



SOS2LearnDBS

Danube – Black Sea

Source to Sea: Leveraging community knowledge and action for restoring the Danube River basin and the Black Sea region

COMMUNITY-LED PILOT ACTIONS

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

&

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

OC-CLed-SoS2LearnDBS-2025

Deadline for submissions: 30th of March 2026



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SoS2LearnDBS calls for innovative community-led pilot actions to restore aquatic ecosystems and empower local communities across the Danube River basin and Black Sea region.

Overview

The **SoS2LearnDBS** project invites consortia to submit proposals for funding to implement innovative, community-led pilot actions that contribute to the restoration of our waters in the Danube River basin and Black Sea region. This Open Call provides a **total budget of up to €7 million**, which will be distributed across all selected projects. The funding aims to support grassroots initiatives that address environmental challenges while strengthening local capacity, empowering communities, and fostering cross-regional collaboration.

What we fund:	Who can apply:	Where:
<p>Community-led projects (with 18-30 months duration) implementing innovative and replicable solutions in Habitat Restoration and Protection, Pollution Prevention, and Sustainable Blue Economy, contributing to the objectives of the EU Mission “Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030”.</p>	<p>Consortia of 3 to 7 independent legal entities located in EU Member States or Horizon Europe Associated Countries.</p> <p>The consortium leader shall be based in the Danube-Black Sea region and at least one partner must represent local communities.</p>	<p>Projects must take place in one of the five target regions: Upper Danube, Middle Danube, Lower Danube, Danube Delta, or Black Sea.</p> <p>We aim to fund a minimum of 2 projects per region.</p>
When:	Funding:	Support provided:
<p>Submission deadline: 30th March 2026, 17:00 CET</p> <p>Projects expected starting date: 1st September 2026</p>	<p>Two funding tiers: €200,000-€400,000 or €500,000-€1,000,000 per project</p> <p>Maximum per organisation: €500,000</p>	<p>Selected projects will receive technical assistance from SoS2LearnDBS partners, capacity-building activities, networking opportunities, access to the Mission Implementation Platform, and communication support throughout implementation.</p>

About SoS2LearnDBS Project

SoS2LearnDBS¹ (Source to Sea: Leveraging community knowledge and action for restoring the Danube River basin and the Black Sea region) is a Research and Innovation Action funded under the Horizon Europe Programme by the European Commission (Grant Agreement No. 101217667)². It is implemented by 12 partners: [INOVA+](#) (coordinator), [STEINBEIS](#), [ADRM](#), [UNIZAG-FSB](#), [GEOECOMAR](#), [BOKU](#), [DDNI](#), [UB](#), [PKS](#), [IAD](#), [VSC-DA](#), [MUNBUD](#). The project operates within the framework of the EU Mission “Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030”³.

The Danube River basin and Black Sea region face interconnected environmental challenges including biodiversity loss, water pollution, eutrophication, habitat degradation, and climate change impacts. These challenges require innovative, locally adapted solutions that combine scientific knowledge with community expertise and traditional ecological practices.

SoS2LearnDBS is dedicated to restoring the ecosystems of the **Danube River Basin and the Black Sea region** through the **active participation of local communities**. The project seeks to empower local stakeholders with the tools, knowledge and support to implement sustainable water management practices, thus contributing to the protection and restoration of freshwater and marine ecosystems.

A core part of the project’s vision is the creation of **learning communities** for sustainable water management, collaborative local networks where residents, practitioners, authorities, and experts work together to build water literacy, exchange knowledge, and co-develop solutions adapted to regional challenges.

The vision combines **innovative, nature-based solutions** with **community engagement** to foster a collaborative approach towards environmental sustainability.

SoS2LearnDBS relies on the active engagement of local communities and stakeholders. Throughout its lifetime, **SoS2LearnDBS** will invite organisations to submit their proposals for Community-Led Actions and Transition Agendas through calls for funding. The present document describes the call for Community-Led Actions.

¹ <https://sos2learndbs.eu/>

² <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101217667>

³ <https://missionoceanwaters.eu/#/>

1. CALL DESCRIPTION

1.1 Expected Outcomes

Projects funded under this call must contribute to the following outcomes in the Danube River basin and Black Sea region:

- 1. Stronger community leadership and capacity for long-term water protection.** Danube-Black Sea region's communities gain the skills, confidence and resources to lead restoration and pollution-reduction efforts in their rivers, lakes, seas and coastal areas. Local communities build lasting capacity to manage and protect their water environments well beyond the project period.
- 2. Proven innovative solutions delivering measurable environmental and societal improvements in Danube-Black Sea region.** Projects test and demonstrate practical, community-led solutions (integrating technological, nature-based, social, cultural, regulatory, financial or governance innovations) that provide verifiable evidence of effectiveness, usability, environmental and societal impact under real conditions in the Danube-Black Sea region.
- 3. Enhanced multi-stakeholder collaboration and knowledge exchange.** Projects bring together diverse actors (communities, local authorities, researchers, SMEs, civil society organisations, underrepresented stakeholders, etc.) to cooperate, build shared understanding of sustainable water management practices, and foster collective capacity to address complex water challenges. Projects effectively integrate Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) expertise and social innovation to match innovative solutions with real community needs, ensuring sustainable engagement, behaviour change and long-term impact on community practices and values.
- 4. Increased readiness for regional deployment and transferability of solutions.** Projects generate practical results, methods, and tools that can be replicated or adapted in other communities across the Danube-Black Sea basin, with community-led monitoring and local data supporting evidence-based decision-making. Projects develop deployment plans that outline clear pathways, technical requirements, institutional arrangements, funding attraction and timelines for replication and upscaling beyond the project period and geographical scope.
- 5. Strengthened verifiable contribution to the Mission Ocean and Waters' objectives and targets.** Projects deliver quantifiable progress towards one or more objectives and targets of the Mission Ocean and Waters, contributing with examples, stories, data, methodologies and lessons that strengthen the Mission-wide monitoring framework and inspire further community-driven action across Europe.

1.2 Call Scope

The Danube-Black Sea basin faces distinct yet interconnected environmental, social, and governance challenges that require locally adapted, community-driven solutions. The main objective of this Open Call is to empower local communities across the Danube River Basin and Black Sea to take an active role in addressing environmental and societal challenges through the implementation of grassroots solutions.

Funded projects under this Call must contribute to at least one of the three objectives of the EU Mission “Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030”, and at least one of their related targets⁴ (Figure 1), while addressing specific local/regional challenges (Annex 1).

Addressing multiple objectives will be considered positively in the evaluation process, as this allows delivering co-benefits across environmental restoration, pollution reduction, and sustainable economic development.

The three interlinked Mission objectives are:

- **Objective 1: Protect and restore marine and freshwater ecosystems and biodiversity.**
- **Objective 2: Prevent and eliminate pollution of our ocean, seas and waters.**
- **Objective 3: Make the sustainable blue economy carbon-neutral and circular.**

Objective 1 Protect and restore marine and freshwater ecosystems and biodiversity	Objective 2 Prevent and eliminate pollution of our oceans, seas and waters	Objective 3 Make the sustainable blue economy carbon-neutral and circular
Contribute to relevant marine nature restoration targets including degraded seabed habitats and coastal ecosystems	Reduce nutrient losses by 50%	Achieve net zero maritime emissions
Protect at least 30% of the EU's seas and integrate ecological corridors, as part of a true Trans-European Nature Network	Reduce the use and risk of chemical pesticides by 50%	Develop zero-carbon and low-impact aquaculture
Strictly protect at least 10% of the EU's seas	Reduce plastic litter at sea by 50%	Promote circular, low-carbon multi-purpose use of marine and water space
Restore at least 25,000 km of free/flowing rivers	Reduce by 30% microplastics released into the environment	
Related policy: EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030	Related policy: Action Plan Towards Zero Pollution	Related policy: European Green Deal European Climate Law

Figure 1 – Objectives and targets of the EU Mission “Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030”
 (Policy Brief 1/2025, Monitoring of the EU Mission “Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030”)

⁴ As described in the implementation plan of the Mission “Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030” https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-09/ocean_and_waters_implementation_plan_for_publication.pdf

⁵ <https://water.europa.eu/marine/europe-seas/eu-mission-restore-our-oceans-and-water/mission-ocean-briefing-1-25>

1.3 Available Budget and Funding Structure

The **SoS2LearnDBS** Cled Open Call funding is designed to enable impactful, long-term actions. A minimum of ten (10) projects will be supported. To achieve this, the Open Call provides funding for projects at two levels: Tier 1 projects, which can receive between €200,000 and €400,000, and Tier 2 projects, which can receive between €500,000 and €1,000,000.

A minimum of ten projects will be selected for funding, with careful attention to ensuring balanced representation across the Danube Basin and Black Sea regions, which include the Upper Danube, Middle Danube, Lower Danube, the Danube Delta, and the Black Sea. For each region, at least one project per funding tier will be financed.

This will ensure balanced regional representation and meaningful contribution to the overarching objectives of the **SoS2LearnDBS** and Mission Ocean objectives.

The budget structure, and funding parameters are summarised below to guide applicants in preparing their proposals (Table 1).

