

# BlueActionBANOS

## Community-Led Actions Open Call

### Terms & Conditions

Open Call starts on **28 November 2025, 10:00 (Brussels time)**

Call deadline: **29 May 2026, 14:00 (Brussels time)**



Version 2.1, Apr 16, 2026

## Open Call Terms and Conditions for

### BlueActionBANOS



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# Community-Led Actions (CLAs)

## Open Call Terms and Conditions

Welcome to the BlueActionBANOS Community-Led Actions Open Call Terms and Conditions (also Terms or Guide). This document outlines the rules for participation in the Community-Led Actions Open Call, including eligibility criteria, maximum grant amount, timeline, submission rules, and the evaluation process.

Please take a moment to read this document carefully to understand the requirements and process. For any questions, please contact us at [BAB\\_helpdesk@fundingbox.com](mailto:BAB_helpdesk@fundingbox.com).

BlueActionBANOS Open Call Team wishes you the best of luck!

## History of changes

Version	Changes	Date
V1	First version of the Open Call Terms & Conditions published on the date of Open Call launch.	Nov 28, 2025
V2	<p>Section 1 “How to Apply”: policy for applicants who do not respond to the initial consultation invitation email added</p> <p>Section 1 “How to Apply”: clarification regarding multiple submissions added; clarification regarding participation in more than one programme/ one grant limitation - changed to bullet points</p> <p>Section 3.1 “Payment conditions”: clarification regarding stages duration added to indicate maximum stage duration</p> <p>Section 6 “Last but not least”: reference to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and helpdesk email address added</p>	Feb 22, 2026
V2.1	Section 1 “Ground rules and formal requirements”: AI content provision added	Apr 16, 2026

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# 1. OPEN CALL BASIC CONDITIONS

Section	Description
Call opening date	28 November 2025 10:00 (Brussels time)
Project Idea Form submission deadline	16 March 2026 17:00 (Brussels time)
Call deadline	29 May 2026 14:00 (Brussels Time)
About the opportunity	<p>The BlueActionBANOS Community-Led Actions Open Call seeks to fund initiatives led by area-based or interest-based stakeholder groups within Baltic and North Sea (BANOS) countries that contribute to <a href="#">Mission Ocean and Waters</a><sup>1</sup> objectives. The focus is on protecting and restoring marine and freshwater ecosystems and biodiversity, preventing and eliminating pollution, and fostering a carbon-neutral and circular sustainable blue economy. The initiatives should meet these challenges with impactful solutions that are innovative for their community. Eligible applicants are consortia of 2 to 12 entities registered in one or more BANOS countries, including regional and local authorities, NGOs, foundations, professional associations, educational establishments, locally based companies, and/or research organisations.</p>
Project scope - type of activities that can be funded	<p>Activities that can be funded under Community-Led Actions should foster a participatory approach that empowers local stakeholders, builds on their local know-how and application of sustainable practices, and encourages their long-term commitment to <a href="#">Mission Ocean and Waters</a> objectives. Those activities can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• initiatives led by area-based and/or interest-based groups of stakeholders forming inclusive partnerships within the Baltic and North Sea countries (see ‘Who can apply?’ below), inspired by a bottom-up approach like e.g. <a href="#">Community-Led Local Development</a>;</li> <li>• designing and implementing concrete innovative<sup>2</sup> and impactful actions aiming for tangible environmental, economic and social benefits,</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> EU’s ‘Restore Our Ocean and Waters by 2030’ initiative (Mission Ocean and Waters)

