European
Commission

EU4OCEAN PLATFORM

Terms of Reference
2023-2025

CONTENT

1 MOTIVATION AND ADDED VALUE OF EU4OCEAN

There is increasing recognition across society that we are in a climate emergency. In response to this, the European Green Deal[1] sets out ambitious targets for Europe to be carbon-neutral by 2050. The European seas, bordering ocean basins and global Ocean offer unprecedented potential for the sustainable green transition. This is driving an increased momentum to raise societal engagement and action on the role of the global Ocean in regulating the planetary system.

EU4Ocean is a European Commission Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE) initiative that offers a focal point for Ocean Literacy in Europe. EU4Ocean connects and drives collaboration and innovation in Ocean Literacy, mobilising a wide diversity of stakeholders to develop concrete activities that create awareness, engagement and momentum across society for action and change. The EU4Ocean Coalition mobilises organisations and individuals – both within and beyond marine and maritime fields - to engage in Ocean Literacy across age groups, integrating the youth, and across sectors and domains. Engagement in the EU4Ocean Coalition may be through active contributors, supporters and multipliers, or as target audiences, all of whom need to be mobilised for co-building effective Ocean Literacy initiatives. These include teachers, school managers, business / industry / professionals, decision makers, authorities, scientists, civil society, financial institutions and philanthropists, artists, the media, as well as children, students and the Youth. The EU4Ocean Coalition brings together a diversity of stakeholders, connected across geographical scales and societal roles.

The guiding principles of the EU4Ocean Coalition are:

- **Leadership for European Ocean Literacy**: driven by active, motivated organisations, networks, communities and individuals who can provide dynamic progress and guidance and catalyse engagement in Ocean Literacy in Europe;

- **Inclusivity**: linking and empowering communities for real change;

- **Shared responsibility** for ocean preservation and engagement of all stakeholders and wider society;

- **Open and free access** to information and sharing of resources;

- A **strong voice for youth** with a strong pillar of youth engagement and leadership – reversing the traditional top-down relationship between adults and the Youth to a fair and balanced relationship;

- Raising the profile of **marine and maritime education** in education;

- **Innovation** in forming new partnerships, joint actions and co-designed solutions, building on existing activities and best practice;

- **European focus**, contributing to the delivery of the European Green Deal, **with an international reach and contribution**. Activities are implemented in the context of the UN 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development[2] and UNESCO activities in Ocean Literacy[3].

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[1] https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

[2] https://oceandecade.org/
[3] https://oceanliteracy.unesco.org

The **EU4Ocean Coalition**[4] comprises three interconnected communities (see Figure1):

- the **EU4Ocean Platform**: the focal point for organisations, networks, individuals, projects and initiatives to connect, collaborate and mobilise efforts on Ocean Literacy;

- the **Youth4Ocean Forum**: a Forum dedicated to Youth (16-30 years old) for young ocean changemakers to speak up for their generation, meet, share and generate ideas, present their projects and connect with young people and experts all over Europe;

- the **Network of European Blue Schools**: a network dedicated to empowering schools to bring ocean-related issues into the education system (e.g., curricula, extra-curricular activities) towards becoming a certified Blue School.

For each community, facilitation is carried out by specific project partners (please refer to the list of partners hereafter).

EU4Ocean is fully inclusive as a European community of practice in the field of Ocean Literacy.

The **three communities work closely together** to ensure that complementarities, synergies, and collaborations are fostered whilst promoting open dialogue with all stakeholders.

The EU4Ocean Coalition is conducted by a consortium of 7 partners, 6 subcontractors and a third party implementing the European Commission EU4Ocean project European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA) service contract (December 2022-December 2025).

The 7 partners are ACTeon (Project Coordinator), Seascape Belgium (EU4Ocean Platform facilitator), Youth and Environment Europe (Youth4Ocean Forum facilitator), the European Marine Science Educators Association (EMSEA, Network of European Blue Schools facilitator), Revolve, Nausicaá-National Sea Centre, and Ciência Viva. The subcontractors are the European Centre for Information on Marine Science and Technology (EurOcean), European Schoolnet, the European Global Ocean Observing System (EuroGOOS), the Joint Programming Initiative Healthy and Productive Seas and Oceans (JPI Oceans), the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) and Euractiv. The third party is the Overseas Countries and Territories Association (OCTA).

In this Terms of Reference (ToR), the Consortium members are referred to as the project partners. Among the EU4Ocean partners, Seascape Belgium is the lead facilitator for the EU4Ocean Platform.

A Glossary at the end of this document explains key acronyms and terms in the ToR.

This ToR outlines the main objectives, expectations and mode of operation of the EU4Ocean Platform - with a focus on the expected growth of the Platform towards longer-term continuation and impact.
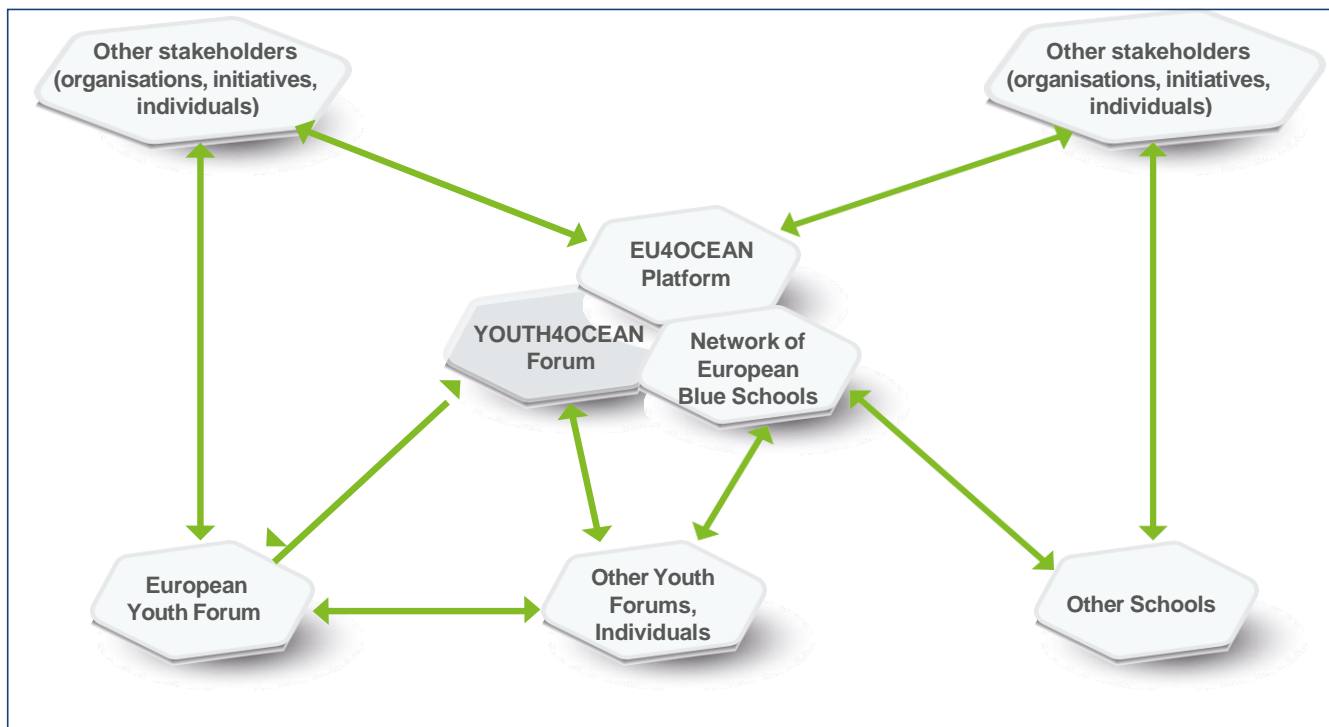
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[4] www.eu-oceanliteracy.eu