Table 1 - Overview of Funding Parameters for the SoS2LearnDBS Cled Open Call

Parameter	Description
Total budget available	€7,000,000 for the OC-Cled- SoS2LearnDBS -2025 open call ⁶ ;
Number of projects to be funded	Minimum of 10 community-led actions
Minimum and Maximum funding per project*	<p>Funding tiers 1: €200,000-€400,000 per project Smaller in scale, for targeted initiatives or pilot projects that address specific regional or thematic challenges.</p> <p>Funding tiers 2: €500,000-€1,000,000 per project Larger in scale, potentially covering multiple categories of eligible activities, addressing more complex challenges aiming for broad, lasting impact.</p>
Maximum funding per organisation	€500.000
Project duration	Between 18 and 30 months
Minimum action to be funded by region of the Danube River basin and Black Sea	Two (2) per region Upper Danube (2), Middle Danube (2), Lower Danube (2), Danube Delta (2) and Black Sea (2)
Funding rate:	100% of eligible costs (co-financing is not mandatory)
Type of grant:	Lump sum ⁷
Cost categories	<p>Personnel costs: Estimated expenses for staff working on the project, based on expected effort and standard salary levels;</p> <p>Travel and accommodation: Project-related travel, accommodation and subsistence;</p> <p>Equipment: Depreciation costs for equipment used in the project;</p> <p>Other goods, works and services: Expenses for other items or services directly linked to the project (e.g. consumables, dissemination materials, printing, translations, materials, supplies,</p>

⁶ The SoS2LearnDBS Consortium reserves the right not to award all available funds or to redistribute them between the open calls planned within the project, depending on the quality of the applications received and the results of the evaluation.

⁷ Lump Sum is a simplified funding mechanism where the EU contribution is paid as a fixed amount without the need to report actual costs. Payments are made based on the completion of predefined and agreed activities, not based on real cost reimbursement. This model makes the process more efficient for beneficiaries.

	<p>native plants, seeds, monitoring equipment, educational materials, etc.);</p> <p>Subcontracting: Costs for external providers contracted to perform specific tasks that cannot be carried out by the project beneficiary(ies). <u>It cannot exceed 30% of total project requested grant;</u></p> <p>Indirect costs: Flat rate of 25% applied to direct costs (following Horizon Europe rules).</p>
Minimum budget to be reserved for joint activities with the SoS2LearnDBS consortium	<p>Funding Tier 1: A minimum of 10% of the total project budget.</p> <p>Funding Tier 2: A minimum of 4% of the total project budget.</p>
No-profit rule applies:	Beneficiaries cannot make profit from the grant
No double funding:	Projects cannot receive funding from multiple EU sources for the same activities. If you would like to nonetheless benefit from different EU funding opportunities, projects must be designed as different actions, clearly delineated and separated for each grant (without overlaps).

*All payments will be subject to tax and other reductions according to the laws of all involved countries.

1.4 Timeline

The indicative schedule for the different stages of the open call can be consulted in Table 2

Table 2 - Open Call Timetable

Stage of the Open Call	Planned Date
Call opening	27 November 2025
Deadline for submission	30 March 2026
Evaluation & Selection	31 March 2026-30 June 2026
Information on evaluation results	10 July 2026
Sub-grant agreement signature	31 August 2026
Project execution timeframe	Start: 1 September 2026 End: February 2028 (18 months) to 28 February 2029 (30 months).

2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

All applicants must meet ALL the following eligibility criteria (subsection 2.1- 2.5). Proposals failing to meet any criterion will be deemed ineligible and will not be evaluated.

2.1 Applications' eligibility

I. Submission Requirements:

- Proposals are to be submitted through the official [SoS2LearnDBS Community-Led \(CLed\) Open Call page](#), by the deadline of submission. Applications submitted via other channels or after the deadline will not be considered.

II. Consortium Eligibility:

- The consortium fits within the target audience as defined in Section 2.2. (Type of Applicants) (Y/N).
- The consortium leader and partners are based in eligible countries as listed in Section 2.3. (Eligible Countries) (Y/N).
- Each proposal must be submitted by a consortium of at least 3 independent legal entities, and a maximum of 7 independent legal entities (Y/N). The consortium must entail at least 2 different types of entities (see Section 2.2. Type of Applicants).
- The consortium leader is located in one of the countries of the Danube-Black Sea region and a legal entity established on or before 2023 (minimum of 2 years of existence). (Y/N). If project is selected, documentation will be requested to prove year of establishment, as well as financial capacity;
- At least one consortium partner represents or is directly accountable to local communities (Y/N)⁸. (see Section 2.2. Type of Applicants).

III. Scope Alignment:

- The proposal is implemented in one of the Danube-Black Sea regions (Upper Danube, Middle Danube, Lower Danube, Danube Delta and Black Sea) (Y/N)
- The proposal contributes to at least one (1) objective of the EU Mission "Restore Our Ocean and Waters" and one target.⁹ (Y/N).

IV. Language and Documentation:

- The application form and all supporting documents are provided in English (Y/N).
- The Technical Annex (proposal description) follows the guidelines and structure outlined in the [Technical Annex template](#) as well as in the present document (Y/N).
- The budget overview is completed using the official [SoS2LearnDBS OC Budget Template](#) (Y/N).

V. Deadline Compliance:

- The complete application has been submitted before the call deadline (Y/N).
- Late or incomplete submissions will not be evaluated.

VI. Compliance with Horizon Europe obligations:

⁸ Defined as: An organisation rooted in the project area, with a formal mandate or proven track record of working directly with local residents or stakeholder groups. It must be able to mobilise community participation and ensure accountability to those communities throughout the project. Eligible examples include local NGOs, municipalities, community associations, schools, and local user groups.

⁹ <https://missionoceanwaters.eu/#/>

- Applicants selected for funding must agree to comply with the same contractual obligations as the **SoS2LearnDBS** Consortium Partners, as outlined in the Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement of **SoS2LearnDBS**. This includes adherence to Articles 12 (Conflict of Interest), 13 (Confidentiality and Security), 14 (Ethics), 17.2 (Visibility), 18 (Specific Rules for Carrying Out the Action), 19 (Information), and 20 (Record-Keeping) (Y/N). These articles are fully embedded in the Sub-Grant Agreement (SGA) that selected applicants must sign. Applicants should consult the SGA template for the detailed legal provisions.

VII. Compliance with auditing and control rights:

- Applicants must agree to comply with the rights of the bodies mentioned in Article 25 of the Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement, such as the granting authority, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), and the European Court of Auditors (ECA), can be exercised with respect to the recipients of FSTP (Y/N).

The following sub-sections provide details on eligibility criteria. Please review them to ensure your application meets all the requirements.

2.2 Type of Applicants

To be eligible, proposals must be presented by a team composed of a minimum of **3 (three) and a maximum of 7 (seven) legal entities** that are considered eligible under Horizon Europe rules.

This Call encourages **multi-actor consortia** that bring together diverse stakeholders. The Consortium must be constituted of at least **2 different types of entities, and at least one consortium partner representing or being directly accountable to local communities**, to promote interdisciplinarity and participatory approach.

For the scope of this open call a partner that represents or is directly accountable to local communities can be *organisation rooted in the proposed project area, with a formal mandate or proven track record of working directly with local residents or stakeholder groups. It must be able to mobilise community participation and ensure accountability to those communities throughout the project. Eligible examples include local NGOs, municipalities, community associations, schools, and local user groups.*

Eligible applicants are **legal entities** that operate within, or act on behalf of local **Mission Communities**, or are **interested in engaging with such communities**, in the fields of water and marine restoration, pollution reduction, sustainable blue economy, or climate adaptation.

Mission Communities are diverse groups of stakeholders and actors, such as ports, islands, fishing communities, waterfront cities, and conservation groups, who are actively engaged in implementing actions to achieve the Mission's objectives.

The following types of entities are eligible to apply as consortium members:

- **Regional and local authorities**, including municipalities and regional administrations.
- **Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), foundations, professional associations**, and other **civil society organisations** engaged in local development, sustainability, or environmental protection.
- **Educational establishments**, such as schools, universities, or vocational institutions.

- **Locally based companies and SMEs** active in areas relevant to the call (e.g., eco-innovation, water management, sustainable fisheries), provided this does not conflict with **State Aid rules**.
- **Research-performing organisations**, including universities, public research institutes, and innovation centers.
- **Other formally constituted entities** fitting within the Mission Communities framework, including those representing:
 - Ports and inland ports
 - Islands and coastal communities
 - Fishing or aquaculture communities
 - Conservation groups
 - Waterfront cities or regions
 - Tourism sector organisations
 - Maritime infrastructure operators

Applicants do not need to already be part of a Mission Community but should be able to demonstrate how they will contribute to the Mission's objectives and collaborate with local communities.

All applicants must be legally established and capable of implementing the proposed activities under Horizon Europe rules. There should not be any conflict of interest as detailed in Section 2.7. If selected, Applicants will be asked to submit documentation supporting their legal status and financial capacity during the sub-grant agreement signing phase.

2.3 Eligible Countries

For the Consortium leader:

The **consortium leader** applying for this call **must be located in one of the following countries of the Danube-Black Sea region**: Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Poland, Italy, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Turkey or Albania.