<sup>2</sup> Within this Open Call, the concepts of ‘innovative’ and ‘innovation’ are defined in relation to the area-based context of the proposed Community-Led Action. To help establish this context, reference may be made to the categories outlined in the European Commission’s [Regional Innovation Scoreboard \(RIS\)](#).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● actions contributing to at least one of the <a href="#">EU Mission Ocean and Waters</a> objectives:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ protection and restoration of marine and freshwater ecosystems and biodiversity;</li> <li>○ prevention and elimination of pollution of our oceans, seas and waters;</li> <li>○ making the sustainable blue economy carbon-neutral and circular.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>For a more detailed description of the type of activities that can be funded, please check <a href="#">Annex I</a>.</p>
<p><b>Max. grant amount</b></p>	<p>The <b>grant amount</b> is between <b>EUR 200 000.00</b> and up to <b>EUR 2 000 000.00</b> per consortium, <b>based on the budget included in the full proposal form</b>. The maximum amount to be granted to each entity within a Community-Led Action is EUR 500 000.00. The total amount you list will be fixed and will determine the grant you'll receive.</p> <p>The funding rate is 100% of the budget included in your full proposal form.</p> <p>The grant will be paid as a lump sum<sup>3</sup>.</p>
<p><b>Number of grants and total funding available</b></p>	<p>We will support between 5 and 15 Community-Led Actions (projects) in this Open Call.</p> <p>The total budget available for this Open Call is EUR 7 000 000.00.</p>
<p><b>Support programme</b></p>	<p>Support programme for Community-Led Actions (CLAs) covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Financial support</b> based on the budget included in the full proposal form, not exceeding the maximum limits described in “Max grant amount” section.</li> <li>● <b>Ongoing project support</b> provided by dedicated Project Key Accounts and tailored technical assistance, defined during onboarding workshops, for a maximum duration of 24 months.</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> The lump sum is a simplified method of settling expenses in projects financed from Horizon Europe Programme funds. It means that the subgrantee is not required to present strictly defined accounting documents to prove the cost incurred (e.g., invoices) but is obliged to demonstrate that the implementation of the project is in line with the milestones set for it. The lump sum does not release the Beneficiary from the obligation to collect documentation to confirm the costs under the fiscal regulation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Technical Assistance</b> will be provided by the BlueActionBANOS consortium tailored to the specific needs and context of each funded Community-Led Action, leveraging the collective expertise of the consortium and drawing on best practices and advances from the multitude of other European projects and initiatives related to the Mission Ocean and Waters. Community-Led Actions will be able to benefit from individual counselling, in-depth sessions, expert and peer-to-peer reviews, workshops, webinars and training to empower them with the skills, knowledge, and motivation needed to implement their projects successfully.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Duration of the Support Programme</b></p>	<p>The Grant is offered together with the BlueActionBANOS Support programme. Our Programme for Community-Led Actions funds projects of <b>24-month duration at maximum</b>.</p>
<p><b>Who can apply?</b></p>	<p>Teams/consortia of minimum 2 up to 12 entities registered<sup>4</sup> in <b>Baltic and North Sea basin (BANOS) countries</b> that, at the time of application, are Member States or <a href="#">Associated Countries to Horizon Europe</a>: Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland and Sweden. Applicants from EU Member States<sup>5</sup> and Horizon Europe Associated Countries outside the BANOS area will be eligible in special cases, where justified. Even if partners from other regions are part of the Consortium, the impact of the proposed Community-Led Action must be within the BANOS area.</p> <p>Each Community-Led Action consortium must appoint an entity which will act on behalf of the consortium as the consortium Coordinator. The Coordinator's entity must be registered in a Baltic and North Sea basin (BANOS) country.</p> <p>Types of entities in the communities listed below that can apply for the support within the Community-Led Action team/consortium:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional and local authorities (including island and waterfront authorities)</li> <li>• Non-governmental organisations, foundations, and professional associations engaged in local development, nature conservation, environmental protection, sustainable use of marine resources, or blue economy activities;</li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup> Registration date must be no later than the full proposal submission date.

<sup>5</sup> Following the Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/2506, as of 15th December 2022, no legal commitments can be signed with Hungarian public interest trusts established under Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity they maintain. Affected entities may continue to apply to calls for proposals. However, in case the Council measures are not lifted, such entities are not eligible to participate in this open call. In case of consortium, co-applicants will be invited to remove or replace that entity. Tasks and budget may be redistributed accordingly.

- Educational establishments, research performing organisations and/or similar;
- Locally based companies, SMEs and startups (provided this is not in conflict with the State Aid rules);
- Knowledge brokers, facilitating organisations;
- Enterprises, cooperatives, and other registered organisations fostering inclusion, skills development, or sustainable blue economy activities;
- Financial institutions or registered cooperatives supporting sustainable investments or local development initiatives;
- any other legal entities in the below-described communities.

Types of communities relevant to the Community-Led Actions Open Call:

- Ports (including inland ports);
- Islands authorities and communities;
- Fishing and aquaculture communities, producers, processors, retailers and manufacturers, and other representatives of blue economy;
- Operators of various vessels;
- River basin and inland water communities engaged in water management and pollution reduction;
- Citizen education, science and community innovation initiatives contributing to marine or freshwater monitoring or restoration;
- Indigenous and traditional knowledge communities involved in sustainable use and stewardship of marine and freshwater resources;
- Blue tech and digital innovation communities contributing to ocean observation, data sharing, or circular blue economy;
- Cultural heritage and maritime identity communities promoting ocean literacy and traditional connections to the sea;
- Local financial institutions, cooperatives, and impact investors supporting sustainable blue investments;
- Enterprises and organisations fostering inclusion, skills, and employment in the blue economy;
- Local Action Groups described by the [Community-Led Local Development](#) strategies;
- Waterfront cities/regional authorities and communities (avoiding overlaps with Cities' Mission)<sup>6</sup>;
- To prevent double funding, activities must not overlap with actions already financed under the EU Mission: Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities, for which cities, local, or regional authorities may have previously received support.

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<sup>6</sup> To prevent double funding, activities must not overlap with actions already financed under the EU Mission: [Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities](#), for which cities, local, or regional authorities may have previously received support.

- Conservation and environmental protection communities;
- Representatives of the tourism sector;
- Maritime infrastructure operators (including offshore wind, wave/tidal energy, and similar infrastructure and their operators);
- Any other community within the BANOS area that could benefit from the impact of funded Community-Led Action(s).