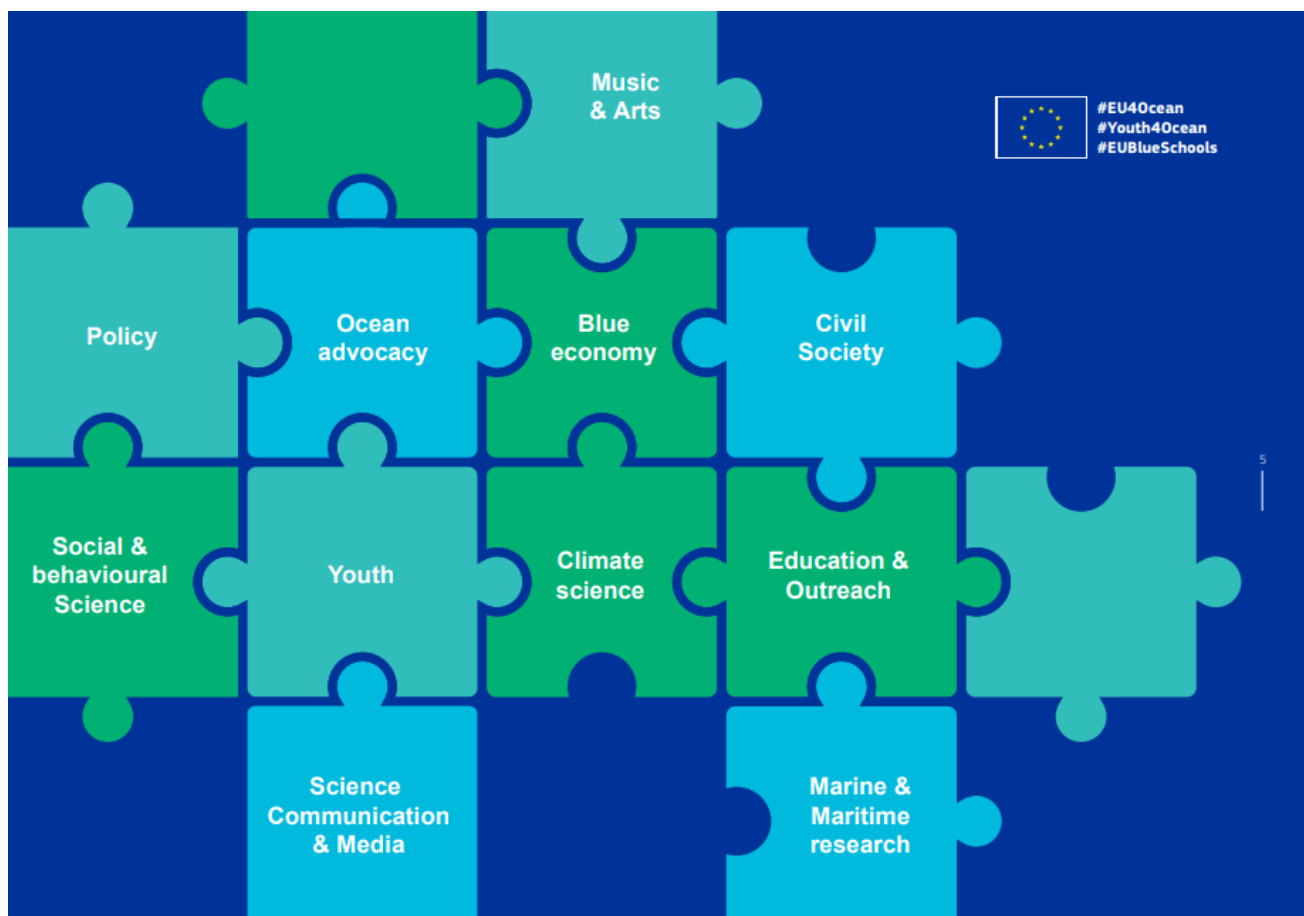*Figure 1: EU4Ocean Coalition for European Ocean Literacy*

Figure 2: EU4Ocean connects and drives collaboration and innovation across Ocean Literacy initiatives, mobilising a wide diversity of stakeholders to develop concrete activities that create awareness, engagement and momentum across society for action and change.

2 EU4OCEAN PLATFORM OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

The **EU4Ocean Platform** is a focal point for organisations and initiatives to connect, collaborate and mobilise efforts on Ocean Literacy. The EU4Ocean Platform offers a dynamic working environment that stimulates collaboration, exchange of practices and dialogue across the many different target groups leading to the creation of new Ocean Literacy partnerships and innovative actions.

The EU4Ocean Platform objectives are to:

- **Consolidate and build on existing initiatives** in Ocean Literacy spanning different stakeholder sectors;

- **Connect disparate and diverse stakeholders** acting in Ocean Literacy to form an inclusive Ocean Literacy community network that stimulates an environment of concrete actions and commitments to create an 'Ocean-Literate generation';

- **Jointly identify opportunities** in Ocean Literacy activities that can be scaled up to raise awareness in wider society;
- Ensure the **Youth** are an integral and active part of Ocean Literacy activities;
- Act as a **focal point for the European Ocean Literacy community** for the United Nations (UN) Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, and in particular its Ocean Literacy components;
- **Build momentum** for EU4Ocean to ensure growth and spreading of the initiative beyond the project lifetime.