For consortium partners:

Entities established in any EU Member States and Horizon Europe-associated country¹⁰ are eligible to participate in the **SoS2LearnDBS CLed** Open Call.

The consortiums can be national based (all members of the same country) or international (members of different eligible countries). International consortium will be valued for their potential to enhance cross-border cooperation, knowledge exchange, and regional impact.

¹⁰ List of Participating Countries in Horizon Europe: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_horizon-auratom_en.pdf

2.4 Eligible Activities and Requirements

2.4.1 Main categories of activities

Eligible activities should **go beyond the state of the art** and combine, as appropriate, **technological, nature-based, social, cultural, regulatory, and financial innovation, and new governance models.**

The main categories of eligible activities are illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3 - List of Main Categories of eligible activities

Main Category	Indicative scope of activities per category
Habitat Restoration and Ecosystem Protection <i>Primary contribution to Mission Objective 1</i>	Marine and coastal habitat restoration
	Freshwater habitat restoration
	Nature-based solutions for ecosystem services:
Pollution Prevention, Reduction and Remediation. <i>Primary contribution to Mission Objective 2</i>	Plastic pollution reduction initiatives
	Water quality improvement and pollution control
	Litter monitoring, tracking and cleanup initiatives
Sustainable Blue Economy and Circular Resource Use <i>Primary contribution to Mission Objective 3</i>	Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture
	Sustainable tourism and recreation
	Circular economy and sustainable use of water resources:

In addition, **integration of cross-cutting activities below into the implementation of Categories 1-3 is highly recommended:**

- **Cooperate with scientific institutions** to stimulate transdisciplinary innovation activities based on best available science practices. Transdisciplinary activities denote cooperation of diverse societal stakeholder groups (administration, civil society, business & industry, finance, etc.), going beyond interdisciplinary academic cooperation.
- **Integrate Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) expertise** to produce meaningful and significant effects enhancing the societal impact of the related innovation activities. Projects should consider an effective contribution of SSH disciplines to ensure solutions address real community needs and foster behaviour change.
- **Consider social innovation** to match innovative ideas with social needs. Social innovation should be embedded in project design to ensure sustainable engagement and long-term impact on community practices and values.
- **Demonstrate a participatory, community-led approach** with bottom-up planning and implementation. Local communities must be involved in defining project objectives and approaches, **and at least one consortium partner must represent or be directly accountable to local communities (e.g., local NGOs, municipalities, community associations, schools, and local user groups, etc).**
- **Build on existing knowledge and tools.** Projects are encouraged to build on existing knowledge, tools, and good practices relevant to the Mission's objectives. Applicants may draw inspiration from publicly available outputs of Horizon-funded projects and resources accessible through the Mission Implementation Platform ¹¹. Proposals should briefly explain how their planned activities complement or add value to existing approaches, without this implying any requirement for previous EU-funded experience (Annex 3 can be consulted for guidance).

¹¹ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/eu-missions-horizon-europe/restore-our-ocean-and-waters_en

- **Deploy, upscale and replicate.** Projects should not only pilot and demonstrate innovative solutions but also **prepare for their deployment and upscaling** beyond the project timeframe and geographical scope.

Projects should include:

- **Deployment plans:** Clear strategies for how demonstrated solutions can be deployed at larger scale, identifying technical requirements, institutional arrangements, financial mechanisms, and timelines.
 - **Replication potential:** Analysis of how solutions can be replicated in other regions with similar conditions, including identification of potential sites, adaptation requirements, and knowledge transfer mechanisms.
 - **Sustainability pathways:** Plans for continuation of activities beyond the funding period, including institutional arrangements, financial sustainability, community ownership, and integration into regional/national policies.
- **Leverage additional financing.** Attracting additional financing from Structural Funds or any national, regional, local programmes or private funding at any stage of the community-led pilot actions is strongly encouraged. Projects that demonstrate potential to leverage co-financing or attract follow-on investment will be viewed favourably in the evaluation. Projects should describe potential sources of additional financing and strategies for accessing them, even if such financing is not yet secured at application stage. Evidence of co-financing commitments or letters of support from potential funders will strengthen proposals.

Annex 2 presents a list of **indicative activities** to develop by category. These are organised according to their primary contribution to the Mission objectives, whilst recognising that many activities contribute to multiple objectives simultaneously. Other activities can be proposed provided they are relevant to regional challenges and Mission objectives.

2.4.2 Monitoring framework

All funded projects must align their expected impacts and measurement with the official EU Mission “Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030” monitoring framework managed by the European Environment Agency (EEA). This ensures that project's outcomes contribute to the pan-European assessment of Mission progress and are properly recognised as part of the collective effort to achieve the 2030 targets.

To ensure the maximum alignment applicants can find in Annex 4 the “Expected Mission Achievements that aggregate targets across ALL Mission-funded projects throughout Europe. These are NOT targets for individual projects to be funded under this Call. Projects should set realistic, achievable targets appropriate to the budget, timeframe, and local context. The project individual contribution, when combined with all other Mission projects, support the collective Mission-level targets.

In addition to the Mission targets, applicants are recommended to include supplementary indicators that capture the community-led nature of their actions and the broader social, governance, and knowledge outcomes essential to long-term sustainability.

These supplementary indicators should be defined to demonstrate the full value and impact of community-driven approaches. Recommended Supplementary Indicators for Community-Led Actions can be found in Annex 5. Applicants are encouraged to tailor the targets related to each indicator to fit their project's scope, with flexibility to adjust the targets based on the project's unique focus, regional challenges, and objectives.

2.4.3 Reporting requirements

Selected projects addressing challenges in the Danube–Black Sea basin are expected to comply with the following implementation and reporting obligations:

- **Periodic reports:** Each CLed Action is requested to comply with regular reporting, in the form of two written reports, at mid-term and at the end of the project, detailing the outcomes, impacts, and lessons learned from their pilot actions. In concrete, reports should address the following items:
 - **Measurable impact:** Clear demonstration of progress towards one or more Mission objectives.
 - **Scalability:** Potential for broader application across other regions or communities.
 - **Stakeholder engagement:** Degree of local stakeholder involvement and long-term commitment.
 - **Interdisciplinary approach:** Inclusion of diverse stakeholder groups and SSH disciplines

The reports should include KPIs measurement of the activities proposed and implemented.

- **Photos, videos and social media content** reporting the process, outputs and events implemented within the project.
- **Participation in SoS2LearnDBS events.** Applicants are expected to actively contribute to the overall scope of the project by sharing their progress and learnings, participating in joint events, and promote cross-fertilization knowledge with other smaller consortia.

In parallel, applicants will benefit from a wide range of support mechanisms designed to strengthen implementation and foster innovation.

Participants are expected to be available and participate in:

- **1 Funded Projects Kick-off meeting** (planned to be in person)
- **1 Funded Projects Conclusion meeting** (planned to be in person);
- **1 Funded Projects Public launch event** (online);
- **Regular meetings** (online, tentatively bimonthly);
- **Study visits / staff exchanges** among the projects (at least 1, in person);
- **Thematic Workshops and Training Sessions** (4 to 6, online);
- **Joint Capacity Building events** with other selected projects and SoS2LearnDBS consortium partners (at least 1, planned to be online);
- **Biannual “peer huddles”**, bringing together different consortia in groups or regional gatherings for cooperative learning and cross-fertilization (online for all, or regionally in person).

When estimating costs on the budget of the project, **applicants are to include travel and participation costs for these events.** In order to maximise synergies and increase the impact of the projects, all proposals selected for funding will be required to **participate in joint activities with the SoS2LearnDBS consortium (see section 2.5).**

2.5 Financial Eligibility

The following financial conditions apply for proposals to be eligible:

- **Projects respect the budget limits:**
 - **Funding tiers 1:** €200,000-€400,000 per project. Smaller in scale, for targeted initiatives or pilot projects that address specific regional or thematic challenges.
 - **Funding tiers 2:** €500,000-€1,000,000 per project. Larger in scale, potentially covering multiple categories of eligible activities, addressing more complex challenges aiming for broad, lasting impact.

It is the responsibility of the Consortium Applicants to select the appropriate Tier based on total budget and scope of their proposed project activities.

- **Each consortium organization budget does not exceed €500.000;**
- **Subcontracting costs do not exceed 30% of the overall project requested grant;**
- **Budget template:** Applications without the completed budget template will be deemed ineligible.
- **All projects are required to reserve a portion of their budget for joint activities with the SoS2LearnDBS consortium, ensuring collaboration and alignment across initiatives:**
 - Tier 1 projects: A minimum of 10% of the total project budget.
 - Tier 2 projects: A minimum of 4% of the total project budget.

For applications selected for funding, a financial capacity check will be conducted prior to the signing of the sub-grant agreement (SGA).

2.6 Rules on Multiple Submissions and Project Participation

The SoS2LearnDBS is a competitive funding programme. Entities may participate in multiple proposals as part of different consortia; however, a single beneficiary can only participate in one funded project.

