# **Expression of Interest: Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership (SBEP)**

# **The Malta Council for Science and Technology is seeking suitable experts to participate in the scientific evaluation within the second call of the Horizon Europe transnational initiative: the Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership (SBEP).**

# Candidates must have expertise in at least one of the following Intervention Areas (PAs):

* Digital Twins of the Oceans (DTO) at regional sub basin scale
* Blue economy sectors, development of marine multi-use infrastructures
* Planning and managing sea-uses at the regional level
* Blue Bioresources

**DEADLINE: Thursday, 14th March 2024, 17:00 CET**

## **1.0 General**

This call is to seek suitable experts to participate as evaluators in the scientific evaluation process of the Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership pre- and full project proposals.

MCST is one of the research funding organisations from 26 countries that are part of this transnational initiative. Each partner involved in SBEP’s Second Joint Transnational Call entitled *“Unified Paths to a Climate-Neutral, Sustainable, and Competitive Blue Economy: Engaging Civil Society, Academia, Policy, and Industry”* has been asked to nominate a minimum of four experts for Priority Area (listed above) to form a pool of experts. Applications are broadly welcome regardless of nationality and/or country of residence, however experts based in Malta will be given priority in the list of nominations.

The chosen evaluators will then be assigned to scientifically evaluate a number of project proposals, in accordance with their area of expertise. **The selection of evaluators from the pool of experts is at SBEP’s Joint Call Secratariat’s sole discretion.**

This call is open to experts who will not participate in any of the SBEP’s pre- and full project proposals and having expertise in at least **one of the listed priority areas** as listed above.

## **2.0 About the Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership**

The Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership (SBEP) is a Horizon Europe Partnership which started in 2022. The Partnership aims to design, steer and support a just and inclusive transition to a regenerative, resilient and sustainable blue economy. SBEP aims to boost the transformation needed towards a climate-neutral, sustainable, productive and competitive blue economy by 2030 while creating and supporting the conditions for a healthy ocean for the people by 2050.

This Call is the second of a series of annual co-funded joint calls that will be launched by this Partnership to tackle priority areas drawn from the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda of the SBEP. This joint call shall pool national and regional financial resources through participation of ministries and funding organisations from 26 countries responsible for funding research and innovation actions in blue economy, with the financial support from the European Commission.

The second Joint Co-funded Call within the Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership is entitled *“Unified Paths to a Climate-Neutral, Sustainable, and Competitive Blue Economy: Engaging Civil Society, Academia, Policy, and Industry”* (listed in Section 3.2). These priority areas were selected to maximise participation while reinforcing the European blue economy through improved resilience of marine ecosystems, thus maximising the impact potential of funded projects. The priority areas embrace actionable routes from science to policy to observe, assess and mitigate the impact on vital ecological assets such as biodiversity and other ecosystem services on which our economies depend, thus supporting coastal communities.

For more information on the second call of the Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership, please consult the Call Documents available on the [Call Webpage](https://bluepartnership.eu/funding-opportunity/sustainable-blue-economy-partnerships-second-joint-transnational-call).

Briefly, project applicants must submit online their pre-proposals by the 10th of April 2024. Then, applicants invited to stage 2 will have to submit their full proposals by the November 2024.

## **3.0 Service Requirements**

**The selection of projects under this call follows a 2-stage process: stage 1: pre-proposal submission, and stage 2: full proposal submission.** At Stage 1, applicants must submit online their pre-proposals by the 10th of April 2024 (15h CET). Then, applicants invited to stage 2 will have to submit their full proposals by the 6th of November 2024 (15H CET).

**Each eligible (pre-)proposal will be evaluated by 3 IEC members.** The evaluation of preproposals must be carried out solely based upon the two criteria: Excellence and Impact. The evaluation of full proposals will be performed based upon the three criteria: Excellence, Impact, Quality and efficiency of implementation.

As an evaluator of the SBEP IEC, you would agree to evaluate at stage 1, a maximum of 10 pre-proposals, and at stage 2, a maximum of 6 full proposals. You would have to provide a written assessment report for each evaluated (pre-)proposal on the dedicated online platform (EPSS).

The evaluation periods will take place **between mid-May and end-June 2024 for the first stage, and between mid-December 2024 to end-February 2025.** The submitted projects will consist of a limited number of pages: 5 pages max of project description at Stage 1, 16 pages max of project description, in addition to administrative pages.

**All along the evaluation process, we foresee two IEC meetings for this ambitious call:**

* A 2 day meeting on **27-28 June 2024** to establish the final ranked list of pre-proposals (online);
* A 2 days final meeting on **20-21 February 2025 (provisional dates)** to establish the final ranked list of full proposals (in Paris - or online at the same dates under exceptional circumstances).

