnerable individuals or groups?

• If yes, are they children / minors?

• If yes, are they other persons unable to give informed consent?

Does your research involve physical interventions on the study participants?

• If yes, does it involve invasive techniques?

• If yes, does it involve collection of biological samples?

Does this activity involve conducting a clinical study as defined by the Clinical Trial Regulation (EU 536/2014)? (using pharmaceuticals, biologicals, radiopharmaceuticals, or advanced therapy medicinal products).

• If yes, is it a clinical trial?

• If yes, is it a low-intervention clinical trial?

3. HUMAN CELLS / TISSUES

Does this activity involve the use of human cells or tissues?  human cells or tissues?

• If yes, are they human embryonic or foetal cells or tissues?

• If yes, are they available commercially?

• If yes, are they obtained within this project?

• If yes, are they obtained from another project, laboratory, or institution?

• If yes, are they obtained from biobank?

4. PERSONAL DATA

Does this activity involve processing of personal data?

• If yes, does it involve the processing of special categories of personal data (e.g.: sexual lifestyle, ethnicity, genetic, biometric and health data, political opinion, religious or philosophical

• If yes, does it involve profiling, systematic monitoring of individuals, or processing of large scale of special categories of data or intrusive methods of data processing (such as, surveillance, geolocation tracking etc.)?

Does this activity involve further processing of previously collected personal data (including use of pre-existing data sets or sources, merging existing data sets)?

• Is it planned to export personal data from the EU to non-EU countries? (If yes, specify the type of personal data and countries involved)

• Is it planned to import personal data from non-EU countries into the EU or from a non-EU country to another non-EU country? (If yes, specify the type of personal data and countries involved)

5. ANIMALS

Does your research involve animals?

• If yes, are they vertebrates?

• If yes, are they non-human primates (NHP)?

• If yes, are they genetically modified?

• If yes, are they cloned farm animals?

• If yes, are they endangered species?

6. NON-EU COUNTRIES

• Will some of the activities be carried out in non-EU countries? (If yes, specify the countries)

• In case non-EU countries are involved, do the activities undertaken in these countries raise potential ethics issues? (If yes, specify the countries)

• Is it planned to use local resources (e.g., animal and/or human tissue samples, genetic material, live animals, human remains, materials of historical value, endangered fauna, or flora samples, etc.)?

• Is it planned to import any material (other than data) from non-EU countries into the EU or from a non-EU country to another non-EU country? For data imports, see section 4. (If yes, specify material and countries involved)

• Is it planned to export any material (other than data) from the EU to non-EU countries? For data exports, see section 4. (If yes, specify material and countries involved)

• Does this activity involve low and/or lower-middle income countries? (If yes, detail the benefit- sharing actions planned in the self-assessment)

• Could the situation in the country put the individuals taking part in the activity at risk?

7. ENVIRONMENT & HEALTH and SAFETY

• Does this activity involve the use of substances or processes that may cause harm to the environment, to animals or plants (during the implementation of the activity or further to the use of the results, as a possible impact)?

• Does this activity deal with endangered fauna and/or flora / protected areas?

• Does this activity involve the use of substances or processes that may cause harm to humans, including those performing the activity (during the

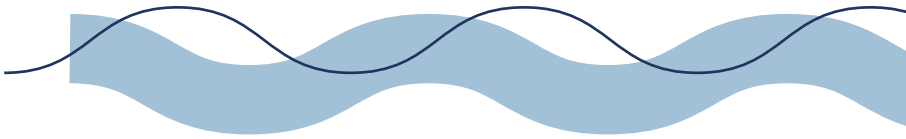
implementation of the activity or further to the use of the results, as a possible impact)?

8. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

• Does this activity involve the development, deployment and/or use of Artificial Intelligence? (if yes, detail in the self-assessment whether that could raise ethical concerns related to human rights and values and detail how this will be addressed).

11. OTHER ETHICS ISSUES

• Are there any other ethics issues that should be taken into consideration?



JPI OCEANS

Rue du Trône 4 I 1000 Brussels | Belgium
Tel. +32 (0)2 62616 60 I info@jpi-oceans.eu
**www.jpi-oceans.eu**