What does the EU4Ocean Platform offer to members?

- ✓ Gaining visibility, added value and impact for existing activities;
- ✓ Increased connection between existing activities, towards an EU movement and narrative;
- ✓ Contributing to the central focal point for collaborative dialogue and action in Ocean Literacy in Europe, the EU4Ocean Coalition;
- ✓ Working with other organisations and individuals and mutual learning;
- ✓ Pooling and adding value to resources for scaling up Ocean Literacy activities;
- ✓ Forming new partnerships, creating innovation and exploring diverse funding opportunities;
- ✓ Directly engaging with youth and Young Ocean Advocates via the Youth4Ocean Forum;
- ✓ Directly engaging with schools via the Network of European Blue Schools;
- ✓ Contributing to the growing European movement in Ocean Literacy, as a contribution to international efforts and agendas (e.g., Ocean Decade and UN 2030 Agenda).

The EU4Ocean Platform works closely with the Youth4Ocean Forum and the Network of European Blue Schools. Members of the three communities work together to contribute to events and campaigns and to co-develop initiatives. Cooperation between members of the three communities is encouraged in the framework of the annual thematic **Challenge of the Year**. Members of the Platform are invited to contribute to the **Mentoring Programme** for Young Ocean Advocates and to **support schools** from the Network of European Blue Schools.

The EU4Ocean Platform started with 76 core founding members in 2020 and has grown rapidly to extend and diversify membership and opportunities for joint innovative activities.

The benefits of EU4Ocean Platform membership are outlined in the box on page 6.

The key expected roles for EU4Ocean Platform members are presented in the box below.

Key roles for EU4Ocean Platform members:

✓ Committing to the EU movement and narrative of the EU4Ocean Coalition, acting as informal ambassadors to build connections and momentum that drive societal change;

✓ Actively participating in the EU4Ocean Platform meetings and activities;

✓ Working proactively and synergistically in a topic-oriented multi-stakeholder environment;

✓ Bringing expertise and knowledge (e.g., in marine and maritime research, policy, conservation management, education, communication, arts);

✓ Being open and inclusive, forming new partnerships and co-designing Ocean Literacy activities, actions and campaigns at multiple geographical scales;

✓ Mentoring and coaching other members of the Platform and the Youth;

✓ Engaging in relevant events and dissemination, contributing to planning and promoting EU4Ocean activities at all geographical levels.

3 COMPOSITION AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR MEMBERSHIP

3.1 Composition of the EU4Ocean Platform

The EU4Ocean Platform is composed of a wide diversity of stakeholder groups that together drive the innovation and longevity of Platform activities. The stakeholder groups include, but are not restricted to, science (public and private scientific bodies spanning STEAM[5] and social sciences), business and industry sectors (with a primary focus on the blue economy), decision makers, authorities, civil society, financial institutions and philanthropists, science-arts initiatives, artists, musicians and the media. Working closely with the Youth4Ocean Forum and the Network of European Blue Schools, the Platform also promotes the membership of particularly active and committed youth organizations and representatives, informal and formal education institutions and organisations.

The EU4Ocean Platform builds on existing and ongoing initiatives in Ocean Literacy. For this reason, the initial EU4Ocean Platform founding membership was spearheaded by marine / maritime organizations and initiatives already engaged in Ocean Literacy activities. These include organisations that have actively participated in Ocean Literacy projects in the past including European Horizon 2020 research projects ResponSEAble, SeaChange, MARINA and other organisations and initiatives that provide examples of best practice in Ocean Literacy. This includes projects of time-limited duration and also longer-term initiatives.

Core membership of the EU4Ocean Platform include stakeholders already active in Ocean Literacy and marine / maritime activities, including:

- **Ocean Literacy practitioners**, including organisations, initiatives and committed individuals contributing to – and/or targeted by – Ocean Literacy initiatives;

- **organisations and/or individuals that can support Ocean Literacy initiatives** – be it as providers of knowledge and expertise, as support for the design of effective Ocean Literacy (media experts), or as funding/bringing financial resources to secure implementation;

- ongoing and forthcoming **projects and initiatives** (e.g., National, regional and European funded projects), that have already secured funding for communication and awareness raising activities to promote a connected EU narrative on Ocean Literacy and ocean advocacy that can support changes.

Platform members can also represent sectors beyond the usual marine/maritime communities. As the EU4Ocean Platform grows, it will reach out to encourage involvement and active participation by wider sectors not yet involved in Ocean Literacy.

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[5] Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Mathematics

A defining philosophy is to expand the membership by mobilising stakeholders beyond the traditional marine / maritime communities that in many cases might be already "acquired to the cause" of a sustainable ocean. It is essential for the EU4Ocean Platform to include member organisations that are "land-based" and indirectly connected to, impacting or impacted by – the ocean. The EU4Ocean Platform is expected to further engage wider domains including full aquatic resources, land and atmospheric/climate initiatives, and, beyond STEAM and natural sciences, to include wider disciplines spanning social sciences and arts.

3.2 Eligibility criteria

The EU4Ocean Platform is a membership-based platform with an **application and approval process**. The application process is outlined in operational procedures (section 4). Most members of the EU4Ocean Platform are **European** (at multiple geographical scales from regional to national and European), with the key purpose to consolidate existing efforts across the European landscape. In this way, the European Union can contribute to international efforts with a coordinated European voice. Since many European stakeholders are involved in international efforts, they offer crucial links and international context to EU4Ocean efforts.

International stakeholders and stakeholders from other countries who are working in Europe, on European projects and/or with European partners, or wish to do so, are eligible to apply to join the EU4Ocean Platform.