Proposed Community-Led Actions must be focused on the BANOS area. Proposals may concern actions in one BANOS country only or in several BANOS countries.

### How to apply?

Our application process involves 2 steps:

- 1) **Compulsory submission of a short Project Idea Form followed by individual consultation.** Submit your Project Idea via our [online form](#). **Project Idea Forms must be submitted by 16 March 2026 17:00 (Brussels time)**. Upon submission of the Project Idea Form, you will be contacted to schedule an individual online consultation to present your idea for the Community-Led Action.

**\*We reserve the right to contact and consult only those applicants who submit complete and full information in the Project Idea form.**

**\*\*To ensure a smooth consultation process, please note the following policy for applicants who do not respond to the initial consultation invitation email:**

- **First Reminder:** One reminder email will be sent.
- **Final Reminder & Deadline:** If there is still no response, a second and final reminder will be issued, setting a strict deadline of **7 calendar days** for the applicant to reply. **Failure to respond by this final deadline will result in the applicant forfeiting their opportunity for the consultation.**

During the consultation, you may be advised on:

- a) General fit of the project idea with the BlueActionBANOS funding programme and its goals;
- b) Project maturity - whether your idea is developed enough for a Community-Led Action;
- c) Integration of innovative solutions - how to better integrate innovative solutions from other projects;
- d) Collaboration opportunities: how to potentially collaborate with other applicants from within your country and/or across the Baltic and North Sea area;

- e) Impact pathway: how to make sure your Community-Led Action is developed to drive impact;
- f) Application alignment: how to best align your project idea with the final full proposal form.

**Only those projects who submit the Project Idea Form and go through the individual consultation will be invited to submit a full proposal.**

While Project Idea Form submission and consultation are a mandatory step, they are not subject to evaluation.

- 2) **Submission of the full proposal.** Once you conclude the individual online consultation, you will be invited to submit the full proposal. **The deadline for full proposal submission is 29 May 2026 14:00 (Brussels Time).**

Project Idea Form and full proposal must be written in English, and all mandatory sections must be completed.

Full proposal form can be modified after submission but **only until the deadline of 29 May 2026 14:00 (Brussels Time).**

Multiple submissions are not allowed. In cases where multiple proposals are submitted by the same applicant (meaning the same consortium of entities), only the submission with the date closest to the deadline will be considered. Also,

- participation in more than one programme under BlueActionBANOS is not allowed;
- each entity can receive grant from BlueActionBANOS only once.

**For the purpose of identification of submitted proposals, Project Idea Form and full proposal should be submitted by the same user (from the same OnePass username).**

**Additional conditions related to who can apply**

Consortium cannot include entities linked to each other by capital, which means that entities within one consortium each should have a separate owner.

Applicants under [EU restrictive measures](#) are ineligible.

BlueActionBANOS partners, their affiliated entities (meaning entities financially or personally linked to the BlueActionBANOS partners) and employees cannot apply due to the conflict of interest.

**Ground rules and  
formal  
requirements**

When applying to the BlueActionBANOS CLA Open Call, please also note that the following conditions will be checked:

- 1) **Submission system and deadline:** Only proposals submitted through the [online form](#) before the deadline will be considered.
- 2) **Compulsory submission of the Project Idea Form and individual consultations:** Only Projects who have submitted the Project Idea Form and had an online consultation with BlueActionBANOS experts will be invited to submit the full proposal (step 2 in the application process - see 'How to apply' section above). Only full proposals will be considered for the evaluation and selection process.
- 3) **Language requirement:** Proposals must be written in English. If mandatory sections are in another language, the proposal will be rejected. Non-mandatory sections in another language will not be evaluated, but the proposal will remain valid.
- 4) **Data accuracy:** The information you provide must be correct, complete, and allow proper evaluation. Extra material provided by you that was not requested in the form will not be considered for evaluation.
- 5) **Completeness:** Ensure all required fields are filled out - only complete full proposals will be considered for evaluation. You can edit your full proposal submission until the deadline, but no changes are allowed after that.
- 6) **European dimension:** Your proposal must align with at least one of the EU and [Mission Ocean and Waters](#) goals and contribute to creating a positive impact within the EU.
- 7) **Conflicts of interest:** We will check for any conflicts of interest between applicants and Consortium partners. Partners, their affiliated entities, and their employees cannot participate. Each case of conflict will be reviewed individually.
- 8) **Financial stability:** Entities under liquidation, [in financial difficulty](#), or excluded from receiving EU funding are not eligible. We also exclude companies in bankruptcy.
- 9) **Original work:** Execution of your project should not violate third-party IPR. It must be based on your intellectual property or you must be allowed to use third-party rights. IPR to the project can not be subject to any dispute.