2.7 Conflict of Interest

Applications will not be accepted from individuals or entities:

- (i) who are partners (beneficiaries) of the SoS2LearnDBS project (INOVA+, STEINBEIS, ADRM, UNIZAG-FSB, GEOECOMAR, BOKU, DDNI, UB, PKS, IAD, VSC-DA, MUNBUD),

- (ii) or any organisation that is declared to the European Commission as a **linked third party / affiliated entity** to one of the beneficiaries of the SoS2LearnDBS project;
- (iii) or any organisation that is directly or indirectly **controlled by, controls**, or is under the **same control as** a SoS2LearnDBS beneficiary. This includes, for example, parent companies, subsidiaries and other entities in the same corporate group where a SoS2LearnDBS beneficiary, alone or jointly with other SoS2LearnDBS beneficiaries, holds more than 25 % of the capital or voting rights, or otherwise exercises decisive influence over management.

Any entity with a previous link to a **SoS2LearnDBS** beneficiary (e.g., spin-off), will not be accepted, unless a minimum of 2 years (as of the 1 November 2025) has passed since the termination of the link.

Some situations **do not, by themselves, make an applicant ineligible**, but they may create a potential conflict of interest that must be declared and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. In such cases, applicants remain **eligible**, but must declare the relationship in the application and in the Declaration of Honour. For instance:

1. Membership in an **association, network, chamber or similar umbrella organisation** that is a SoS2LearnDBS beneficiary. Members may be eligible provided that:
 - the member entity is an **independent legal person** and is not controlled by the association; and
 - the association does **not** receive any part of the CLed project budget (e.g. as subcontractor or paid service provider).

Applicants must not have any current and/or potential conflict of interest with the **SoS2LearnDBS CLed** Open Call selection process and during the whole process of the open call. Applicants must formally and immediately notify the **SoS2LearnDBS** Project Coordinator of any situation constituting or likely to lead to a conflict of interests and take all the necessary steps to rectify this situation. A conflict of interest may exist, for example, where:

- a person involved in the preparation, submission or implementation of the proposal is also involved in the **evaluation, selection or monitoring** of CLed projects (e.g. as evaluator, jury member, or member of the SoS2LearnDBS management team);
- key staff of the applicant consortium (e.g. legal representative, project coordinator, project manager) is simultaneously employed by, seconded to, or holds a governing position (board member, director) in a SoS2LearnDBS beneficiary;
- there are close **family ties** or other close personal relationships between staff of the applicant and staff of a SoS2LearnDBS beneficiary who are involved in the evaluation, selection or monitoring of CLed projects;
- any other shared economic, political, institutional or personal interest could reasonably be perceived as compromising the **impartial and objective** evaluation, selection or implementation of the project.

All cases of conflict of interest will be assessed case by case. Applicants must take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective evaluation and implementation of the project are compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties, or any other shared interest (conflict of interests).

In case of doubts, applicants shall contact SOS2LearnDBS during the proposal preparation: sosdb@inova.business.

If a conflict of interest is discovered and confirmed, without any possible mitigation measure, at the time of the evaluation process, the proposal will be considered as non-eligible and will not be evaluated. SOS2LearnDBS reserves the right to request any mitigation measures that allow the resolution of the conflict of interest (if applicable), such as suggesting changes in tasks, responsibilities, budget reduction, etc.

2.8 Other Conditions

Each applicant must confirm:

- It is not under liquidation or is not an enterprise under difficulty according to the Commission Regulation No 651/2014, art. 2.18.
- The proposed project is based on **original ideas** and, going forward, none of the developments foreseen will be limited by third party rights, or are clearly stated in the proposal description if they are limited (including how they will be handled during the project).
- The project is based on work that has not been developed and offered as a commercial product or solution.
- It is not excluded from the possibility of obtaining EU funding under the provisions of both national and EU law, or by a decision of both national and EU authority.

3. APPLICATION PREPARATION & SUBMISSION

3.1 STEP 1: Read Open Call Documentation

The open call documentation can be found in the [SoS2LearnDBS website](#). Applicants must carefully read all the open call documents (Figure 2) and follow all the guidelines when preparing their proposals for the **SoS2LearnDBS** Cled Open Call. Failure to adhere to these instructions may result in ineligibility.

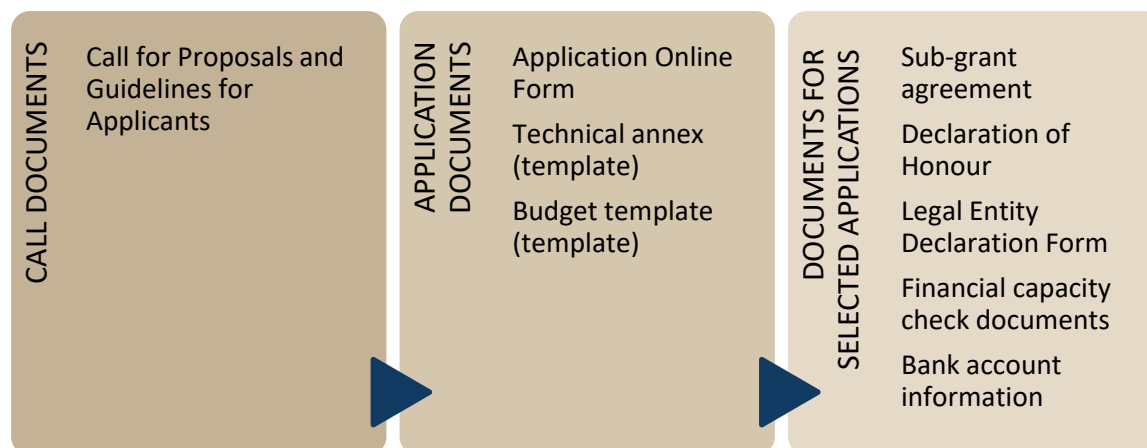


Figure 2 – Overview of the Open call documents.

Applicants are highly encouraged to read and download all relevant files before proceeding with the submission.

3.2 STEP 2: Prepare your Application

The application is composed of the following items:

- Application form: https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/OC_Cled_SoS2LearnDBS_2025
- Technical Annex: [Technical Annex](#) template
- Budget: [Budget Template](#).

Applicants must complete all these items and submit them through the online form. This is a condition of eligibility check.

3.3 STEP 3: Submit your Proposal

Submissions must be done exclusively via https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/OC_Cled_SoS2LearnDBS_2025. Any submission not done via this channel will not be eligible. The deadline for submission of proposals is **30 March 2026, 17h00 CET**.

Applicants should submit one Application Form per project proposal. Multiple proposals are allowed but only one project can be awarded per beneficiary.

Once the proposal is submitted, you will receive a confirmation e-mail. If you do not receive this confirmation e-mail, it means your proposal has **NOT been submitted**. If you believe this is due to a fault in the submission system, you should immediately file a complaint via, explaining the circumstances and attaching a copy of the proposal (and, if possible, screenshots to show what happened).

Applicants can edit their proposal until the call closure, as the system allows participants to change their contribution. In case you can not edit your application due a technical constraint, please contact **SoS2LearnDBS** team at sosdbs@inova.business. No updates will be allowed after the call closure. We highly recommend avoiding updates in the last 48 hours of the call submission, as the system might not work properly due to the number of users. **SoS2LearnDBS** Team does not take responsibility in case you can not submit your application in due time.

Queries about applications can be sent by email to sosdbs@inova.business before 25 March 2026. We cannot guarantee that emails will be answered after this date. A FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) section will be posted on the **SoS2LearnDBS** project website and updated regularly.

All applicants will be notified via email of the results of the evaluation process by 10 July 2025 (indicative date). The results will then be published on the website and information channels of the **SoS2LearnDBS** project.

It is strongly recommended that applicants submit their proposal well before the deadline. If the applicant discovers an error in the proposal, and if the call deadline has not passed, the applicant may request the **SoS2LearnDBS** team to re-submit the proposal (for this purpose please contact sosdbs@inova.business). However, **SoS2LearnDBS** team does not guarantee that a resubmission will be feasible in due time in case the request for resubmission is not received at least **96 hours before the open call deadline**.

The failure to submit a proposal on time, for any reason, including network communications delays or working from multiple browsers or multiple browser windows, is not acceptable as an extenuating circumstance. The time of receipt of the application as recorded by the submission system will be definitive.

4. EVALUATION AND SELECTION

Proposals will be evaluated in a **five-step process**, as presented in the following sub sections (4.1-4.5).

4.1 Step 1: Eligibility verification

An initial eligibility verification will be done to filter out and discard non-eligible proposals. Proposals **must meet ALL the eligibility criteria**, as described in section 2.

Proposals marked as non-eligible (for not meeting one or more of the eligibility criteria) will get a rejection letter with a justification. **No additional feedback on the process will be given.**

4.2 Step 2: Individual Evaluator Assessment

Applications meeting the eligibility criteria will move on to the individual evaluation phase. During this step, evaluation will be done remotely by a jury composed of senior members from the **SoS2LearnDBS** partners' organizations. Each application will be evaluated by at least three (3) jury members: one from a Research and Technology Organization (i.e. DDNI, GEOECOMAR), one from a university (i.e. BOKU, UNIZAG-FSB) and one from a Public Authority (i.e. MUNBUD, VSC-DA). At least one of these evaluators shall be based in a **region different from that of the applicant consortium leader, and, where possible, from other applicant consortium members**. This ensures the evaluation process incorporates diverse regional perspectives and aligns with the objectives of the **SoS2LearnDBS** project.

