

ANNEX D – PRE-PROPOSAL FORM

This template is an indicative model of pre-proposal application form. All pre-proposals have to be submitted online via the electronic proposal submission system (EPSS). The format of the pre-proposal application form will be modified to fit the EPSS.

PRE-PROPOSAL APPLICATION FORM

2026 SBEP Joint Co-funded Call for transnational research projects on “**Building a sustainable and innovative Blue Economy: mastering digital opportunities and fostering resilience**”.

General guidance for all applicants:

- ▶ The Call Text and its Annexes can be downloaded from the Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership <https://bluepartnership.eu/>;
- ▶ All Participants i.e. Consortium Partners, Self-Financed Partners, must log in onto the EPSS to confirm their participation in a pre-proposal and complete their information as required;
- ▶ The content of the pre-proposal must be written in English and follow the set guidelines. The different sections of the pre-proposal should not exceed the prescribed maximum space. Incomplete pre-proposals that do not adhere to the general eligibility criteria and to the national/regional eligibility requirements will be rejected and will not be evaluated;
- ▶ Any documents other than those requested as part of the proposal **will not be forwarded** to the International Evaluation Committee (IEC) members;
- ▶ The pre-proposal can be submitted by the Consortium coordinator multiple times before the **pre-proposal submitting deadline on 16th of November 2026, 15H00 CET (local time in Brussels, Copenhagen, Paris)**. Only the very last submitted copy will be used by the Joint Call Secretariat (JCS). It is not possible to edit / submit the pre-proposal after this deadline.

1.0 GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION

CALL ID:	SBEP2026
Proposal ID:	Automatically from EPSS (e.g. SBEP2026-1)
Project title¹ (max 255 characters including spaces)	
Short name / Acronym² (max 20 characters including spaces)	
Project duration (project period)	36 months
Start Date³	December 2027 to June 2028
Project total costs	
Total funds requested from funding organisations?	
Keywords (min 1 keyword, max 10 keywords)	

2.0 SHORT PROJECT DESCRIPTION

NB: This part will have to be uploaded as a single pdf on the EPSS.

Page limit: The short project description should not be longer than 5 pages. All tables, figures, references, and any other element pertaining to this section must be included as an integral part of these sections and are thus counted against this page limit.

¹ Please note that the project title should be considered as definitive

² Please note that the acronym should be considered as definitive

³ Enter start date in YYYY-MM-DD format, between 2027/01/01 and 2027/06/30

The page limit will be applied automatically. After the deadline, excess pages (in over-long proposals/applications) will be automatically made invisible and will not be taken into consideration by the evaluators.

The proposal is a self-contained document. **Links and hyperlinks are not allowed** and evaluators will be instructed to ignore any information that is specifically designed to expand the proposal, thus circumventing the page limit.

The following **formatting conditions** apply.

- ▶ *The reference font for the body text of proposals is Arial. The minimum font size allowed is 11 points. Standard character spacing and a minimum of single line spacing is to be used. This applies to the body text, including text in tables.*
- ▶ *Text elements other than the body text, such as headers, foot/end notes, captions, formula's, may deviate, but must be legible (**links and hyperlinks are not allowed**).*
- ▶ *The page size is A4, and all margins (top, bottom, left, right) should be at least 1.27 cm (not including any footers or headers).*
- ▶ ***A pre-proposal can be declared as ineligible if formatting conditions are not followed.***

The project description should include the following elements to respond to the evaluation criteria Excellence and Impact, as defined in the Call Text. Note that Projects must comply with ethical principles (including the highest standards of research integrity) and applicable EU, international and national law. Applicants will have to complete the ethics self-assessment as part of their application at Stage 2. For more information, see *How to complete your ethics self-assessment*.⁴ You must include the appropriate consideration of the ethical issues according to the EU “Do no significant harm” principle (DNSH) in your proposal.

- *Describe how the project fits the scope of one call priority area;*
- *Describe with clarity the pertinence of the scientific objectives and main research questions*
- *Demonstrate how the proposed work **contributes to advancing the knowledge gaps** and the understanding of its field and/or across different fields;*

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/how-to-complete-your-ethics-self-assessment_en.pdf

- *Provide a short description of the theoretical framework, research questions, and hypothesis to be tested. Explain to what extent the proposed work is in adequacy with the addressed priority area of the call;*
- *Explanation of the **novelty of the research** planned, the extent to which the proposed work is ambitious, contributes to scientific excellence and goes beyond the state of the art. Explain to what extent the proposed work explores creative and original concepts and contributes to and/or increasing the advancement of its field across different fields. Explanation of the identified scientific and/or technological risk and the potential breakthrough despite this risk taking. Explanation of the management of risks;*
- *Describe the proposed methodology and research design to answer the identified knowledge gaps and/or achieve the proposed objectives;*
- *Explanation of the **soundness of the proposed methodology**, , including the underlying concepts, models, assumptions, inter-disciplinary approaches, appropriate consideration of the 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.*
- *Explain to what extent your **Impact plan** is ambitious to solve the addressed problem. Does your proposed work have a strategic impact on reinforcing competitiveness and/or on solving societal or environmental problems at the European and international levels? You must demonstrate the credibility of the pathways to achieve the expected outcomes and impacts specified in the work programme, and the likely scale and significance of the contributions from the project.*
- *Explain the suitability and quality of the measures to maximise expected outcomes and impacts (i.e. dissemination, exploitation, communication plan, ocean literacy);*

It is requested to include a plan that describes what impact the research is expected to achieve in the long run and how it contributes to the overall impacts. One way to make such a plan is to establish a Theory of Change (ToC) methodology with a related Impact Pathway (IP) to describe the research process, mentioning well-specified outputs and outcomes. Please refer to the Annex A of the call text: Theory of Change, for more information on how to set up a Theory of Change.

Please be aware that pre-proposals will be evaluated based on their submitted content and written information only and strictly following the assessment criteria «Excellence» and «Impact» as defined in the call text.

3.0 ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF APPLICANTS

NB: This part will have to be filled in directly in the EPSS.

