Feedback opportunity for the work programme 2025

Mission: Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030

Draft expected impacts:

The actions to be financed under this WP will contribute to achieving the three specific objectives of the Mission and their related targets:

- protecting 30% including 10% strictly protected of the EU's sea area as well as restoring marine ecosystems and biodiversity and 25.000 km of free flowing rivers (in line with EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 and the [proposed] Nature Restoration Law);
- preventing and eliminating pollution at sea by reducing plastic litter by 50%, the release of microplastics into the environment by 30%, nutrient losses and use of chemical pesticides by 50% (in line with the EU Action Plan Towards Zero Pollution for Air, Water and Soil); and
- making the blue economy climate-neutral and circular with net-zero maritime and aquaculture emissions (in line with the European Climate Law and the Sustainable Blue Economy Strategy)

They will also contribute to both cross-cutting enablers that support these objectives, by providing access to a digital ocean and water knowledge system as well as broad public mobilization and engagement in the co-design and co-delivery of the solutions.

The actions will contribute to transitions of the European Green Deal in an inclusive way, ensuring the uptake of innovative solutions and preparing the ground for further replication and deployment. Activities proposed will ensure the involvement of relevant **communities and stakeholders across the EU, especially those dependent on healthy seas, oceans and inland waters** (e.g., coastal communities, islands, waterfront cities, coastal regions, river catchments, fishing and maritime stakeholders).

Main expected outcomes:

As mentioned in the Implementation Plan of the Mission [ref IP section 2.1.1], in the second 'deployment and upscaling' phase (2026-2030), the solutions already developed and piloted to deliver on the Mission and Green Deal objectives will be further replicated and scaled up through rounds of calls for the up-scale of solutions. This will enable broad participation in the Mission across the EU. These scale-up actions will bring new innovations (either developed in the first phase of the mission or outside) to the local contexts, and adapt solutions so they can be replicated in new areas. These scale-up actions will include not only science and technologies, with high TRL levels and de-risking of market deployment, but also social and governance innovation, with a strong involvement of citizens, stakeholders, communities and international organisations, such as those in charge of sea/river basin strategies. Excellent and impact-driven R&I efforts will contribute to boosting the scale, scope and availability of the knowledge, data and solutions, improving monitoring, mapping and modelling in a context of climate change and anthropogenic pressures. It will also contribute to the development of new business models, financial and societal innovation as well as innovative participatory research frameworks with close involvement of citizens.

The 'lighthouse' approach designed in the first phase will be enhanced, through the support to place-based activities implementing the objectives and developing further solutions needed for scale up, and thus strengthening basin-scale cooperation and governance.

Overall, the actions will contribute to the ecological-circular-climate neutral transitions promoted by the Mission Ocean and Waters in line with the European Green Deal.

Examples of 2030 expected outcomes include the following as outlined in the Mission implementation plan:

- evidence-based approaches and solutions to support the establishment of Marine Protected Areas through the active involvement of relevant stakeholders (national and regional authorities, research organisations, NGOs, blue economic sectors such as fisheries, tourism, shipping, and citizens) in the Blue Parks activities implemented by the Mission;
- placed-based activities addressing pollution-related pressures and effects in the sea-waters ecosystems by implementing source-to-sea approaches and promoting effective forms of governance at local and transregional level;
- uptake of innovative solutions to support carbon-neutrality, energy transition and circularity in fisheries and aquaculture across the value chain, including through the integration of IT/AI, big data, automated and autonomous technologies and multi-purpose approaches;
- place-based and people-centered restoration of a number of coastal regions and river catchments, helping regional and local authorities to implement solutions contributing to achieving substantial progress under the Mission target(s), building on existing knowledge and solutions, as well as on already applied mechanisms such as e.g. coastal restoration contracts, river contracts, etc.;
- restoration of waterfront cities helping relevant local authorities to implement solutions to achieve substantial progress under the Mission target(s), applying existing knowledge and solutions involving local communities and pooling complementary sources of funding;
- restoration of small islands, helping relevant local authorities to implement solutions to achieve substantial progress under the Mission target(s), applying existing knowledge and solutions involving local communities and pooling complementary sources of funding;
- integration of additional models in the European Digital Twin Ocean (EU DTO), ensuring appropriate connectivity/coupling between them: geochemical, ecosystem and integrated coastal models, building on the EDITO-Infra[1] prototype and the EDITO-Model Lab[2] project;
- consolidation of national and regional hubs mobilizing of national and regional funds as well as private financing, to support the replication of innovative solutions in each lighthouse addressing the Mission objectives.

[1] European Digital Twin Ocean - Introducing EDITO-Infra - EDITO-Infra
[2] EDITO-Model Lab — European DIgital Twin Ocean