- 10) **AI content:** The use of AI tools to improve clarity and structure is permitted, provided the content remains accurate and fact-based. Applications may be rejected if found to be AI-generated and lacking a factual foundation. All submissions must be authentic reflections of the project, and the applicant team must evidence the technical and operational capacity required for implementation. Providing unverifiable or non-authentic information is grounds for immediate rejection.
- 11) **Gender Equality Plan (GEP):** Public bodies, universities, and research organizations from EU or Associated countries must have a GEP.
- 12) **Acceptance of rules:** By applying, you agree to the Open Call Terms and Conditions outlined in this document.

**More info about  
BlueActionBANOS**

You can find more information about our Project on <https://blueactionbanos.eu>.

The Open Call is managed by FundingBox Accelerator Sp. z o.o. (FBA) and organised by the BlueActionBANOS Consortium partners listed at <https://blueactionbanos.eu>.

All documents can be found <https://blueactionbanos.eu>.



## 2. SELECTION PROCESS

Our evaluation process is transparent, fair and equal to all participants, with a clearly defined complaint procedure (see [Section 5](#)). The process includes several main phases:



Figure 1 -Overview of the selection process

### 2.1. Full proposal submission



In order to submit a full proposal for a Community-Led Action, you will be requested to:

- 1) Submit your Project Idea Form [here](#);
- 2) Have an individual consultation with BlueActionBANOS Experts;
- 3) Follow instructions and **complete the full proposal**.

**Only full proposals** submitted through the [online form](#) before the [Call Deadline](#) **will be considered**. You will receive an email confirmation if the form is submitted correctly. If not, contact us immediately.

Figure 2 - Application process

Project Idea Form and full proposal should be submitted by the same user (from the same OnePass username).

## 2.2. Admissibility & Eligibility check

After the closure of the Open Call, the system will review your proposal to ensure it meets the Call basic conditions ([Section 1](#)). This check will be based on the declarations in your proposal. As a result, 'List of Eligible Applications' will be produced.

Later on, during the evaluation process, the above conditions will be verified, and non-compliant applicants will be excluded.

## 2.3. Independent Individual Evaluation

Proposals that appear on the 'List of Eligible Applications' will proceed to the independent individual evaluation phase. To guarantee transparency, objectivity and fairness, the BlueActionBANOS evaluation process is guided by the following principles:

- **Dual Evaluator System:** Your proposal will be evaluated by two evaluators: one BlueActionBANOS partners' expert and one external expert;
- **Complementary Expertise:** One evaluator will be familiar with the topical focus of your proposal, and the other one with the main country/-ies where the proposed Community-Led Action is planned;
- **Unified Ranking:** All evaluated proposals will be ranked on a single, comprehensive list;
- **Merit-Based Selection:** Quality will be prioritised.

Your proposal will be evaluated against the following three criteria, which correspond to the sections of the proposal form.

### (1) RELEVANCE - relevance of the proposed Community-Led Action to the Call

Under this criterion, the evaluators will assess the following aspects of your proposal:

- **Ambition - proposal's relevance to the Call objectives and expected results.**
  - *How does your proposed Community-Led Action contribute to the BlueActionBANOS project scope (e.g., the Mission Ocean and Waters target, the target community)?*
  - *What are the challenges or gaps in your target region/community (state-of-the-art baseline) that your Community-Led Action will address?*
- **Innovation.** Applicants should provide information about the level of innovation of the proposed Community-Led Action in relation to the community in which it will be implemented, and how it will differentiate itself within the Action implementation area.
  - *In what ways is your action new or different for the local community(ies) you are targeting (even if similar ideas exist elsewhere)?*
- **Soundness of the approach and credibility/ feasibility of the proposed methodology.** Applicants have to demonstrate that:

- a) their proposal is based on a deep understanding of the sector, community or location in which the Action will be implemented and on the latest available scientific data;
- *What understanding does your Community-Led Action project Consortium have of the community (or location) in which you plan to act? What local knowledge, experience or data have you drawn on?*
- b) their proposal includes transdisciplinary elements and relies on collaboration with various community actors (e.g. experts, civil society, private sector, local communities and authorities etc.) to ensure success and/or the longevity/sustainability of the project output.
- *Which local actors (community groups, civil society, private sector, local authorities etc.) have you involved until now, and how will they participate in the design and execution of your action?*

## 2) IMPACT

Under 'IMPACT', the evaluators will assess the following aspects of your proposal:

- **Measurable Impact** - the proposed Action is designed to have a measurable impact in supporting at least one of the Mission Ocean and Waters objectives.
  - *What concrete changes do you expect your Community-Led Action to bring about in the community or environment? How will you measure or observe these changes?*
- **Societal Impact** - the proposed Action has the potential to inspire, engage, and educate the communities it targets (experts, private sector, local communities, citizens, authorities, youth, etc.) with due consideration for diversity, equity and inclusion, and - where appropriate - involvement of vulnerable or marginalised communities.
  - *Who specifically in the community will benefit from your Community-Led Action (for example: citizens, local businesses, vulnerable or marginalised groups)? How will you ensure diversity, equity and inclusion in your approach?*
- **Economic/Technological impact** - the results of the proposed Action are significant and transferrable to other communities outside the local implementation community during and after the Action's lifetime (long-term financial sustainability).
  - *How does your Community-Led Action link to broader regional or transnational challenges, strategies or policies relevant to the North and/or Baltic Sea Region (or your region/area of operation specifically)?*
  - *How will the results of your Community-Led Action continue after the project ends? Can the experience or method be transferred or adapted by other communities or settings?*

