

BLUE ECONOMY WORKING GROUP

ANNUAL PLAN 2023

WORKING GROUP LEADERS

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OBJECTIVES

The Working Group focuses on the blue economy covering both marine, maritime and water systems research and innovation areas with the intention to support members with their regional strategies in the field. Sustainability and the digital challenges related to the ocean, seas and water sectors are key issues. The group aims to foster participation in European funding programmes and initiatives and to build partnerships between members.

CONTEXT

What are the key EU level priorities, strategies, and events that the Working Group aims to follow up in 2023?

- EU Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030
- European Partnerships
 - Zero-Emission Waterborne Transport
 - Sustainable Blue Economy
 - Water4All
- Water Smart Territories Partnership (S3)
- Fit for 55 and REPowerEU
 - In the frame of maritime transport and offshore renewable energy
- European Commission proposal for cleaner air and water
- KIC on Water, Marine and Maritime Sectors and Ecosystems
- European Maritime Days, 24-25 May, Brest
- BlueInvest Day, 9 March, Brussels

Which funding programmes are important for the Working Group and how does the WG aim to facilitate project development?

- Horizon Europe Programme
 - Clusters 5 and 6
 - Mission Work Programme
- European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF)
- LIFE Programme
- European Territorial Cooperation Programmes

The Blue Economy WG will facilitate project development through an online session focused on the LIFE programme in spring 2023, once the new LIFE calls have been published.

How does the group support partnership building and collaborate with other European organisations or networks?

The Blue Economy WG will support partnership building through the organisation of an online project facilitation session. The WG will also follow and engage with the CSA projects responsible for setting up the lighthouse basins in the Ocean and Waters Mission, as well as closely work with the project responsible for setting up the implementation support platform for the Mission, in which ERRIN is a partner.

What topics and tailored activities could be proposed for less active regions, for example tackling topics directed to widening countries?

The WG will in 2023 address topics that are relevant to all regions, including regions of widening countries, such as marine and coastal biodiversity and the issue of water in relation to climate change. The WG will also look to engage regions from widening countries in project facilitation activities.

ACTIVITIES

Ocean and Waters Mission input for ERRIN's contribution to the Horizon consultation January/February 2023

The Blue Economy WG will provide input on the Ocean and Waters Mission for ERRIN's response to the European Commission's Horizon consultation. Members are encouraged to contact the WG leaders for any input related to the Mission that they would like to include in ERRIN's response to the consultation.

ERRIN's input on the Ocean and Waters Mission will be discussed with the WG members in the first WG meeting of the year, taking place on 3 February.

Blue Economy WG coffee meeting: Kicking off 2023

3 February 2023 | 9:00-10:30 (physical meeting)

This meeting will offer an opportunity for all Blue Economy WG members to come together to network and jointly kick off the WG activities for 2023. The WG leaders will present the annual plan for the new year, providing an opportunity for WG members to familiarise themselves with the planned activities and discuss their potential involvement in the planned work. ERRIN's input on the Ocean and Waters Mission for the European Commission's Horizon consultation will also be discussed.

This meeting will be an information and networking session directed towards Brussels-based people.

Implementation challenges and opportunities in Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters

29 March 2023 | 9:00-10:30 (online meeting)

The aim of this WG meeting is to discuss the implementation progress of the Ocean and Waters Mission in regions and highlight challenges and opportunities that regional stakeholders face in the implementation work. The Mission Secretariat will be invited to provide an update on the state of the Mission and to participate in the discussions. Regional stakeholders will be invited to present the challenges and opportunities that they experience and foresee in the implementation process.

This meeting will be an interactive online session focused on exchanging experiences and discussing with the European Commission representatives. The meeting is directed both towards Brussels-based people and regional stakeholders active in the implementation of the Mission.

LIFE project facilitation session: Marine and coastal biodiversity

4 May 2023 | 14:00-15:30 (online meeting)

This will be a two-part meeting, with the first part consisting of a presentation by the European Commission on the new funding opportunities under the circular economy and quality of life, nature and biodiversity, and climate change mitigation and adaptation sub-programmes of the LIFE programme. The focus will be on the calls relevant to marine, coastal and blue ecosystems as well as on the policy frameworks that the LIFE programme strongly links to. The second part of the meeting will focus on project facilitation with pitches by project proposals looking for partners to join their consortia.

This will be a combined online information and project facilitation session directed towards both Brussels-based people and regional stakeholders. The aim of the session is to present the new funding opportunities under some of the sub-programme of the LIFE programme, and to facilitate the building of consortia around pre-defined project proposals.

Water issues in the era of climate change

5 October 2023 | 10:00-11:30 (hybrid meeting)

Regions across Europe are experiencing water-related challenges, ranging from water scarcity to flooding, as a direct impact of climate change. Nature-based solutions represent natural and cost-effective solutions that simultaneously provide environmental, social and economic benefits to the local community. Many cities and communities have therefore adopted nature-based solutions to address the water-related problems that they are facing.

This WG meeting will discuss the water-related challenges experienced by regions and share best practices of nature-based solutions to tackle water-related challenges, including key enabling conditions for scaling up actions, such as successful financing schemes and cooperation between local stakeholders. Links will be made with relevant R&I initiatives in which regions are active, including the EU Mission on adaptation to climate change. The meeting will also provide an update on ERRIN's role in the Water4All Partnership.

This will be organised as a hybrid meeting directed towards Brussels-based people and regional stakeholders.

Producing and using clean energy in the maritime sector

November 2023 (online meeting)

In the Fit For 55 package, the European Commission proposed to raise EU's renewable energy target from 32% to 40% by 2030 (RED II revision). This proposal aims to increase the production and use of renewable energy and to enhance energy systems integration. This WG meeting will look at the EU approach to harness the potential of offshore renewable energy within the union, with examples of best practices from ERRIN members.

This meeting will be organised as an online meeting directed towards Brussels-based people and regional stakeholders.