BlueLightS

1st Call for Blue Challenges/Blue Schools

In the framework of the project

EnLIGHTening future Schools to deliver BLUE Sustainability in Europe

Funded by HORIZON-MISS-2022-OCEAN-01

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1. Introduction

This is a call for proposals under the BlueLightS - EnLIGHTening future Schools to deliver BLUE Sustainability in Europe, funded by the European Union within the Horizon Europe Programme. The overarching aim of BlueLightS is to enhance Ocean and Water Literacy in schools by engaging children and youth in the EU Blue School program and Mission Ocean.

The EU mission "Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030" (from now on referred to as" the Mission") aims to reverse the degradation of oceanic, coastal, and inland waters caused by human activities (such as climate change, ocean acidification, unsustainable resource exploitation, pollution with plastic, nutrients, and chemicals, and habitat destruction). The Mission aims to protect and restore ecosystems, prevent and eliminate pollution, and increase the circulation of the blue economy. The Mission's success is influenced by ocean and water literacy and the resulting environmental responsibility. In this regard, the Network of European Blue Schools (NEBS), founded as part of the EU4Ocean Coalition for Ocean Literacy, must develop and be supported, in order to meet the Mission' s objectives.

The Network of European Blue Schools (NEBS) connects diverse organisations, projects and people contributing to ocean literacy and the sustainable management of the ocean. The NEBS aims to inspire teachers, school directors or staff of education services to challenge their students to develop a "Find the blue" project that links them to the ocean or the sea. By successfully completing the project and sharing its results, schools will receive the European Blue School label.

This call for proposals describes the conditions of calls for Blue Challenges/Blue Schools within the framework of the BlueLightS funding support scheme.

2. Objectives, activities and topics

2.1. Objectives of the call for Blue Challenges/Blue Schools

With the submission of the application, schools that get funded and meet the criteria will be automatically included in the Blue Schools Network. This initiative aims to:

1. **Wide-scale development of more impactful blue projects** *in schools that support the Mission Ocean ambition while contributing to the widening of the Network of European Blue Schools (NEBS).*
2. **Diversify the community of schools** *engaging in blue challenges, including coastal and inland schools, primary/secondary and vocational schools, as well as schools for disabled children.*
3. **Mobilize youth through e-twinning** *between schools.*

Calls will target priority blue challenge projects that are: (1) innovative and ambitious in relation to the key principles of blue education (common criteria for all), providing clear sources of inspiration; (2) focused on thematic issues of different regional lighthouses (e.g., pollution/plastics in the Mediterranean, ocean/water ecosystem conservation in the Atlantic/Arctic and in the Danube/Black Sea, sustainable aquaculture in the Baltic); (3) supporting the experimental activities of the BlueLights project, carried out in selected countries (France, Portugal, Croatia, Greece, Spain, Finland, Sweden, Ireland, Romania).

2.2. What types of projects can be submitted

The BlueLightS project's goal is to support flexible and effective ocean and water literacy programs for primary and secondary schools (including vocational schools). Each project considered for support has to:

*   Promote and contribute to achieving of EU Mission "Restore our ocean and waters by 2030" objectives

*   Enlarge and strengthen the NEBS, contributing to the work of the EU4Ocean Coalition. Consequently, each project has to meet at least 5 mandatory criteria of the Network of European Blue Schools.

*   Promote collaborative learning practices with staff and students via eTwinning as key tool to intercultural learning and giving opportunities to bring a clear European dimension

*   Engage students, youth, teachers, school leaders, and the wider school community in the pursuit of ocean and water literacy and sustainability.

2.3. Who is eligible to apply

The first BlueLIghtS funding call is directed at primary and secondary-level schools (including vocational schools) of the EU-27 Member States and third countries associated with Horizon Europe, as described in section 4.1 – Eligible beneficiaries. Grants will be awarded to schools as legal entities (and not to teachers, students, or any other persons individually). However, it is expected that students, teachers, school leaders, and eventually other stakeholders also actively participate in the preparation of the applications.

![BlueLightS logo]

2.4. What topics should be addressed in the projects

- Pollution/plastics / microplastics
- Ocean/water ecosystem conservation
- Initiatives about carbon neutrality and positive environmental impact
- Sustainable aquaculture
- Fresh water conservation
- Climate change literacy
- The European Ocean Coalition (EU4Ocean) - each European is a citizen of our ocean and waters
- Marine Protected areas
- Using ecosystem-based services and nature-based solutions to protect the coast and seas
- Protecting European rivers, lakes and aquiferous horizon
- Ending destructive fishing practices, e.g. overfishing
- Reduce pesticides in seas and waters / tackling micro pollution – zero spill
- Reduce underwater noise pollution
- Sustainable shipping
- Promoting renewable ocean energy
- Sustainable fish consumption
- Blue biotechnology
- Sustainable ports and marinas
- Active citizenship, awareness raising campaign
- Sustainable coastal tourism/water sports
- Coastal hazards
- Biodiversity
- Other (please specify)

2.5. Duration of the projects

The maximum duration of each project in this call is 5 (five) months and the minimum duration is 2 (two) months.