## (3) IMPLEMENTATION - quality of the proposed Community-Led Action design and plan

Reviewing this section of your proposal, the evaluators will look into:

- **Work Plan** - proposed Action's objectives are clearly defined and realistic, and the Action work plan is clear, complete, and effective.
  - *What are your main objectives, and how realistic are they given the resources, time and context of your Community-led Action? Please outline your work plan: key activities, milestones, who does what, and when.*

- *What are your assumptions about external existing political, economic, social, legal and environmental factors (PESTLE) in the community your Action addresses? How will these contribute to your Action's implementation?*
- *How do you plan to integrate the technical assistance mechanism into your project? What type of technical assistance do you foresee that you will need? When should it be provided in your project's timeline? What goal should it achieve?*
- **Resources** - proposed Action is cost-effective and allocates appropriate resources to each activity.
  - *What is the reasoning behind the composition of your Community-Led Action consortium?*
  - *How have you allocated resources (budget, people, materials) in a way that is efficient and appropriate for each activity?*
  - *Please provide the cost estimate for your Community-Led Action.*
- **Team** - applicants experience and profile:
  - a) The applicants have to demonstrate that they are embedded in the stakeholder community in which they wish to implement the project;
    - *How is your organisation (and your partner organisations) rooted in the stakeholder/community context where you will act? What is your experience or past involvement in this field or community?*
  - b) Applicants have to prove their expertise and experience in the sector addressed (through a demonstrated track record of previous activities);
    - *Please describe the expertise and experience of key team members of your Community-Led Action in the sector addressed.*
  - c) Gender diversity and inclusion. Applicants have to demonstrate how the entities' teams contribute to gender diversity and inclusion (e.g. through gender/inclusion action plans or equivalent strategies).
    - *How will you contribute to gender diversity and inclusion within your Community-Led Action team?*
- **Stakeholder and/or citizen engagement** - proposed Action foresees a clear stakeholder and/or citizen engagement, dissemination and exploitation strategy (including attracting additional funding during and after the project's lifetime).
  - *How will you engage local stakeholders and/or citizens (where appropriate) throughout the action (from design through implementation and dissemination)?*
  - *What is your plan for communication, sharing results, attracting additional funding and making sure that the action's outcomes are used and exploited after the lifetime of the project?*

Each evaluator will score each criterion on a scale from 0 to 5:

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

1 = Poor – criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses.

2 = Fair – the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.

3 = Good – the proposal addresses the criterion well, but several shortcomings are present.

4 = Very good – the proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.

5 = Excellent – the proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion, any shortcomings are minor.

Each evaluator will produce an Individual Evaluation Report. Once the Individual Evaluation Reports are submitted, the final score per each individual criterion will be calculated as the average of the scores provided by each evaluator. **The final score per proposal** will be calculated as the sum of the final scores for each individual criterion, with the maximum of 15 points.

For each criterion, the minimum threshold is 3 out of 5 points. The maximum total score will be 15 points, with a minimum total threshold of 10 points in order to pass this phase.

Ties will be solved using the following criteria, listed in order of priority:

- the highest score in the Relevance section (first priority),
- the highest score in the Impact section (second priority in case a tie is not resolved by the highest score in the Relevance section).

Proposals that meet or exceed the threshold for each criterion and the overall proposal will be added to the *'Ranking List'* and moved directly to the Consensus Meeting.

Please note that we need time to process all the proposals in this phase, so you probably will not hear back from us for approximately 7-8 weeks.<sup>7</sup>

### **Evaluation Consensus Group (optional)**

After carrying out the Independent Individual Evaluation, there may be cases of proposals where there is a significant divergence between two evaluators' scoring. Experts who have evaluated such proposals may join an Evaluation Consensus Group to discuss those cases and agree on a common position, including comments and scores. If no consensus is reached between the evaluators, a third evaluator will be appointed to provide an extra evaluation.

## **2.4. Jury Day (optional)**

If, following the Independent Evaluation phase, a large number of proposals reach the required threshold, an additional "Jury Day" step may be incorporated into the Selection Process.

In such a case, up to 35 highest-scoring proposals will receive an invitation to an online pitching session - Jury Day, and will have the possibility to pitch their Community-Led Action in front of the Selection Committee.

The Selection Committee - including External Advisors (if applicable) - will select the finalists taking into account the following awarding criteria:

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<sup>7</sup> The timeline could change, depending on the number of applications received.

- relevance to BlueActionBANOS and Mission Ocean and Waters goals;
- vision and attitude of the Community-Led Action consortium team;
- critical impact on the targeted community.