Please note that some information will not be evaluated and is collected by the European Commission for the purpose of doing anonymous statistics. This information will be indicated in the EPSS guidelines.

You will have to provide in this section information on the consortium coordinator and the Participants of the project, as well as the requested budget per Partner.

Here Participants refers to partner and self-funded partner.

What is a Partner?

Note that depending on the Funding Organisation, a “Partner” can be:

- ***a researcher,***
- ***an institution,***
- ***a laboratory, a department of an institution.***
- ***SME***
- ***Company other than SME***

Please make sure to respect the general eligibility rules of the call.

Please also consult the Annex B about the national/regional funding eligibility rules of each Participating Funding Organisation in this call which are compulsory. **Applicants are strongly advised to contact their respective Funding Organisations (National Contact Points (NCP) list available in the Annex B of the Call Text) and to confirm**

their eligibility with their Funding Organisations before submitting the pre-proposal.

ACCESS AND BENEFIT SHARING

Please note that if you plan to use genetic resources and traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources in your project, you will have to ascertain towards the competent authorities and focal point that these used genetic resources and traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources have been accessed in accordance with applicable access and benefit-sharing legislation or regulatory requirements, and that benefits are fairly and equitably shared upon mutually decided terms, in accordance with any applicable legislation or regulatory requirements⁵.

Please also note that if the utilisation of genetic resources or traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources takes place in an EU Member State, users in those states will have to comply with the general due diligence obligation under Art. 4 of Regulation (EU) No 511/2014, as well as the obligation to file due diligence declarations under Art. 7 of Regulation (EU) No 511/2014⁶.

For funding, there are 2 categories of Partners:

- 1. Partners from countries (and organisations) eligible for direct funding (designated Partners 1, 2... N) by a participating Funding Organisation of this call;*
- 2. Fully self-financed Partners from any country who bring their own secured budget (designated Partner A, B).*

⁵ Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilisation (ABS) to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

⁶ Regulation (EU) No 511/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 on compliance measures for users from the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilisation in the Union

The Table below indicates the information that will have to be fill out by the Consortium Coordinator (Partner 1) and by all others Partners (2, 3, ...N).

Example: if your consortium is composed by 6 Partners, the following Table will have to be completed for each of the 6 Partners.

Details of the Principal Investigator of Partner 1

Principal Investigator - Consortium Coordinator – Partner 1 (example)					
First Name		Last name		Email	
Title		Gender	(Female;Male;Non-binary) – dropdown menu		
Nationality	Dropdown menu		ORCID ID		
Principal investigator's website (including complete list of publications, if any)			Phone		
Professional status	Choose between: - Professor -Assistant Professor -Associate Professor -Senior Scientist -Post-doc PhD Student -Other status (specify)				
Career Stage⁷	Choose between: Category A: Top grade researcher Category B: Senior researcher Category C: Recognised researcher Category D: First stage researcher N: Not applicable				
Employment status information	- on a permanent position - on fixed-term position				

⁷ Category A: the single highest grade/post at which research is normally conducted, e.g., “director of research” or “full professor”.

Category B: Researchers working in positions not as senior as top position (a) but more senior than newly qualified doctoral graduates, e.g., “senior researcher”, “principal investigator” or “associate/assistant professor”.

Category C: the first grade/post into which a newly qualified doctoral graduate would normally be recruited, e.g., “researcher”, “investigator” or “post-doctoral fellow”.

Category D: Either doctoral students at the ISCED level 8 who are engaged as researchers or researchers working in posts that do not normally require a doctorate degree, e.g., “Ph.D. students” or “junior researchers” (without a Ph.D). These categories are defined in Frascati manual from OECD <https://www.oecd.org/sti/inno/frascati-manual.htm>(page 249).

Details of the organisation (Partner 1)

Legal full name of the research organisation / Company						
Short name (acronym) of the research organisation/Company – if any						
Participant Identification Code (PIC) number of the Research organisation/Company ⁸						
Website						
Street name				Number		
<i>PO Box (optional)</i>		Postal code		<i>Cedex (optional)</i>		
Town				Country	<i>Dropdown menu</i>	
Participant Organisation Type	Choose between: - HES: Higher or Secondary Education Establishments - REC: Research Organisations (including RTOs – Research and Technology Organisations) - PRC: Private for-profit entities (excluding Higher or Secondary Education Establishments) - PUB: Public Bodies (excluding Research Organisations and Higher or Secondary Education Establishments) - OTH: Other (e.g. non-profit organisation)					
Status: Private or public?	If Private: - Small or Medium-sized Enterprise (SME status): Yes/No - Enterprise other than SME: YES/NO - Other (please specify)					
Statistical Classification of Economic Activities (NACE)⁹:						<i>Dropdown menu</i>
Division / Department / Unit or Laboratory						
Street name				Number		
<i>PO Box (optional)</i>		Postal code		<i>Cedex (optional)</i>		
Town				Country	<i>Dropdown menu</i>	
Expertise and participant’s role in the project?						
<i>Describe participant’s expertise and role in the project (1000 characters max)</i>						

⁸ A 9-digit number serving as a unique identifier for organisations (legal entities) participating in EU funding programs / procurements. A search tool for organisations and their PICs is available on <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/participant-register-search>

⁹ The NACE code is a Statistical Classification of the Economic Activities of the organisation. You can find further information about NACE at the Eurostat website: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/nace>

Other team members involved in the project ¹⁰
Team member 1: First name, Last name, gender, title, email, ORCID id., Nationality, Career Stage
Team member 2: Family name, First name, gender, title, email, ORCID id., Nationality, Career Stage
Team member N: Family name, First name, gender, title, email, ORCID id., Nationality, Career Stage

The Table below indicates the information that will have to be fill out by the Self-financed Partner(s) (Partner A, B).

Example: if your consortium is composed by 2 Self-financed Partners, the following Table will have to be completed for each of the 2 Self-financed Partners.

