



European
Commission

EU funding opportunities for the Blue Economy 2014-2020

The Blue Economy: an ocean of opportunities

Our seas and oceans are drivers for the economy and have great potential for innovation and growth. In the European Union, the Blue Economy is expected to grow faster than the economy as a whole, making it an important area for future investment.

To support sustainable growth in the marine and maritime sectors as a whole, the European Commission announced its long-term 'Blue Growth' strategy in 2012. Initiatives have since been launched in many policy areas related to Europe's oceans and coasts, identifying welfare and economic opportunities in areas such as renewable energy, aquaculture, tourism and blue biotechnologies.

To accompany the Blue Growth strategy, the European Commission made available several funding opportunities for Blue Economy projects through a number of programmes

and instruments. These funding streams can be mixed and matched, and are often complementary, which helps to create opportunities for businesses across borders and sectors.

This brochure presents an overview of existing funds, programmes and instruments (2014-2020) that aim to support growth and innovation in the Blue Economy. It also features some illustrative examples of how resources have supported projects and initiatives in the EU.

The European Structural and Investment Funds: what's in it for me?

The European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) are the EU's main channels for investing in job creation, a sustainable economy and environment, and a socially inclusive society. They also aim to support specific projects that aim for economic, social and territorial cohesion.

The majority of the funds are managed by different national or regional authorities through their respective operational

programmes. You can find out about funding opportunities by contacting the authorities in your region.

For funds managed directly at EU level, you can check the information provided by the relevant EU Executive Agencies managing the funds on behalf of the European Commission, such as the Executive Agency for SMEs (EASME) or the Innovation & Networks Executive Agency (INEA).

The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund

The EMFF is a key supporter of the Blue Economy. Tailored to the seas and coasts, the Fund supports the diversification and sustainable development of maritime economies.

Almost half (47.6%) of the funds allocated by Member States under the EMFF are dedicated to increasing the competitiveness of SMEs in Blue Economy sectors. The Fund offers simplified access to funding through various advisory services, options for accelerated selection procedures, and advanced payments.

- finances projects that create new jobs and improve quality of life along European coasts;
- makes it easier for applicants to access financing.

More specifically, the EMFF:

- helps fishermen to transition to sustainable fishing;
- supports coastal communities looking to diversifying their economies;

How to apply:

Through national authorities managing the Operational Programmes (shared management) or through EASME (direct management)

Blue Economy budget:

€71 million

Type of finance available:

Co-finance projects with national funding, loans and guarantees, grants and procurements

Managed by:
EU Member States

€89% shared

and the European Commission
(11% direct management)

Overall budget:

€199 billion

(EU contribution);

€8.6 billion

(EU + national contribution)

Duration:
2014-2020



INvertebrateIT

Call: Blue Technology - transfer of innovative solutions to sea basin economies 2016

Project aim: To develop innovative approaches for the aquaculture sector, particularly using organic waste in the production of invertebrates to be used for fish feed.

EMFF Contribution
€688 769

North Sea Solutions for Innovation in Corrosion for Energy (NeSSIE)

Call: Blue Technology - transfer of innovative solutions to sea basin economies 2016

Project aim: To draw on regional expertise to develop solutions for emerging opportunities in offshore renewable energy sources.

EMFF Contribution
€676 684

Blue Career Centre of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea

Call: Blue Careers in Europe 2016

Project aim: To launch a dedicated career centre that helps jobseekers learn new skills and improve existing ones in key blue sectors such as maritime transport, nautical tourism and aquaculture.

EMFF Contribution
€551 810

Maritime Clusters Network for Blue Growth (Blue NET)

Call: Projects in the context of the Integrated Maritime Policy in the Black Sea and/or Mediterranean Sea regions 2015

Project aim: To develop SMEs' collaboration and networking among maritime clusters in the Adriatic, Ionian and Black Seas. The projects also aim to diffuse innovation and achieve added value in relation to the maritime policy of the target area.

EMFF Contribution
€223 237

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

The ERDF offers numerous opportunities for investing in the Blue Economy by supporting programmes in areas such as sustainable tourism, the protection of biodiversity, renewable energy, transport and fisheries. Regional and local authorities increasingly allocate budget for investments in the maritime economy, as the Commission encourages mainstreaming of blue investments in the ERDF.

