



EUROPEAN UNION



EU MISSIONS

RESTORE OUR OCEAN AND WATERS



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Version 2

Call for Expression of Interest

Technical assistance to support communities of actors to achieve the EU Mission: Restore our Ocean and Waters objectives

HISTORY OF CHANGES

Date	Version	Description	Page
22 March 2024	1	Initial version of the Call for Interest	
12 April 2024	2	Suspension of webinars	Throughout the document

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Introduction

The aim of the call for the Expression of Interest is to engage, inform, and invite relevant stakeholders interested in benefiting from the technical assistance offered through this support scheme. Their participation will contribute to the overall objectives and targets of Mission Ocean and Waters. Hence, our approach places a strong emphasis on providing stakeholders with all the necessary information required to make an informed decision about their potential participation and eligibility as well as to guide them in submitting a successful application.

Following this introduction, the Call for Expression of Interest presents the following:

- **Chapter 2** outlines the background information on the Mission “Restore our Ocean & Waters”.
- **Chapter 3** presents the target communities eligible for assistance.
- **Chapter 4** defines the objectives and services of the technical assistance.
- **Chapter 5** outlines the application and implementation timeline.
- **Chapter 6** presents the eligibility criteria.
- **Chapter 7** highlights the application procedure.
- **Chapter 8** provides information on the support available to the applicants.

What is the Mission “Restore our Ocean & Waters”?

State of play: our ocean & waters

Freshwater and marine ecosystems play vital roles in sustaining life on earth and contributing to climate stability. Over the past two decades, the EU has sought to safeguard and restore marine ecosystems through political commitments and policy initiatives. In line with the European Green Deal, the EU has heightened its ambition to restore the ‘hydrosphere’ through actions aimed at implementing efficient resource usage, cutting pollution, as well as protecting and restoring biodiversity.

Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters

Mission objectives, targets & enablers

In response to the existential challenges that the degradation of water ecosystems poses, the EU Mission ‘Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030’ provides a systemic approach to protection and restoration of European oceans, seas and waters by 2030. The Mission aims to comprehensively restore ocean health using a systematic approach, focused on **three objectives**:

- Protecting and restoring marine and freshwater **ecosystems and biodiversity**;
- Preventing and eliminating oceans, sea and water **pollution**; and
- Ensuring a sustainable carbon-neutral and circular blue economy.

The first objective includes protecting at least 30% of the EU’s Sea area while integrating ecological corridors, strictly protecting 10% of EU sea areas, restoring 25,000 km of free-flowing rivers, and contributing to upcoming nature restoration goals, including degraded seabed habitats and coastal ecosystems.

The second objective targets a 50% reduction in marine plastic litter, a 30% decrease in released microplastics, and a 50% reduction of nutrient losses, usage and the risks associated with chemical pesticides.

The third objective seeks to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions originating from maritime-related activities while also exploring possibilities to sequester any unavoidable emissions.

To achieve these objectives, the Mission has implemented **two cross-cutting enablers** aimed at supporting them:

- digital ocean and water knowledge systems; and
- public mobilisation and engagement actions.

Mission Charter

The Charter is a non-binding call for stakeholders to commit jointly to objectives seeking the protection and restoration of our oceans, seas and waters and align efforts to achieve a critical mass much

needed at the local level. With a simplified, inclusive and inspirational framework which fosters cooperation, pools resources and develops common activities, public and private actors can adhere by submitting various types of actions:

- Research and innovation;
- Evidence-based knowledge and data and/or access provisions to knowledge and data, in line with FAIR principles for the Mission Ocean and Waters Knowledge System;
- Upscaling, deployment and replication of solutions;
- Citizen engagement, citizens-science, youth-led initiatives, communities of practice, ocean and water literacy, outreach, awareness raising and participatory approaches;
- Education and training

Currently, **493 pledged actions with a total budget of EUR 4.50 billion** have been accepted.¹

Mission lighthouses

The Mission has rolled out four ‘**lighthouses**’ which are sites to test, deploy, develop and scale up innovative solutions in each sea/river basins: the Atlantic/Arctic coast, the Baltic and North Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Danube River basin.

The initiative **Marine Blue Parks** further seeks to drive testing and pilot new solutions for the extension and improvement of marine protected areas.