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3. Funding call timeline and budget

3.1. Timeline

Call opening – 15.09.2024

Deadline for submission – 15.11.2024 at 17:00 CET

Project evaluations – 16.11.2024 to 17.01.2024

Announcement of results – 20.01.2025

- Publication of the list of results on the BlueLIghtS' website, the social media and the EU Funding & Tenders Portal. The list will include approved projects, reserve list, and projects not approved. To preserve the reputation and privacy of the schools (especially in case they obtain low scores), when publishing the list of results, we will use the code/reference attributed to each school upon submission of the respective proposal and not the name of the school.

Signing of contracts – 20.01 to 28.2.2025

Projects implementation dates – 15.2.2025 - 30.7.2025

3.2. Available budget

The overall available budget for Blue Challenges is € 325 000 (three hundred twenty five thousand Euros) that will be distributed in three calls. In this call, the available budget is 100 000 Euros and we expect to fund 35-40 blue challenges. The maximum grant per school is set at 3 000 Euro. For more details on the financial provisions, please see section 5 – Financial provisions of this call for proposals.

4. Eligibility conditions

4.1. Eligible beneficiaries

- In order to be eligible, the beneficiaries must be registered as a school with legal status, public or private, accredited by the appropriate administration and realizing the official education curriculum, in either primary or secondary education (including vocational education and training), up to ISCED level 3, established and approved by the administration of the country it is located in.

  Notes:

  - A school that is a member of any form of a school cluster or group may submit their application individually, provided that the applicant school has a legal personality.

  - Several schools from the same school cluster or group may submit their applications individually, provided that each applicant school has its own legal personality.

  - Application has to be submitted by a person who is an employee of the applicant school (e.g. teacher, school principal, hired project manager).

- Be established and operating in any EU-27 Member States and third countries associated with Horizon Europe[1].

- Have not previously received funding from ProBleu or SHORE projects. Schools may apply for other open funding opportunities simultaneously; however, they cannot receive funding from more than one projects. In such cases, only one application will be selected for funding.

- Be a member of the Network of European Blue Schools or outline in the funding proposal under this call how the project meets at least 5 mandatory criteria of the Network of European Blue Schools. The schools selected for funding will be automatically certified.

4.2. Consortia

Proposals can be submitted either by individual schools or by a consortium of 2 or more schools from the same country. In the case of proposals submitted by a consortium:

- All partners schools must comply with eligibility criteria for beneficiaries.

- One school is nominated as applicant and the other participating schools are partners. Funding will be allocated to the applicant school, with the consortium members collaboratively determining the budget distribution among themselves.

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[1] The 27 member states of the European Union: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden

Third countries associated with Horizon Europe: Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Georgia, Iceland, Israel, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Tunisia, Turkey, the UK, Ukraine.

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4.3. Eligible applications

In order to be considered eligible for funding, applications should:

- Be submitted between September 15 and November 15, 2024, 17:00 CET;
- Be submitted electronically via the official application form on the BlueLIghtS website;
- Present projects that have not been funded by the Probleu and SHORE projects.

4.4. Eligible activities:

Each project may include the following types of activities:

- **Organization of Study Visits and Field Trips -** organizing study visits and field trips for educational purposes.
- **Development and Equipping Laboratories -** developing new or equipping existing laboratories for enhanced educational activities.
- **Organization of Educational Events -** organizing events such as lectures, workshops, and student projects.
- **Student Involvement Activities -** organizing or participating in workshops, meetings, conferences, training, field trips, exhibitions, local expeditions, technical trips, virtual educational activities, boat activities, virtual laboratories, laboratory trips, museum trips, and technical field trips, both inside and outside school premises
- **Development of In-Classroom Lessons -** creating lessons and exercises to promote ocean and water literacy across multiple school subjects.
- **Development of Practical Lessons Outside the Classroom -** designing practical lessons and exercises to promote ocean/marine and water literacy using citizen-science methodologies, covering multiple school subjects.
- **Research-Based Activities - c**onducting research-based activities, including laboratory testing and analysis of results.
- **Communication and Visibility -** activities to promote learning outcomes and project results within the school and the wider community. Applicants are encouraged to widely disseminate the project's impacts.
- **Competitions -** organizing or participating in competitions to promote ocean and water literacy among students, encouraging collaborative and group work at various levels (classroom, school, and between schools).
- **Twinning Activities -** activities linking schools through twinning programs.
- **Other Open Schooling Activities** - other activities that promote collaboration with the local community and external stakeholders.
- **Participation in Training and Events -** participation in training courses and events organized by other relevant organizations, including professional development events if necessary.