Details of the Principal Investigator of Self-financed Partner A

Principal Investigator: Self-financed Partner A (example)				
First Name		Last name		Email
Title		Gender	(Female;Male;Non-binary) – dropdown menu	
Nationality	Dropdown menu		ORCID ID	
Principal investigator's website (including complete list of publications, if any)			Phone	
Professional status	Choose between: - Professor -Assistant Professor -Associate Professor -Senior Scientist -Post-doc PhD Student -Other status (specify)			

¹⁰ Please include all other team members to be involved in the project, would they be funded or not by your project. Do not repeat a principal investigator here. If you do not yet have all the information for a team member (e.g. for a postdoc), you can indicate that the person is not yet known.

Career Stage¹¹	Choose between: Category A: Top grade researcher Category B: Senior researcher Category C: Recognised researcher Category D: First stage researcher N: Not applicable
Employment status information	Choose between: - on a permanent position - on fixed-term position

Details of the organisation (Self-financed Partner A)

Legal full name of the research organisation / Company						
Short name (acronym) of the research organisation/Company – if any						
Participant Identification Code (PIC) number of the Research organisation/Company¹²						
Website						
Street name			Number			
PO Box (optional)			Postal code	Cedex (optional)		
Town				Country	Dropdown menu	
Participant Organisation Type	Choose between: - HES: Higher or Secondary Education Establishments - REC: Research Organisations (including RTOs – Research and Technology Organisations) - PRC: Private for-profit entities (excluding Higher or Secondary Education Establishments) - PUB: Public Bodies (excluding Research Organisations and Higher or Secondary Education Establishments) - OTH: Other (e.g. non-profit organisation)					

¹¹ Category A: the single highest grade/post at which research is normally conducted, e.g., “director of research” or “full professor”.

Category B: Researchers working in positions not as senior as top position (a) but more senior than newly qualified doctoral graduates, e.g., “senior researcher”, “principal investigator” or “associate/assistant professor”.

Category C: the first grade/post into which a newly qualified doctoral graduate would normally be recruited, e.g., “researcher”, “investigator” or “post-doctoral fellow”.

Category D: Either doctoral students at the ISCED level 8 who are engaged as researchers or researchers working in posts that do not normally require a doctorate degree, e.g., “Ph.D. students” or “junior researchers” (without a Ph.D). These categories are defined in Frascati manual from OECD <https://www.oecd.org/sti/inno/frascati-manual.htm> (page 249).

¹² A 9-digit number serving as a unique identifier for organisations (legal entities) participating in EU funding programs / procurements. A search tool for organisations and their PICs is available on <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/participant-register-search>

Status: Private or public?	If Private:				
	- Small or Medium-sized Enterprise (SME status): Yes/No - Enterprise other than SME: YES/NO - Other: please specify				
Statistical Classification of Economic Activities (NACE)^{13*}:					<i>Dropdown menu</i>
Division / Department / Unit or Laboratory					
Street name				Number	
<i>PO Box (optional)</i>		Postal code		<i>Cedex (optional)</i>	
Town			Country	<i>Dropdown menu</i>	
Expertise and participant's role in the project?					
<i>Describe participant's expertise and role in the project (1000 characters max)</i>					
Other team members involved in the project¹⁴					
Team member 1: First name, Last name, gender, title, email, ORCID id., Nationality, Career Stage					
Team member 2: Family name, First name, gender, title, email, ORCID id., Nationality, Career Stage					
Team member N: Family name, First name, gender, title, email, ORCID id., Nationality, Career Stage					

4.0 SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

NB: This part will have to be filled in directly in the EPSS.

4.1 Summary

(min 500 and max 3,000 characters including spaces)

¹³ The NACE code is a Statistical Classification of the Economic Activities of the organisation. You can find further information about NACE at the Eurostat website:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/nace>

¹⁴ Please include all other team members to be involved in the project, would they be funded or not by your project. Do not repeat a principal investigator here. If you do not yet have all the information for a team member (e.g. for a postdoc), you can indicate that the person is not yet known.

4.2 Priority areas

Please choose:

- One primary priority area and identify the sub-themes addressed in your project.
- If relevant, select *secondary priority areas and identify research directions addressed in your project*

PA1	Transitioning the blue economy sectors for sustainability and strategic autonomy	
PA 1.1	Marine Infrastructures	
PA 1.1.1	Innovative approaches to ensure operational safety, security, and risk management within an overall sustainability context. This research direction addresses the protection and resilience of critical blue economy infrastructures (energy, food, underwater domain, marine communications) through continuous, integrated monitoring of their conditions and interactions with the natural environment, leveraging robotic, autonomous and sensor-based systems. It further includes secure, reliable and knowledge-based control and decision-support systems enabling safe remote intervention, as well as comprehensive strategies for preparedness, prevention, response and post-incident environmental remediation, embedded within a long-term sustainability and resilience framework.	
PA 1.1.2	Strategic autonomy enabled by local digital twins: Deliver methodologies, tools and approaches that strengthen the European Union’s strategic autonomy in addressing current geopolitical shifts. The research direction focuses on the development and deployment of local digital twins as core components of Europe’s critical digital infrastructure, enhancing autonomous capacities for maritime surveillance, situational awareness and energy security, while maintaining societal and environmental imperatives. By embedding digital twins within operational and governance frameworks, the research direction supports informed, sovereign decision-making and resilience of key maritime and energy systems beyond incremental technical improvements.	
PA 1.1.3	Autonomous observation & Artificial Intelligence (AI) analytics for ocean operations: in line with the framework of the Ocean Eye initiative, develop digitally assisted and autonomous ocean observation systems to support the exploration, monitoring and	