Duration:
2014-2020

Overall budget:
€199 billion
(EU contribution);

€280 billion
(EU + national contribution)

Blue Economy budget:

€5.5 million

Type of finance available:

Co-finance projects with national funding, loans, guarantees, equity, grants and procurements

How to apply: Through national or regional authorities managing the Operational Programmes

Oceanic Platform of the Canary Islands (PLOCAN)

Project aim: To promote the economic growth of the Canary Islands by developing an innovative research and production base in the marine and maritime sectors.

ERDF Contribution

€7.1 million

(ERDF Operational Programme of the Canary Islands thematic 2007-2013 Priority axis: Development of the knowledge economy)

Sustainable heritage management of Waterway Regions (SWARE)

INTERREG Within the ERDF, INTERREG helps implement cross-border solutions and offers funding opportunities with Blue Economy sectors – particularly through programmes centred on sea basins.

Project aim: To achieve a better balance between the protection and sustainable exploitation of the natural and cultural resources of waterway regions by improving development programmes and sharing good practices.

INTERREG contribution:

€1.4 million

(INTERREG Europe 1st Call - Priority axis: Environment and resource efficiency)

Cohesion Fund (CF)

The Cohesion Fund aims to reduce economic disparities and promote sustainable development. In terms of the Blue Economy, it supports trans-European networks and environmental projects.

Duration: 2014-2020

European Social Fund (ESF)

Supporting jobs, helping people find work and ensuring fairer job opportunities for all are the aims of the ESF. The Fund provides support to SMEs to help them improve their competitiveness and invests in Europe's human capital. Programmes in coastal regions can help to strengthen training and education in the marine and maritime sectors.

Duration:
2014-2020

Overall budget:)

€84 billion

(EU contribution);

€121 billion

(EU + national contribution)

Blue Economy budget:

€5.5 million

Type of finance available:

Co-finance projects with public or private funding

How to apply: Through national or regional authorities managing the Operational Programmes

Highland Energy Collaboration

Project aim: To meet labour market needs in the renewable sector and establish an engineering training programme for young people.

ESF Contribution

€640,000

(Priority axis: Opening Pathways To Work, Creating Chances For Youth)

**Blue Economy budget:
More than**

€2 billion

Type of finance available:

Co-finance projects (grants), loans, guarantees, equity

How to apply: Through national or regional authorities managing the Operational Programmes

Overall budget:

€63 billion

(EU contribution)

€75 billion

(EU + national contribution)

Modernisation of the Piast Canal

Project aim: To upgrade portions of the Piast Canal in order to improve access to inland ports and mitigate damage from tidal surges and flooding.

ESF contribution:

€62 million

(OP Infrastructure and Environment 2007-2013 - Priority axis: Environment-friendly transport)



Horizon 2020: Whats in it for me?

Horizon 2020 is the EU's largest research and innovation programme. Designed to drive economic growth and job creation, the programme promises breakthroughs, discoveries and world-firsts by taking great ideas from the lab to the market.

€260 million is allocated annually to maritime and marine projects. This funding is being integrated across all challenges and priorities of Horizon 2020 and a specific H2020 Blue Growth Call has also been launched.

Projects can also access funding through various other branches of Horizon 2020 too, such as other parts of the Societal Challenges pillar or through the Leadership in Enabling and Industrial Technologies pillar.

Marine Investment for the Blue Economy (MARIBE)

Horizon 2020 contribution

€2 million

(Call: Blue Growth - Unlocking the potential of Seas and Oceans. Topic: Preparing for the future innovative offshore economy)

Project aim: Exploring cooperation opportunities and multi-use of space for companies that combine different Blue Economy sectors. MARIBE aims to:

1. promote cooperation between sectors and foster new business partnerships;
2. promote the Blue Growth sector;
3. stimulate interest and empower stakeholders to significantly increase investor and industry stakeholder participation in Blue Growth;
4. create comprehensive databases that will act as a resource for the Blue Growth sector.