Members of the EU4Ocean Platform are primarily organisations, associations, faculties / departments, projects and networks that can demonstrate their willingness and capability (e.g., resources to engage in the EU4Ocean Platform activities). Initiatives with no legal entity or **individuals** are also welcome to apply where they can demonstrate relevant ongoing and future activities relevant to EU4Ocean Platform activities. Stakeholders applying for EU4Ocean Platform membership will be asked to demonstrate their **ability and/or willingness to meet the following eligibility criteria**:

- be a European stakeholder or an international one that can demonstrate **concrete activities, interactions, collaborations or joint activities** with European stakeholders;
- be a representative of at least one **key target group** of the EU4Ocean Platform, namely science (public and private research with a primary focus on STEAM and social sciences), policy makers and decision-makers, industry and business, financial institutions, media, civil society e.g. NGOs, philanthropists, art and culture, educational organisations and initiatives;
- be able to explain the **benefit and contribution** of the particular stakeholder and its sector/domain to the efforts of the EU4Ocean Platform and wider EU4Ocean Coalition;
- be already **actively working in the area of Ocean Literacy**, including activities spanning ocean awareness and communication, ocean advocacy, Ocean Literacy resource design, implementation and sharing, marine and maritime education, careers and skills;
- provide examples of where the stakeholder's Ocean Literacy efforts are directly contributing to **develop European capability and best practice in Ocean Literacy**;

- demonstrate e.g. through existing examples or proposed resources (in-kind or concrete funds) the **motivation and capacity** of their organisation (or individual) to actively contribute to relevant Ocean Literacy activities of the EU4Ocean Platform;
- show motivation and willingness to **comply with the guiding principles** of the EU4Ocean Coalition, including an open philosophy to share and co-create Ocean Literacy activities, resources and tools for the benefit of EU4Ocean and, ultimately, wider society;
- show willingness to **share experiences** and **openness to form new partnerships** and **jointly implement new activities** under the label EU4Ocean;
- show willingness to **integrate Youth** into all Ocean Literacy activities and offer **coaching and mentorship** to the Youth through the Youth4Ocean Forum.

Stakeholders should strive to provide motivation, explanation and, where possible, concrete evidence, to **meet as many eligibility criteria as possible**, recognising that stakeholders have a diversity of skills and resources so are **not required to meet all eligibility criteria**. The EU4Ocean Platform will predominantly remain organisation (or department) - based so that there is a clear mandate and resources for joint activities that can be co-designed and implemented by the Platform members. This needs to be clearly demonstrated to allow for a solid assessment. **Each application will be assessed against these eligibility criteria**.

Integrating the Youth in EU4Ocean Platform activities and meetings is crucial to connect members of the EU4Ocean Platform, the Youth4Ocean Forum and the Network of European Blue Schools and enable them to cooperate on joint initiatives for the benefit of all.

In addition, members of the Youth4Ocean Forum and of the Network of European Blue Schools are eligible to apply as members of the EU4Ocean Platform if they wish and if they can demonstrate particular willingness and capability to contribute to Platform activities, in addition to the Youth4Ocean Forum and Network of European Blue Schools activities.

3.3 Roles and activities of EU4Ocean Platform members

For all EU4Ocean activities, members are expected to provide **voluntary contributions** to cover their staff, resources and travel costs where relevant. By joining, members have benefits, as outlined in section 2, including added visibility and impact for ongoing activities and the opportunity to forge new partnerships leading to new innovative activities and shared funding resources.

It is recognised that each stakeholder will bring specific skill sets and offer multiple methods and levels of engagement. Some organisations will be willing to play a fully active role from the start, whilst others may need time to develop awareness, capacity and resources in their country or sector. In addition, individuals and organisations with an interest, but no prior experience in Ocean Literacy, or lack of access to resources, also need to have ways to engage and feel part of the EU4Ocean Coalition without commitment or active resource contribution. For this reason, members of the EU4Ocean Platform are invited to contribute to the full range of EU4Ocean Platform activities, according to their skill set. Building on the key roles of EU4Ocean Platform members (summarised in section 1), below we enumerate a more complete list of responsibilities and activities. These include, but are not limited to:

- actively participate in **EU4Ocean Platform meetings**, providing experience and leadership to drive interdisciplinary discussions for joint Ocean Literacy activities;

- promote various **interdisciplinary discussions and joint actions** spanning multiple domains and sectors, identifying and assessing complementarities and creating synergies for EU4Ocean Platform thematic areas;

- contribute to, and support planned **communication and advocacy campaigns**;

- **develop and/or share Ocean Literacy content** for the EU4Ocean Platform: active ideation & support to the implementation of Ocean Literacy activities emerging from the EU4Ocean Platform;

- **provide scientific, technological, technical, artistic educational and/or communication support** to enable EU4Ocean Platform activities;

- **enable resources** for Ocean Literacy activities (in-kind or concrete funding) and propose innovative ways to fund and link to wider stakeholders;

- serve as **informal ambassadors** for EU4Ocean, actively promoting EU4Ocean and sensitising wider stakeholders to the value of Ocean Literacy and the EU4Ocean initiative;

- **identify, map and mobilise stakeholders** in their domains, working with the EU4Ocean facilitators to identify potential new members and extend the EU4Ocean Platform to new sectors and domains.

- **mentor, coach and collaborate** with other EU4Ocean Platform stakeholders, members of the Youth4Ocean Forum, in particular Young Ocean Advocates, and members of the Network of European Blue Schools;

- **support communication efforts** and provide feedback on potential dissemination, promotion activities, campaign planning and media contacts to increase the impact of EU4Ocean, identify key channels locally or per sector, to drive messaging further and raise the visibility of the EU4Ocean Coalition;

- contribute to **regional and national promotion**, awareness raising and action (e.g. through stakeholder identification and dialogue, translation of content into national languages and bringing expertise in how to reach stakeholders in regional and national contexts);

- bring expertise in **engaging with youth,** strengthen the dialogue with the Youth4Ocean Forum and Network of European Blue Schools, help with the customisation and translation of content for schools locally/regionally;

- contribute to defining **quantitative targets** to measure EU4Ocean Platform success;

- Contribute to the **strategic development** of the Platform including governance and content.

Duration of EU4Ocean Platform membership contributions

The EU4Ocean Platform was launched in 2020 for a first phase that lasted 24 months. A second phase started in December 2022 for a period of 3 years, until December 2025.

Members are expected to contribute to the activities and growth of the Platform from the time they join until the end of this second phase and – where possible – beyond. Further information on operational activities is detailed in section 4 below.

Organisations that are members of the EU4Ocean Platform can at any time **contact the Platform facilitators at info@eu4ocean-platform.eu** to replace an expert who was involved in the EU4Ocean Platform or add new experts who wish to take part in EU4Ocean activities.

4 OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

4.1 Stakeholder mobilisation and dialogue

Continuous identification of existing Ocean Literacy initiatives in Europe, and wider stakeholders, is important for the development of the EU4Ocean Platform. An initial mapping exercise was conducted in the first phase of EU4Ocean to identify potential stakeholders for the three key components of the EU4Ocean Coalition, including the 76 founding members of the EU4Ocean Platform.