Aim and objectives of this call

The Call for Expression of Interest actively engages, informs, and invites selected communities of actors (i.e., ports, islands, fisheries) seeking technical assistance for their projects that will help achieve the Mission “Restore our Ocean and Waters” specific objectives and targets.

This process facilitates the selection of actions that fully align with the Mission Ocean and Waters and have the potential to safeguard and restore marine ecosystems. The technical assistance will be provided by a technical expert group with the support of CINEA and the Mission Secretariat.

¹ As of January 2024

Who are the target communities eligible for technical assistance?

Ports

Definition of target communities eligible

The targeted communities are based on the definition of a “Port”: an area of land and water, made up of such infrastructure and equipment to permit, principally, the reception of waterborne vessels, their loading and unloading, the storage of goods, the receipt and delivery of those goods and the embarkation and disembarkation of passengers, crew and other persons and any other infrastructure necessary for transport operators within the port area.

Eligible types of actors

Applications under this category are open to:

- Local/regional authorities and/or similar bodies (e.g. regions as legal entities, as well as any bodies representing a regional authority, such as regional agencies, regional planning bodies, regional transport authorities, etc);
- Port authorities;
- NGOs or equivalent entities engaged in port development activities; and
- Professional associations locally based or engaged in local development activities.

Examples of project ideas

Presented below is a non-exhaustive list of possible port-related project ideas based on the Mission objectives. Please note that this section is designed to inspire future applicants by presenting potential projects. It constitutes only a non-restrictive illustration. All projects submitted that are compliant with the requirements presented in this Expression of Interest, will be considered.

- Implementation of circular economy in ports activities (waste treatment – reuse) for ports supply
- Development of solutions supporting coastal resilience in particular regarding mean-sea level rise or extreme events
- Development of the energy mix of ports with low carbon emissions solutions (renewable or green power)
- Development/implementation of solutions to ensure low carbon and/or pollutants (NO_x/SO_x) emission (i.e. electrification)
- Waste Management (Marine and land litter reduction)
- Re-naturalisation (Reduction of coastal zone artificialization)
- Implementation of nature-based solutions within the port areas and surroundings

- Setting protected areas or engaging restoration actions within the port areas and/or its surroundings
- Environmental monitoring of the ports areas and surroundings to reduce port activities impacts considering the cumulative approach
- Decarbonisation of the logistics chain from shipping to hinterland

Fisheries

Definition of target communities eligible

Target communities are fisheries communities, Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs), described by the Community Led Local Development (CLLD) strategies, fishing vessels, aquaculture_producers: a fishery community (coastal community) gathers EU actors who operate in an area close to sea, rivers or where fishing operations (from the most traditional to more industrial, using different vessels and gear) and/or aquaculture represents a dominant part of the area's activities and brings together stakeholders with close ties with the marine environment.

In the context of the call for expressions of interest, this target group includes communities in fishing or aquaculture areas for exploiting and benefiting from the opportunities offered by the sustainable blue economy.

Eligible types of actors

Applications under this category are open to:

- Local/regional authorities and/or similar bodies (e.g. regions as legal entities, as well as any bodies representing a regional authority, such as regional agencies, regional planning bodies, regional transport authorities, etc);
- NGOs or equivalent entities engaged in fisheries communities, local Action Groups described by the Community-led Local Development strategies, fishing, and research vessels;
- Professional associations locally based or engaged in local development activities in the region;
- Fishermen (either commercial or subsistence purposes), fishing vessel owners, operators and crew, fish processors involved in processing and preserving fish for distribution and sale and traders acting as intermediaries between fishermen and consumers but also aquaculture producers;
- Research vessels and fishing and aquaculture vessels, including crowd sampling by small boats for ocean and waters data collection contributing to the digital ocean and waters knowledge and the Digital Twin of the Ocean; and
- Marine conservationists, researchers and scientists who work to preserve marine ecosystems, and fish populations and study to improve the sustainability of fishery resources but also government agencies and NGOs that are involved in policy making, regulation and providing support to fishery communities for sustainable practices.

