BlueActionAA Transition Agenda Call – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

EMPOWERING COMMUNITY- LED ACTION IN THE ATLANTIC & ARCTIC

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BLUEACTIONAA

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PLOCAN Plataforma Oceánica de Canarias

NIVA Norwegian Institute for Water Research

universidade de aveiro

SDU University of Southern Denmark

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BlueActionAA - Transition Agenda Call (BAAT-01)

Frequently asked questions

1. About the call

Q1. What is the BlueActionAA Transition Agenda Call (BAAT-01)?

BAAT-01 is a cascading grant call under the BlueActionAA project to support **the development of transition agendas** in the Atlantic and Arctic basins that protect, restore and reduce pollution in marine and freshwater ecosystems, and advance a carbon-neutral, circular blue economy. It funds organisations and consortia to develop plans or roadmaps as a first step towards delivery of innovative solutions aligned with the EU Mission "Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030".

Q2. What are the main objectives of the call?

Projects must contribute to at least one of the Mission Ocean and Waters objective areas:

1. **Protect and restore ecosystems and biodiversity**, e.g. protected areas, ecological corridors, seabed and coastal restoration, free-flowing rivers.

2. **Prevent and eliminate pollution**, including plastic and microplastics, nutrient losses and chemical pesticides.

3. **Advance a sustainable, carbon-neutral and circular blue economy**, including net-zero maritime emissions and low-impact, circular uses of marine and water space.

Q3. What is meant by "transition agenda"?

For the purposes of this call, a Transition Agenda is a strategic roadmap or actionable multi-year plan to support the achievement of the Mission "Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030". It sets out priorities, specific actions, expected results and impacts, and identifies concrete pathways for implementation,

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scaling and future financing, with a focus on the Mission objectives most relevant to the specific community that is targeted.

Q4. What is the total budget and how much funding is available per project?

The call will distribute a total of **EUR 1,000,000** in the form of lump-sum grants. Project proposals can request up to **EUR 100,000**. At least **ten projects** are expected to be funded.

Q5. What is the expected project duration?

Projects must last between **6** and **18 months**.

Q6. What are the key dates?

- Call opening: **30/01/2026**
- Proposal deadline: **29/05/2026, 14:00 Brussels time (CEST)**
- Evaluation period: **01/06/2026 – 29/09/2026**
- Communication of results: **30/09/2026**
- Sub-Grant Agreement Signature: **01/10/2026-30/10/2026**
- Starting date of the projects: **4/11/2026**

Q7. What is the EoI – Expression of Interest? Is it compulsory? Is there a deadline to complete this?

The Expression of Interest – EoI aims to gather preliminary interest from potential applicants for the call, identify local challenges and needs and identify the potential needs about technical assistance.
This is not compulsory but very useful for the Consortium.
There is no deadline to complete this.
The link to the Call EoI is the following:
https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=NnrLEgkfpES2FLPqyv-

3GEyBlLxIwxNMiTgofnU_E2BUODA1NVpYTDdLOVMxU0E1M0E2TzFRVjBQUSQlQCN0PWcu&route=shorturl

2. Eligibility and consortium requirements

Q.8 What is the eligibility check?

Once the deadline for application is reached, the ESF will proceed with the eligibility check: they will make sure that the applications are eligible in term of:

- Countries of the applicant (and co applicant(s))
- Entities of the applicant (and co applicant(s))
- Composition of consortium in accordance with the call guidelines
- Format of the application (all the questions are answered, number of words, font and size of the text, number of pages,

Q9. Which countries are eligible?

Applicants must be located in:

- EU Member States (including outermost regions)
- Overseas Countries and Territories linked to EU Member States
- Horizon Europe associated countries at the time the BlueActionAA grant entered into force (01/09/2025), including e.g. Norway, Iceland, UK, Canada, New Zealand, etc.

Countries not covered by this list are not eligible.

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Q10. Can an entity outside of the area of action be a partner in a consortia ?

Yes, you can have actors in the consortia that are not based in the area of actions but from the eligible countries.

Q11. Can parties/actors from non-eligible areas participate in the project ?

Participation is possible in a project, however, they cannot be co-applicants in the project with funding allocated to them.
Nevertheless, they can be included as subcontractors (respecting the sub-contracting conditions) if they have a specific expertise.

Q12. Are associated partners (i.e. partners not receiving funding) allowed to participate in a project?

Yes, associated partners are allowed. However, their involvement must be clearly justified and credible in the proposal. It is strongly recommended to provide evidence of their commitment (e.g. a letter of support). Simply mentioning their participation without any formal confirmation may be viewed unfavourably by evaluators.