	sustainable management of marine environments. This research direction focuses on advancing intelligent robotic and autonomous systems for critical offshore and underwater assets, such as renewable energy infrastructures, aquaculture facilities, deep-sea communication infrastructures), enabling efficient, continuous and high-resolution data collection as complementary and beyond conventional vessels and fixed observatories. It further addresses the integration of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning techniques to process and analyse large, heterogeneous datasets from multiple sensors and platforms, transforming ocean data into actionable knowledge to support informed decision-making for sustainable blue economy activities.	
PA 1.2	Circularity and Ecosystem-Based Transition	
PA 1.2.1	Exploring business models for possible investment mechanisms to facilitate the circular re-use of installations in the maritime domain addressed from a legal, environmental, and economic perspective.	
PA 1.2.2	Activities related to pursuing climate neutrality, such as blue carbon ecosystems and other nature-based solutions within coastal and marine ecosystems with a view also to help build new business model for coastal communities, e.g. ecosystem-based services (sustainable tourism, aquaculture and fisheries practices, ...). Improving resilience and adaptation to natural disasters, including climate change-driven events, and supporting ecosystem-based adaptation in marine operations, notably offshore.	
PA 1.2.3	Increasing natural capital by enhancing marine biodiversity, and contributing to ‘good environmental status’ of the marine environment, through: - developing and scaling up NbS, including ecosystem restoration approaches, to higher Technology Readiness Levels (TRL), supporting a circular blue economy by regenerating ecosystems (e.g. seagrass restoration, artificial reef deployment, ...) - adopting a holistic, ecosystem-based approach to assess the effects of interventions with attention for cumulative impacts and exploring trade-offs and compatibility between different functions (e.g., fisheries, renewable energy, tourism)	
PA 1.3	Digital Transition	
PA 1.3.1	Diversification and promotion of social innovation and business models, as well as legal frameworks for ensuring co-existence of sectors and social license to operate, with a focus on empowering coastal communities and smaller actors.	
PA 1.3.2	Research and innovation actions aimed at developing technologies, data infrastructures and governance models that ensure equitable	

	access and fair benefit sharing from emerging digital technologies and marine data, including Digital Twins and Artificial Intelligence applications. The topic addresses the advancement of trusted marine data sharing across science, policy, society and the private sector, grounded in the implementation of FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) and CARE (Collective Benefit, Authority to Control, Responsibility, Ethics) Principles. By fostering inclusive, transparent and interoperable data ecosystems, it supports responsible innovation and shared value creation for a sustainable and competitive blue economy.	
PA 1.3.3	Socio-economic research on the just transition of blue economy workforces, identifying opportunities for new skills and upskilling in support of a digitalized and circular economy.	

PA 2	Managing sea-uses by advancing digital and ecosystem-based approaches	
PA 2.1	Effective management, conservation, restoration and pollution reduction	
PA 2.1.1	Research focused on status and ecosystem service assessment and mapping, and how it can improve the management of marine resources in the frame of MSP, through development of monitoring programmes and methods to assess ecological status of marine areas (including of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)), notably of protected species and habitats therein, and evaluate management effectiveness (including for individual MPAs and regional MPA networks). Digitalization of monitoring processes enables more efficient and accurate data collection and analysis.	
PA 2.1.2	Development of approaches, e.g. using natural capital accounting or simulation tools such as spatially-based scenarios (and their co-creation and evaluation) can help predict ecosystem responses and optimize management strategies, for the integrated assessment of ecosystem services to provide more information on the links between the ecosystem and the social-economic system to support the implementation of ecosystem-based management of human activities and marine policies, as in particular MSP.	
PA 2.1.3	Research focussed on pressures and their impact, through improving data coverage of physical and chemical human pressures affecting seafloor integrity, and of benthic habitats, e.g. by performing intelligent seafloor sampling surveys, to assess the status of these habitats and evaluate the effectiveness of restoration measures. Artificial intelligence can be applied to analyse complex datasets and identify patterns in human pressures and ecosystem changes. Research	

	should also focus on cumulative impact assessment to understand the combined effects of different pressures on ecological components.	
PA 2.1.4	Research focused on developing reduction targets for anthropogenic pressures, by quantifying sources of cumulative pollution, including nutrients, hazardous substances and litter sources (e.g. discarded fishing gear), that lead to inputs to the sea, especially in highly anthropized land-ocean interface ecosystems. This includes also assessing the efficiency of measures and evaluating environmental impact to inform evidence-based decision-making. Sources are both land-based (agriculture, urban and industrial wastewater, ports) and sea-based (shipping, offshore energy production, aquaculture, fishing vessels, shipwrecks, unexploded ordnances). With regard to sea-based cumulative sources of pollution/introduction of energy, underwater noise and electromagnetic fields are also of concern. For underwater noise, the EU threshold values still need to be specified regarding the target species and relevant habitats to be considered.	
PA 2.1.5	Research focused on assessing the effectiveness of measures, notably NbS, for identifying areas and developing methods to restore habitat-forming species such as seagrass beds or macrophyte stands and reefs. This includes the development and improvement of methods for the restoration, along with improving the understanding of the co-benefits and wider synergistic effects of habitat restoration efforts, such as enhanced biodiversity, coastal protection, and, among other ecosystem services, the carbon sequestration capacity of blue carbon ecosystems. This aims to support effective measures to improve biodiversity and NbS for tackling climate change and its impacts.	
PA 2.2	Innovative Decision Support Tools (DSTs)	
PA 2.2.1	Development and improvement of (Artificial Intelligence based) Decision Support Tools that can perform qualitative and quantitative analyses to support implementation of the ecosystem-based management of human activities.	
PA 2.2.2	Development of new digital and simulation-based methodologies to be included in DSTs to improve quantitative estimates of environmental, social, and economic benefits of MSP in present and future scenarios, considering climate change, at a transnational scale.	
PA 2.2.3	Identifying environmental and socio-economic trends and drivers, including environmental disasters and preparedness to marine hazards, and building scenarios at sea basin and sub-sea basin scale for informed adaptive planning and management, including deployment of nature-based solutions.	
PA 2.2.4	Development of case studies and demonstrators of the concrete added value of the developed DSTs for specific sector planning demands, with a focus on coastal areas and land-sea interactions (e.g., offshore	

	renewable energies, aquaculture, fisheries, maritime transport, coastal and maritime tourism, commercial ports, co-existence of these uses).). Case studies and demonstrators could identify and test for example: - solutions to improve the coexistence of specific marine use (e.g. fisheries, maritime transport or Offshore Renewable Energy) and reduce impacts on ecosystems within MSP processes at the national and transboundary level. - better embedding protected areas (including those strictly protected and other Area-Based Management Tools (e.g. managed fishing areas, managed transport areas, areas for maritime surveillance, etc.) into MSP, through dedicated zoning and management measures.	
PA 2.2.5	Using nature-based solutions or nature inclusive design of flood plains, salt marshes, estuaries, coastal and marine structures such as harbours, breakwaters, offshore platforms, etc., and assessing how they should be integrated within MSP.	
PA 2.2.6	Contributing to overcoming technical and non-technical barriers in co-using available advanced DSTs in institutional MSP processes to make them interoperable, trusted and adoptable inside real planning administrations as well as in different administrative sectors.	