Examples of project ideas

Presented below is a non-exhaustive list of possible fisheries-related project ideas based on the Mission objectives. Please note that this section is designed to inspire future applicants by presenting potential projects. It constitutes only a non-restrictive illustration. All projects compliant with the requirements presented in this Expression of Interest will be considered.

- Development of stakeholder-driven spatial and temporal management of fisheries activities that protect marine and freshwater ecosystems and biodiversity at the local level
- Promoting low-impact, selective fisheries that are compatible with marine nature restoration initiatives
- Promoting low trophic and integrated multi-trophic aquaculture
- Reducing carbon emissions of fisheries and aquaculture operations
- Reducing the use and loss of plastics in fisheries and aquaculture operations. (Detect and map the marine litter with the combined use of UAS and machine learning methods to facilitate decision-making by stakeholders based on litter density)
- Develop citizen science initiatives that collect scientific data that can support evidence-based fisheries management and marine conservation
- Innovative digitalised solutions to monitor and assess food quality to support fish cold supply chain
- Develop innovative seafood products that promote the consumption of neglected fish materials, achieving “zero waste” with a respectful approach to biodiversity
- Innovative technologies (i.e. robotics) to enhance productivity, quality and monitor species and wastes, in view of circular economy process

Islands

Definition of target communities eligible

The targeted communities are based on the definition of “Islands”: the island typology is applied at the level of regions. Island regions are defined as NUTS level 3 regions within the European Union that are entirely composed of one or more islands. “Islands” communities are the ones who live on territories having:

- a minimum surface of 1 km²;
- a minimum distance between the island and the mainland of 1 km;
- a resident population of more than 50 inhabitants; and
- no fixed link (for example, a bridge, a tunnel, or a dyke) between the island(s) and the mainland.

Eligible types of actors

Under the call, applications under this category are open to:

- local/regional authorities and/or similar bodies (e.g. regions as legal entities, as well as any bodies representing a regional authority, such as regional agencies, regional planning bodies, regional transport authorities, etc);
- NGOs or equivalent entities engaged in local development activities; and
- professional associations based on the concerning island or engaged in local development activities of the island.

Examples of project ideas

Presented below is a non-exhaustive list of possible island-related project ideas based on the Mission objectives. Please note that this section is designed to inspire future applicants by presenting potential projects. It constitutes only a non-restrictive illustration. All projects compliant with the requirements presented in this Expression of Interest will be considered.

- Development of Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) and seamless land planning or sustainable strategic planning
- Implementation of carbon free solutions to reduce overall dependency on imports and to become « low carbon » territories
 - Renewable production at island scale for energy autonomy
 - Development of low/no carbon public transportation on land or sea
- Development of solutions to develop coastal resilience regarding extreme events and mean sea level rise
- Sustainable water production (desalination)
- Circular economy development (waste treatment and reduction)
- Marine or coastal protected area development or improvement of effectiveness for the existing ones towards fully protected areas
- Restoration actions on coastal and marine habitats.

What is being offered?

Objectives of the Technical Assistance

The objective of the technical assistance is to support selected applicants in developing and strengthening their actions contributing to one or more of the targets of the Mission Ocean and Waters.

The technical assistance shall match the needs, capacity, and interests of applicants, providing **tailored expert support** for applicants' projects on key dimensions such as **regulatory, technical, economic, operational, environmental, and commercial feasibility**. Please note that no financial support will be offered under this technical assistance support.

The feasibility studies shall provide an assessment of the **overall viability of projects**, defining risks, opportunities, and probability of success and analysing whether the planned projects are legally, technically, financially, economically, operationally, environmentally, and commercially justifiable and feasible. The studies shall also provide recommendations on how to **improve the feasibility** of selected actions.

Benefits of the technical assistance

The technical assistance is an **exclusive, impact-driven coaching programme** for selected signatories of the EU Mission Ocean and Waters Charter, which consists of expert support to analyse and improve each project. The technical assistance shall be **tailored to each project's maturity and objectives** and support the achievement of the selected targets of the Mission.

Practically speaking, the technical assistance shall provide you with **expert knowledge and guidance** complementing your project teams' skills and capabilities, in the form of **analysis, strategic advice and hands-on support** across different project dimensions.