The stakeholder mapping continues throughout the project and includes the thematic and sector diversity outlined in section 3, across initiatives/projects (including those with limited duration), organisations, institutes, initiatives (e.g., networks with longer-term duration) and individuals.

Organisations, projects, initiatives and individuals can apply to become members of the EU4Ocean Platform at any time, either in response to an invitation received by e-mail from the Platform facilitators or after review of information available on the official webpages of EU4Ocean Coalition on the European Commission Maritime Forum website (http://eu-oceanliteracy.eu) which includes details on the procedure to apply to become a member of the EU4Ocean Platform, together with this full version of the Terms of Reference.

All applications must be submitted by completing the **online application form available on the official webpages of EU4Ocean Coalition** in the section dedicated to the EU4Ocean Platform.

Any question concerning the application process can be addressed at the EU4Ocean Platform facilitators at info@eu4ocean-platform.eu.

Further dialogue with the Platform facilitators can take place via **videoconference** to discuss the EU4Ocean Platform benefits, eligibility criteria and roles and activities as well as any questions the stakeholder may have.

The EU4Ocean Platform facilitators also maintain communication with stakeholders involved as members of the EU4Ocean Platform to inform them of upcoming events and activities of the EU4Ocean Coalition, calls for Collective Actions (e.g. Challenge of the Year), calls for EU4Ocean Awards and calls for support to the Youth4Ocean Forum and Network of European Schools.

The EU4Ocean Platform facilitators organise **online Platform meetings**, inviting all Platform members to participate, to inform them of the latest developments, stimulate cooperation and enhance networking and brainstorming for the development of new initiatives.

EU4Ocean Platform facilitators also organise **ad-hoc videoconferences** with interested Platform members to identify and discuss specific opportunities for cooperation between members and contributions to events and activities. These meetings aim to build a lasting engagement of Platform members in the EU4Ocean Coalition.

In addition to online meetings, various communication channels are used including e-mails and a social media hashtag **#EU4Ocean**.

All Platform members have the possibility to be featured in the **searchable online database of members** publicly available on the official webpages of EU4Ocean Coalition on the European Commission Maritime Forum website.

The members' pages include the name of the experts and public information provided in the application form. E-mail addresses are not included on the members' pages. Platform members who do not wish to share their member's page online can indicate so when they complete the application form.

In all recording of stakeholder names and contact information, the **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)** and any other data protection frameworks utilised by the European Commission services will be strictly adhered to. E-mails of experts provided in the application form are included in the **EU4Ocean Platform mailing** list managed by the EU4Ocean Platform facilitators to inform Platform members of EU4Ocean activities.

By applying to become members of the EU4Ocean Platform, organisations, projects, initiatives and individuals agree to receive e-mails from the EU4ocean Platform facilitators as well as the facilitators from the Youth4Ocean Forum and the Network of European Blue Schools and the EU4Ocean Coordinator ACTeon.

Platform members can at any time 'opt-out' from receiving e-mails by replying to received e-mail or contacting the Platform facilitators at info@eu4ocean-platform.eu.

Platform members are asked to contact the Platform facilitators at this address in case their contact details have changed to ensure that their **contact details in the mailing list are up-to-date**.

4.2 Application process and timeline for membership

A light framework has been set up for the membership application process to the EU4Ocean Platform, with a long-term durability in mind. Once an organisation / project / initiative / individual is committed to apply for membership of the Platform, it is vital to harness this interest, motivation and intent and to have a smooth and fast process for application approval so that they can connect to the EU4Ocean Platform activities at the earliest opportunity. The target for completion of the full application process - from assessment to a decision on approval - is two working weeks, from receipt of application.

Potential members are invited to apply online through the EU4Ocean website (European Commission Maritime Forum webpages at **www.eu-oceanliteracy.eu)** by completing the **online form** and including the following elements in this form:

- a **motivation letter** explaining the reasons for applying and what the organisation can bring to the EU4Ocean Platform to develop and implement joint EU4Ocean Ocean Literacy activities, indicating their commitment and willingness to perform specific activities;
- **supporting evidence** of active Ocean Literacy activities; and
- information on **how the organisation / project / initiative / individual will contribute** to the activities of the EU4Ocean Coalition.

Once the online application has been submitted, it will be reviewed by the EU4Ocean Platform facilitators.
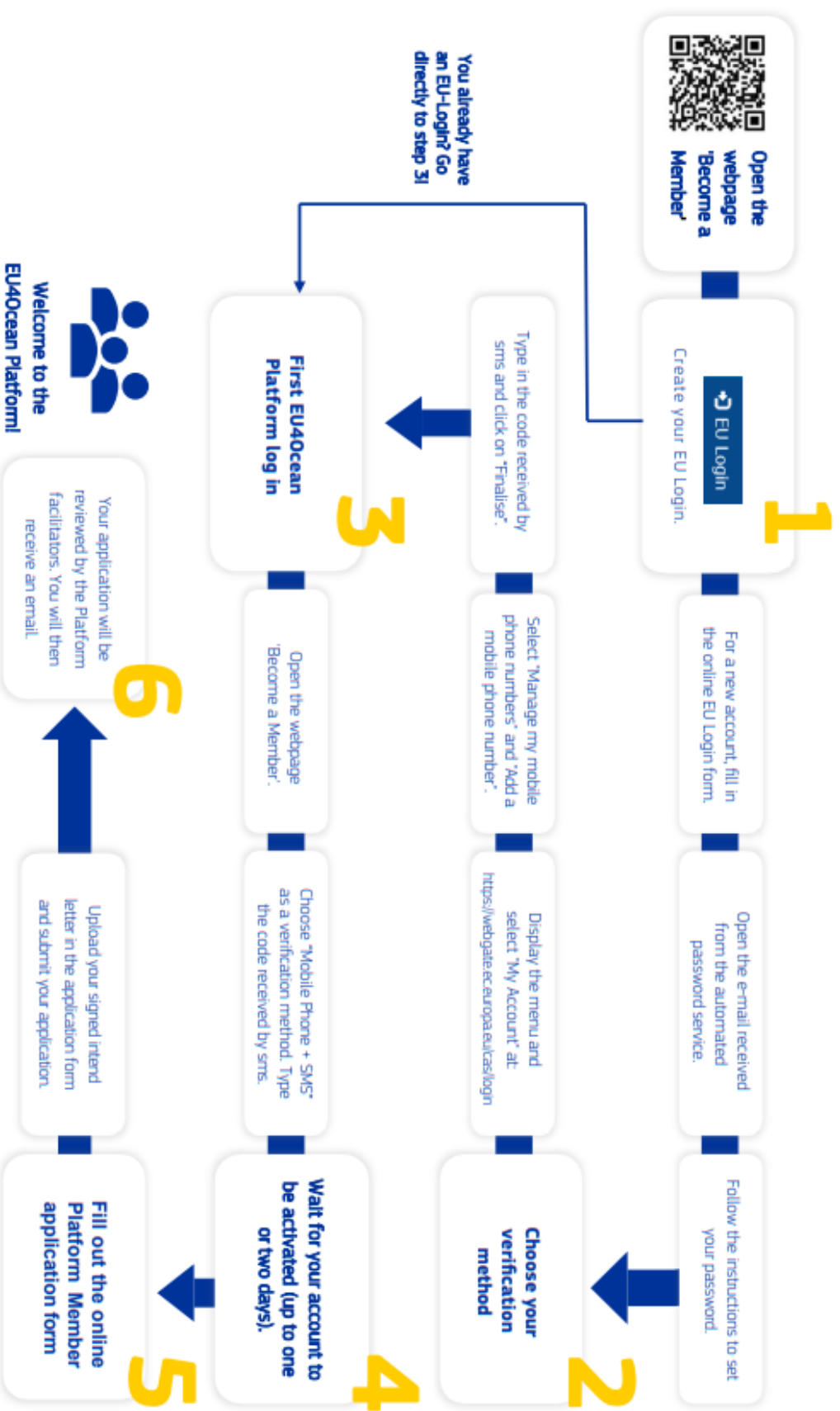
The Platform facilitators are responsible for keeping records of all applications, reviewing them for completeness and assessing them against the eligibility criteria for the EU4Ocean Platform membership listed under section 3.2. At this stage, the Platform facilitators may contact the applicant to request any missing elements or ask any question concerning the content of the application.