PA 3	Promoting sustainable blue bioresources through innovation in production and harvesting	
PA 3.1	Fisheries and Harvesting	
PA 3.1.1	Development and co-creation with industry of integrated innovation approaches to enhance vessel operations and practices, including technologies (e.g. positioning, environmental monitoring, route and fuel optimisation, and catch logistics) to improve efficiency, transparency, and reduce fossil fuel use; exploring new fishing techniques, emerging resources (including seaweed and invasive species) for small-scale fisheries, and supporting fishers in this transition through more selective and lower-impact gear development.	
PA 3.1.2	Research to improve the understanding of species’ roles in trophic webs and their growth potential. The goal being to translate this knowledge into concrete, ecosystem-based management solutions and policy options aligned with managers’ needs, including application to migratory fish stocks that spend different parts of their life cycle across multiple jurisdictions. In this sense, R&I is also needed to assess cumulative impacts on ecosystems, fisheries and aquaculture, identify vulnerable species and critical habitats, and develop adaptive management and restoration measures, such as improving	

	connectivity and creating and protecting climate refugia for (vulnerable) fish species.	
PA 3.1.3	Research to support the application of ecosystem-based management approaches, notably, through the development and integration of innovative digital monitoring tools, enabling well-informed and timely decision-making and enhancing sustainable management outcomes.	
PA 3.1.4	Research to understand the impacts of climate change and human activities (including pollution) on commercial fisheries, fish stocks and other species with commercial potential. This for example includes research to improve our understanding of and predictive capabilities related to how climate change is altering fish migration patterns through changes in water temperature, oxygen levels, river flow, salinity and ocean currents. Key needs include improved long-term monitoring, better tagging and tracking technologies, integrated models linking climate, habitats and species behaviour, and stronger data sharing across regions and river and sea basins	
PA 3.2	Aquaculture	
PA 3.2.1	Develop alternative solutions to produce established and new species, integrating advanced approaches such as integrated multitrophic and regenerative aquaculture (IMTA), nature-based solutions (NbS), circular bioeconomy principles, and hybrid offshore–onshore platforms, including the strategic use of seaweed and other low-input species to enhance resource efficiency, environmental performance and climate resilience.	
PA 3.2.2	Develop biologically, technically, and economically feasible system opportunities for fish, shellfish, seaweed, and other low trophic species by using AI tools. These systems include: - onshore recirculation aquaculture systems and, - innovative near shore systems for low trophic aquaculture, IMTA, and regenerative aquaculture.	
PA 3.2.3	Understand challenges and opportunities associated with aquaculture, including potential threats for food safety such as cumulative pollution, harmful algal blooms, bioaccumulation and biomagnification of xenobiotics; production of sustainable and healthy feed, cost/benefits for longer distance offshore production.	
PA 3.2.4	Develop innovative alternative solutions to produce established and new species, including IMTA, regenerative aquaculture, new systems associated with other economic offshore activities, closed or land-based systems.	
PA 3.2.5	Development / adaptation of low impact aquaculture to work as a NbS towards environmental challenges and climate changes.	

PA 3.2.6	Develop targeted, high-value, and sustainable feed value chains, focusing on developing alternatives to fishmeal, and fish oil by promoting novel feed ingredients including algae, insect protein, microbial and circular feed ingredients and their production, processing and integration, to ensure balanced feeds that enhance fish and stock quality, health and welfare while strengthening food security.	
PA 3.2.7	Identify the socio-economic challenges of integrating aquaculture into the existing sea-based economy, or the socio-economic consequences of replacing existing activities. Provide evidence for policy development to mitigate the ‘crowding out’ effects related to challenges accessing investment funding, skilled labour markets, and the licensing and regulatory barriers faced by potential small and medium-sized aquaculture start-ups	
PA 3.2.8	Develop Digital Twins for a holistic approach including design, build and operation phases.	
PA 3.3	Circular blue bioeconomy	
PA 3.3.1	Address technology challenges to overcome sensory and cultural drawbacks to increase consumer acceptance for new products.	
PA 3.3.2	Support through research and innovation in digitalisation the traceability of bio-based products from marine bioresources.	
PA 3.3.3	Enable technological advancements to help preserve the nutritional value of harvested or fished species.	
PA 3.3.4	Accelerate R&I on bio-based products, covering the development of new high-value applications from by-products and side streams, including pathways towards commercialisation, as well as supporting evidence for regulatory development to enable their sustainable use in the circular blue bioeconomy.	
PA 3.3.5	Assess costs and benefits of new products compared with existing alternatives, to understand their economic viability.	