Through the technical assistance, selected beneficiaries shall gain a clearer understanding of the project feasibility and/or requirements to scale up and further develop the project. You can potentially reap the following benefits:

- Improved focus of the project team
- Identification of new opportunities
- Acquisition of valuable information for a "go/no-go" decision
- Enhanced prioritisation of business alternatives
- Strengthening of the rationale for undertaking a project

Services to be provided

A set of 10 technical assistance packages was developed, each related to a feasibility dimension and covering a sample range of support activities. Technical assistance packages will be delivered through regular calls and in person meetings (more information can be found in section [Roadmap for implementation of technical assistance](#)).

These packages aim to provide applicants with a clear understanding of what is being offered as part of the technical assistance and how it aligns with their specific needs, helping them prepare their Expression of Interest effectively.

It is important to highlight that while this framework shall serve as initial guidance for applicants, the service shall be tailored to the project's needs during the application assessment and technical assistance plan development stages. As such, the technical assistance plan shall indicate challenges to be addressed, proposed activities, expected results and measurable KPIs for each assistance package that are aligned with the overall framework but specific to the key needs of the selected projects.

As an applicant, you may select up to 3 packages that you consider most relevant for your project.

You will also be able to select an "Other" option, to indicate additional support areas which you consider relevant and are not covered by the proposed assistance packages.

The table below provides an overview of the proposed assistance packages, together with the feasibility dimension they relate to and an indicative description of activities.

Table 1 List of proposed technical assistance packages

Name of assistance package	Feasibility dimension	Indicative description of activities
Product, service, and technology feasibility analysis	Technical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology or service identification • TRL assessment & solution upgrade • Analysis of technical requirements • Analysis of technical resources versus capacity • Benchmarking with peers • Assessment of potential product, service or technology replicability and scalability
Commercialisation	Commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market research and analysis, including insights into market opportunities, demand, and competition • Estimation of total addressable market • Discovery and refinement of product market fit • User involvement/stakeholder analysis • Partner search • Definition of project advocacy strategies

Name of assistance package	Feasibility dimension	Indicative description of activities
Economic feasibility and investment readiness	Economic/ Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calculation of the business case • Business model development or evaluation (due diligence), including estimation of key financial indicators such as CAPEX, OPEX, revenues, ROI, NPV, etc. • Cost-benefit analysis • Economic and financial risk assessment • Investment concept development
Access to finance and fundraising	Economic/ Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of fundraising strategy (grants, equity, debt) • Optimisation of business and financial plan • Preparation of project for compliance with investor requirements • Identification and liaison with suitable investors • Documentation overview & preparation • Investor pitch and negotiation preparation • Analysis of risks, challenges, and weaknesses of investment proposals
Improving operations and execution capacity	Operational	<p>Internal dimension:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project management, including support for the set-up of KPIs for tracking successful project implementation • Operational excellence • Organisation design and workforce • Development of implementation roadmaps • Development of case studies • Benchmark with peers and set up of mentoring and peer-to-peer exchange • Operational risk management <p>External dimension:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancement of supply chain and logistics • Outsourcing as a strategic asset
Scaling up and internationalisation	Operational/ Commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roadmap for scaling product, service, or technology • Internationalisation readiness • Assessment and prioritisation of target markets and business opportunities • Analysis of export regulations and policies • Identification of relevant clients and partners in target markets

Name of assistance package	Feasibility dimension	Indicative description of activities
Regulatory advice	Regulatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of applicable regulatory frameworks to implement the envisaged solutions • Analysis of applicable standards and regimes, including examples of good practice
Intellectual Property advice	Commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of Intellectual Property: patent, copyrights, design registrations, trademarks, logos, domain names • Analysis and understanding of the IP landscape and definition of relevant IP strategies
Marketing and communications	Commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing and communications strategy and action planning • Definition and refinement of value proposition • Definition of a unique selling point • Preparation of project presentation & sales pitch • Analysis and understanding of the buyer's journey/profile/sales cycle
Environmental and impact assessment	Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of a methodological approach to measure and track environmental impact • Definition of baseline indicators and progress across key dimensions such as GHG emissions, waste reduction, etc. based on the selected Mission Ocean and Waters targets • Training on the EU taxonomy, environmental and impact reporting

What is the timeline?