Complete and eligible applications will be approved by the EU4Ocean Platform facilitators. Applicants will be informed of the positive outcome of their applications by e-mail.

The EU4Ocean Platform facilitators regularly assess Platform membership with regard to representation in terms of expertise areas, stakeholder sectors and geographical distribution so as to ensure balanced representation. The Platform facilitators take this information into account in stakeholder mapping so as to invite organisations/ projects / initiatives /individuals from less represented countries, areas of expertise or sectors to join the EU4Ocean Platform.

Where possible, approved organisations / projects / initiatives are encouraged to nominate **two or more key experts/ representatives** who will actively contribute to the EU4Ocean activities and events on behalf of their organisation / project / initiative.

The diagram below provides a step-by-step guideline to submitting an online application to join the EU4Ocean Platform.

EU4Ocean Platform Registration Flow

1 Open the webpage 'Become a Member'

1 Create your EU Login.
- For a new account, fill in the online EU Login form.
- Open the e-mail received from the automated password service.
- Follow the instructions to set your password.

You already have an EU-Login? Go directly to step 3!

2 Choose your verification method
- Display the menu and select "My Account" at https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/cas/login
- Select "Manage my mobile phone numbers" and "Add a mobile phone number".
- Type in the code received by sms and click on "Finalise".

3 First EU4Ocean Platform log in
- Open the webpage 'Become a Member'.
- Choose "Mobile Phone + SMS" as a verification method. Type the code received by sms.

4 Wait for your account to be activated (up to one or two days).

5 Fill out the online Platform Member application form
- Upload your signed intend letter in the application form and submit your application.

6 Your application will be reviewed by the Platform facilitators. You will then receive an email.

Welcome to the EU4Ocean Platform!

Information about EU4Ocean Platform membership is available in the following documents and resources:

- The present revised **Terms of Reference (ToR)** for the period 2023-2025;

- The **EU4Ocean Platform webpage** dedicated to applicants and titled '**Become a Member of the EU4Ocean Platform**'[6];

- The **EU4Ocean Platform brochure** that can be downloaded from the above webpage and includes answers to a range of questions that applicants may have.

An overview of all Platform members is accessible via the following tools available from the EU4Ocean Platform webpages[7]:

- The **online EU4Ocean Platform members' searchable database** that is updated each time a new member joins the EU4Ocean Platform;

- The EU4Ocean Platform members' **map** in the European Atlas of the Seas[8] that is updated periodically.

Following the approval of their application, organisations / projects / initiatives/ individuals will receive an e-mail with **on-boarding information**. This includes ways they can contribute to EU4Ocean, a list of open calls, a list of upcoming events and a list of members who carry out similar work or complementary work to what they do. For GDPR reasons, this list does not include contact details. If new members are interested in contacting other members directly, they can contact the Platform facilitators who can help them connect.

When requested, the Platform facilitators can also organise a videoconference with a new member to discuss specific questions from the new member or specific contributions from the new members (e.g. contribution to an event).

Level of involvement

Participation of members in the EU4Ocean Platform activities is entirely voluntary. Platform members can choose the activities and events they wish to contribute to and their level of involvement. The more they contribute to EU4Ocean, the more they can benefit from their contributions and cooperation with others.

Withdrawing membership

Members will be free to withdraw at any time, giving a notice period of three months to allow for hand-over or any ongoing activities and knowledge. Where possible members will be invited to reconsider and provide a new representative. If membership is to be withdrawn, members will be asked to provide an explanation to help provide feedback to the EU4Ocean Platform for potential further improvement. If a member withdraws from the EU4Ocean Platform, the experts will be removed from the mailing list accordingly and the member's page will be removed from the online searchable database.

Organisations / projects / initiatives / individuals who have withdrawn from the EU4Ocean Platform can at any time decide to again become members of the EU4Ocean Platform. In this case, they need to submit a new application.

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[6] https://maritime-forum.ec.europa.eu/theme/ocean-literacy-and-blue-skills/ocean-literacy/eu4ocean-platform/become-member-eu4ocean-platform_en

[7] https://maritime-forum.ec.europa.eu/theme/ocean-literacy-and-blue-skills/ocean-literacy/eu4ocean-platform/eu4ocean-platform-members_en

[8] www.european-atals-of-the-seas.eu

4.3 Platform mode of operation

The EU4Ocean Platform is constantly evolving. It was set up in 2020 with 76 founding members[9], it reached 160 members at the end of 2023 and continues to grow. The aim is to expand the EU4Ocean Platform so as to reach 450 members at the end of 2025, subject to membership applications and approval.