PA 4	Building resilience in coastal communities with infrastructure and businesses	
PA 4.1	Small-scale businesses	
PA 4.1.1	Explore the risks and challenges, the costs and benefits faced by coastal businesses as a result of climate change impacts, marine environmental degradation and ongoing socio-economic transitions. This includes assessing the effects of extreme weather events, ocean warming, sea-level rise, biodiversity loss, and changing environmental	

	conditions on livelihoods, as well as understanding the social, cultural, and economic disruptions affecting key sectors such as tourism and culturally significant traditional industries. Research should explore the transition towards more diverse, low-impact, and regenerative coastal economies, identifying pathways that enhance community resilience, well-being, and sustainable development.	
PA 4.1.2	Assess the impacts of diverse coastal activities on marine and coastal environments in particular considering a source-to-sea approach, to evaluate ecosystem health and the interdependencies with establishing resilient business environments.	
PA 4.1.3	Explore digital technologies and tools to support the management of long-term and seasonal migration flows which contribute to socio-political tensions.	
PA 4.1.4	Explore how social innovation can support the diversification of coastal and marine-based enterprises while strengthening their resilience and preparedness against natural and human-induced shocks. Identify strategies that foster sustainable coastal business development and social innovation.	
PA 4.1.5	Examine approaches to enable meaningful community participation and stakeholder participation for significant policy and planning initiatives in coastal settings including deployment of NbS.	
PA 4.1.6	Improve understanding of financing instruments and incentives for innovation, including social innovation, that support job creation in coastal communities.	
PA 4.2	Coastal infrastructures	
PA 4.2.1	Assess the risks posed to coastal infrastructure by climate change impacts and marine environmental degradation to develop strategies to enhance resilience through the protection, adaptation, or redesign of built structures, including the use of Nature-based Solutions. Research should explore how advanced technologies can be integrated into coastal infrastructure to monitor environmental conditions, provide early warning of hazards, support long-term observation of coastal change, and help reduce risks to the safety, security, and sustainability of coastal communities and businesses. This includes engaging local communities and stakeholders in the co-design and implementation of resilience strategies to ensure social acceptance, and liveability of coastal areas.	
PA 4.2.2	Enable the use of coastal infrastructure to be diversified by working with existing and emerging maritime sectors. The objective is to foster an integrated “business ecosystem” approach where sectors work together to drive economic growth, innovation and sustainability.	

PA 4.2.3	Mapping accurately specific public policies around water provisions, desalinisation and marine based infrastructures management.	
PA 4.2.4	Access the diversity of the demand per region of the necessary infrastructures (stable or mobile ones) and feedback to policy makers in approaching coastal development for local economic activities.	
PA 4.2.5	Investigate options for a coastal economy ‘industrial strategy’ to identify effective policy interventions to encourage both private and public investment or subsidies to accelerate sustainable business start-up and relocation to coastal regions, particularly by ensuring that coastal regions have the necessary infrastructures to support the relocation and growth of sustainable businesses, such as harbours, sustainable desalination plants and energy installations.	
PA 4.2.6	Compare regulatory frameworks across different European regions to stimulate and support coastal infrastructures; identify and better understand the successful ‘enabling regulations’ that minimise system frictions, costs and participation.	

4.3 Scientific Disciplines

Please indicate the scientific disciplines involved in your project.

Scientific disciplines involved <i>Please indicate the scientific disciplines mobilised in your project, depending on the expertise of the members of your consortium</i> To be selected from a standardised list (available on the EPSS) – multiple choices
--

4.4 Sea-basins/ocean

Please indicate the sea-basins/ocean covered by your project.

Sea-basins/ocean covered by the project <i>(multiple choice option)</i>	
Mediterranean Sea	
Black Sea	
Baltic Sea	
North Sea	
Atlantic Ocean	

4.5 Study areas/countries

Study areas/countries covered by the project (please do not indicate here the nationality of the members of the consortium but the areas and countries studied in your proposals (research scope, studied sites, etc.))

(max 3,500 characters including spaces)

4.6 Preliminary Data Management Information

(max 2,500 characters including spaces)

Please address the following questions:

- Who will be responsible for developing, implementing, overseeing, and updating the DMP (role, position, and institution)? For collaborative projects, explain the coordination of data management responsibilities across partners;
- What types of datasets of long-term value do you expect the project will produce or reuse?

“Long-term” means those data that will or may be of value to others within your research community and/or the wider research, innovation and stakeholder communities.

Data of long-term value should meet the FAIR principles; *i.e.* they should be findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable.

- How have you accounted for the costs required to manage the data and digital outputs to ensure long-term accessibility?

Please refer to the guidelines in Annex F «Open Access and Fair Data,» which provides further guidance on how to establish a Data Management Plan.

4.7 Contribution to Ocean Decade Challenges

Please select which of the Ocean Decade Challenges your project contributes to (max. 3):

- ☐ **Challenge 1:** Understand and map land and sea-based sources of pollutants and contaminants and their potential impacts on human health and ocean ecosystems, and develop solutions to remove or mitigate them.
- ☐ **Challenge 2:** Understand the effects of multiple stressors on ocean ecosystems, and develop solutions to monitor, protect, manage and restore ecosystems and their biodiversity under changing environmental, social and climate conditions.
- ☐ **Challenge 3:** Generate knowledge, support innovation, and develop solutions to optimise the role of the ocean in sustainably feeding the world’s population under changing environmental, social and climate conditions.
- ☐ **Challenge 4:** Generate knowledge, support innovation, and develop solutions for equitable and sustainable development of the ocean economy under changing environmental, social and climate conditions.
- ☐ **Challenge 5:** Enhance understanding of the ocean-climate nexus and generate knowledge and solutions to mitigate, adapt and build resilience to the effects of climate change across all geographies and at all scales, and to improve services including predictions for the ocean, climate and weather.
- ☐ **Challenge 6:** Enhance multi-hazard early warning services for all geophysical, ecological, biological, weather, climate and anthropogenic related ocean and coastal hazards, and mainstream community preparedness and resilience.
- ☐ **Challenge 7:** Ensure a sustainable ocean observing system across all ocean basins that delivers accessible, timely, and actionable data and information to all users.
- ☐ **Challenge 8:** Through multi-stakeholder collaboration, develop a comprehensive digital representation of the ocean, including a dynamic ocean map, which provides free and open access for exploring, discovering, and visualizing past, current, and future ocean conditions in a manner relevant to diverse stakeholders.
- ☐ **Challenge 9:** Ensure comprehensive capacity development and equitable access to data, information, knowledge and technology across all aspects of ocean science and for all stakeholders.
- ☐ **Challenge 10:** Meaningful society-ocean connections are strengthened, driving increased motivation, capability and opportunity for people, across all sectors of society, to make decisions, act and behave in ways that ensure a healthy ocean.