Application timeline

The application for the Call for Expression of Interest will be organised in two distinct cycles running from:

- Cycle 1: from 22 March 2024 until 24 May 2024 at 23:59 CEST
- Cycle 2: from September/October 2024 until November/December 2024 (exact dates to be confirmed)

For Cycle 2, unsuccessful candidates from Cycle 1 will have the possibility to resubmit their application along the new applicants.

More specifically, **the key dates for Cycle 1** are as follows:

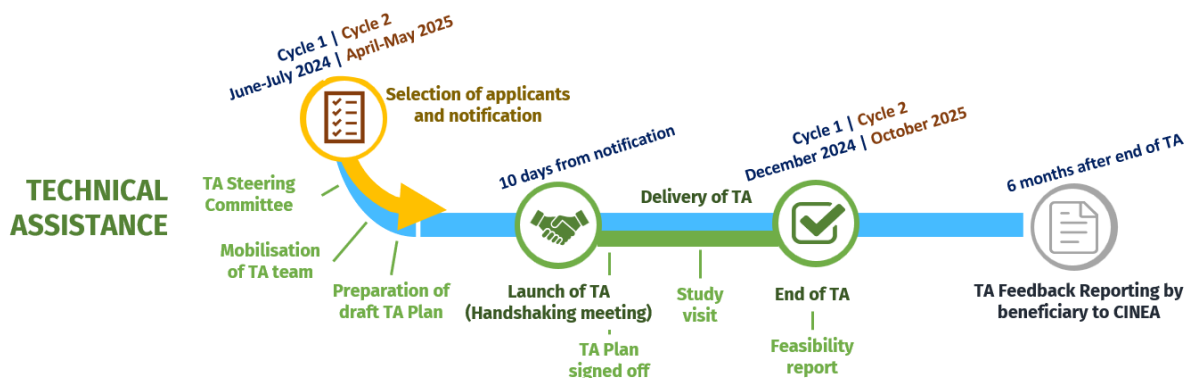
- Publication of the Call for Expression of Interest: 22 March 2024
- Submission deadline for the Expression of Interest: 24 May 2024 at 23:59 CEST
- Selection of successful applicants and notification: end of June 2024 (*exact date to be confirmed*). More information on selection criteria can be found in section “[Who can apply?](#)”.

Roadmap for implementation of technical assistance

The proposed roadmap for the implementation of technical assistance makes it possible to guide successful applicants to receive the best available technical assistance package for their projects while boosting results and impacts contributing to achieving the objectives and targets of the Mission.

The figure below illustrates the key steps of the technical assistance process following the final selection and notification of applicants.

Figure 1 Key steps and timeframe for the process of delivery of the technical assistance



As a first step, the Mission Ocean Support team will work on the mobilisation of the technical assistance support team and develop a draft technical assistance plan for each applicant, based on the challenges identified and needs analysis performed at the evaluation stage. The technical assistance plan shall outline the challenges identified, proposed activities, expected results and measurable KPIs to guide the technical assistance delivery.

Next, the draft technical assistance plan will be shared with successful applicants, together with any requests for clarifications and an invitation to a **handshaking meeting**. The Handshaking meeting will be organised as an online event **within 10 working days** from the date the applicant has received their selection results notification. During this period, applicants shall confirm their participation and may request clarifications on the process and/or services.

The Handshaking meeting marks the formal launch of the technical assistance activities and will aim to align the draft technical assistance plan with the current state of the applicant's project (scope, timing, availability of data, resource availability, etc.) and with their availability and jointly agree on the specific scope of the support. Notably, it will allow to:

- Introduce to the successful applicant the Technical Assistance team
- Present to the successful applicant the draft Technical Assistance Plan and the package of tailored services pre-identified based on their application, as well as the terms of the provision of technical assistance (e.g., the obligation to cooperate in good faith with the Technical Assistance team; or the production of a Technical Assistance Feedback Report to be sent to CINEA six months after the end of the technical assistance).
- Trigger the refinement of the draft Technical Assistance Plan based on the feedback provided by the applicant, clarifying any relevant aspects, including:
 - Details needed for technical assistance
 - Respective roles and responsibilities
 - List of tasks to be performed
 - Timeline of the tasks, including agreed deadlines
 - Data/inputs needed from the applicant with deadlines
 - Total number of days of technical assistance to be provided
 - Confidentiality rules / GDPR (Any project ideas presented are always treated confidentially and never shared with third parties unless the presenters of the idea give their express consent).
 - Procedure for submitting complaints / give feedback.
- Agree on the working arrangements for the next steps, starting from meetings, online shared environment, logistics, and other modalities for the actual deployment of the technical assistance services.