The EU4Ocean Platform is a **dynamic, ever-changing ecosystem of stakeholders**. The expansion of the Platform is progressive, iterative and adaptive, set up for long-term durability. The aim, as the EU4Ocean Platform grows, is to increase geographical and sectoral diversity so as to increase expertise within the EU4Ocean Platform as well as opportunities for multidisciplinary cooperation. This is key to addressing the challenges we face and work towards a sustainable ocean.

Geographical expansion covers all European sea-basins, including bordering ocean basins (e.g. Atlantic and Arctic), as well as Overseas Countries and Territories and land-locked countries. Thematic expansion goes beyond marine and maritime organisations to include wider environmental, educational, artistic and societal sectors.

The Platform within the EU4Ocean Coalition

As the EU4Ocean Platform is one of the three communities of the EU4Ocean Coalition, its activities are organised in coordination with the two other EU4Ocean communities, the Youth4Ocean Forum and the Network of European Blue Schools.

An **EU4Ocean Secretariat** brings together the EU4Ocean Coalition Coordinator, the facilitators of the three communities and representatives from the EU4Ocean communication team. The EU4Ocean Secretariat establishes a **yearly programme of key activities and events** that all members of the EU4Ocean Coalition can contribute to. This strengthen the links between members of the three communities with the objective to stimulate new collective actions that are implemented by groups of members from the three communities working together. Examples of key yearly events and activities include contributions to **European Maritime Day**, **EU4Ocean Awards ceremony** and the annual call for the **Challenge of the Year**. The EU4Ocean Secretariat is supported by the **Advisory Board**. EU4Ocean Platform members are informed of these events and activities by e-mail and on the occasion of Platform meetings (see further details hereafter).

EU4Ocean: a bottom-up inclusive approach

At any time, **Platform members can contact the Platform facilitators at info@eu4ocean-platform.eu** to share information about their work related to Ocean Literacy, upcoming activities or calls for support from other Platform members. The Platform facilitator can then disseminate this information towards all Platform members via the existing communication channels (e.g., email, publication of articles on the Maritime Forum).

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[9] https://maritime-forum.ec.europa.eu/theme/ocean-literacy-and-blue-skills/ocean-literacy/eu4ocean-platform/eu4ocean-platform-founding-members_en

Platform members can also make suggestions for new activities and/or topics to be addressed in EU4Ocean activities. This can be done via e-mail or bilateral / multilateral meetings.

Working language(s)

The working language of the EU4Ocean Platform is **English**. Platform meetings are organised in English. For this reason, representatives should have a high level of professional English.

Many languages are spoken by Platform members across Europe. Platform members are encouraged to disseminate EU4Ocean information and campaigns in their countries in their mother languages so as to reach wider society around Europe.

Potential costs

The EU4Ocean Platform and the European Commission are not in a position to cover travel & subsistence costs for Platform members wishing to attend events nor staff costs related to participation of Platform members in meetings and activities. All related costs should be covered by the Platform members themselves.

Seed funding for new collective action

Every year, as mentioned above, the EU4Ocean Coalition launches a Call for the **Challenge of the Year**. This is an opportunity for Platform members to co-develop new initiatives with others to make a real difference in promoting Ocean Literacy and sustainability. Winning proposals receive seed funding to help turn their vision into reality. Of course, additional funding may be required to fully implement the initiative.

The role of Platform facilitators

EU4Ocean Platform facilitators:

- support applicants who have questions about the application process;

- review and approve applications;

- are responsible for onboarding of new Platform members;

- map stakeholders and invite potential new members to join the EU4Ocean Platform members;

- organise and moderate EU4Ocean Platform meetings;

- inform Platform members of EU4Ocean developments and upcoming activities and events;

- reply to questions from Platform members, support them in connecting with other members, discuss with Platform members ideas and suggestions for new activities or topics to be addressed in EU4Ocean activities;

- liaise with the facilitators of the Youth4Ocean Forum and the Network of European Blue schools to strengthen links between members of the communities and identify opportunities for mentorship and partnerships / cooperation on new initiatives;

- liaise with the EU4Ocean Coalition Coordinator to ensure the EU4Ocean Platform works efficiently towards meeting the objectives of the Coalition as a whole;

- assess progress made towards the EU4Ocean objective to enhance Ocean Literacy.

EU4Ocean Platform meetings

Online Platform meetings bringing together all Platform members are organised by the Platform facilitators at least once per year. Platform members are invited to these meetings by e-mail.

The objectives of these online Platform meetings are to **connect, network and cooperate**. During these meetings, Platform members can:

- learn about the upcoming events and initiatives of the EU4Ocean Coalition and how they can contribute to these activities;
- hear about organisations/ projects that have recently joined the EU4Ocean Platform and possibilities to work with them;
- find out about the development of initiatives implemented by other Platform members;
- get the opportunity to share information about their work, events and ideas with other EU4Ocean Coalition members;
- network and take part in discussions about possibilities for future cooperation.

The dates of the Platform meetings will be determined to align with other EU4Ocean Coalition activities and events so as to:

- organise the meetings at the most relevant times for engagement of Platform members in EU4Ocean events and calls for collective actions organised by the EU4Ocean Coalition;
- ensure availability of Platform members (e.g.; avoiding dates of conferences and events that many members are likely to attend).

The programme of Platform meetings is drafted by the Platform facilitators and discussed with the members of the EU4Ocean Secretariat so as to ensure coordination with the latest developments of the EU4Ocean Coalition as a whole and the two other communities, the Youth4Ocean Forum and the Network of European Blue Schools.

To ensure strong links between the three communities, the facilitators and/or representatives from the two other communities can be invited to online Platform meetings either as speakers or as participants.

The European Commission (DG MARE) and CINEA are invited to the Platform meetings as speakers and participants.

Platform meetings are hosted and moderated by the Platform facilitators.

To ensure interactivity during the Platform meetings, tools to facilitate discussions, collective learning and activities are used (e.g. chat, Padlet, Sli.do). All participants can thus directly contribute to the meeting and interact with others.

Following each Platform meeting, the Platform facilitators publish an article on the EU4Ocean Platform official webpage on the Maritime Forum that summarises the content and key outcomes of the meeting.

Presentations made at the meeting are made available in this article following approval of the speakers.