The names of the IEC members will be made public after the announcement of awards. Which IEC members assessed which proposals will however be kept confidential. Please note that the composition of the IEC may evolve between Stage 1 and Stage 2 according to the number of projects to evaluate and the thematics addressed.

## **4.0 Remuneration**

Financial remuneration will be provided to the evaluators by the SBEP Joint Call Secretariat and **NOT** by the Malta Council for Science and Technology. Each IEC member will receive a fee of 50 EUR for each evaluated pre-proposal and 100 EUR for each evaluated full proposal. In addition, each IEC member will receive a fee at each step that is fixed to a standard rate of 250 EUR for the attendance to meetings. The travel and accommodation for participating to the final IEC meeting will be covered by the Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership. **Please note that the attendance to the IEC meetings is mandatory.**

## **5.0 Evaluator Requirements**

Experts must, at minimum, hold a first degree and a post graduate qualification in a specific area of expertise, which is in line with the Priority Area chosen. They must show proof of at least five years of professional experience (or at least 2 years if in possession of a Ph. D) in the area of expertise.

Expert nominations will be compiled by the SBEP Joint Call Secretariat. The nomination shall include the full name of the nominated expert, title, contact details, current employment, nationality, field of expertise keywords and CV.

## **6.0 Conflicts of Interest (COI)**

It is imperative that the nominated experts are by no means affiliated with any active project proposal and/or the SBEP in any way. **Please consider that your availability as evaluator in the International Evaluation Committee will be checked against any potential conflict of interest.** Therefore, if you decide to apply to the 2024 SBEP co-funded Call at a later stage, the Joint Call Secretariat should be notified as soon as possible. All evaluators are required to declare their independence to the projects and the SBEP to avoid any conflict of interest.

A COI exists if a candidate:

* is involved in the preparation of any of the SBEP project pre-proposals or proposals.
* stands to benefit directly / indirectly if the proposal is positively evaluated.
* has a family / personal relationship with any person that is part of a consortium that has submitted a research project pre-proposal.

## **7.0 Instructions and Application**

Interested candidates are to submit the following documentation:

* Filled in Annex 1: Submission Form
* A detailed Curriculum Vitae

The requested documentation shall be sent electronically to eusubmissions.mcst@gov.mt, with “SBEP Call for Experts 2024” as a subject heading. Applications should be received by not later than **Thursday, 14th March 2024, 17:00 CET**. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered. It is the responsibility of the experts to ensure that they are provided with a written confirmation of receipt of their application.

Interested parties may also contact one of the national contact points for the SBEP, Ms. Christy Baldacchino, on +356 2360 2158 or christy.baldacchino.2@gov.mt, for additional information.

*Data Protection Clause: The information collected through this Call shall be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act, Chapter 586 of the Laws of Malta* *and Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation). The contents remain confidential and solely intended for the use of this Call’s purpose and will not be disclosed or copied without your consent. Submitted information will be retained for a period of ten (10) years from the date that the SBEP ends.*

## **Annex 1: Submission Form**

*Kindly fill in the following form with the requested information, sign and submit together with a detailed CV.*

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| --- | --- |
| Full Name | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Gender | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Nationality | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Email Address | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Phone (incl. Country Code) | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Position | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Organisation Name | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Highest level of Education | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Main Field of Expertise | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Describe your expertise in 3-5 keywords | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Expertise in Ethics/ Ethical Reviews | Choose an item. |
| Priority Area most relevant to your expertise (Primary)[[1]](#footnote-1)  | Choose an item. |
| Priority Area most relevant to your expertise (Secondary)[[2]](#footnote-2) *if applicable* | Choose an item. |

Kindly read the call text [link] section …. To get acquainted with the area of expertise required for each IA

[ ]  I consent that the above documents provided are shared with SBEP Joint Call Secretariat for the selection of evaluators for the SBEP First Joint Transnational Call.

[ ]  I consent that the SBEP Joint Call Secretariat discloses information in the public domain in relation to the evaluators throughout the review process including name, surname and area of specialization.

[ ]  I confirm that a detailed CV has been attached to the form.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Signature |  |
| Date | Click or tap to enter a date. |

1. Kindly Read the SBEP Call Text [here](https://bluepartnership.eu/funding-opportunity/sustainable-blue-economy-partnerships-second-joint-transnational-call) to get acquainted with the area of expertise required for each Intervention Area [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Kindly Read the SBEP Call Text [here](https://bluepartnership.eu/funding-opportunity/sustainable-blue-economy-partnerships-second-joint-transnational-call) to get acquainted with the area of expertise required for each Intervention Area [↑](#footnote-ref-2)