Based on the discussions and potential additional input from other stakeholders in the applicant's ecosystem, the Technical Assistance team will adapt and fine-tune the support plan. The fine-tuned plan will be sent to the applicant for approval and signature, the latest 10 days after the handshaking meeting.

Once the **Technical Assistance Plan is signed off**, the **delivery of the agreed technical assistance begins**. The technical assistance delivery is foreseen to **last around 5 months**, with a tentative end date for the first cycle of technical assistance in December 2024. During this period, at least a **site visit** will be organised, in addition to regular progress calls.

At the end of the technical assistance, each beneficiary will receive a **feasibility study report** produced by the Technical Assistance team who worked on their specific project. The feasibility study report will also include in an appendix the template for the **Technical Assistance Feedback Report** which each applicant commits to deliver to CINEA within 6 months from the end of the technical assistance delivery. Finally, a **Letter of Completion of Work** will be sent to each beneficiary by the Technical Assistance team upon completion of the technical assistance.

Who can apply?

Eligibility criteria

The Call for Expression of Interest seeks to collect applications from relevant communities of actors, who wish to contribute to the objectives of the Mission ‘Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030’² in one of the EU Mission lighthouses basins (the Atlantic/Arctic coast, Baltic and North Sea, Mediterranean Sea, and Danube River basin)

To be eligible, an applicant from one of the three targeted communities must therefore:

- Both a single legal entity or a group of entities are eligible. This can include, and is not restricted to, the following types of entities:
 - City or local/regional authority
 - Port authorities
 - Donors, philanthropic communities
 - Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or equivalent entities engaged in local development activities
 - Trade, business, or professional organisation
 - Private entities (small, medium / large), start-ups, accelerator clusters
 - Research institutions
 - Non-for-profits (different than NGOs)
 - Consultancies
 - Innovators
 - Among other relevant actors
- Submit a complete application
- Applicants must be from one of the three target communities, mentioned in section “Who are the target communities eligible for technical assistance?” above
- Action to be located within the Mission lighthouses basins (Mediterranean, Atlantic, Arctic, Danube, and North & Baltic Sea) for all categories.³
- Applicants must commit to the following requirements, via a Declaration of Honour:

² The activities to be provided under this Call for Expression of Interest are complementary to the services that the EU Mission Implementation Platform (MIP) is providing to enhance possible synergies benefiting participants.

³ The lead partner of the action can be located beyond Mission lighthouses basins.

- To adhere to the Mission Charter⁴ by the start of the technical assistance, if it is not already the case. Note: applicants not adhering to the Mission Charter cannot be considered eligible.⁵
- To submit a Technical Assistance Feedback Report within 6 months after finalisation of the service received. A template will be provided to the successful applicants.

Exclusion criteria

Applicants will be excluded from the call for Expression of Interest when falling under one or more of the following situations:

- Maximum one application per applicant/entity will be approved for Cycles 1 and 2.
- No costs for the same activity can be funded twice from the EU budget (no double funding allowed).⁶

How to apply? How are applicants selected?

How to prepare and submit the application form

The journey to completing your final application consists of four key steps.

Step 1: Determine Your Eligibility

Before you begin, ensure you meet the eligibility and exclusion criteria as outlined in this Call for Expression of Interest. Review both the eligibility requirements (including entity type, location, and commitments via a Declaration of Honour) and the exclusion criteria to ensure your project qualifies for consideration (see section “[Who can apply?](#)”).

Step 2: Prepare Your Application

- Understand the Mission ‘Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030’: Familiarise yourself with the Mission to ensure your project aligns with its principles and objectives.
- Understand the Mission Charter: Familiarise yourself with the Mission Charter to ensure your project aligns with its principles and objectives.
- Gather Necessary Information: Start by collecting the information and documents related to your project, such as project descriptions, budgets, team details, and any supporting documents that highlight your project's alignment with the Mission's objectives.