4.5. Exclusion

Applicants are requested to declare that all information shared in their application is correct, complete, and legitimate and that the legal entity fully complies with the eligibility criteria set out in the call. We will not award a grant to an applicant who:

- is in an exclusion situation established in the terms of the Declaration of Honour; or

- has misrepresented the information required as a condition for participating in the procedure or has failed to supply that information; or

- was previously involved in preparing documents used in the award procedure, which entails a breach of the principle of equal treatment, including distortion of competition, that cannot be remedied otherwise.

5. Financial Provisions

- The grant takes the form of a lump sum

- The maximum grant budget per blue challenge project is 3 000 Euros.

- The maximum budget of the 1st call, for each EU-27 Member States country is 6 000 Euros

- The maximum budget of the 1st call for each third country associated with Horizon Europe is 3000 Euros.

- Applicants shall propose a budget based on a simplified estimation of costs that summarises the direct costs associated with the school project proposed.

- BlueLightS partners retain the right to propose a reduction in the requested financial support and resulting financial grant if different cost elements are not fully justified.

5.1. Eligible costs

To be eligible, the costs of school projects must be duly justified and relate to work carried out following the description of the activities of the project as set out in the contract, and during the eligibility period stated.

The table below describes the categories of eligible costs, as well as examples of types of costs within each category – the examples are not exhaustive.

Cost category	Examples of expenses
Travel and accommodation	Cost of transportation, accommodation costs and costs of stay for: - school staff, students and invited experts, to visit exhibitions, museums, laboratories, research centres or other venues justified within the project activities. - teachers and school staff participating in professional development events (e.g. training courses, conferences).
Cost of equipment	Purchase or renting of equipment and supplies necessary to implement the action, including (but not limited to) lab equipment, photographic equipment, specialised software, equipment for the development of resources, arts and crafts equipment.
Other goods, works or services	- Registration fees for school staff and teachers participating in professional development events (i.e. training courses, conferences). - Renting of rooms, audiovisual equipment, catering, printing and communication costs for the organization of events - Purchase of pedagogical resources (i.e. books, software, supplies necessary to implement the action). - Communication costs (e.g. social media, web hosting, printing, organisation of events, i.e competitions). - Purchase of consumables and supplies for the development of project activities.

	• Translation services
	• Production of videos, graphic design, brochures.
	• Fees for professionals providing specific services, e.g. Invited experts/professionals providing workshops for students, as part of the project activities or to support the development of specific project activities. Note: The maximum amount for fees is 30% of the lumpsum requested.

Table 1. Eligible costs

The following types of costs are NOT eligible:

- Personnel costs: human resources working for the beneficiary's organization.
- Purchase or renting of real estate

5.2. Payment arrangements and conditions

The grant takes the form of a lump sum grant linked to the completion of work. The schools will receive an advance payment and a balance payment, provided that the activities defined in the contract are completed.

The schedule for grant payment is as follows:

- Advance payment: 80% of the grant will be made available upon contract signature.
- Balance payment: 20%, after project completion, against the validation and acceptance of the final report.

In the case that the school does not manage to complete, successfully the activities defined in the contract, it will be asked to pay back the part of the grant, corresponding to the activities not implemented (recovery).

Payments will be made in Euro to the bank account indicated by the applicant (school). The legal representative of the applicant school, i.e. the school principal, will sign the contract and take complete responsibility for executing the proposed activities.

6. Award Criteria

Eligible applications will be assessed and scored up to 100 points. The minimum score necessary for a project to be considered for financial support (threshold) is 70 points. Each application will be evaluated by two experts selected by the BlueLightS consortium.