5.0 COMPLIANCE WITH EU REQUIREMENTS

5.1 Do no significant harm principle¹⁵

Does your project comply with the "Do no significant harm principle"? YES / NO

Please specify: (Maximum number of characters allowed: 1000)

Projects must comply with ethical principles (including the highest standards of research integrity) and applicable EU, international and national law. If a project does not comply to ethical principles, it will not be funded under this Call.

5.2 Compliance with EU Taxonomy¹⁶

- Describe how your proposal will make a substantial contribution to at least one of the six environmental objectives:

1. *Climate change mitigation*
2. *Climate change adaptation*
3. *The sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources*

¹⁵ The Do no significant harm principle was introduced in the European Green Deal to ensure that the research and innovation activities do not make 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: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/support/faq/15485>

¹⁶The EU Taxonomy Regulation adopted in June 2020 is a tool that will help investors, industry and researchers to navigate the transition to a sustainable economy by providing a science-based classification system to determine whether an economic activity is environmentally sustainable. https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/news/all-research-and-innovation-news/research-and-innovation-heart-eu-taxonomy-2021-04-21_en and https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-04/ec_rtd_research-innovation-eu-taxonomy.pdf

4. *The transition to a circular economy*

5. *Pollution prevention and control and 6. The protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems*

- Explain how your proposal do no significant harm (DNSH) to the other five objectives
- Explain how your proposal meet minimum social safeguards such as the OECD Guidelines on Multinational Enterprises and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

6.0 BUDGET

NB: This part will have to be filled in directly in the EPSS.

!! Please note that you should indicate in this table an indicative repartition between the different categories of costs, the total budget / total costs of the project and the budget requested to your PFO for this 2026 Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership call. Please make sure to follow your Funding Organisations’ rules. !! (see Annex B of the Call Text).

Please note that for each Partner you are requested to indicate both the total costs of the project and the requested funding budget:

- The total costs/expenses (column Total costs) comprise all the costs related to the project independently of national funding rules. You have to indicate here all the costs of the project (including personnel costs of permanent staff not eligible; etc.)
- Requested funding budget (column Funding request) comprises costs or expenses for personnel (including permanent salaries depending on Funding Organisations’ rules), travelling, consumables, overheads (if fundable), subcontracts etc. that you will request to your Funding Organisation.

For requested funding budget, the cost calculation has to be based for each Partner on its Funding Organisations’ rules; for questions, please contact National Contact Point of your Funding Organisation.

!! Please note that some Funding Organisations cannot provide 100% of eligible costs. Please make sure to follow your Funding Organisations’ rules!!

MANDATORY COSTS:

The funded projects are considered to form part of an international research programme for which activities will be organised, namely a kick-off meeting, a mid-term meeting and a final meeting. The coordinators of funded projects should actively engage to these three joint activities. Accordingly, the cost for attendance to the physical meetings should be foreseen in their proposals’ budget. These events will be possibly organised back-to-back with other workshops/events. . The coordinators of the funded projects are expected to get involved in other relevant Partnership ‘s activities: training, communication and dissemination (symposium, conferences, portfolio etc.) and must foresee the costs in their budget.

Note about Subcontracting costs

Subcontractants are subject to the terms and conditions of each Funding Organisation and need to comply with their rules. Generally speaking, subcontracting is understood as the externalization of the execution of a (minor) project task that this Partner cannot execute. Please, refer to the Funding Organisations’ rules, as some Funding Organisations have specific restrictions about subcontracting costs and your proposal will be ineligible if you do not follow national rules. Please consult the Funding Organisations’ rules (Annex B).

Subcontractants CANNOT REQUEST FUNDING.

When applicable, Partners will request funding for the subcontracting activities according to the Funding Organisations’ rules.

The indicated requested budget per Partner should be considered definitive, unless minor adjustment is requested by the Funding Organisations. Between pre-proposal and full proposal stage, change of budget can be allowed by the relevant Funding Organisation provided they are in line with the general rules of the call and the rules of the Funding Organisations. The Funding Organisation can decide according to its own rules whether it needs a justification.

Each Partner must report its own budget (including the subcontracting costs) as following:

Example: Budget Table of Partner 1 (including budget of each subcontractor 1a, 1b...1n)

Partner 1 - Budget	Cost category		Total cost (in EURO, incl. VAT)	Funding request (in EURO, incl. VAT depending on rules ¹⁷)
Partner 1 <i>Name of the research organisation/company</i> <i>Country</i> <i>Funding organisation¹⁸</i>	Salaries	Permanent		
		Non-permanent		
		Total		
	Travel			
	Participation to joint activities of the SBEP Initiative			
	Consumables			
	Equipment			
	Other costs			
	Overheads			
	Subcontracting costs ¹⁹			
	Total			

Subcontracting costs for Partner 1	Cost Category		Total cost (in EURO, incl. VAT)	Funding request by Partner 1 (in EURO, incl. VAT depending on rules ²⁰)
Subcontractant 1a²¹	Salaries	Permanent		0 €
		Temporary		0 €

¹⁷ Please make sure that VAT is eligible according to national/regional legal framework and Funding Organisations' rules. If not, please do not include VAT.

¹⁸ Please indicate to which Funding Organisation you are requesting funds. If more than one Funding Organisation from your country is participating in the call, please indicate which one should fund your project. It is not possible to indicate more than one Funding organisation per country.

¹⁹ Indicate here the total budget and requested budget for any subcontracting costs.

²⁰ Please make sure that VAT is eligible according to national/regional legal framework and Funding Organisations' rules. If not, please do not include VAT.

²¹ Each subcontracting Partner must fill out the information for each of its Subcontractants i.e. the total budget per cost category (column 'Total costs') and the costs you will request funding from your Funding Organisation should be included in the 'Funding request' of the relevant subcontracting Partner (Partner 1, 2, 3, etc.).