Duration:
2014-2020

Overall budget:

€77 billion
(EU contribution)

Blue Economy budget:

€260 million annually

Implemented by: European Commission (DGs and executive agencies), public-public/public-private partnerships, European Institute of Innovation and Technology, European Investment Bank

Type of finance available: Grants, prizes, loans, guarantees, equity

How to apply: Through calls for proposals and financial instruments in areas identified by the biannual work programmes

European Innovation Council (EIC) pilot

The EIC pilot brings together the parts of Horizon 2020 that provide funding, advice and networking opportunities for those at the cutting edge of innovation. It features various complementary instruments to support innovative companies:

- **Horizon 2020 SME Instrument:** Available to SMEs alone, the scheme offers phased, progressive and complementary support to the development of out-of-the-box ideas for products, services or processes that are ready to conquer global markets
- **Fast Track to Innovation (FTI):** The FTI funds relatively mature, ground-breaking technologies, concepts and business models that are close to market.
- **Future and Emerging Technologies (FET):** The FET Open promotes collaborative, inter-disciplinary research and innovation on future and emerging technologies.
- **EIC Horizon Prizes:** Prizes are awarded to whoever can most effectively meet a defined challenge, without prescribing how that challenge should be solved.

Sea Litter Critters

Horizon 2020 SME Instrument contribution:

€50 000

Project aim: To explore the potential of a compact, unmanned and self-sufficient marine litter collection and treatment vessel, powered by renewable resources, that will help to minimise the pollution risks linked to plastics in the sea.

aPad

Horizon 2020 Future and Emerging Technologies:

€100 000

Project aim: To develop the Autonomous Unmanned Marine Surface vehicle 'aPad', into a commercially attractive, sustainable and innovative product that addresses societal challenges and is highly competitive in global markets.

InToTidal

Horizon 2020 Fast Track to Innovation:

€2 million

Project aim: To develop and demonstrate an integrated solution for offshore tidal power plants, and make it ready for successful commercial business application.

Horizon 2020 INNOSUP

Calls for proposals and tenders under Horizon 2020 INNOSUP are part of a broader effort to develop an ecosystem of innovation support for SMEs in Europe. Some actions provide Member States and regions with opportunities to enhance their services, while others focus on the identification, development and dissemination of skills and expertise among SMEs

New cross sectorial value chains creation across Europe facilitated by clusters for SMEs's INnovation in Blue Growth (NEPTUNE)

Horizon 2020 INNOSUP contribution:

€4.6 million

Project aim: To foster the development of Blue Growth industries in Europe by directly supporting SMEs, and integrating new technologies and know-how into cross-sectoral and cross-border industrial value chains.

Other programmes and funds

LIFE+

LIFE+ is the EU's funding instrument for the environment and climate action. The instrument contributes to the implementation, updating and development of EU environmental and climate policy and legislation by co-financing projects with European added value. While projects with a marine component are not directly targeted, support is available for projects in the sustainable energy, environment and climate fields. **Managed by** the EU Executive Agency for SMEs (EASME)

Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs (COSME)

The general objective of the COSME programme is to promote entrepreneurship and improve the business environment for SMEs. While not designed specifically for the Blue Economy, COSME's services and financing opportunities can be accessed by SMEs within the Blue Economy sectors. **Managed by** the EU Executive Agency for SMEs (EASME)

Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)

The CEF promotes growth, jobs and competitiveness through targeted infrastructure investment at European level. Support is available for the maritime sectors, particularly through the Motorways of the Seas policy, which focuses on projects related to port infrastructure, lowering the carbon footprint and compliance with air quality legislation. **Managed by** the Innovation & Networks Executive Agency (INEA)

EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS)

The EU ETS plays a central role in the EU's efforts to combat climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in a cost-effective way. Through the NER 300 programme, the EU ETS supports the deployment of innovative renewable energy technologies and low-carbon energy demonstration projects. **Managed by** DG CLIMA (European Commission)

Investment Plan for Europe

The European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI) is one of the three pillars of the Investment Plan for Europe. Launched jointly by the European Investment Bank and the Commission, the EFSI aims to overcome the current investment gap in the EU by mobilising private financing for strategic investments. In terms of the Blue Economy, the Plan focuses mainly on maritime infrastructure projects. **Co-managed by** the European Commission and the European Investment Bank

Find out more

Additional support instruments:

European Commission

EU Results database:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/euprojects/search-projects_en

ESI Funds Open Data Platform:

<https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/>

Community Research and Development Information Service (CORDIS):

<https://cordis.europa.eu/>

EIC SME Instrument data hub:

<https://sme.easme-web.eu/>

European Investment Project Portal:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eipp/>

Ficompass advisory service (in partnership with EIB):

<https://www.fi-compass.eu/news/2016/10/new-advisory-services-fi-compass>

European Investment Bank

European Investment Advisory Hub:

<http://eiah.eib.org/>