BlueAction Atlantic and Arctic awards €7 Million to Five Community-Led Projects Advancing Ocean Restoration Across the Atlantic and Arctic

Five innovative community-led initiatives have been awarded a combined €7 million through the BlueAction Atlantic and Arctic's (BlueActionAA) Community-Led Action Call. The funding will empower local communities to deliver practical soloutions for ocean and freshwater restoration acorss the Atlantic and Arctic regions. The projects were chosen from a highly competitive pool of more than 110 applications submitted across the Community-Led Action and Transition Agenda calls.

The projects will commence this month and run for up to 24 months. Spanning locations from Macaronesia and Scotland to Ireland, Iceland and northern Norway, they address local environmental challenges while demonstrating how communities can lead scalable solutions that address ecosystem restoration, biodiversity protection and sustainable blue economy development.

Collectively the projects contribute to the objectives of EU Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030 by restoring biodiversity restoration, reducing pressures on marine and freshwater environments, promoting sustainable resource management and developing innovative community led circular approaches in developing the blue economy.

Funded through Horizon Europe "Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030" BlueActionAA provides cascade funding grants that enable communities to take a leading role in restoring and protecting aquatic ecosystems. Together, the five projects represent an estimated €7 million investment involving 30 partner organisations across eight countries.

"*Restoring our ocean and waters cannot be achieved through policy or research alone. It requires the active participation of communities who understand their local environments and are committed to their long-term*

stewardship. These five projects demonstrate how community-led innovation can generate meaningful environmental impact while building resilience, creating opportunities and inspiring wider action across the Atlantic and Arctic regions."
Dr Niall McDonough, Director of Policy, Innovation and Research Support, Marine Institute, Project Coordinator, BlueAction Atlantic and Arctic.

Selected Projects

ATLAS AGÜITA

Portugal and Spain, Duration: 18 months

Connecting Madeira and Gran Canaria, ATLAS AGÜITA will establish a community observatory for tidal pool ecosystems. Through citizen science, biodiversity monitoring and the collection of local ecological knowledge, the project aims to strengthen coastal resilience and stewardship in Macaronesia.

CSI-Wester Ross

United Kingdom, Duration: 24 months

Working in Scotland's Wester Ross Marine Protected Area, CSI-Wester Ross will bring together local communities and scientists to improve marine monitoring and support ecosystem recovery. The project will develop a community-led model for marine management that can be replicated in other coastal regions.

MAB – Marine Algae Biorefinery

Ireland, Iceland and Portugal, Duration: 24 months

MAB will support the development of a community-based framework for sustainable seaweed management in Iceland. By combining local governance, ecosystem stewardship, and algae-based innovation, the project seeks to create new economic opportunities while protecting coastal resources.

MARISENSE

Ireland and Norway, Duration: 24 months

MARISENSE will establish a community-led network for marine monitoring, restoration and ocean education. Activities include habitat restoration, citizen science programmes and locally managed environmental monitoring systems designed to support long-term ecosystem recovery.

WAAVES

France, Norway and Canada, Duration: 24 months

WAAVES combines kelp forest restoration, circular economy innovation and youth engagement. The project will support the recovery of degraded coastal habitats while exploring new uses for marine resources and strengthening environmental stewardship among younger generations.

Key Numbers:

- €7 million awarded
- 5 community-led projects
- 30+ partner organisations
- 8 countries involved
- Up to 24 months duration
- Part of Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030, funded by Horizon Europe

More information is available on blueactionaa.eu.

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