Q13. Is there a preference between transnational actions or local/regional actions ?

The focus of call is on local/regional impact but transnational actions are also welcome.

Q14. Additional questions on the topic of countries

Can the project be transnational across European partners ? Yes

a) Is there a limit of entities per country ?

No

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b) Is there a possibility to have several partners from the same country ?

Yes

c) Is a project focusing on the Carribean territories eligible ?

Yes, as long as these concern territories linked to the EU member States. (Dutch, French, etc)

d) Should we cover both the Atlantic and Arctic or can we focus on a specific area?

There is no need to cover both the Atlantic and Arctic

Q15. Which types of organisations can apply (Target Groups)?

Five main Target Groups are eligible:

1. Regional and local public authorities
2. NGOs, foundations, professional, civil society and citizen associations (especially those active in local development / nature conservation)
3. SMEs and large enterprises
4. Cultural and educational organisations
5. Relevant EU research infrastructures, research organisations and academia

Examples include port authorities, fishing and aquaculture communities, maritime operators, tourism organisations, conservation groups and locally based companies. Small and community-based organisations are particularly welcome; evaluation will look at proportionality between budget and capacity.

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Q16. What are the consortium requirements?

- Applications are welcome from individual entities (single applicant submission) or from multi-partner consortia..
- Consortia should have no more than **6 partners**.
- At least **one consortium member must have an established link with the local/regional communities** concerned (e.g. operating locally or running local projects).
- Proposals are expected to focus activity and deliver impact within the Atlantic and Arctic Basin area.

Q17. What does the "link with local and regional communities" mean ?

As the call focuses on producing plans for regional/community plans and solutions to the Mission Ocean objective, the consortia needs to demonstrate that their plan directly benefits their specific region/area or that their plan has the credibility to be considered as a plan by and for the community.
Example : a regional authority being part of the consortium; entities that have clear links to the region in question, etc...

Q18. Does all of the consortium members need to have an established link with local/regional communities?

No, the rule states the following: **at least one consortium member must have an established link with local/regional communities"**
→ if other consortium members are not established within those communities, it is not an issue as long as at least one local actor is engaged in the project AND the project's impact is focused on the Atlantic or Arctic regions.
Nevertheless, you should demonstrate HOW concretely "other consortium members" will contribute to the expected impact and which role they will play in the activities.

Q19. Are research projects eligible?

No, researchers can be part of the project, but this should not be a focus of the project.

- While Horizon Europe overall falls into the category of Research, this specific EU Horizon Europe Topic and Call, is about deployment of already existing solutions (Community-let action call (CLA) in particular), and creating actionable, to-be-concretely-implemented roadmaps (Transition Agenda (TA) calls). Applied Research can be valuable part of such proposals, but they should not necessarily constitute the focus of this. In that sense, "academic research may not be considered eligible".

Q20. Can universities or research organisations coordinate?

Yes, research organisations and academic/educational institutions can coordinate project proposals. However, the call prioritises community-led, impact-oriented actions rather than academic research-driven projects. Proposals for activities that are primarily research-focused may be considered ineligible.

Q21. Are BlueActionAA partners allowed to apply?

No. BlueActionAA consortium partners, their affiliated entities and their employees are not eligible to apply for or receive financial support through this call.

Q22. Is it possible to be involved in an application but not as an applicant or co-applicant?

Yes, there can be extra entities like supporting organisations, associated partners, providing that they are not receiving funding.

There is a possibility to have entities employed as sub-contractors, within the subcontracting rules. It is difficult to answer for all possible combinations, so please email info@blueactionaa.eu in case of any doubts.

Q23. What are the requirements for partner involvement and documentation when submitting a project application?

a) Letter of intent

Only the project coordinator is required to submit and sign the application. Letters of intent from project partners are not mandatory; their inclusion is left to the discretion of the consortium.

b) Consortium agreement

If the project involves the distribution of funds to co-applicants, a consortium agreement (or an equivalent document) will have to be established between the partners if the project is funded. This agreement will have to, among other elements, clearly define the allocation of funds within the consortium.

a) Letters of support

Letters of support are not mandatory; however, applicants are welcome to include them in their application. These letters are not counted within the 11-page limit and can be added either within the CV or at the end of the application.

3. Funding, budget and multiple submissions

Q24. How is the funding provided?

The grant is paid as a lump sum to the project coordinator. It covers all cost categories (personnel, travel, equipment, overheads, etc.). The coordinator is responsible for distributing funds within the consortium (normally via a consortium agreement).

Q25. Are there limits on budget structure?