Name of the research organisation/company Country (if known)		Total		0 €
	Travel			0 €
	Consumables			0 €
	Equipment			0 €
	Other costs			0 €
	Overheads			0 €
	Total			0 €

Each Self-financed Partner must report its own budget as following:

Example: Budget Table of Self-financed Partner A

Self-financed Partner A - Budget	Cost Category		Total cost (in EURO, incl. VAT)	Funding request (in EURO, incl. VAT depending on rules)
Self-financed Partner A ²² Name of the research organisation/company Country	Salaries	Permanent		0 €
		Non-permanent		0 €
		Total		0 €
	Travel			0 €
	Consumables			0 €
	Equipment			0 €
	Other costs			0 €
	Overheads			0 €
	Total			0 €

For self-financed Partners, please indicate shortly how their participation to the project will be funded.

Self-financed Partner A Name of the research organisation/company Country	The Partner will be funded through ... (Use as many lines as needed)
---	---

²² Self-financed Partners have to indicate the total budget per cost category (column ‘Total costs’). The Self-financed Partner should indicate 0€ in the column ‘Funding request’.

Total budget of the project: Please note that this Table will be partly generated automatically in the EPSS, based on the information provided in the Partners budget tables.

Cost Category		Total cost (in EURO, incl. VAT)	Funding request (in EURO, incl. VAT depending on rules ²³)
Salaries	Permanent		
	Non-permanent		
	Total		
Travel			
Participation to joint activities of the SBEP initiative			
Consumables			
Equipment			
Other costs			
Overheads			
Subcontracting costs			
Total ²⁴			

7.0 BRIEF CVS FOR THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR OF EACH PARTNER INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT

NB: This part will have to be filled in directly in the EPSS, using the CV template below.

When relevant, please include the CVs of self-financed partners and subcontractors.

When relevant, please specify in the CVs, the Partners’ capacity to involve stakeholders.

Participation status: <Project Coordinator or principal investigator of a participant>
Name:
Nationality:

²³ Please make sure that VAT is eligible according to national/regional legal framework and Funding Organisations’ rules. If not, please do not include VAT.

²⁴ The total for the column “total costs /expenses” should include the costs of Subcontractants and self-financed Partners (Partners 1a, 1b, 2a, etc.); the total for the column “Funding request” should not include the costs of self-financed Partners as they do not directly request funding. For Subcontractants, when eligible, the subcontracting costs should be included in the requested budget of the subcontracting Partner (Partner 1, 2, 3, etc.).

Institution, City, Country:
E-mail:
URL / website (including complete list of publications if any):
Professional status: <Professor, Assistant professor, Associate professor, Senior scientist, Post-Doc, PhD-student, Other>
Education: <Year; type of education; organisation; country > <Year; type of education; organisation; country > ...
Positions: <Year; Position; organisation; country > <Year; Position; organisation; country > ...
Awards received / other responsibilities (max 1,000 characters including spaces)
General expertise and its relevance for the project (max 1,000 characters including spaces)
Up to 5 most important achievements, publications, IP (e.g. patents) relevant to the proposal over 2021-2026, if any: <...> <...> <...> <...> <...>

8.0 EXCLUSION OF POTENTIAL REVIEWERS (OPTIONAL)

NB: This part will have to be filled in directly in the EPSS.

List here potential reviewers who, you think, should not be asked to evaluate the project for reasons of direct competition and partiality. Also provide the names of significant collaborators that should not be used as reviewers due to conflicts of interest.

Potential competitors

	First Name	Last Name	Organisation	Country	E-mail address	Rationale for excluding the reviewer
1						
2						

3						
N						

Insert as many lines as needed

Collaborators with conflict of interest

	<i>First Name</i>	<i>Last Name</i>	<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>E-mail address</i>	<i>Rationale for excluding the reviewer</i>
1						
2						
3						
N						

Insert as many lines as needed

9.0 SUGGESTION OF POTENTIAL REVIEWERS (OPTIONAL)

Please indicate up to 4 experts who could review your proposal, including their field expertise. The rules on conflict of interest set forth in 4.3. ‘Confidentiality and conflict of interests’ in the Call Text apply to these suggestions.

NB: *This part will have to be filled in directly in the EPSS.*

	<i>First Name</i>	<i>Last Name</i>	<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>E-mail address</i>	<i>Link to his/her website</i>	<i>Field of expertise</i>
1							
2							
3							
4							

Please note that these are only suggestions for consideration by the Call Steering Committee (CSC).

10.0 CONFIRMATION OF SUBMISSION & USE OF DATA

Each Participant i.e. Partners, Self-financed Partner(s) and subcontractor(s) must validate its participation to the project by logging into the EPSS.

Each Partner and Self-financed Partner must carefully read the documents. Each Partner is strongly advised to contact its respective National Contact Point(s) for any question or doubt to ensure the compliance with the Funding Organisation funding rules. Some funding organisations may also require the submission of national documents in addition to the international pre-proposal.

Further information is available on the ANNEX B: National contact points and national/regional funding rules of the Call Text.

You will NOT be funded without fully complying with the requirements of each relevant Funding Organisation.

For information: the data provided in this pre-proposal application form will be used to:

- *communicate with you about the call and application process;*
- *allow the JCS and the funding organisations to perform the eligibility check and the national eligibility checks of the applicants, respectively;*
- *evaluate your proposal by the IEC members, Ethics experts (for ethical clearance purpose)*
- *allow the call steering committee to recommend a list of projects for funding*
- *award funding if your application is successful;*
- *allow the independent observer to review the evaluation process*
- *allow the endorsement of your project as Ocean Decade projects (if successful)*
- *analyse and describe our applicant pool (the name of applicants is anonymised in our analysis);*
- *collect your feedbacks and improve our communications with potential future applicants in future Joint Calls.*

Anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained throughout processing of these data for the production of statistics. Please note that these data will be accessible to Funding

2026 SBEP Fourth Joint Transnational Co-Funding Call “2026 Fourth SBEP Transnational Co-Funded Call “Building a sustainable and innovative Blue Economy: mastering digital opportunities and fostering resilience”

Organisations participating to the call, including the ones based in non-EU countries.

Protection of personal data and compliance with the [EU's General Data Protection Regulation \(2016/679\)](#) (GDPR) is however ensured.

Retention of personal data shall take an end in accordance with the EPSS General Data Protection Policy.