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# How to become a Young Ocean Advocate

Application Guidelines 2024



# Young Ocean Advocate accreditation process

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## Online application

Members of the Youth4Ocean Forum can submit their projects and apply for accreditation by the European Commission's DG MARE as Young Ocean Advocate at any time, by completing the [project submission form](#). To fill the form, you'll need to create and/or access to your **EU Login** account first.

A

Click on the "EU Login" button and fill in the form to create a EU Login. Then, follow the instructions received by email to set a password and choose a verification method. If you need help, you can read the [EU Login Guidelines](#).



B

Make your first EU Login access on the Maritime Forum (you can use the QR code on the left) and choose "Mobile Phone + SMS" as a verification method.

C

Go back to the "How to become a Young Ocean Advocate" page and click on the "Submit your project" button. You can now complete the project submission form!

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## Screening for eligibility

Before proceeding with the selection of candidates, **eligibility of applications is screened according to the following criteria:**

### You need to be:

- Between 16 and 30 years of age;
- A EU citizen, or EU-based individual.

### Your project needs to be:

- Relevant to the topics of the EU4Ocean Coalition and the EU Mission Ocean;
- Related to ocean disciplines such as education, conservation, research, arts, communication, blue economy, sports, advocacy, or community engagement;
- Relevant to EU seas and waters.



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## Assessment of applications

A jury of Youth4Ocean Forum facilitators will carefully review all eligible applications by assessing the criteria below. Facilitators will consider appointing other members of the jury from Young Ocean Advocates or EU4Ocean Platform members, in case a specific expertise is deemed necessary to properly assess one or more project submissions. Assessment criteria are listed below.

### Your skills

- Motivation and commitment
- Leadership and teamwork
- Open-mindedness
- Communication skills
- Willingness to learn
- Creativity

### Your project

- Societal impact
- Clear vision and implementation
- Sustainability and replication potential
- Relevance to EU Green Deal, Blue Economy, SDGs
- European dimension
- Inclusiveness and collective approach
- Effectiveness and achievement of outputs
- Communication and visibility

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## Final review by European Commission

Finally, pre-selected applications are reviewed by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE) and the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA). The selection process is concluded once the European Commission provides final clearance to the Youth4Ocean Forum facilitation team. Final approval of project submissions takes up to 4 weeks after the application deadline.

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## Congratulations, you are a Young Ocean Advocate!

Once you have received the admission and onboarding email from the Youth4Ocean Forum facilitation team, you are officially a Young Ocean Advocate and part of the Youth4Ocean Forum.



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## Benefits and duties of Young Ocean Advocates

As a Young Ocean Advocate, you will have access to exclusive benefits and resources to make a positive change for the ocean:

- Your project and personal profile will be **showcased** in the Youth4Ocean Forum section **on the Maritime Forum website of the European Commission**, and promoted on social media by the EU4Ocean Coalition;
- You will get **support and guidance from members of the EU4Ocean Coalition**, including by having access to the mentoring programme of the EU4Ocean Coalition to develop your project and skills;
- You will get the chance to **pitch your project and ideas** in front of a broad audience during high-visibility events;
- You will be able to attend events and **network with leading experts, likeminded young people and professionals** from all over Europe.
- You will get **access to tools and networks** to promote ocean literacy in Europe.
- You will be able to participate in the **Ocean Literacy in Action! Award contest**.
- You will get the opportunity to participate in the **Call for Collective Action** of the EU4Ocean Challenge of the Year.

Young Ocean Advocates will be active in the Youth4Ocean Forum; in particular they will:

- Continue to **develop their projects**;
- **Promote the Youth4Ocean Forum** and ocean literacy and advocate for initiatives supporting the sustainable use of the ocean;
- **Mobilise their networks** to expand the Youth4Ocean community, to include youth from beyond the marine sector and from all social groups;
- **Participate in and contribute** to Youth4Ocean Forum meetings, activities, outreach and advocacy, and mentoring programme;
- **Contribute to the strategic development** of the Youth4Ocean Forum;
- Contribute to collective EU4Ocean initiatives by **collaborating with the EU4Ocean Platform and of the Network of EU Blue Schools**.



## FAQ

### **I just missed the deadline. Can I still apply?**

Not to worry, you can apply at any time. We will publish new calls for projects on specific topics every 6 months and will review your application in the next selection period.