The applications will be evaluated in three dimensions with different criteria:

Award criteria	
Relevance (Maximum 35 points, threshold: 21 points)	• High relevance to the priorities of Mission Ocean in the different Mission Ocean (sea/river basin) Lighthouses; • High degree of circularity, carbon neutrality and positive environmental impact, as well as commitment to a Climate Pact Pledge leading to decarbonisation or at least carbon neutrality of the project and of the proposed school activities; • Cooperation and/or twinning with other schools, in particular within the Network of European Blue Schools; • Schools from isolated and low populated regions in Europe; • Schools from landlocked countries (Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Kosovo, Czechia, Hungary, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, North Macedonia, Moldova, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Switzerland and Vatican City); • Inland schools (more than 100km apart from shore); • Involvement of students with disadvantages, i.e. disabled, students facing socio-economic difficulties, migrants and refugees; • Emphasis to the 21st century skills (*Critical thinking, creativity, problem solving, flexibility, leadership, collaboration, communication, information literacy, media literacy, technology literacy, taking initiatives, productivity, ethical understanding, social responsibility, self-direction, innovation*) • Promotion of EU values, (freedom, democracy, equality, justice/respect of the law, active citizenship, diversity & inclusion, tolerance, solidarity, human dignity). • Originality of the idea
Quality (Maximum 30 points, threshold: 18 points)	• Strong and innovative Ocean and Water Literacy activities aimed at students and associating teachers, parents/guardians of the school(s) concerned; • Mobilisation of Open Schooling methodologies, engaging with the community and ensuring visibility (communication) of the blue challenge projects and its results;

	• Capacity and experience of the team assigned to the implementation of the Blue Challenge project; • Soundness of proposed project management and administration arrangements • Sound risk assessment and sound prevention measures proposed.
Impact (Maximum 35 points, threshold: 21 points)	• Impact of the action to the school community – students in the first place, but also teachers and parents/guardians; • Wider impact at the level of the local (territorial) community; • Long term impact and contribution to the achievement of the objectives "Restore our ocean and waters by 2030: and reinforce and contribute to the work of the EU4Ocean Coalition for Ocean Literacy.

Table 2.   Award criteria

7. The submission process

Applications will be submitted **online through the project's webpage at https://blue-lights.eu/grant-for-schools/**

The application form includes:

1.   An administrative section with information about the school, the contact person(s) and the proof of membership to the Network of European Blue Schools (or a statement with the agreement to apply as members of the Network)

2.   The description of the proposed blue challenge project/activities to be carried out by the school

3.   The estimated budget of the blue challenge project/action

4.   The Declaration on Honour in relation to exclusion criteria

The applications should be submitted in **English language**

Questions could be posed via the Call's webpage using the Contact Form until the 8th of November 2024. Participants will receive replies via email.

Additionally, FAQs will be published on the Call website.

The deadline for the submission of applications is 15 November 2024.

Maximum grant for each Blue Challenge is 3000 EUR.

8. The selection process

After eligibility checks, the submitted applications will be subject to a qualitative evaluation from evaluators, following the selection criteria. The evaluation process will be managed by the Selection Committee and performed by a team of competent evaluators from all participating countries. The evaluators will evaluate the proposals independently and give a score in a 100 points scale, following common instructions that will be provided by the Selection Committee. After assessing the applications, the Selection Committee will organise a de-brief session with all evaluators, to check and ensure the soundness of the evaluation and discuss the overall results, before developing an overall ranking with all applications with their scores.

The list of the selected applications will be decided by the Selection Committee, taking into account:

- The overall ranking of applications;

- The budget allocated to each country;

- E-twinning applications.

The partners retain the right to reduce the grant that will be awarded to the selected schools, if the different cost elements are not fully justified. The approved budget will be awarded as lump sum.

BlueLightS will publish the outcome of the calls without delay on its project web site (and announced on social media), presenting a description of the selected blue challenge projects, the date of the award, the duration of the project, and the legal name and country of the recipient in charge of the project implementation. It will also ensure results are

published in the dedicated Network of European Blue Schools webpage and disseminated throughout the EU4Ocean and Mission Ocean communities.

8.1. Notification of selected projects

The notification process for selected projects is a critical phase in the funding cycle, ensuring transparency and effective communication with all stakeholders involved. The following details outline the key elements of this process:

Announcement of Results

The announcement of selected projects will take place on **January 20, 2025**. This date marks the culmination of the selection process, where applicants will learn the outcomes of their submissions.

Publication of Results

Following the announcement, a comprehensive list of results will be published on various platforms, including:

- **BlueLIghtS Website**: The official site will serve as the primary source for all project results.
- **Social Media**: Announcements will be shared across relevant social media channels to reach a broader audience.
- **EU Funding & Tenders Portal**: This platform will also host the results, ensuring accessibility to stakeholders across Europe.

Contents of the Results List

The published results will include the following categories:

- **Approved Projects**: A list of projects that have successfully secured funding, providing details about each project's focus and objectives.

- **Reserve List**: A secondary list that includes projects deemed eligible but not funded due to budget constraints. This list allows for the possibility of future funding opportunities should any approved projects become ineligible or decline the offer.