⁴ Application to Mission Charter pledges can be accessed here: <https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/MissionOceanWatersCharter#page0>

⁵ If considered necessary by the applicants, the Mission Secretariat will directly provide support to complete the pledge application. For more information, please submit your query to helpdesk_mission_ocean_waters@technopolis-group.com

⁶ Applicants must confirm through the Declaration of Honour.

- Prepare the Declaration of Honour: Ready your commitment to adhere to the Mission Charter⁷ and meet the reporting requirements.
- Refer to the section “[Support provided to the applicants](#)” on support and resources to the applicants for answers to common questions (FAQs) or if you have any specific questions or need further assistance (Helpdesk).

Step 3: Fill Out the Application Form

- Access the Form on the EU Survey Platform: The application form is accessible through the EU Survey platform, linked via the Mission Implementation Platform (MIP) website. It is available on https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/TechnicalAssistance_Communities_MissionOcean
- Complete each section of the Form: Fill out each part of the application form carefully. Be concise yet thorough in your responses, ensuring you address all required aspects. You can refer to section “[Overview of the Application form](#)” for guidelines on how to fill each section.
- Offline Drafting Option: For your convenience, the application will also be available for download as an offline document with guiding questions on the MIP website. This option allows you to draft your responses offline, facilitating internal review and collaboration within your organisation before submitting the final version online. Please note, the offline document is for preparation purposes only; your final application must be submitted through the EU Survey platform.

Language Options: Applications can be submitted in any of the 24 official EU languages. If your application is not in English, it is recommended (but not required) you include a summary of the application in English in Section 7 of the Application Form.

Step 4: Submit Your Application

- Review your application: Before submission, review your application to ensure all information is accurate and complete.
- Submit before the deadline: Applications must be submitted by May 24, 2024 at 23:59 CEST. We advise you to submit well ahead of the submission deadline, to avoid any potential technical issues at the last minute. Late submissions will not be considered.
- Confirmation: Upon submission, you will receive a confirmation email⁸. Keep this for your records. Note: If you don't receive the confirmation email, please contact us immediately at: mission.ocean.studies@technopolis-group.com

Additional notes for applicants:

- Ensure all sections are filled out completely and concisely, adhering to the word limit while providing all necessary details.

⁷ Application to Mission Charter pledges can be accessed here: <https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/MissionOceanWatersCharter#page0>

⁸ For more information on receiving the confirmation message, please refer to the “How do I adjust the default confirmation message?” at https://bo-survey.berec.europa.eu/eusurvey/home/helpauthors#_Toc_1_0

- Attach all required documents and any relevant project documentation, as instructed in the application form.
- Pay special attention to how your project aligns with the Mission Ocean & Waters objectives and how it addresses identified challenges, ensuring to articulate the potential impact and scalability of your proposal.

Support and Resources

FAQs: For answers to common questions, visit our FAQ section at <https://projects.research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/en/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/eu-missions-horizon-europe/restore-our-ocean-and-waters/technical-assistance-support-communities-actors-achieve-eu-mission-restore-our-ocean-and-waters#call-contact>

Helpdesk: If you have specific questions or need assistance with your application, contact our helpdesk at mission.ocean.studies@technopolis-group.com

Presentation of application form and relevant selection criteria

Overview of the Application form

The following section provides a general overview of the application form, including guidelines for applicants on how to complete it. The complete application form is available on https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/TechnicalAssistance_Communities_MissionOcean

Table 2 Guidelines to fill in the Application form

Section of the Application Form	Word Limit (excluding spaces)	Guidelines on How to Fill In	How will the assessment be conducted?
Introductory Section: General Information on Applicant	250	Provide your project title along with concise information about the lead organization, including its name, type, and location. Indicate your project's associated community of actors and select your basin coverage/lighthouse area. If you have project partners, list them here. Provide your contact details and proceed with informing the checkboxes related to eligibility criteria.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligibility & exclusion
Section 1: Project Information	2000	Describe your project, including its background, location, the problems it aims to address, objectives, expected results, impact area of the services to be	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and