### **I am under 16 /over 30, but I feel that my project fits the criteria. Can I still apply?**

Yes, we will review all applications, and apply flexibility if we deem that your project is innovative and promising.

### **I have developed my projects with others, can we apply as a group?**

Only one person can submit the project through the online application form and can mention the names of the other applicants, as requested in a specific field of the form. If the project is approved, all applicants will become Young Ocean Advocates if they individually meet the eligibility criteria (see p. 1) and can create a Young Ocean Advocate profile associated to their project on the Maritime Forum by filling in a dedicated form.

### **I already am a founding member/regular member of the Youth4Ocean Forum, can I apply?**

Yes! Founding members are allowed and encouraged to place their candidacy to become Young Ocean Advocates. For obvious reasons, if you apply, you will be excluded from the jury assessing your application.

### **My project is only an idea at the moment, can I apply?**

Yes, we welcome applications for projects at various stages of development, it can be just a concept (in which case the Youth4Ocean Forum will help you in developing it), or already being implemented or ongoing.



**I understand English but I am not confident in applying in English.  
Can I apply in my native language?**

We do not want language to be a barrier. Candidates can be leaders at a sea basins scale and not be fluent in English. Unfortunately, we cannot accept applications in languages other than English, but in order to be inclusive, the Youth4Ocean Forum members who are fluent in English can help other members to translate their documents in English for evaluation. If you need help, please reach out through the contact form or by email at [info@youth4ocean-forum.eu](mailto:info@youth4ocean-forum.eu).

**If my application is not successful, can I improve my project and apply again?**

Absolutely! The projects that have passed the eligibility criteria but have been rejected will benefit from advice/coaching tips to succeed the next time they are submitted. Some applicants whose projects do not comply with the criteria will be contacted and given suggestions on how to improve their project and apply again. In addition, members of the Youth4Ocean Forum and the EU4Ocean Coalition will provide mentoring and coaching to improve projects that have been declined and to implement projects that are in concept phase or planning stages.

**I would like to submit more than one project /  
I am already part of a Young Ocean Advocate project and would like to submit another project. Can I apply?**

Absolutely yes! We always appreciate Young Ocean Advocates taking on multiple initiatives to support ocean conservation. Any new projects you submit for accreditation will be evaluated individually and according to the same criteria as other applicants.

**My project is in place already and it generates a profit.  
Could this be an issue?**

Not at all, as long as a project contributes to a more sustainable use of the ocean resources or to raise awareness, we want to hear from it!



## The Youth4Ocean Forum and the EU4Ocean Coalition

The Youth4Ocean Forum is a **European network of young ocean changemakers** like you. Our common goal is to shape our future with a healthy ocean that sustains us all. It provides young project leaders with the opportunity to obtain accreditation as EU Young Ocean Advocates, awarded by the European Commission.

The Youth4Ocean Forum is part of the **EU4Ocean Coalition**, an initiative funded by the European Commission and implemented by a consortium of 13 partners\* across Europe.

The Coalition gathers all ocean literacy stakeholders who are committed to strengthening the network of initiatives in Europe and contributing to a healthy ocean that sustains us all. The EU4Ocean Coalition is composed of **three communities** working together towards common goals, namely: the EU4Ocean Platform, the Youth4Ocean Forum, and the Network of EU Blue Schools. For more information, visit our website:

[eu-oceanliteracy.eu](https://eu-oceanliteracy.eu)

\*EU4Ocean implementing partners include: ACTeon (coordinator, France), Seascope Belgium (Secretariat of the European Marine Observation and Data Network and the European Atlas of the Seas, Belgium), Youth and Environment Europe (YEE, Czechia), Nausicaá-National Sea Centre (France), Ciência Viva (Portugal), the European Marine Science Educators Association (EMSEA, Belgium), REVOLVE (Belgium), the Global Ocean Observing System of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (EuroGOOS, Belgium), EurOcean (Belgium), the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA, Belgium), JPI Oceans (Belgium), European Schoolnet (Belgium), and the Overseas Countries and Territories Association (OCTA).



*This document was designed by YEE and is an updated version of the 2020 Application Guidelines created with the input of Nausicaá, ACTeon environment, and the founding members of the Youth4Ocean Forum.*



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**We are always there if you need help.  
You can contact us through the contact form  
or by email at [info@youth4ocean-forum.eu](mailto:info@youth4ocean-forum.eu)**



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