Eligible applications will be evaluated according to the criteria presented in Table 4.

Table 4 - SoS2LearnDBS Cled Open Call evaluation criteria

Evaluation Criterion (EvC)	Description
EvC1 Advancement beyond current practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposes innovative solutions beyond current practice in the region. Addresses local/ regional challenges. Combines, as appropriate, different types of innovation (technological, nature-based, social, governance, etc.). Demonstrates measurable contribution to Mission Ocean and Waters objectives. Addresses multiple Mission objectives and targets.
EvC2 Community-led and Participatory approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively involves local stakeholders and communities, ensuring inclusion of diverse socio-economic profiles, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups. Builds on and integrates local and traditional knowledge, and sustainable practices. International consortia will be valued for their potential to enhance cross-border cooperation, knowledge exchange, and regional impact.
EvC3 Social innovation and societal impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses social dimensions, describing innovation aligned with social needs; Integrates Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) expertise. Enhances public engagement, water literacy, ethics, and social resilience.
EvC4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presents a clear communication and dissemination strategy. Identifies specific target audiences with appropriate approaches. Uses diverse and appropriate channels.

Dissemination and communication	
EvC5 Feasibility and implementation capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides realistic and achievable objectives, work plan, timeline, and budget. • Demonstrates necessary expertise, operational capacity and management experience. • Presents clear allocation of roles and responsibilities. • Consortium demonstrates necessary complementarity. • Identifies main risks with credible mitigation and contingency measures.
EvC6 Commitment to the Charter of Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defines specific, measurable actions and targets. • Ensures transparency and progress tracking.
EvC7 Quality and relevance of the expected outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defines clear, credible, and measurable expected outcomes. • Aligns with CLed, SoS2LearnDBS, and Mission Ocean objectives; • Demonstrates clarity, innovation, and measurable results. • Ensures relevance to stakeholder and community needs.
EvC8 Sustainability and scaling potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines credible strategy for sustaining results beyond funding. • Demonstrates potential for replication and upscaling. • Builds strategic partnerships for long-term impact. • Demonstrates potential to attract additional financing or co-funding to sustain or scale the project.

The threshold for each criterion is three (3.0) out of five (5.0) possible points. Half points are not given. This indicates that if a proposal scores less than 3.0 in any criterion the proposal is automatically rejected. **Community-led and Participatory approach is given a weight of 1.5 when to determine the final ranking.**

For each criterion under examination, score values will indicate in accordance with score/rational presented in Table 5.

Table 5 - SoS2LearnDBS CLed Open Call scoring rationale

Score	Rationale
0 – FAIL	The proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.
1 – POOR	The criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
2 – FAIR	The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.
3 – GOOD	The proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.
4 – VERY GOOD	The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.
5 – EXCELLENT	The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

Each evaluator will record his/her individual assessment of each proposal using an online Individual Evaluation Report.

4.3 Step 3: Ranking of proposals

At the end of the remote evaluation process, the final score for each proposal will be calculated as follows:

- Each evaluator scores all criteria independently.
- The score for each criterion is the **average** of the scores given by all evaluators.
 - For the purpose of ranking, the criterion *Community-led and Participatory approach* (EvC2) will be assigned a **weight of 1.5**. All other criteria keep a weight of 1.0.
- The **final ranking score** of a proposal is the **weighted sum** of all criterion scores.

Each criterion has an individual threshold of **three (3)**. Any proposal receiving a score below 3 in **any** criterion will be automatically rejected. Only proposals meeting all thresholds will advance.

Proposals that pass the thresholds are ranked according to their **final weighted score** and organised into ranking lists according to the planned distribution by region and by funding tier (Table 6).

Table 6 - SoS2LearnDBS Cled Open Call minimal proposals selected by region and funding tier.

Funding tier	Upper Danube	Middle Danube	Lower Danube	Danube Delta	Black Sea
1 €200,000-€400,000 per project	1 project	1 project	1 project	1 project	1 project
2 €500,000-€1,000,000 per project	1 project	1 project	1 project	1 project	1 project

Note: SO2LearnDBS reserves the right to decide differently on this distribution based on the quality of the proposals received.

In case of a tie, in the final weighted score the following rules will apply:

- **Rule 1:** If there are proposals in the same position, priority will be given to proposals that have the highest score on **EvC2. Community-led and Participatory approach**.
- **Rule 2:** After applying Rule 2 and if there are proposals in the same position, priority will be given to proposals that have the highest score on **EvC3. Social innovation and societal impact**.
- **Rule 3:** After applying Rule 3 and if there are proposals in the same position, priority will be given to proposals that have the highest score on **EvC4. Dissemination and communication**.
- **Rule 4:** After applying Rule 4 and if there are proposals in the same position, priority will be given to proposals submitted by an **International consortium**.
- **Rule 5:** After applying Rule 4 and if there are proposals in the same position, priority will be given to proposals submitted by a **consortium involving four or more organisations**.
- **Rule 6:** After applying Rule 5 and if there are proposals in the same position, priority will be given to proposals whose **consortium composition includes women in key roles** (e.g., coordination, or equivalent decision-making positions) over those without women.

4.4 Step 4: External Expert Assessment

After ranking, independent external experts will be appointed to assess a compiled list of potential proposals to be selected for funding (i.e. at least the 20 highest scored proposals, including proposals to be selected and for the reserve list), **to ensure transparency, fairness and rigor in the evaluations**. The external experts will validate the Consolidated Evaluation Reports produced in the previous step and identify any significant discrepancies. In case of significant discrepancies, the administrative Panel will request a revision of the final rankings in the consensus meeting.

4.5 Step 5: Consensus meeting and proposals selection

The consortium evaluators will then hold a consensus meeting to decide by consensus the selected proposals taking into consideration the final ranking score and the external evaluation assessment. The decision on the selected applicants shall be sought by consensus, and whenever not feasible, by a majority vote of 2/3. As a result of this meeting, two lists will be produced:

- Selected Projects List: the projects recommended for funding;
- Reserve list: identification of the applications to be selected for funding, if any of those listed is unable to proceed to the implementation.

All proposals will receive an acceptance or rejection letter together with an anonymized version of the proposal's Evaluation Summary Report. Applicants will be informed about the result of their evaluation by email by 10th July 2026 (indicative date). The results will then be published on the website and information channels of the **SoS2LearnDBS** project.

4.6 Redress process

Within three (3) working days of receiving (1) a Rejection Letter informing the proposal as noneligible or (2) an Evaluation Summary Report ranking the proposal below the selection borderline, an applicant may submit a request for redress if they believe the results of the eligibility checks have not been correctly applied, or if they feel that there has been a shortcoming in the way their proposal has been evaluated that may affect the final decision on whether to enter the funding program.

In such a case, an internal review committee from **SoS2LearnDBS** will examine the applicant's request for redress. The committee's role is to ensure a coherent interpretation of such requests, and equal treatment of applicants. Requests for redress must:

- Be related to the evaluation process or eligibility checks.
- Clearly describe the complaint. Received within the time limit (three (3) working days) from the reception of (1) a Rejection Letter considering the proposal as non-eligible or (2) the Evaluation Summary Report.
- Sent by the entity's legal representative that has also submitted the proposal.

The committee will review the complaint and will recommend an appropriate course of action. If there is clear evidence of a shortcoming that could affect the eventual funding decision, it is possible that all or part of the proposal will be re-evaluated. Please note:

- This procedure is concerned only with the general evaluation and/or eligibility checking process. The committee will not question the scientific or technical judgement of the evaluators.
- A re-evaluation will only be carried out if there is evidence of a shortcoming that affects the final decision on whether to fund the proposal or not. This means, for example, that a problem relating to one evaluation criterion will not lead to a re-evaluation if a proposal has failed anyway on other criteria.
- The evaluation score following any re-evaluation will be regarded as definitive. It may be lower than the original score.

All requests for redress will be treated in confidence and must be sent to the **SoS2LearnDBS** team at sosdb@inova.business .

In the case where a proposal under the redress process is re-evaluated and the new evaluation score is higher; it will be compared with the proposal that has entered the funding programme with the lowest ranking. The comparison will use the ranking rules as detailed in section 4.2.

4.7 Signature of sub-grant agreement

After the evaluation and selection phase is concluded, the **SoS2LearnDBS** consortium will start the sub-grant agreement (SGA) preparation phase in collaboration with the representatives of the projects that have been awarded. The objective of the SGA preparation is to fulfil the legal requirements between the **SoS2LearnDBS** consortium and each beneficiary of the open call.

*Selected projects should be flexible enough to accommodate for some adjustments that may be requested by the **SoS2LearnDBS** before and during the grant agreement signature to ensure alignment with **SoS2LearnDBS** Project goals and the Mission latest developments.*

The request for the documentation by the **SoS2LearnDBS** team will be sent to the beneficiary, including deadlines by which information and documentation should be sent. Documentation requested includes:

- Proof of legal existence: Company(ies) register, official journal or other official document per country showing the name of the organisation(s), the legal address and registration number and a copy of a document proving VAT registration (in case the VAT number does not show on the registration extract or its equivalent).
- Financial capacity check documents
- Bank Account & Legal Entity Declaration Form, available at: https://commission.europa.eu/publications/business-partners-legal-entities-and-bank-accounts_en

Specific to SMEs | Proof of the SME condition is required:

- If the applicant has been fully validated as an SME on the Beneficiary Register of the EC Participant Portal, the PIC number must be provided.