The Jury Day ranking will be created as follows:

- average scores will be calculated for each Jury Day criterion;
- the total Jury Day score will be calculated as a sum of the final scores for each individual criterion;
- the Jury Day ranking will be created in the topdown order, i.e. the proposal with the highest total score will be ranked first, with the second highest total score - the second, etc.

The general ranking after the Jury Day will include results of both Independent Evaluation and Jury Day phases.

## 2.5. Consensus Meeting

The **Selection Committee**, composed of BlueActionBANOS consortium partners and, if needed, external experts, will review and discuss the results of the Independent Individual Evaluation (or the results of the Independent Evaluation and Jury Day, if applicable) based on the *'Ranking List'*. They will reach a consensus or majority of  $\frac{2}{3}$  votes on the list of proposals to be selected, i.e. the *'List of Finalists'*, and *'Reserve List'* (if applicable).

Please keep in mind that although the highest-ranked proposals will be selected for funding, the Selection Committee might have fair reasons for objecting to a specific proposal, like the alignment with BlueActionBANOS goals and scope (including geographic spread and diversity of topics and any other factors related to the objectives of the call), the ability to achieve the highest impact possible across the BANOS region, commercial competition, as well as the existence of significant ethical concerns or a potential conflict of interest. In this case, the choice may pass to the next-ranked proposal. The exact number of proposals approved will be decided based on the overall quality of the proposals.

## 2.6. Formal check & Agreement signature

### Formal check

Finalists will undergo a formal check to confirm their legal status (e.g., company registration, financial documents, ownership structure, tax ID, etc.). Therefore, to confirm your formal status and eligibility, we will ask you for (not an exhaustive list): entity's registration document, tax ID number, ownership structure, financial statements, bank account details for grant payments. Documents must be provided within the given deadline (normally 3-7 working days) that we will communicate to you. If you fail to deliver the requested documents on time without a clear and reasonable justification, we will have to exclude you from further formal assessment.

## **Ethics Assessment**

During the formal check, each selected proposal will be reviewed by an ethics expert to ensure compliance with ethical principles and regulations. As a result, an 'Ethics Summary Report' will be produced when applicable, and specific requirements will be included as deliverable in the Individual Integrated Project Plan - IIPP (See [Section 3](#) below).

## **Sub-Grant Agreement Signature**

After you pass the formal check, we will invite you to sign the Sub-grant Agreement with the BlueActionBANOS consortium to officially participate in the programme. Please note that each entity in the Community-Led Action consortium will be requested to sign the Sub-grant Agreement.

# **3. AFTER SUB-GRANT AGREEMENT SIGNATURE**

## **3.1. Payment conditions**

Once your Action is selected and the Sub-grant Agreement (SGA) is signed, you will become an official beneficiary of the BlueActionBANOS support programme for Community-Led Actions. You will receive a grant based on the budget indicated in the full proposal and later approved following its further development during Stage 1 of the support programme (no more than EUR 2 000 000.00 per Community-Led Action and no more than EUR 500 000.00 per Action consortium partner and no more than requested in the full proposal form). For eligible cost categories, please refer to [Annex I](#).

The grant will be paid as a lump sum. Payments depend on the successful and timely completion of each stage of the work planned as outlined in the Individual Integrated Project Plan (IIPP) developed at the beginning of the support programme. Payments are scheduled in tranches as follows:

Stage	Approximate timeline	Stage duration	Deliverable	Deliverable due date	Payment due date and conditions	Payment value
<b>Stage 1</b> Individual Integrated Project Plan	M1 - M2	Up to 2 months	Completed IIPP	M2	Approximately one month <b>after approval and validation of all the deliverables</b> for this stage.	Up to 10%
<b>Stage 2</b> Mid-Term Review	M3 - M14	Up to 12 months	CLA Mid-Term Report	M14	Approximately one month <b>after approval and validation of all the deliverables</b> for this stage.	Up to 50%
<b>Stage 3</b> Final Review	M15 - M24	Up to 10 months	CLA Final Report	M24	Approximately one month <b>after approval and validation of all the deliverables</b> for this stage.	Up to 40%

*Table 1 - Payment conditions*

**A delayed payment mechanism will be applied to all payments. 15% of each tranche will be paid once the whole BlueActionBANOS Project is completed.** This should happen approximately 9 months after the end of the BlueActionBANOS Project. The expected end of the BlueActionBANOS is 31 August 2029. Relevant provisions will be included in the Sub-grant Agreement. Please consider that the BlueActionBANOS Project might be extended.

### 3.2. Progress evaluation

We pay upon the delivery of the agreed results - not upon delivery of certain receipts. Therefore, Consortium Partners, gathered in the Selection Committee, will evaluate your progress regularly.