EU4Ocean bilateral / multilateral meetings

When relevant, the Platform facilitators can organise bilateral / multilateral meetings with one or several Platform members as well as the facilitators of the two other communities and/or members of the two other communities.

These meetings are organised on an ad-hoc basis and make it possible to:
- organise the contributions of members in upcoming events (e.g., European Maritime Day);
- create and reinforce connections between members of the EU4Ocean Coalition who could potentially cooperate on common activities;
- discuss suggestions and ideas from Platform members;
- answer questions from Platform members.

Through bilateral and multilateral meetings, links between the three communities can thus increase.

Bilateral and multilateral meetings are usually organised online but can also, when relevant and possible, be organised in-person (e.g., when the participants are physically in the same country for an event or another meeting).

4.4 Platform communication

Website

A dynamic and high content online presence of EU4Ocean is crucial to promote activities, events and initiatives. The EU4Ocean Coalition as a whole (www.eu-oceanliteracy.eu) and the three EU4Ocean communities are present on the European Commission Maritime Forum as online communities. The EU4Ocean Platform community on the Maritime Forum includes the following information:

- general information about the Platform;
- information for applicants as well as the online application form to be completed to become a member of the EU4Ocean Platform;
- the searchable database of Platform members;
- the list of the founding members of the EU4Ocean Platform;
- information about the three Working Groups organised in the period 2020-2022 and their outcomes;
- news articles;
- events.

Content on the EU4Ocean Platform is updated by the EU4Ocean Platform facilitators.

EU4Ocean Platform members can submit news articles (including the text, an illustration and the copyright/ credit for the illustration) for review and publication on the webpages by contacting the Platform facilitators at info@eu4ocean-platform.eu.

Communication and dissemination

Communication is crucial to the success of EU4Ocean. Members of the EU4Ocean Platform, as members of the two other communities, are ambassadors for EU4Ocean. As such, it is important that they contribute to the communication activities of the EU4Ocean Platform and EU4Ocean Coalition. This includes,

amongst other communication activities:

- the promotion of calls for collective action, campaigns, events and activities;
- identification of and engagement with stakeholders to join the Ocean Literacy efforts and build momentum and change.

Being part of the EU4Ocean Coalition, members are expected to:

- help bring the main messages and mainstream Ocean Literacy to a wider audience;
- communicate about the EU4Ocean Platform and its activities whenever they find appropriate in events;
- use the communication tools / products developed for the EU4Ocean Coalition and the EU4Ocean Platform (e.g., flyers, brochure, presentations, videos) and facilitate the communication to their local communities and networks.

While the working language of the EU4Ocean Platform is English, Platform members are encouraged to leverage their own, and networks' regional and national language skills to help communicate EU4Ocean to more local audiences across Europe.

Members will also be called upon to identify key channels locally or by sector, to drive messaging further and raise the visibility of the EU4Ocean Platform. Platform members can contribute to content for communication material and engage in translation of communication content locally/regionally.

For regional and local citizen engagement, key communication will be as far as possible provided in multiple European Union languages.

4.5 EU4Ocean and UNESCO

EU4Ocean is Europe's Ocean literacy hub. Since 2022, the European Commission, EU4Ocean partners, and the UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission are working together to enhance Ocean Literacy activities across the globe to empower society to take action for the ocean.

EU4Ocean aligns with the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030). This global initiative aims at reversing the declining cycle of ocean health and promoting sustainable development by bringing together ocean stakeholders worldwide under a common framework, ensuring ocean science supports actors in creating improved conditions for the ocean's sustainable development.

5   IMPACT AND LEGACY

The establishment of the EU4Ocean Platform is for an unlimited duration. For this reason, a legacy plan will be developed to maintain the operation of the EU4Ocean Platform beyond the current period 2022-2025. This started in the early phase of the initiative, including establishing domain names for websites and information and email accounts.

The success and impact of the EU4Ocean Coalition and of the EU4Ocean Platform is closely linked to the diversity of members who join the Coalition and the Platform, their continued and confirmed commitments, cooperation between members, co-development of initiatives and the communication strategy to engage media to reach wider society.

This requires close collaboration across the EU4Ocean communities' facilitators spanning operational, communication and advocacy roles. Quantitative targets have been set for the continued growth of the communities.

The Platform facilitators, with the contribution of EU4Ocean partners, Platform members and other EU4Ocean Coalition members, assess the growth and success of the EU4Ocean Platform with regard to contribution to events, calls for collective actions, co-design and inter- and trans-disciplinarity of activities and support to other communities. In this framework, the Platform facilitators can organise online surveys using EU Survey.

The EU4Ocean Platform is designed to significantly raise the visibility, awareness and concrete action in Ocean Literacy in Europe, bringing Ocean Literacy high on policy agendas and embedding it in many different policies and strategies and into education and school curricula or in Youth programmes, in addition to policies on equality and fairness.

Society as a whole is the target, to create a movement in Ocean Literacy that can raise Europe's capability in Ocean Literacy, drive societal and behavioural change and action and promote Ocean Literacy at global fora with EU4Ocean as a focal point for European contributions to global Ocean Literacy efforts, such as under IOC UNESCO's relevant Ocean Literacy Portal.

6 GLOSSARY

CINEA	European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA)
DG MARE	Directorate-General for Maritime Fisheries and Affairs of the European Commission
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
EU4Ocean	European initiative on Ocean Literacy, funded by the EC (DG MARE)
EU4Ocean Coalition	Integrated three components of EU4Ocean, namely the EU4Ocean Platform, the Youth4Ocean Forum and the Network of European Blue Schools.
EU4Ocean Platform	Membership network of stakeholders collectively co-creating and implementing Ocean Literacy initiatives for EU4Ocean.
EU4Ocean project partners	Consortium of 14 partners funded to manage the EU4Ocean Coalition from December 2022 to December 2025.
Youth4Ocean Forum	Membership network of EU4Ocean dedicated to the Youth (16-30 years old).
IOC-UNESCO	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Mathematics
UN	United Nations
UN2030	UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
YOA	Young Ocean Advocates are members of the Youth4Ocean Forum, who have been recognised for their outstanding and innovative work that contributes to improving the health of the world ocean and the well-being of coastal communities.

This EU4Ocean Platform Terms of Reference was produced by the EU4Ocean Platform facilitators as an update of the Terms of Reference produced in the framework of the first EU4Ocean DG MARE service contract for the period December 2019 - December 2022.

#EU4Ocean
#Youth4Ocean
#EUBlueSchools