Section of the Application Form	Word Limit (excluding spaces)	Guidelines on How to Fill In	How will the assessment be conducted?
		conducted, and target beneficiaries. Highlight the project's timeline and discuss its potential for up-scaling or replication.	time-bound project objectives
Section 2: Alignment with Mission Ocean Objectives and impacts and synergies with other policy initiatives	600	Detail how your project aligns with the objectives and targets of Mission Ocean & Waters, including its expected impacts and synergies with other policy initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of the overall objectives Mission Ocean & Waters • Relevance of the project to the specific objectives and targets of the Mission Ocean • Relevance of the project for other related EU policy objectives and synergies with relevant initiatives (Scaling up or replication of already existing projects or initiatives carried out with EU, national, or regional funding is highly encouraged).
Section 3: Project Feasibility	400	Present your project's financial aspects, including the planned budget and sources of financing (including self-investment (financial or man-days allocation)). Identify the needs of your project, the three biggest challenges/blockers to its implementation and how you plan to address them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project feasibility
Section 4: Technical Assistance Needs	400	Identify and rank three types of technical assistance needed from the drop-down menu and describe how it will address your project's challenges. Also, explain the added value and relevance of the TA to your project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical assistance needs assessment • Relevance of identified technical assistance to address the project challenges <p>Added value of technical assistance to achieve the project objectives</p>
Short Description in English (if application not provided in English)	250	Provide a brief summary of your application in English, focusing on the key aspects of your project and the assistance requested.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completeness and relevance

Common selection criteria

All applications that meet the eligibility criteria will be scored, based on the selection criteria presented in the following table:

Selection Criteria	Weight in the final evaluation	Link to Section
Project description	15%	Section 1: Project Information
Understanding and contribution to the Mission Ocean objectives and impacts and synergies with other policy initiatives	20%	Section 2: Alignment with MO Objectives and impacts and synergies with other policy initiatives
Project feasibility	20%	Section 3: Project Feasibility
Relevance/ Added Value of Technical Assistance	20%	Section 4: Technical Assistance Needs
Organisation structure to receive the Technical Assistance	25%	Section 5: Applicant's Capacity

Selection procedure

Once the application is submitted, it will be reviewed by the Evaluation Team and European Commission, finishing five weeks after Expression of Interest closure. First, the evaluators will review the eligibility and completeness of the submitted Expression of Interest (see section [“Who can apply?”](#)). Secondly, evaluators will perform the assessment of the selection criteria (see section [“Presentation of application form and relevant selection criteria”](#)). In case of limited incompleteness of the application, the applicant will be promptly contacted and allowed to provide clarification on missing elements within 5 working days from the date of the notification.

After the review is carried out, the applicants will be informed about the outcome of their application. A notification to the selected and rejected applicants about the final decision will be provided via email with the corresponding feedback. All decisions are final and cannot be appealed.

Applicants are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the Call for Expression of Interest and contact the helpdesk in case of any questions (see section [“How to prepare and submit the application form”](#)).

Support provided to the applicants

Link to the Expression of Interest website

Access all relevant information about the Call for Expression of Interest on the Mission Implementation Platform (MIP) dedicated website: <https://projects.research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/en/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/eu-missions-horizon-europe/restore-our-ocean-and-waters/technical-assistance-support-communities-actors-achieve-eu-mission-restore-our-ocean-and-waters>

This portal serves as your central hub for application guidelines, updates, and additional resources.

Link to FAQ

For answers to commonly asked questions regarding the application process, support offered, submission deadlines, and more, visit our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section on the MIP website: <https://projects.research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/en/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/eu-missions-horizon-europe/restore-our-ocean-and-waters/technical-assistance-support-communities-actors-achieve-eu-mission-restore-our-ocean-and-waters#call-contact>

The FAQ is a live document, regularly updated based on applicant inquiries and changes in the call timeline, ensuring you have access to the most current information.

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Contact information of the Helpdesk

For personalised support or specific inquiries, contact our Helpdesk at mission.ocean.studies@technopolis-group.com. Our team is ready to assist with your questions in any EU language, responding within three working days.

Helpdesk Support Includes

- Answers to queries in any EU language, with responses provided in English, and if possible, in the EU official language of the applicant.

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