Stage	Explanation
<b>Individual Integrated Project Plan (IIPP)</b>	<p>Within the first month of the Action you will prepare an <b>Individual Integrated Project Plan (IIPP)</b>, outlining the final budget for your Community-Led Action, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and deliverables for performance assessment. The IIPP will also cover any specific Ethics Assessment requirements (if applicable).</p> <p>KPIs for targeting the objects of the Mission Ocean and Waters and creating impact in accordance will be checked, co-created and confirmed together with the BlueMissionBANOS experts.</p> <p>The IIPP will be evaluated by the Selection Committee taking into account Deliverables quality (90%) and Deadline compliance (10%).</p>
<b>Milestone reviews</b>	<p>Before each payment, the Selection Committee will review your progress. Performance will be evaluated by Project Key Accounts, Technical Assistance Experts (if needed) and Ethics Experts (if applicable) based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Deliverables' quality (30%)</li> <li>● Technical performance indicators (60%)</li> <li>● Deadline compliance (10%)</li> </ul> <p>Each criterion will be scored from <b>0 to 10</b>, and the final score will be calculated based on the weights indicated. A total score of <b>7 out of 10 points</b> or more is required to continue in the programme.</p> <p>The consortium not reaching the threshold will be asked to submit a plan on how to address the delays and shortcomings in their projects and improve them. If the consortium fails to comply with the requested improvement, the project will be invited to leave the program without receiving the corresponding payments.</p> <p>For more details, please check the template of the Sub-grant Agreement.</p>

*Table 2 - Overview of the progress evaluation process*

## 4. CONTACT US

If you have any questions about our application process, feel free to reach out to us at [BAB\\_helpdesk@fundingbox.com](mailto:BAB_helpdesk@fundingbox.com) .

Please note that responses are given individually and do not change these Terms; the responses are provided for informational purposes only.

In case of any technical issues or problems, please include the following information in your message:

- your OnePass username, phone number and email address;
- details of the specific problem (e.g. error messages you encountered, bug description, i.e. if a dropdown list isn't working, etc.); and
- screenshots of the problem.

## 5. COMPLAINTS

If you believe there was an error in one of the evaluation phases, you may submit a complaint within three (3) calendar days after the date the results were sent to you. Send it to

[BAB\\_helpdesk@fundingbox.com](mailto:BAB_helpdesk@fundingbox.com) in English and include:

- your contact details (including email),
- the subject of your complaint,
- evidence of the specific issue.

Please note that we will review only complaints related to:

- errors in the process caused by our staff,
- technical issues beyond the applicant's control,
- clear human or mechanical errors made by our staff,
- incorrectly marked statements, minor clerical errors, and obvious typographical mistakes.

**Please note that we will not review complaints related to the content of the expert evaluations.**

Complaints will be reviewed within seven (7) calendar days. If more time is needed, we will inform you via email. Anonymous complaints or those with incomplete information will not be considered.

## 6. LAST BUT NOT LEAST - FINAL PROVISIONS

Any issues not covered by these Terms and Conditions are governed by Polish law, Horizon Europe Programme rules, and EU grant regulations.

We make our best effort to keep all provided data confidential by complying with EU regulations, GDPR and our own Data Management Plan; however, for the avoidance of doubt, you are solely responsible for indicating your confidential or sensitive information as such. Please be aware that your application form will be shared with the external evaluators and BlueActionBANOS Consortium partners.

You retain ownership of your intellectual property rights (IPR).

The CLA project results have to be made available as open access and offered as part of the BLueActionBANOS ecosystem. The progress in achieving project-specific KPIs for Mission Ocean and Waters objectives will be aggregated from all CLA's and reported as a part of BlueActionBANOS deliverables on project monitoring.

The signature of the Sub-grant Agreement is the initial condition to establish any obligations among applicants and any Consortium partners (with respect to the obligation of confidentiality of the application). The Sub-grant Agreement will include a set of obligations towards the European Commission (for example: promoting the project and giving visibility to the EU funding, maintaining confidentiality, and understanding potential controls by the EC/ECA, EPPO, and OLAF).

**Please be aware that eligibility criteria will be checked throughout the process, including the whole duration of your Action and final milestone review.**

In the event of any discrepancies between these Terms and their Annexes, the Terms shall prevail.

The BlueActionBANOS Consortium reserves the right to cancel or modify the call at any time, informing applicants accordingly.

To ensure timely submission, please plan ahead for the entire proposal completion. We advise against submitting your proposal at the last minute before the call deadline.

Need more help?

- Check Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) available on the [BlueActionBANOS project website](#).
- Contact us at [BAB\\_helpdesk@fundingbox.com](mailto:BAB_helpdesk@fundingbox.com), and we'll be happy to assist.

## ANNEX I

### Activities that qualify for financial support

The type of activities that qualify for financial support to the CLAs are innovative solutions aimed at achieving one or several interlinked Mission Ocean and Waters objectives in the Baltic and North Sea (BANOS) basin. The activities should foster a participatory approach that empowers local stakeholders, builds on their local know-how and application of sustainable practices, and encourages their long-term commitment to the protection, restoration and de-pollution of our ocean, seas and waters and to making the sustainable blue economy carbon-neutral and circular.