- **Non-Approved Projects**: A list of projects that were not selected for funding, along with general feedback where applicable.

Privacy and Reputation Considerations

To protect the reputation and privacy of participating schools, especially those that may have received lower scores during the evaluation process, the published list will utilize a **code/reference system**. This means that rather than listing the names of the schools, each will be identified by a unique code assigned at the time of proposal submission. This approach helps maintain confidentiality and minimizes any potential negative implications for schools that did not receive funding.

Communication of Feedback

While the initial announcement will focus on the results, additional communication may follow to provide feedback to applicants. This feedback can be invaluable for schools, offering insights into the strengths and weaknesses of their proposals, and guiding future applications.

Next Steps for Successful Applicants

Once the results have been announced, successful applicants will receive further instructions on the next steps, including:

- **Formal Acceptance of Funding**: Details regarding the acceptance process for the awarded funds.
- **Project Implementation Guidelines**: Information on how to proceed with project activities, reporting requirements, and timelines for implementation.
- **Certification Process**: For schools that are members of the Network of European Blue Schools, information about automatic certification and its implications will be provided.

9. Visibility

Beneficiaries must properly acknowledge the European Union's contribution in any publications or activities that employ the funds provided. Beneficiaries are expected to display the emblem and disclaimer of the European Union on all publications and other products created under the financed action. They should also use the BlueLightS visuals where applicable. Guidelines will be provided to the successful beneficiaries.

10. Processing of Personal Data

To respond to a call for proposals, personal data (such as name, e-mail address, and address) must be recorded and processed. Such information will be handled under Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural people concerning the processing of personal data and the free movement of such data.

Unless indicated otherwise, the questions and any personal data requested that are required to evaluate the application following the call for proposal will be processed solely for that purpose by the consortium.

GDPR Information Clause

On the basis of Article 13(1) and (2) or Article 14(1) and (2) of Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27th April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repeating Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation), hereinafter referred to as "GDPR", we inform you about the manner and purpose for which we process your personal data, as well as your data protection rights, as follows:

1. **Personal Data Controller:**

The entity responsible for the processing of your personal data is IDEC. You can contact the controller of your personal data in the following way:

- by post, to the address: Iroon Polytecneiou, 18536, Piraeus, Greece

- by e-mail: info@idec.gr

2. **Data Protection Officer:**

For any inquiries or concerns regarding the processing of your personal data, you may contact our Data Protection Officer (DPO) at:

- **Name:** Kostas Bariamis

- **Email:** k.bariamis@idec.gr

- **Phone:** +30 2104286227

3. *Purposes of Data Processing and Legal Basis:*

To respond to a call for proposals, personal data (such as name, email address, and address) must be recorded and processed. Failure to provide personal data shall make it impossible to achieve the aforementioned objective

Unless indicated otherwise, the questions and any personal data requested that are required to evaluate the application following the call for proposal will be processed solely for that purpose by the consortium.

Personal Data Storage Period:

Personal data will be stored only as long as necessary (not exceeding 5 years) to fulfill the purposes for which it was collected, including compliance with legal obligations, resolving disputes, and enforcing agreements.

4. *Data Recipients:*

We may share your data with entities providing postal or courier services, public authorities, or other entities that are legally entitled to obtain such data. These authorities may include, but are not limited to:

- *National and local government agencies*
- *Law enforcement agencies*
- *Regulatory bodies*
- *Educational authorities*

If tools such as Microsoft Forms or Google Forms are used to gather data, please note that any data collected via these tools may include, but is not limited to, IP addresses, which may be stored and/or transferred in accordance with their own terms and conditions. For more information on how your data is handled by such tools, please refer to Microsoft's Privacy Policy, and/or Google's Privacy Policy.

Additionally, your data may be shared with administrators of the SHORE and ProBleu funding schemes to verify that your project has not received funding from these sources and to prevent any instances of double funding.

5. *Rights Related to the Processing of Personal Data:*

Right to Access:

- You have the right to request access to your personal data and obtain information about how your data is being processed.

- You have the right to request correction of inaccurate personal data or to have incomplete data completed.

- You have the right to request the deletion of your personal data under certain circumstances.

- You have the right to request the restriction or suppression of your personal data under certain conditions.

- You have the right to obtain and reuse your personal data for your own purposes across different services.

- You have the right to object to the processing of your personal data in certain circumstances.

- Your data shall not be subject to automated decision-making, including profiling.

For any questions or concerns regarding GDPR compliance and data protection, please contact our Data Protection Officer (DPO) at the provided contact details.