- If the applicant has not been fully validated as an SME on the EC Participant Portal, the following documents will be required to prove the status as an SME:
- SME declaration signed and stamped: If the beneficiary declares to be non-autonomous, the balance sheet and profit and loss account (with annexes) for the last period for upstream and downstream organizations is required.
- Status Information Form, which includes the headcount (AWU), balance, profit & loss accounts of the latest closed financial year and the relation, upstream and downstream, of any linked or partner company.

In general, the SGA preparation should be concluded within four (4) weeks. Additional time may be provided by the **SoS2LearnDBS** Project Coordinator in case of a relevant reason. In case the beneficiary does not send the requested documents within the above period, the proposal is automatically rejected and the next proposal in the reserve list is invited to initiate the contract preparation.

The SGA will be signed between the **SoS2LearnDBS** consortium represented by its coordinator (INOVA) and by all Consortium' beneficiaries of each proposal.

5. OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES OF BENEFICIARIES

The selected CLed Applicants are indirect beneficiaries of EC funding. Therefore, they must comply with obligations under Horizon Europe-specific requirements. The obligations that apply to the beneficiaries are described in the following sub-sections.

5.1 Conflict of interest

The beneficiaries must take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the project is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest ('conflict of interests').

They must formally notify the **SoS2LearnDBS** consortium without delay of any situation constituting or likely to lead to a conflict of interest and immediately take all the necessary steps to rectify this situation. The **SoS2LearnDBS** Coordinator would verify if the measures taken are appropriate and may require additional measures to be taken by a specific deadline. If the beneficiaries breach any of their obligations, the sub-grant agreement may be automatically terminated.

5.2 Data protection and confidentiality

During the implementation of the project and for four years after the end of the collaboration, the parties must keep confidential any data, documents, or other material (in any form) that is identified as confidential at sub-grant agreement signing time ('confidential information').

If a beneficiary requests it, the EC and the **SoS2LearnDBS** consortium may agree to keep selected information confidential for an additional period beyond the initial four years. This will be explicitly stated in the sub-grant agreement.

If information has been identified as confidential during the project implementation or only verbally, it will be confidential only if this is accepted by the **SoS2LearnDBS** coordinator and confirmed in writing within 15 days of the verbal disclosure. Unless otherwise agreed between the parties, they may use confidential information only to implement the agreement.

The beneficiary may disclose confidential information to the **SoS2LearnDBS** consortium and to the selected reviewers, who will be bound by a specific Non-Disclosure Agreement.

Please consult Sub-Grant Agreement model for further contractual points.

6. CONTACT INFORMATION

The **SoS2LearnDBS** consortium will provide information to the applicants via the project website, so that the information (question and answer), will be visible to all participants. No binding information will be provided via any other means (e.g., telephone or email).

More info at: <https://SoS2LearnDBS.eu/>

Apply via: [https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/OC_CLed SoS2LearnDBS 2025](https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/OC_CLed_SoS2LearnDBS_2025)

SoS2LearnDBS support team: sosdb@inova.business

7. General Information

7.1 Terms and Definitions

This section describes the relevant terms that are used in the open call documentation. Unless otherwise stated, the definition of a term is the one stated in this section.

7.2 Relevant Concepts

Table 7 - Relevant concept definitions of the funding programme.

Term	Definition
Community Led-Actions (CLed)	Initiatives where local communities actively define, design, and implement solutions to address local social, environmental, and economic challenges , often using a participatory approach and drawing on local knowledge to achieve desired outcomes and local welfare.
Danube River basin and Black Sea region	For the purposes of this call Danube-Black Sea region includes the following countries: Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Poland, Italy, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Turkey and Albania.
Learning Community	A collaborative group of local actors—such as citizens, community organisations, authorities, and experts—who work together to share knowledge, co-design solutions, and build capacities for sustainable water and ecosystem restoration. It promotes continuous learning, inclusion, and the integration of scientific, local, and traditional knowledge. Through cooperation and mutual support, learning communities strengthen community-led innovation and long-term stewardship in the Danube–Black Sea region.

7.3 Entities and Committees

Table 8 - Relevant Entities and Committees Definitions of the funding programme.

Term	Definition
SoS2LearnDBS consortium	Group of legal entities that are cumulatively responsible for implementing the SoS2LearnDBS project as defined in the Grant Agreement number 101217667.
Applicant	Entity that intends to submit or has submitted a proposal to the funding program, as part of an Applicant Consortium.
Applicant Consortium	Group of entities that intends to submit or has submitted a proposal to the funding program
Beneficiary	An entity (or group of entities) that has submitted a proposal to the funding program, has been accepted for funding and has signed or is in the process of signing a sub-grant agreement.
Evaluator	An expert who is appointed by SoS2LearnDBS to assist in the evaluation of the proposals submitted to the funding program.

Experts cannot have conflicts of interest and are bound by their own confidentiality agreement.

7.4 Language

English is the official language for the **SoS2LearnDBS** Cled open call. Selected projects may use local language to exchange and organize local activities, but they should use English when contacting SoS2LearnDBS consortium and reporting on project activities.

7.5 Documentation formats

Any documentation requested in any of the phases of the open call and the projects implementation must be submitted electronically in PDF format without restrictions for printing.

7.6 Data protection

The reply to any call for proposals involves recording and processing of personal data (such as name, email, and address). Such data will be processed pursuant to 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. Unless indicated otherwise, the questions and any personal data requested that are required to evaluate the application in accordance with the call for proposal will be processed solely for that purpose by the consortium.

It should be noted that **SoS2LearnDBS** requests the minimum information needed to deliver the evaluation procedures or the implementation of the funding program. The “Annex: Sub-grant Agreement template” and the [European Commission’ Business partners – Legal entities and Bank Accounts Template](#) are provided for reference and will only be requested for the proposals awarded.

7.7 Origin of the funds

Selected applicants will sign a dedicated sub-grant agreement (SGA) with the **SoS2LearnDBS** consortium. The funds attached to the sub-grant agreement come directly from the funds of the European project **SoS2LearnDBS** and therefore remain the property of the EU until payment of the balance, whose management rights have been transferred to the project partners in **SoS2LearnDBS** via European Commission GA no. 101217667.

As detailed in “Annex: Sub-grant Agreement template”, this relation between the subgrantees and the European Commission (EC) through the **SoS2LearnDBS** project carries a set of obligations to the subgrantees with the EC. It is the task of the sub-grantees to achieve them and of the **SoS2LearnDBS** consortium partners to inform them about them

Annex 1 – Indicative list of possible challenges to be addressed by applicants

Applicants may address the challenges presented in this annex or additional challenges, provided they are well contextualised and demonstrate clear relevance to Mission objectives.

Table 9 - Indicative Region-Specific Priority Challenges.

Region-Specific Priority Challenges	
<p>Upper Danube Region</p> <p>(Germany, Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased flood risks due to extreme rainfall and urban surface sealing • Growing water scarcity from droughts and reduced river flows • Rising temperatures altering water quality and stressing aquatic ecosystems • Declining species richness caused by altered hydrology and pollution • Heavy reliance on hydropower disrupting natural flow regimes and aquatic habitats • High nutrient loads and emerging pollutants (e.g., PFAS, pharmaceuticals, microplastics) degrading water quality • Limited public awareness of river health and insufficient local capacity for effective environmental action
<p>Middle Danube Region</p> <p>(Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban flooding driven by excessive paved surfaces and extreme rainfall • Loss of aquatic biodiversity due to artificial water channels • Pollution from contaminated runoff and untreated sewage degrading river ecosystems • Threats to drinking water safety caused by fluctuating Danube water levels • Sewage discharge from ships contributing to water quality deterioration • Overloaded urban sewage systems during storm events due to climate impacts • Lack of rainwater harvesting infrastructure in apartment buildings • Limited public access to Danube and other local riverbanks for recreation and community use • High vulnerability of flood-prone zones in urban and peri-urban areas • Lack of cross-border data exchange and coordination on fish restocking and monitoring
<p>Lower Danube Region</p> <p>(Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disconnected floodplains and degraded riparian wetlands reducing retention, habitat connectivity, and water quality • Disrupted sediment continuity and sediment deficit from dams and barrages (e.g., Iron Gates, Olt River) causing channel incision and morphological pressure • Pollution in river sediments, including legacy industrial contamination, affecting water quality and aquatic life • Droughts, low-flow extremes, and unsustainable navigation practices impacting ecological flows and spawning grounds • Unsustainable bank erosion management and forestry practices accelerating shoreline degradation • Invasive species expansion and shifts in aquatic species composition threatening biodiversity