All costs must be reasonable, aligned with standard accounting practices and with the proposed activities. Large-scale equipment or capital costs are not anticipated for the development of strategic agendas, roadmaps or plans as supported under this call. Overheads are eligible but cannot exceed 25% of the total requested budget.

Q26. Are subcontracting costs allowed?

Subcontracting is allowed but not for core/essential tasks. Core responsibilities (e.g. project management, whole work packages, key deliverables) must be carried out by the consortium team. Subcontracting is intended for specialist services (e.g. technical experts, translation, external facilitation) that support but do not replace the project's core work.

Q27. Are there mandatory budget items we must include?

Proposals should consider reserving budget for specific cost categories such as communication and networking, site visits, and participation in project monitoring meetings, as appropriate to the scope of the proposed activities.

Q28. Can an organisation submit more than one proposal?

An organisation may participate in more than one proposal submission. However, organisations can receive grant only once from BlueActionAA. In light of this restriction, applicants should therefore consider carefully which call they apply to and whether they wish to engage in more than one submission.

In the event that more than one proposal involving the same applicant is approved for funding, the BlueActionAA call secretariat will engage with the applicant and respective coordinators to facilitate a decision on which project the applicant wishes to be funded and to address any implications for approved project(s) for which they will not be eligible to receive funding.

Q29. Is there a limit to the amount of funding that organisations can receive?

Yes. An individual organisation cannot receive financial support of more than EUR 75,000 under the Transition Agenda call

Q30. What are the rules on double funding?

Applicants must declare that:

- They are not receiving other EU grants for the same work.
- They are not planning to submit the same (or substantially the same) work to other EU funding schemes.

BlueActionAA also coordinates with other Mission Ocean Cascade funding calls to detect overlaps. If a consortium/partner appears in multiple similar projects, they may be asked to choose one call and be removed from the others.

Q31. Can informal community groups apply?

Yes, however, informal groups (i.e. entities are not legally established) may need to:

- Partner with an eligible legal entity that will sign the grant agreement and manage the funds, or
- Establish a legal entity before contract signature.

Q32. Is co-funding required?

The funding rate is up to 100% of eligible project costs. Co-funding is not required, although it is welcomed.

Q33. What is the difference between co-funding and double funding?

- **Double funding** occurs when the *same work* is financed twice by different programmes (e.g., if BlueActionAA and one of its sister projects support the same activity). This is strictly prohibited.
- **Co-funding** refers to a situation where *additional activities* within the project are financed by an external source (for example, by a national government). This is allowed, provided that activities are clearly differentiated.

Q34. What costs are eligible?

Typical eligible costs include:

- Personnel costs directly working on the project
- Travel and subsistence for project activities
- Equipment, materials and consumables necessary for implementation
- Subcontracting (e.g. specialised studies, facilitation, communication)
- Communication, dissemination and stakeholder engagement activities

- Monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment
- Overheads/indirect costs (see Q24)

Costs must be reasonable, necessary, and incurred during the project period. A non-exhaustive list of eligible and ineligible costs is provided in the call guidelines.

Q35. Can overhead/indirect costs be claimed?

Yes. Indirect costs (e.g. administrative overheads) may be included as eligible costs in the project budget at a rate not exceeding 25% of eligible direct costs.

4. Project scope and duration

Q36. What is the expected project duration?

Projects are expected to run for a period of between 6-18 months. Proposals should justify the duration in relation to the work plan and expected results.

Q37. What types of activities are not eligible?

Examples (adapt to your scheme):

- Pure research without clear community-led implementation
- Large infrastructure works (e.g. major construction)
- Activities with significant negative environmental or social impacts
- Actions that primarily benefit a single private entity without clear public benefit

Any activity that conflicts with EU values, environmental legislation, or ethical standards is ineligible.

Q38. Is it possible to address all 3 Mission objectives?

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Yes, it is possible to address all 3 Mission objectives. You are not obligated to specify a primary objective and the others as secondary but this might help evaluators when reviewing your application.

Q39. Is the call encouraging projects scaling-up solutions previously funded by the Mission in Phase 1 Atlantic – Arctic Setup & Piloting?

While the call does encourage projects that were previously funded under Phase 1 Atlantic – Arctic Setup & Piloting, it is not limited to these projects. New applications, including those that were not part of the Phase 1, are also welcome and eligible for consideration.

5. Application process

Q40. How do I apply?

Applications must be submitted via the online application system. Paper or email submissions will not be accepted. All call documents and relevant links are available on the BlueActionAA website:

https://blueactionaa.eu/transition-agenda-call-1/

Q41. In which language should applications be submitted?

Applications must be submitted in English.

Q42. What is the deadline for submission?