The type of activities that qualify for financial support for CLAs under [the Mission Ocean and Waters objectives](#):

- Re-naturalising coastal zones and reducing artificial surfaces within and around port areas.
- Introducing nature-based solutions within port and coastal environments.
- Establishing protected areas or restoring natural ecosystems in riverine, lacustrine and marine coastal areas and ports.
- Designing and deploying solutions that enhance coastal and riverine resilience to sea level rise and extreme weather events.
- Supporting spatial and temporal management of coastal and fisheries activities to reduce ecosystem pressure.
- Promoting nature-based infrastructure to buffer coastal communities against climate-related risks.
- Supporting local initiatives for ecosystem-based planning and stakeholder-led resource management.
- Supporting sustainable blue tourism practices, especially from a multi-use perspective.
- Developing and piloting multi-use solutions in coastal and marine areas (e.g. co-locating tourism, renewable energy, conservation, fisheries or aquaculture) to optimise space, reduce user conflicts, and enhance environmental and socio-economic benefits.
- Implementing circular economy practices in port operations (e.g. waste treatment, reuse systems for port supplies).
- Developing low-carbon energy solutions for port operations (e.g. renewable energy, green electricity).
- Electrification and other solutions to reduce emissions of pollutants (e.g. NO<sub>x</sub>, SO<sub>x</sub>).
- Developing and implementing waste management systems and awareness campaigns to reduce marine and land litter.
- Monitoring environmental conditions in port and urbanised coastal areas to assess and mitigate cumulative impacts.
- Reducing emissions throughout the maritime logistics chain (from shipping to hinterland connections).
- Promoting low-impact, selective fishing methods aligned with marine nature restoration.
- Supporting low-trophic or integrated multi-trophic aquaculture systems.

- Supporting local entrepreneurship utilising high-value blue bioresources for innovative, sustainable uses.
- Reducing carbon emissions in fisheries and aquaculture operations.
- Developing systems to reduce the use and loss of plastics in fisheries and aquaculture.
- Detecting and mapping marine litter using Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) and AI to support decision-making.
- Developing digital tools to assess food quality and support traceability in the fish supply chain.
- Using robotics or automation to improve productivity, quality monitoring, and waste reduction in aquaculture.
- Developing innovative products from underutilised or low-trophic species or fish processing by-products to achieve “zero waste”.
- Engaging recreational users of coastal and aquatic environments in awareness, monitoring, and stewardship initiatives to promote sustainable ocean practices and protect marine biodiversity.
- Documenting, exhibiting, and raising awareness about the historical relationship between society and the natural aquatic environment, with a focus on ecological change and sustainable practices.
- Supporting local entrepreneurship utilising high-value blue bioresources for innovative, sustainable uses.
- Promoting ocean literacy through formal and informal education, public outreach, and stakeholder engagement to foster understanding of marine ecosystems and sustainable ocean use.
- Capacity building through citizen science programmes that gather data for fisheries/aquaculture management or marine/riverine/lacustrine conservation and pollution reduction.

### Eligible costs

Costs for the Community-Led Action are eligible if:

- corresponding tasks or parts of the Action have been properly implemented, in line with the Individual Integrated Project Plan (IIPP) and accepted by the Selection Committee,;
- they are incurred during the CLA support programme duration.

The BlueActionBANOS grant - paid as a lump sum - will cover the following cost categories:

- **Personnel costs** - costs of the team members participating in the Community-Led Action: estimated Full Time Equivalent (FTE) persons that each team participating in the granted Action have to allocate (the FTE persons needed per the number of months per stage);
- **Travel costs** - costs of business travel related to the Action implementation;
- **Purchases** - (i.e. purchase cost of goods, works, equipment and services) connected to the Action and necessary for its implementation, directly linked to the performance of the Action i.e. to achieve the Action’s objectives;
- **Overheads** - 25% of the abovementioned costs

In the full proposal form, you will be asked to set the budget per proposed Community-Led Action, with an indication of percentage share for all the Action consortium partners involved.

Also, all applicants will be requested to reserve sufficient funds for conditional activities, such as participation in collaborative knowledge-sharing activities, taking actions to measure their own impacts according to jointly agreed indicators and developing and providing material designed to ensure knowledge transfer to other stakeholders.

During Stage 1 of the CLA support programme, as part of the Individual Integrated Project Plan (IIPP), you will refine the Action budget, providing costs breakdown per stage per Action partner. The total cost of the Action defined in IIPP cannot exceed the total budget for the Action estimated in the full proposal.

## GLOSSARY

<b>Action</b>	Community-Led Action (CLA) - project funded by BlueActionBANOS
<b>BANOS</b>	Baltic and North Sea
<b>CINEA</b>	European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency
<b>CLA</b>	Community-Led Action
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>ECA</b>	European Court of Auditors
<b>EPPO</b>	European Public Prosecutor's Office
<b>GA</b>	Grant Agreement
<b>IIPP</b>	Individual Integrated Project Plan
<b>KPIs</b>	Key Performance Indicators
<b>OLAF</b>	European Anti-Fraud Office
<b>SGA</b>	Sub-Grant Agreement