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak community-scale data and stewardship limiting local engagement at priority reaches • Wastewater treatment gaps in small towns increasing nutrient and sediment loads • Lack of International Cooperation and Governance Structures for management of Fish resources.
<p>Danube Delta Region (Romania, Ukraine)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decline of key species and degradation of habitats in the region. • Persistent pollution from industrial, agricultural, and domestic sources affecting water quality. • Fragmentation of ecosystems caused by land conversion and infrastructure development. • Unsustainable fishing practices threatening aquatic biodiversity and fish stocks. • Weak institutional coordination and enforcement of environmental policies. • Lack of local participation and socio-economic alternatives during conservation periods. • Gaps in environmental monitoring and insufficient adaptive management capacity. • Inadequate wastewater treatment and uncontrolled boat traffic harming ecological health. • Droughts, water body drying, and climate-induced habitat shifts impacting biodiversity.
<p>Black Sea Region (Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia, Turkey, Ukraine – subject to current geopolitical restrictions)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coastal erosion and shoreline retreat threatening natural and built environments • Altered sediment input from the Danube affecting delta lobe evolution • Eutrophication risks and algal blooms impacting bathing waters and fisheries • Marine litter and microplastics hotspots degrading beaches and lagoon inlets • Degraded wetlands and disrupted lagoon connectivity (e.g., Razelm-Sinoe Lagoon system) • Sea-level rise and storm-surge flooding endangering low-lying communities • Dune and foredune destabilization in areas under touristic pressure • Saltwater intrusion risks affecting coastal aquifers and wetlands

Annex 2 - Indicative list of activities by Main Category of Eligible Activities

This Annex provides concrete examples to help applicants understand how to implement the main categories of eligible activities and the cross-cutting activities. These examples are illustrative and not exhaustive. Projects should adapt these approaches to their local context and specific objectives.

Table 10 - Indicative list of activities by Main Category of Eligible Activities.

Category 1: Habitat Restoration and Ecosystem Protection	
<i>Primary contribution to Mission Objective 1: Protect and restore ecosystems and biodiversity</i>	
Marine and coastal habitat restoration:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restoration of degraded coastal ecosystems including beaches, dunes, salt marshes, and seagrass meadows Creation or enhancement of artificial reefs using environmentally appropriate materials to support biodiversity Coastal protection using nature-based solutions (e.g., living shorelines, vegetated dunes) Rehabilitation of rocky shore habitats and tide pools Restoration of coastal lagoons and their connectivity with the sea
Freshwater habitat restoration:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconnection of floodplains and oxbow lakes to main river channels through removal of embankments or creation of side channels Removal or modification of river barriers (weirs, small dams) to restore longitudinal connectivity for fish migration Restoration of riparian vegetation corridors along rivers and streams Rehabilitation of degraded wetlands, ponds, and lake ecosystems Renaturalisation of channelised or straightened river sections Creation of fish spawning habitats and nursery areas Restoration of natural river morphology and sediment dynamics
Nature-based solutions for ecosystem services:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wetland creation or enhancement for water purification and flood regulation Floodplain reconnection for natural water retention and flood risk reduction Green-blue infrastructure in urban and peri-urban areas (e.g., rain gardens, bioswales, constructed wetlands) Biodiversity enhancement measures including creation of ecological corridors Restoration of traditional sustainable land use practices that support biodiversity
Category 2: Pollution Prevention, Reduction and Remediation	
<i>Primary contribution to Mission Objective 2: Prevent and eliminate pollution</i>	
Plastic pollution reduction initiatives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community-led plastic collection, sorting and recycling programmes Development and deployment of macro-plastic and micro-plastic trapping systems in rivers and coastal areas Elimination of unnecessary single-use plastics through awareness campaigns and provision of reusable alternatives Improved waste management systems in coastal and riverside communities Circular economy approaches for plastic waste valorisation Prevention of plastic leakage from tourism, fishing, and aquaculture sectors
Water quality improvement and pollution control:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature-based water treatment systems (constructed wetlands, riparian buffer strips, biofilters) Implementation of sustainable agricultural practices to reduce nutrient runoff (precision farming, cover crops, buffer zones) Green infrastructure for stormwater management and combined sewer overflow (CSO) reduction in urban areas Demonstration of innovative wastewater treatment technologies adapted to local contexts

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remediation of contaminated sediments or legacy pollution hotspots • Development of locally adapted solutions for diffuse pollution control
Litter monitoring, tracking and cleanup initiatives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marine and river litter monitoring programmes using standardised methodologies • Regular community-based cleanup campaigns with itemised litter counting and data sharing • Beach and riverbank cleanup initiatives coupled with source identification • Microplastic sampling and monitoring by citizen science networks • Development of litter tracking tools and dashboards for community engagement • Collaboration with local authorities to establish long-term cleanup and prevention strategies
Category 3: Sustainable Blue Economy and Circular Resource Use <i>(Primary contribution to Mission Objective 3: Make the blue economy carbon-neutral and circular)</i>	
Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rehabilitation of aquatic ecosystems to support sustainable fish stocks • Sustainable artisanal fisheries management plans co-developed with fishing communities • Citizen science programmes involving commercial fishermen and recreational anglers in fish stock assessment • Development of selective fishing gear to reduce bycatch and ecosystem impacts • Demonstration of sustainable, low-carbon aquaculture practices • Restoration of fish spawning and nursery habitats to support fisheries
Sustainable tourism and recreation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of nature-based, low-impact tourism activities (e.g., birdwatching, kayaking, educational tours) • Eco-tourism initiatives that generate income for local communities whilst protecting ecosystems • Sustainable management of recreational use in sensitive areas • Infrastructure for sustainable coastal and riverine tourism (e.g., wooden walkways to prevent trampling) • Educational programmes linking tourism with conservation and water literacy
Circular economy and sustainable use of water resources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstration of business models based on sustainable use of restored ecosystems • Circular economy approaches for marine and freshwater resources (e.g., sustainable reed harvesting, algae production) • Development of green jobs and economic opportunities in ecosystem restoration • Valorisation of by-products from restoration activities • Traditional sustainable practices revitalisation (e.g., traditional fishing methods, sustainable aquaculture)

Table 11 - Indicative list of activities for Cross-cutting requirements.

Possible activities for Cross-cutting requirements (section 1.2.1)	
Community engagement and empowerment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active involvement of local communities in all project phases (design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation) • Meaningful participation of diverse community members (gender, age, socio-economic groups) • Building sense of ownership and long-term commitment among participants • Empowering communities to become stewards of their local water bodies • Bottom-up decision-making processes that respect local priorities and needs
Citizen science and participatory monitoring:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of citizen science networks for water quality monitoring • Community-based biodiversity monitoring programmes • Participatory mapping of ecosystem services and degradation hotspots • Development of low-cost monitoring tools accessible to local communities • Data collection and sharing platforms linking citizen science with policy-making • Training and support for volunteers to ensure data quality •

Capacity building and water literacy:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water literacy and environmental education programmes for schools and communities • Training for local stakeholders on sustainable practices and restoration techniques • Workshops and dialogues for co-creation of restoration plans • Development of community engagement toolkits for participatory planning and implementation • Intergenerational knowledge exchange programmes connecting elders with youth • Building technical skills for long-term maintenance of restoration activities
Governance innovation and multi-stakeholder collaboration:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of multi-stakeholder platforms for collaborative water governance • Community-based natural resource management initiatives • Co-development of local water management strategies with authorities and communities • Participatory monitoring and adaptive management systems • Social innovation in water governance structures • Conflict resolution mechanisms for competing water uses • Integration of traditional ecological knowledge with modern scientific approaches
Knowledge sharing, demonstration and replication:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstration sites showcasing innovative restoration or management practices • Knowledge exchange platforms and learning networks connecting communities • Development of guidance documents and toolkits based on project learnings • Peer-to-peer learning programmes between communities • Documentation and dissemination of traditional sustainable practices • Site visits and exchanges to facilitate knowledge transfer • Communication materials adapted to different audiences (technical, policy, community)

Annex 3 – Useful European Data Resources and Mission Project References

Table 12 - Current knowledge and tools.

Use European data and observation infrastructures where applicable:
Copernicus: European Earth Observation programme providing data on water quality, land use changes, coastal dynamics, and environmental monitoring (link).
EMODnet: European Marine Observation and Data Network providing access to marine data including bathymetry, geology, habitats, human activities (link).
GALILEO/EGNOS: European satellite navigation services for positioning and timing applications in monitoring and field operations (link)
WISE – Water Information System for Europe providing data on freshwater and marine water status and quality (link)
Examples of relevant Horizon Europe Mission projects to consult:
DANUBE4all: Testing nature-based solutions for free-flowing rivers, flood/drought risk reduction
DALIA: Decision-making tools for freshwater ecosystem protection and restoration
EcoDaLLi: Coordination and support for the Danube-Black Sea lighthouse
DaWetRest, Restore4Life, FutureLakes: Freshwater ecosystem restoration projects

Annex 4 – Expected Mission Achievements

Table 13 - Mission objectives and their related targets and indicators.