The deadline is **29/05/2026, 14:00 Brussels time (CET).** Late submissions cannot be accepted.

Q43. Is there a word limit, a page limit for the application?

Yes. There is a **word limit per question**, and the application **must not be longer than 11 pages?**

Longer Applications may be deemed ineligible.

6. Evaluation and selection

Q44. When will applicants be informed of the results?

We aim to inform applicants of funding decisions by the 30/09/2026.

Q45. Will I receive feedback on my proposal?

Yes. All applicants will receive summary evaluation comments explaining the strengths and weaknesses of their proposal.

Q46. What happens if my project is selected

Selected applicants will:

1. Receive a notification of award
2. Complete any requested clarifications
3. Sign a sub-grant agreement

The project can start on the date specified in the agreement.

7. Contracting, payments and project obligations

Q47. What is the Sub-Grant (Sub-Grantee) Agreement?

Selected projects sign a Sub-Grantee Agreement with the BlueActionAA consortium (represented by ESF). It sets out the rights and obligations of both parties, including implementation duties, payment schedule, reporting, record-keeping, checks/audits, and rules on grant reduction or recovery.

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Q48. How and when will funds be paid?

Exact modalities are set out in the template sub-grant agreement available on our website.

Q49. How will payments be made?

The lump sum is paid in **instalments** according to a detailed payment schedule (Annex 2 of the Sub-Grantee Agreement). Payments are made in **euros** to a bank account specified by the beneficiary. Currency conversion costs on the beneficiary side are their responsibility.

Q50. Are financial documents required for reporting?

No, financial documents are not required, as this grant operates under a lump sum scheme. However, beneficiaries are expected to maintain proper accounting records, as they would for any other project. This is important in the event of an audit.

Q51. What are our main obligations as beneficiaries?

Key obligations include:

- Properly implementing the project and achieving the agreed milestones and outputs.
- Providing required documents and information on time.
- Immediately informing BlueActionAA of any major changes affecting implementation or eligibility.
- Keeping **original or legally valid digitised records** and documentation, and making them available for checks, reviews, audits and evaluations up to **six years after the end of the BlueActionAA project (31/08/2029 + 6 years)**.
- Cooperating with BlueActionAA's dissemination, communication and impact evaluation activities.

Q52. What happens if the project underperforms or breaches obligations?

If core obligations are not met, milestones are not achieved, or serious breaches occur (including false information, ethical breaches, inadequate documentation), BlueActionAA can:

- Reject specific payments or deliverables.
- Reduce the grant amount.
- Recover unduly paid amounts, including after project completion, potentially with late-payment interest and legal action according to national law.

In the event of unforeseeable and exceptional events beyond the control of the affected party may prevent the proper implementation of the Project, e.g., natural disasters, pandemics, unexpected government decisions the beneficiary must notify BlueActionAA in writing without delay, indicating the nature, expected duration, and foreseeable effects. The beneficiary is not considered in breach for obligations impacted by force majeure; however, if the situation cannot be resolved within six weeks after notification, BlueActionAA may decide to terminate the project and adjust payments accordingly.

8. Ethics, environment and social safeguards

Q53. What ethical requirements apply?

Projects must follow the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and address any ethical issues (e.g. vulnerable groups, personal data) in the application. Applicants accept a declaration of honour on ethics during submission. Proposals failing to adequately address ethical concerns or privacy aspects can be rejected and may be referred to an additional ethics review.

Q54. How is data protection handled?

ESF, as call coordinator, acts as Data Controller for data submitted through SmartSimple. The platform is operated in line with GDPR (EU 2016/679);

applicants must accept its terms. Application data may be shared with the BlueActionAA consortium, evaluators, ethics advisor and relevant European Commission officers. Data are retained for up to five years after the end of BlueActionAA to allow for audits.

Q55. How are conflicts of interest managed (for applicants and reviewers)?

- Applicants sign a Declaration on Conflict of Interest and Double Funding (Annex 4).
- External evaluators are selected via a separate call. Evaluators must sign a confidentiality and no-conflict declaration, and are screened for current or past affiliations with applicants before assignments.

9. Support and contact

Q56. Is there support available for preparing applications?

The BlueActionAA team will provide:

- Online information webinars
- A set of **FAQs** on the website (this document), updated regularly
- Optional **matchmaking / brokerage** support for building partnerships.

Details and registration links are available on the BlueActionAA project website.

Please contact info@blueactionaa.eu for any questions you might have related to topic specific questions.

In case of technical questions concerning the submission platform SmartSimple (operated by ESF) and/or the cascade call grant process please contact: technical.support@blueactionaa.eu

Please consult the call text and FAQs before contacting the helpdesk.

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