Target	Indicator	Expected Achievements for the Mission	Related policy
Objective 1: Protect and restore marine and freshwater ecosystems and biodiversity , in line with the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 ¹² ;			
Contribute to relevant marine nature restoration targets including degraded seabed habitats and coastal ecosystems	Marine restoration to enhance biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing solutions to enhance ecosystem services including through control of invasive species by Mission activities. Testing nature-based solutions for restoration of vulnerable marine ecosystems by Mission projects. 	Biodiversity Strategy 2030 , Nature Restoration Regulation , Habitats Directive , Marine Strategy Framework Directive
	Marine restoration: financing, ecosystem services, and monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing monitoring technologies to measure effectiveness and to design restoration interventions developed by Mission projects. Testing novel assessment and financing models to evaluate societal benefits of healthy ecosystems and secure their long-term sustainability. 	Biodiversity Strategy 2030 , Nature Restoration Regulation , Habitats Directive , Marine Strategy Framework Directive
Protect at least 30% of the EU's seas and integrate ecological corridors, as part of a true Trans-European Nature Network	Marine protected areas (MPAs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging 50+ existing MPAs in testing new governance and management tools by Mission activities. Identifying 50+ new sites by Mission projects as suitable to become MPAs. 	Biodiversity Strategy 2030 , Habitats Directive , Marine Strategy Framework Directive
Strictly protect at least 10% of the EU's seas	Marine strictly protected areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting selection and designation through blueprints and road maps developed by Mission projects. Strengthening management of protected areas through ecosystem-based approaches and blueprints developed and tested by Mission activities. 	Biodiversity Strategy 2030
Restore at least 25,000 km of free/flowing rivers	Floodplains and wetlands with restored connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing solutions for restoring 50+ floodplains through Mission activities. Developing solutions for restoring 57,000 ha of wetlands through Mission activities. 	Biodiversity Strategy 2030 , Nature Restoration Regulation , Water Framework Directive
Restore at least 25,000 km of free/flowing rivers	Rivers restored into free-flowing rivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Testing solutions for restoring 500+ km of rivers into free-flowing rivers by Mission activities. 	Biodiversity Strategy 2030 , Nature Restoration Regulation , Water Framework Directive

¹² https://environment.ec.europa.eu/strategy/biodiversity-strategy-2030_en

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessing 100+ barriers and eventually removing them by Mission activities. 	
Objective 2: Prevent and eliminate pollution of our ocean, seas and waters, in line with the EU Action Plan Towards Zero Pollution for Air, Water and Soil¹³;			
Reduce nutrient losses by 50%	Nitrate in rivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Testing technologies to reduce fertilizer use by 20-40% potentially achieved at selected demo sites by Mission activities. Developing solutions to reduce nutrient levels by 30% in targeted ecosystems by Mission activities. 	Biodiversity Strategy 2030, Zero Pollution, Water Framework Directive, Marine Strategy Framework Directive
	Total phosphorous in lakes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Testing solutions to reduce nutrients enrichment by 15% at selected demo sites by Mission activities. 	Biodiversity Strategy 2030, Zero Pollution, Water Framework Directive, Marine Strategy Framework Directive
Reduce the use and risk of chemical pesticides by 50%	Chemical pesticides in water environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Testing technologies for reduction and prevention of chemical pesticides, including nature-based solutions and treatment technologies, by Mission activities Developing technologies for on-site monitoring of pesticides by Mission projects 	Zero Pollution, Water Framework Directive, Marine Strategy Framework Directive
Reduce plastic litter at sea by 50%	Litter in marine ecosystems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collecting 422 tons of marine litter by activities conducted by Mission projects at selected demo sites Testing solution to prevent up to 11,000 tons of lost gears every year if these Mission solutions are implemented to EU fishing fleet. Testing solutions to prevent up to 40,000 tons marine litter every year if these Mission solutions are implemented to EU fishing fleet. 	Zero Pollution, Marine Strategy Framework Directive
	Litter in freshwater ecosystems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 80% plastic litter prevented from entering rivers potentially achieved by Mission solutions. Up to 93% plastic litter removed in rivers at demo sites from technologies tested by Mission projects. 	Zero Pollution, Marine Strategy Framework Directive
Reduce by 30% microplastics released into the environment	Microplastic released to the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Testing technologies to remove up to 90-95% microplastic in wastewater through activities conducted by Mission projects. Engaging citizens and industries engaged to promote alternatives to plastic material thanks to Mission activities. Developing and testing monitoring technologies for in-situ monitoring of microplastics by Mission activities. 	Zero Pollution, Water Framework Directive, Marine Strategy Framework Directive

¹³ COM(2021) 400 final. Pathway to a Healthy Planet for All – EU Action Plan: 'Towards Zero Pollution for Air, Water and Soil' NB: All these targets are subject to a review by 2025. URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52021DC0400>

Objective 3: **Ensure a sustainable, carbon-neutral and circular blue economy**¹⁴, in line with the proposed European Climate Law and the holistic vision enshrined in the Sustainable Blue Economy Strategy.

Achieve net zero maritime emissions	CO2 emissions from maritime transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing retrofitting solutions for small-fishing vessels potentially reducing their CO2 emissions by 40% through Mission activities • Developing and demonstrating fully electric engines for small-scale fisheries by Mission projects 	European Green Deal , Marine Strategy Framework Directive , Climate Law , Zero Pollution
Develop zero-carbon and low-impact aquaculture	Sustainable fishing gears	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting the use of degradable fishing gears through the development and deployment of alternative to common plastic-based gears by Mission activities. • Fostering collection and recovery of lost gears thanks to Mission activities engaging with fishermen and local communities. 	European Green Deal , Marine Strategy Framework Directive , Climate Law , Common Fisheries Policy
	Sustainable aquaculture practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting and expanding cultivations of low trophic species including algae and bivalve by Mission activities. • Fixating up to 1.3 tons of CO2 thanks to algae production as part of activities conducted by LOCALITY Mission project at selected demo sites. 	European Green Deal , Marine Strategy Framework Directive , Climate Law , Common Fisheries Policy
Promote circular, low-carbon multi-purpose use of marine and water space	Areas with optimized and sustainable use of marine space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering the coexistence of offshore wind and nature restoration through novel solutions developed by Mission projects. • Enabling the coexistence of offshore wind and aquaculture through novel Mission technologies for cultivation of low-trophic species in harsh offshore environments • Fostering regenerative aquaculture practices through Mission solutions for the coexistence of sustainable farms with nature restoration/ protection activities 	European Green Deal , Maritime spatial planning , Climate Law , Marine Strategy Framework Directive

Source: <https://water.europa.eu/marine/europe-seas/eu-mission-restore-our-oceans-and-water>

¹⁴ COM/2021/240 final. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a new approach for a sustainable blue economy in the EU Transforming the EU's Blue Economy for a Sustainable Future. URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52021DC0240>

Annex 5 – Supplementary Indicators for Community-Led Actions

Table 14 - Recommended Supplementary Indicators and KPIs Targets as example.

Outcome Category	Supplementary Indicators	Example KPIs Targets
Community Engagement and Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Number of volunteers enrolled in water conservation activities; •Number of local stakeholders actively participating; •Number of workshops and participants (gender disaggregated) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Enroll 200 volunteers in water conservation activities; •Engage 50 local stakeholders in water governance activities; •Conduct 20 workshops, with 50% women and 30% youth participation.
Capacity Building and Water Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Number of training sessions and workshops delivered; •Number of participants in educational activities (disaggregated); •Percentage demonstrating improved knowledge (pre/post assessment); •Number of schools/organisations engaged. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •20 training sessions delivered; •300 participants trained; •70% showing improved knowledge; •15 schools actively engaged.
Behaviour Change and Social Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Measurable changes in community practices; •Adoption rates of sustainable practices promoted; •Reduction in harmful behaviours •Number of community-led initiatives continuing post-project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •30% reduction in single-use plastic consumption; •40% of households adopting sustainable practices; •5 community initiatives continuing beyond project.
Governance Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Number of multi-stakeholder platforms established; •Stakeholder satisfaction with governance processes (%); •Integration of local/traditional knowledge; •Number of collaborative decisions made. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •1 functional multi-stakeholder platform; •80% stakeholder satisfaction; •Traditional knowledge integrated in 3 management plans; •10 collaborative decisions documented.
Economic Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Number of green jobs created (FTE); •Income generated from sustainable activities (€); •Number of businesses adopting circular practices; •Economic value of restored ecosystem services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •10 FTE jobs created; •€50,000 annual income from eco-tourism; •5 businesses adopting circular approaches; •€100,000 annual value from ecosystem services;
Citizen Science and Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Number of citizen scientists trained and active; •Number of community monitoring stations established; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •100 citizen scientists active; •10 monitoring stations operational; •500 data points per year contributed;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Data points contributed to monitoring databases; • Data quality validation rate (%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 85% data validated as reliable.
Knowledge Transfer and Replication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Number of knowledge products developed (case studies, toolkits, guidelines); •Number of knowledge exchange events organised; •Number of site visits or peer-learning activities; • Evidence of replication elsewhere. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •5 case studies published; •3 peer-learning events organised; •50 visitors to demonstration sites; •Approach replicated in 2 other communities.
Policy Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Number of policy briefs or local action plans produced; •Policy recommendations adopted by authorities; •Number of policy dialogues facilitated; •Changes in regulations influenced by project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •3 local water action plans developed; •2 recommendations adopted by local authorities; •5 policy dialogues facilitated.

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